

1st Information Circular on Upcoming MEPAG Meetings

**VM1 Virtual MEPAG meeting
February 20, 2018, 1-3 p.m. EST**

&

**Spring 2018 / 36th MEPAG Meeting
April 3-5, 2018
Washington DC region (Crystal City)**

Members of the Mars community,

I cordially invite you to participate in two upcoming Mars Exploration Program Analysis Group (MEPAG) meetings: *a*) on February 20, 2018, 1-3 p.m. EST will be a virtual meeting (**VM1**), while *b*) on April 3-5, 2018, will be the annual face-to-face MEPAG Meeting (**#36**). Details for both of these meetings are given on the following pages, and posted at <https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/meetings.cfm>. These meetings are open to all members of the Mars science community including our international colleagues. I look forward to your participation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeffrey R. Johnson

MEPAG Chair

Important Dates

Friday, January 26	1 st Meeting 36 Informational Circular released
Sunday, February 11	Meeting 36 Early Career Travel Grant application deadline
Tuesday, February 20	MEPAG Meeting VM1 (virtual) , includes Q&A about Meeting 36
Thursday, February 22	Forum presentation abstract deadline
Early March	2 nd Meeting 36 Informational Circular released, including draft agenda
Friday, March 23	Registration deadline (not required, but requested for logistics planning)
Tuesday-Thursday, April 3-5	MEPAG Meeting 36

If you have a suggestion for the agenda or a question about either meeting, please email mepagmeetingqs@jpl.nasa.gov.

Virtual Meeting 1 (VM1), Tuesday February 20, 2018

The first virtual meeting of the year will be a ~2 hr webcast at 1-3 p.m. EST (10-noon PST). This webcast is expected to include MEPAG announcements and a brief NASA update, followed by a report on recent Mars Sample Return (MSR)-related technology studies. Time will also be allotted for Q&A regarding the structure and scope of the 36th MEPAG Meeting in April (see below). Further information on the VM1 Meeting will be emailed and posted to the MEPAG meeting website

(<https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/meetings.cfm>). In general terms, VM1 will cover (times subject to change):

MEPAG Announcements	20 minutes
NASA Update	20 minutes
Discussion of 36 th MEPAG Meeting (including forum)	20 minutes
Progress on MSR Technologies	45 minutes
Discussion	15 minutes

36th MEPAG, Tuesday-Thursday April 3-5, 2018, Crystal City (near Washington DC)

The annual face-to-face MEPAG meeting is scheduled for Tuesday-Thursday, April 3-5, 2018, in Crystal City (Arlington, VA). The meeting will also be webcast. Further details, including a draft agenda, will be posted on the MEPAG meeting website (<https://mepag.jpl.nasa.gov/meetings.cfm?expand=m36>) about a month before the meeting. We will post the venue and hotel block information as soon as it has been confirmed (we are awaiting the contract). Travel awards for up to 4 early career participants are available (see details below).

The tentative topical agenda for this meeting is:

April 3:

- NASA PSD/MEP Reports
- Potential MEPAG Goals Revision: Polar Science
- Forum: Mission Concepts for the 2020's and beyond (*info below*)

April 4:

- Decadal Survey Preparations
- Summary of Mars Mission Concepts Forum
- Reports from Mars Missions in Development

April 5:

- Updates from Ongoing Mars Missions
- Human Exploration & Commercial Space
- Conference Reports
- Future MEPAG Plans

A focus of this MEPAG meeting is preparation for the next Decadal Survey. MEPAG seeks to enable opportunities for identifying concepts in all mission classes that could make significant progress on compelling Mars science questions during 2023-2032. While the return of samples to be prepared by NASA's Mars 2020 rover continues to be a priority, there is a strong pool of concepts for (1) completed missions (including possible New Frontiers candidates), (2) small satellite missions enabled by strategic mission launch capabilities, and/or (3) follow-on flagship capabilities. These build on the extraordinary discoveries of past and ongoing missions, as well as new technological developments. MEPAG's goal is to generally support scientific mission concepts with enough detail to enable their serious consideration

by the next Planetary Decadal Survey. The forum on the afternoon of the first day has the main goal of identifying mission objectives and concepts that address high-priority Mars science questions, with an emphasis on the science that can be achieved over the next two decades.

