Frequently Asked Questions – Community of Practice (CoP) Fund 2025-28

Contents (quick links)

1. **Application Process and Portal Guidance**
2. **Funding Details and Eligibility**
3. **CoP Structure, Collaboration, and Focus**
4. **Proposal Content and Evaluation**

---

1. Application Process and Portal Guidance

Q: What should I know about the CoP Fund application process and its deadline?

a1. Applications are due **17 August 2025 at 11:59PM ET**. You can submit your proposal [here](#).

a2. The primary applicant (typically the CoP Lead) must be eligible to hold a grant in their name at their organization.

a3. Please visit [MEOPAR CoP Fund](#) for further information.

Q: Where can I find guidance on how to use the online application portal?

a1. A detailed user guide for the SurveyMonkey Apply portal is available on the landing page of MEOPAR's online application portal: https://meopar.smapply.io. This guide is available in both [English](#) and [French](#). To access it from the portal, look for the words "SurveyMonkey Apply (SMA) User Guide" and follow the links for the English or French version.

a2. The guide provides step-by-step instructions and visual cues on how to navigate the portal, complete your submission, add a collaborator (to complete some or all your application), and submit a request to a 'Recommender' for a letter of support.

Q: If I ask a 'recommender' to submit a letter directly to the online portal, do I need to wait for it to arrive before submitting my application?

a. You may submit your application prior to the receipt of all letters of support from recommenders. Upon submission of each letter of support, you will receive an email notification and if you wish, you can log into the portal to review the letter. Please note that recommenders are unable to provide letters of support after the application deadline has passed.

Q: Is there an information session for applicants?

a. Yes, MEOPAR hosted an online info session on 17 July 2025 at 10am PT / 1pm ET. You can view the recording [here](#).

Q: Who can I contact with other questions?

    a. For inquiries, contact Kristi Carter at kristi.carter@meopar.ca

2. Funding Details and Eligibility

Q: When will funding begin?

    a. Funding will begin on 1 October 2025, and may extend up to 30 September 2028, depending on the duration requested.

Q: Why the difference in funding level eligibility (i.e., established CoPs being eligible for up to $30,000 per year and new CoPs being eligible for $50,000 per year)?

    a1. Typically, new CoPs must build a foundation from the ground up, setting up their governance structure, developing a vision, recruiting members, establishing connections and communications channels, and designing programming. A higher level of funding helps to ensure they have the capacity to launch effectively and build momentum. Established CoPs already have their foundational elements in place and don't have the same startup resource needs.

Q: What's the difference between matched and leveraged funding?

    a1. Matched funds are new, incremental contributions (cash or in-kind) that are secured from non-federal sources, and are essential to meeting the 1:1 matching requirement for the CoP Fund Call for Proposals. These funds must be directly tied to the CoP's activities and should represent new contributions that would not be available without MEOPAR's funding support. Examples might include staff time from a provincial partner, venue space donated by an organization, or cash from a private foundation or provincial grant.

    a2. Leveraged funds are existing investments or additional contributions that support the CoP but do not count toward the required match. These may come from federal sources (e.g., NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR, your CoP being able to use CFI-funded equipment) or other federally-funded organizations. While not eligible for matching, leveraged funds demonstrate broader support and can strengthen your application.

    a3. For additional guidance about this, review [this document](#).

Q. Can funding from international sources be used towards the matched funding requirement?

    a. Yes, international funding is eligible if it is directly related to your CoP's activities. Verification of matched funding may be included with your application through a letter of support or another relevant funding verification document.

Q. Can matched funding be made up of 100% in-kind support?

    a. Yes. Please see the links provided in the 'Information' tab in the [Partner Contribution budget template (Appendix C)](#) for guidance on calculating in-kind contributions.

Q. What is the timeline for securing matching funds?

a1. Ideally, matching funds will be secured prior to submitting your application but we recognize that isn't always possible.

a2. For all matched funding, please ensure you identify the contributing partner, the value, and whether the contribution is expected or secured in your budget submission (via Appendix C and the accompanying narrative section in the application form).

a3. You have the option to invite expected contributors to submit a Letter of Support that outlines the anticipated value and form of their contribution (e.g., cash or in-kind). If obtaining a letter is not feasible, you may choose to instead upload a written statement describing the expected support and briefly explaining why obtaining a formal letter wasn't feasible.

Q. Is leveraged funding required?

a. No, unlike matched funding, there is no requirement associated with leveraged funding.

Q: What types of expenses are eligible for the CoP Fund?

a. Eligible expenses include 1) personnel costs (e.g., portion of a salary for a CoP coordinator), 2) direct costs (e.g., contracted services, website development/maintenance, costs for dissemination activities, development of knowledge mobilization products) and 3) indirect costs (i.e., administrative overhead). Please note, indirect (or overhead) costs are eligible, up to a maximum of 15%, at a rate appropriate for the context of the project. The rate must be established considering the scale of the project (i.e., not simply using a general flat-rate percentage charge [such as 15%] that does not consider project context). Justification is required for use of this category in the form of a narrative description that explains how the funds will be used under this category, how each expense is calculated, and why it is required.

