Maine Economic Improvement Fund at the University of Southern Maine

(MEIF@USM) Strategic Framework

**What is the Maine Economic Improvement Fund?**
The Maine Economic Improvement Fund (MEIF) was established by the Maine State Legislature in 1997 to support the development of private enterprise based on applied research and development performed within the University of Maine System in seven target ‘technology’ areas; and to provide the basic investment necessary to obtain matching funds and competitive grants from private and federal sources. The target ‘technology’ areas are:

- biotechnology
- aquaculture and marine technology
- composite materials technology
- environmental technology
- advanced technologies for forestry and agriculture
- information technology
- precision manufacturing technology

**What is MEIF@USM?**
MEIF@USM is an economic development investment tool that enables USM to be a key player in the creation of a thriving economy in Maine. MEIF@USM seeds initiatives that strengthen USM’s applied research and workforce development capacities in strategic areas that are responsive to the needs of businesses and industries in one or more of the seven MEIF target areas and/or support ecosystems.

- “Support ecosystems” refer to all the key players external to USM that are involved in, rely on, or support a target area. Examples include growers, manufacturers, processors, distributors, suppliers, business services, tourism, community agencies and organizations, trade associations, medical facilities, critical infrastructure, and cultural and educational institutions.

- At USM we define applied research broadly to include research, evaluation, and technical assistance. We are committed to an approach that solves practical problems of the modern world in response to specific articulated needs from community partners. The expectation is that the applied research will solve an immediate problem and provide a long-term practical solution.

**What are the Types of MEIF@USM Investments?**
The types of MEIF@USM investments include:

- Strategic initiatives. (Review [MEIF@USM Procedures for Selecting Strategic Investments](#) for procedures for selecting, developing, and reviewing proposals for strategic initiatives.)

- Internship programs and the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP).

- Graduate research assistantships and requests for small research equipment.

- Course releases to lay the groundwork for submission of successful proposals for extramural funding from federal agencies, foundations, or other research sponsors.

- Requests for matching funds required in proposals for extramural funding.

MEIF@USM does not support independent projects unless the project becomes part of a larger multidisciplinary strategic initiative that addresses documented community needs, shows evidence of institutional impact, contributes to Maine’s economic development, and aligns with the MEIF@USM Strategic Framework. Review [MEIF@USM Award Policies](#) for applicant eligibility, allowable uses of MEIF@USM Funds, and other award policies.

**What is the Purpose of the MEIF@USM Strategic Framework?**
The accompanying MEIF@USM Strategic Framework is intended to guide MEIF@USM investments in our faculty, staff, and students who want to look outward to the larger world and engage with USM’s communities and the University of Maine System campuses in responding to the economic, health, and social needs of Maine citizens,
businesses, industries, and communities. This outward-looking approach seeks to strengthen USM’s applied research and workforce development capacities in strategic areas that are responsive to the needs of businesses and industries in one or more of the seven MEIF target areas and/or support systems.

- The MEIF@USM Strategic Framework outlines two major pillars of community engagement activities that are responsive to the community, business, and industry needs in one or more of the seven MEIF sectors: Research, Training, and Technical Assistance; and Education and Workforce Development. The Framework takes full advantage of the collective knowledge, experience, and national and international recognition of our faculty and staff in innovations that span the K-to-Workforce Continuum.

- The MEIF@USM Strategic Framework also recognizes that the success of MEIF@USM investments depends on USM Administration, faculty, and staff and their respective departments taking active roles in developing and sustaining a culture that supports and awards innovations in research, education, and workforce development programs that build our students’ global competence.

**WHAT MAKES AN INITIATIVE ELIGIBLE FOR MEIF@USM INVESTMENT?**

An initiative may lead directly to economic development generally, but that is not enough to make it eligible for MEIF@USM investment. To be eligible for MEIF@USM investment an initiative must meet the following four fundamental requirements:

1. **MEIF Target Area:** Aligns with at least one MEIF target area.
2. **Community Needs:** Addresses documented needs of one or more businesses and industries in the target area and/or support ecosystems.
3. **Measurable Workforce Development Outcomes:** Includes measurable outcomes, especially those related to workforce development that could span the K-to-Workforce continuum.
4. **Economic Development Impacts:** Initiative outcomes map to one or more of the economic development impacts in the Maine Development Foundation’s *2016 Measures of Growth* or other more appropriate economic development impacts that are relevant to the initiative.

In addition to the fundamental requirements, an initiative must:

- Align with one or more outcomes of the MEIF@USM Strategic Framework.
- Include meaningful partnerships with: businesses/industries in the target area and/or support ecosystems; and multi-disciplinary collaborations with more than one USM college and/or UMS universities.
- Include a return on investment strategy for securing and leveraging external funds through sponsored grants, fee for services, and/or commitments from partners.
- Include a well thought out and reasonable sustainability strategy to grow the initiative post MEIF@USM support.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND POINTS OF CONTACTS**

Please visit the USM Research [website](#) for more information on research activities and research support resources at USM. You can also browse the MEIF@USM website for more information on the program, Calls for Proposals, and funded projects.