In particular, we are interested in concepts that address high-priority science questions that could be addressed in parallel with or after Mars sample return. Identification of such concepts would help later planning of studies or workshops commissioned by MEPAG or MEP to e.g., mature specific concepts or to define technological areas for potential later investment. Additionally, we seek to facilitate maturation of ideas within our community and identification of collaboration opportunities.

Registration for in-person attendance at MEPAG Meeting 36

Registration is not required for attendance, but aids with meeting planning and namebadge printing. (Note that registration is completely separate from forecasting.) Please register by March 23 at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf5ryntC2pTy7D3rJT5XdRoibOMDVyaYmRYR0Hsb4IDf0BSSA/viewform>.

The forum within MEPAG Meeting 36

The forum thus serves as a community “brainstorming,” to start discussions regarding preparation for the next Planetary Science Decadal Survey. Forum presentations will primarily consist of posters; following the poster session, there will be a facilitated discussion. The forum will be summarized the next day as part of the discussion about future MEPAG planning activities.

To request a presentation spot at the MEPAG meeting forum, please submit an abstract (.pdf format; ≤ 1page including title, author list/affiliations/contact, abstract text/figure(s), and references; we recommend an LPSC-style format) outlining your concept to mepagmeetingqs@jpl.nasa.gov by **Thursday, February 22**. For example, a concept could focus on any of the following:

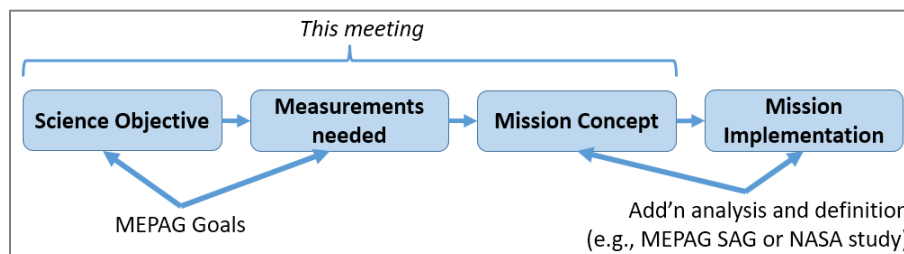
- a high-level science objective (e.g., Mars science results that could be relevant for solar system formation studies and extrasolar system interpretation) or question
- the importance of specific types of observations/measurements/analysis
- a science or technology strategy (e.g., multiple small rovers or subsurface access).

The concept could also span any mission class: from secondary payload to Discovery- or New Frontiers-class competed to Large strategic.

To best facilitate the presentations and discussion, we suggest that presenters:

- focus on the science question(s) and measurements that their concept would address, rather than implementation specifics (*see Figure below*);
- provide a zeroth-order mapping to specific portions of the 2015 MEPAG Goals document (or identify a gap in the MEPAG Goals, if you think one exists);
- identify the type of information needed to mature the concept for consideration by the next Planetary Science Decadal Survey Committee.

To facilitate discussion at the meeting and beyond, accepted abstracts will be posted on the MEPAG meeting website along with the meeting agenda.



Early Career Travel Grant for MEPAG Meeting 36

To encourage and enable more Early Career participation in the forum (and in the full MEPAG meeting), the NASA Mars Program Office has announced that travel awards are available for up to four early career scientists or engineers with an interest or role in the Mars Exploration Program, and who will present a first-author abstract within the forum. U.S. citizens or legal residents within 10 years after their terminal degree are eligible for this program. (Current students are not eligible.)

Selection for the travel award will be based on submission of an acceptable abstract for the forum, anticipated participation in the full MEPAG meeting, and demonstration of financial need. To be considered for this funding, **submit an application form by February 11, 2018 and a first-author concept abstract by the abstract deadline.** NASA Headquarters will make the selections and awardees will be notified in early March. Awardees likely will be asked to assist during parts of the rest of the MEPAG meeting (e.g., to serve as mic runners during a discussion period) although we will aim to not overly infringe on their ability to participate in the meeting.

For further information and the application, see <http://mepag.nasa.gov/student.cfm?expand=student>. Questions about this program should be directed to Dr. Serina Diniega (serina.diniega@jpl.nasa.gov).