



## PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

Making the Most of Masters aims to improve collaboration between employers and universities by providing opportunities for postgraduate students to undertake work based projects as an alternative to a traditional university dissertation. Projects should address a real need within the host organisation and be beneficial to both host and student.

The Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland (MASTS), pools the majority of Scotland's marine research capacity. MASTS members provide Masters courses in a range of marine related disciplines and many of their students are keen to undertake applied projects outside of academia.

### Notes on Topic Selection

A relevant academic will work with your organisation to refine your proposed topic and ensure it meets both your needs and the academic requirements of the student. Projects should typically be achievable within a 12–16 week timeframe (including writing the final report).

Your proposed project could be:

- A specific project title or topic for the student to deliver;
- A general idea of a business need which requires further development;
- A core research theme to be developed by the student into a bespoke project;
- An intended outcome for the organisation.

The level of detail you provide will determine the extent to which further discussion may be required with the relevant programme director to ensure suitability.

desk-based/data studies that will easily facilitate remote working and remote supervision are welcome, as well as in person and/or experimental based projects where appropriate.

### What's Next?

Please send your completed form to the MASTS Programme Coordinator & Deputy Dean of Grad School, Dr Emma Defew ([masts@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:masts@st-andrews.ac.uk)) before the deadline.

Following submission of the form, it will be channeled to the leaders of the various Masters programmes that operate within the MASTS community and a representative from the most relevant programme or department will get in touch to discuss the project scope, delivery and the selection of an appropriate student. If more than one student expresses an interest in your project, you will need to ensure discussions take place to enable the most suitable student to be matched with your project. The projects themselves usually won't start until May or June.



## MASTS - Making the Most of Masters – Project Proposal Form

**Name and address of Organisation:**

Bp North Sea

bp International Limited. Registered office: Chertsey Road, Sunbury on Thames, Middlesex, TW16 7BP

**Name of the key contact in Organisation:**

Melanie Netherway

**Contact e-mail and phone number:**

melanie.netherway@uk.bp.com

**Title of proposed project:**

Understanding habitat preference and environmental stressors for deep sea sponge aggregations West of Shetland

**Project outline and intended outcomes:**

bp operates within a Marine Protected Area which has been designated for the protection of deep sea sponge aggregations. There are significant evidence gaps on the impacts of oil and gas activities on these species which can make environmental impact assessments challenging. bp are currently working in collaboration with regulators, statutory nature conservation bodies (SNCBs) and academia to further the understanding of these species.

As part of the work being completed bp are collating as much information as possible on the presence and absence of these deep sea sponge species, and this Project proposal would be to support this data collection activity to better understand:

Where are sponges being found?

Is there any sort of correlation between where we are finding them and possible habitat preferences?

What does literature say about sensitivities of these species/stressors/recovery and what evidence exists?

This will include:

Reviewing available survey reports and mapping in GIS

Engaging with other operators in the sponge belt to identify possible other data sets on presence of deep sea sponges

Engaging with the SNCBs to better understand available information on the species

Engaging with current consultancy executing a multi year research project on the

deep sea sponges WoS

Someone with GIS skills and a biology/zoology background would be preferable

**Any additional comments e.g. details of specific disciplines required, methods to be used, travel involved, where the work would take place (i.e. at the host site or at the University), whether you foresee any Intellectual Property or confidentiality issues (and if so, what form might these take?):**

Work could be completed at bp offices in Dyce, Aberdeen  
Some potential confidentiality issues due to partner partial ownership of datasets but nothing a simple NDA as appropriate couldn't cover