



ITOPF 2026

R&D Award

Apply for funding for research projects related to accidental spills of oil and cargo in the marine environment

£60,000

for short-term projects

- Intended for 1 to 2 year projects
- Figure can include research costs, staff costs and overheads, travel expenses

The ITOPF R&D Award provides financial support for projects which have the potential to lead to improvements in spill related matters. This includes (but is not limited to) preparedness, monitoring, response, environmental effects, and impact mitigation.

The Award is open to any reputable R&D establishment or other organisation worldwide intending to fund a project team or PhD candidate to undertake relevant research. Applications are invited from all academic disciplines, although preference will be given to those with an applied scientific focus and a potential impact on ESG-related themes.

£40,000

+ stipend + university fees contribution for PhD projects

- Intended for 3 to 4 year projects
- Figure is for expenses related to research
- Stipend & contribution to university fees are pegged to UKRI values for that year

This year, special consideration will be given to projects addressing:

- Fisheries & mariculture
- Emerging fuels (including nuclear)
- Environmental recovery
- AI applications; Remote sensing; Autonomous vehicles

PhD projects are particularly welcome!

Important dates

1 September 2025 – Applications open
1 December 2025 – Applications closing date
April 2026 – Award granted



How to apply

To apply for the ITOPF R&D Award, please visit our website:

Application form



Further information



**If you have any
questions, please
contact us**

rdaward@itopf.org

Funding explained

Funding is available at the following levels:

- **Short-term projects:** up to £60K – this can be spread over 1-2 years and can include research costs, staff costs and overheads, and travel expenses.
- **PhD research projects:** up to £40K – this sum is provided for research costs in instalments for the duration of the PhD (up to 4 years). Additionally, a competitive annual stipend (living expenses) and contribution towards tuition fees are payable to the successful candidate each year for the duration of their research. The exact amount awarded towards the stipend and tuition fees is dependent on the location of the host institution.

About ITOPF

ITOPF is maintained by the world's shipowners and their insurers on a not-for-profit basis to promote effective response to spills of oil, chemicals and other substances in the marine environment.

Since ITOPF's establishment in 1968, our technical staff have attended on-site at over 850 shipping incidents in 100 countries to provide objective and scientific advice on clean-up measures, the effects of pollutants on the environment and economic activities, and on compensation. These incidents can involve oil, chemicals and other bulk or packaged cargoes, as well as bunker fuel from all types of ship.

Our first-hand experience of pollution incidents is utilised during contingency planning and other advisory assignments for government and industry. We are an authoritative source of information on marine spills and share our knowledge at training courses and seminars throughout the world, encouraging best practice through outreach and education.

As part of our mission to promote effective spill response, we are proud to invest in R&D on behalf of our shipowners and their insurers.

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