Points of Contacts:

- Dr. Terry Shehata, MEIF@USM Coordinator: a.shehata@maine.edu or 207-228-8239, or
- Maggie Vishneau: vishneau@maine.edu or 207-780-5469
### MEIF@USM Strategic Framework (FY2017 to FY2021)

**Goal:** Strengthen USM’s research and workforce development capacities in strategic areas that are responsive to the needs of one or more businesses and industries in the seven MEIF Technology areas (Sectors. Biotechnology, Aquaculture and marine technology, Composite materials technology, Environmental technology, Advanced technologies for forestry and agriculture, Information technology, and Precision manufacturing technology) and/or support ecosystems.

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<th>Major Activities</th>
<th>USM Administration</th>
<th>USM Faculty &amp; Staff</th>
<th>USM Outcomes</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Goals Impacted</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MEIF Administration</strong></td>
<td>Seed strategic initiatives that develop multidisciplinary groups of faculty, staff and students from all colleges and external partners that coalesce around innovative applied research and/or workforce development solutions that span the K-to-Workforce Continuum that are responsive to the needs of businesses and industries in one or more of the seven MEIF sectors including their support ecosystems.</td>
<td>Develop and implement a system-wide strategic framework, for which USM is the convener, that defines USM’s role in supporting the state’s economic development vision and strategies in the Iceland/ North Atlantic region.</td>
<td>Internal Outcomes</td>
<td>USM Goals:</td>
<td>BOD MEIF Goals:</td>
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<td>Establish an Economic Development Forum as a sustainable process that defines and updates USM’s role in supporting the state’s and region’s economic development strategies, and that informs MEIF investments.</td>
<td>Generate quarterly project-specific budget-to-actuals; quarterly MEIF budget-to-actuals; semi-annual progress reports; annual progress reports; annual UMS reports; outreach and communications; and economic impacts of funded projects.</td>
<td>More faculty/staff are submitting proposals for external support.</td>
<td>Maintain a concerted effort to involve faculty, staff and students in R&amp;D, and supported by commercialization.</td>
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<td>Departments provide administrative support to help faculty and staff manage their funded awards.</td>
<td>• Activity from the seven MEIF sectors will account $45.5 MM grants and contracts and $45 MM in NSF expenditures (3% annual growth on a three year rolling average).</td>
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<td>More faculty/staff are engaging students in externally funded research.</td>
<td>• Revenue from industrial contracts</td>
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<td>Develop and implements a plan to incentivize research, scholarship and student research, and implements a fair and equitable return on indirect policy.</td>
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<td>Develop and implement a unified approach to engaging faculty, staff and students across all colleges are engaged with school districts in helping them graduate students who are more prepared for STEM-related post-secondary education.</td>
<td>Maintaining a concerted effort to involve faculty, staff and students in R&amp;D, and supported by commercialization.</td>
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<td>More undergraduate and graduate education and research experience align with STEM-related programs.</td>
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**Internal Outcomes**
- More faculty/staff are submitting proposals for external support.
- More faculty/staff are engaging and building long-term research collaborations with external partners.
- More undergraduate and graduate students are engaged in externally funded research.
- MEIF community partners see USM’s MEIF-supported applied research initiatives as being responsive to their needs and challenges.

**External Outcomes**
- MEIF community partners see USM’s MEIF-supported applied research initiatives as being responsive to their needs and challenges.
- Survey of community partners from selected advisory boards

**Data Collection**
- # faculty, staff and students supported
- # proposals submitted, awarded, and value of awards
- $ leveraged
- # patents filed and issued
- # license agreements and license options
- # industrial contracts and value of contracts
- # community collaborations
- Survey of community partners from selected advisory boards

**Goals Impacted**
- BOD MEIF Goals:
  - Maintain a concerted effort to involve faculty, staff and students in R&D, and supported by commercialization.
  - Activity from the seven MEIF sectors will account $45.5 MM grants and contracts and $45 MM in NSF expenditures (3% annual growth on a three year rolling average).
  - Revenue from industrial contracts
- MDF’s Measures of Growth (2016):
  - R&D expenditures
- USM Goals:
  - USM headcount enrollment will reach 10,000 (IPEDS, now 8,700).
  - 72% of our students will remain at USM between each school year (IPEDS, now 63%).
  - USM will be known for academic excellence with real-world experiences as a core part of its academic program.
  - % of indirect returned to departments
- BOD Goals:
  - Each UMS institution executes retention and persistence strategies that achieve an ongoing, aggregate degree and certificate completion rate relative to market segment (each category of population served) exceeding the 3-year rolling average of peer institutions by FY19.
  - Maine employer surveys show that UMS works actively with businesses to meet state workforce needs, and that UMS graduates are best-prepared to fill those needs at undergraduate and graduate levels.