Q: What types of organizations are eligible to receive MEOPAR funding?

a. Eligible recipients of MEOPAR funds include post-secondary institutions, not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations and governments, municipalities, research networks, public engagement networks, companies that deliver public engagement activities, or start-up companies (including those housed in Canadian post-secondary-linked incubators). Eligible recipients do not include federal departments, agencies, or Crown Corporations of the Government of Canada.

Q: Can previously MEOPAR-funded CoPs apply for this opportunity?

a1. Yes, established CoPs (whether they've received funded from MEOPAR previously or not) may apply for up to three consecutive years of funding (1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026, 2027, or 2028) and can request up to $30,000 per year. MEOPAR requires all applicants to secure matching funds from non-federal government sources that equal or exceed the amount requested from MEOPAR.

Q: Are there any parameters regarding the eligibility of start-ups?

    a. Start-ups must be Canadian based. International collaboration and partnerships are permitted and even encouraged; however, the CoP itself must be Canadian.

Q: If I'm successful with my application, what are the requirements to receive the funding from MEOPAR?

    a. Each CoP Lead and Co-Lead receiving MEOPAR funding will enter into an agreement with MEOPAR called an Ultimate Recipient Agreement (URA) in which the CoP is the Ultimate Recipient. The URA identifies the funding schedule, reporting timeline, project milestones and key performance indicators (KPIs).

3. CoP Structure, Collaboration, and Focus

Q: Can government scientists be involved in CoPs as co-leads or in other key roles if they are not receiving funding?

    a. Yes

Q: Can an applicant propose a CoP that is focused on a specific bioregion, rather than an issue-based CoP like those listed on the MEOPAR website?

    a. Yes. MEOPAR values place-based approaches that reflect the unique ecological, cultural, and social dynamics of a region. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how your CoP's focus aligns with MEOPAR's Objectives and Science Strategy and contributes to knowledge sharing, capacity building, and impact. Wherever possible, applicants are encouraged to seek out opportunities to broaden the scale of their CoP, perhaps through cross-regional collaboration or expanding participant engagement, to enhance its reach and relevance.

Q. Is collaboration between CoPs encouraged and how can CoPs explore potential partnerships?

    a1. Yes, collaboration between CoPs is strongly encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to review the existing CoPs listed on the MEOPAR website to identify areas of overlap or shared interest. If you see potential for collaboration, reaching out to those CoPs is welcomed and supported.

    a2. MEOPAR is considering the development of a CoP made up of the CoPs it funds. This CoP would be designed to support ongoing collaboration amongst these CoPs to facilitate the sharing of resources, strategies, and learning opportunities, and enable both real-time and passive engagement.

4. Proposal Content and Evaluation

Q. What should proposals include to demonstrate their relevance and impact for MEOPAR?

    a1. Project proposals must align with MEOPAR Objectives and Science Strategy. Listed below are MEOPAR's Objectives for which targeted funding will be provided:

        i. Strengthen the evidence base for decision making and adaptation through development of improved tools, techniques, and strategies for ocean and coastal observation, prediction, and information sharing.

        ii. Increase economic opportunity, coastal community resilience, and marine ecosystem protection in the face of climate and technological change through end-user-driven science and novel collaborative structures.

        iii. Improve access to and use of ocean research infrastructures.

        iv. Diversify, develop, and broaden deployment of Canada's ocean-related research and innovation talent.

a2. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the [MEOPAR Science Strategy 2025–2030](#) for further context and to ensure alignment with MEOPAR's long-term vision and core priorities.

Q: I see that MEOPAR is asking applicants to provide details about how CoPs will integrate Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) and Truth and Reconciliation principles into their design and operations. What should we do if we don't know enough about EDIA and/or the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action?

a1. MEOPAR is seeking details about how diverse individuals, inclusive of Indigenous peoples and members of equity-deserving groups (e.g., members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, persons with a disability, racialized individuals, and women), will be involved in the CoPs activities, including governance, programming, community engagement, and evaluation.

a2. A foundational understanding of EDIA approaches may be necessary in the formulation of a formal EDIA policy or framework. If you need more information about EDIA, you can consult [this website](#).

a3. Understanding the Truth and Reconciliation process and its calls to action can effectively demonstrate your CoP's dedication to these initiatives. Information about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is available [here](#).

Q. I haven't developed partnerships with Indigenous collaborators yet. Do you have any advice about how my CoP can work towards this?

a. If you have not yet developed collaborative relationships with Indigenous partners, your CoP can still meaningfully reflect one or more of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action through its activities. Consider, for example:

- Creating space for Indigenous knowledge systems and languages in community-facing events to encourage participation and reflect diverse ways of knowing.
- Translating materials into one or more Indigenous languages to improve accessibility and engagement.
- Including visits to Indigenous communities to support longer-term, reciprocal relationship-building.
- Offering honoraria to Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and/or Elders who contribute to your CoP's activities, to recognize their time and expertise.

- Hiring Indigenous-owned businesses for services such as facilitation, translation, or design.
- Using Indigenous-authored resources and/or cultural safety training to guide the design and delivery of your CoP's activities.

Q. I'm interested in applying for more than one of MEOPAR's funding calls. Is this permitted?

a. Yes. Please ensure you tailor your applications to align with the specifics of each individual call. If there are overlaps between applications, please ensure you explain how your projects differ and/or complement each other, as well as your capacity to deliver multiple initiatives.