



# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

## Expedition Fund – Strategic Support Horizon

Fall 2025

### A. Program Overview

[MEOPAR \(Marine Environmental Observation, Prediction and Response Network\)](#) is a Canadian not-for-profit organization that supports research, training, and communication related to the ocean through funding programs. MEOPAR is making it easier for Canadian ocean researchers to obtain funding for collecting observations at sea. With three different horizons (Rapid Response, Strategic Support, and Major Expeditions) the Expedition Fund addresses community needs on short to long timescales. Expeditions funded under the Strategic Support Horizon will typically have durations on the order of several days to several weeks, depending on the vessel size.

The [MEOPAR Expedition Fund](#) is intended to support multidisciplinary collaborations, including Indigenous owned and operated research vessels, in Canada. While we anticipate that some expeditions may leverage a complementary proposal to the NSERC Ship Time Program, eligibility for MEOPAR funding is greatly expanded under the Strategic Science Fund (SSF; see Section D below), extending opportunities to researchers who may have had limited access to vessel funding in the past, and opportunities for Indigenous owned research vessels to connect with the ocean research sector.

Specifically, key aspects of the Strategic Support Horizon include:

- Emphasis on Canadian leadership of multi-investigator expeditions, and Indigenous owned research vessels, where opportunities exist.
- Research that integrates multiple objectives, including ones that advance federal strategic priorities and responsibilities.
- Reserved funds for expeditions led by individuals from under-represented groups, or expeditions that show excellent commitment to inclusion.
- Projects that have matched funding from other programs or join existing expeditions to augment MEOPAR support.
- Vessels may be any size, but the expedition award is to support regular vessel operations. If no day rate exists, example eligible expenses include fuel, insurance, annualized maintenance costs, and crew fees.
- Expeditions may be composed of a single voyage or multiple voyages, depending on the scientific objectives.

### B. Alignment with MEOPAR objectives and Science Strategy

MEOPAR has identified the following objectives for which targeted funding will be provided:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Improve access to and use of ocean research infrastructures.
4. Diversify, develop, and broaden deployment of Canada's ocean-related research and innovation talent.

Principal investigators are also 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.

## C. Structure of the Call

MEOPAR expects to strategically fund **4-6 expeditions per year** with a **total annual budget of \$1M**. **New this year**, MEOPAR will accept applications for expeditions that can be carried out in 2026-27 *or* 2027-28 (principal investigators can request funding for expeditions taking place between April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 *or* April 1, 2027 to March 31, 2028). The scientific expedition(s) must take place during the requested funding period. Projects with **strong justification** for multiple years of funding may apply for expedition funding in both project years.

## D. Funding Eligibility

Eligible recipients of MEOPAR funds include post-secondary institutions, not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations and governments, municipalities, research networks, public engagement networks, organizations and 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.

## E. Requirements of Funding

The institution of the principal investigator will enter into an agreement with MEOPAR (called an Ultimate Recipient Agreement [URA]), that will enable the institution to pay for eligible research expenses. The URA identifies the funding schedule, reporting timeline, expedition milestones, and key performance indicators.

## F. Budget

A budget with justification is required with the workplan. The budget must be submitted in the format of the attached template (**Appendix B**). Funds requested under the Strategic Support Horizon are to cover vessel operations fees only. If no day rate exists, example eligible expenses include fuel,

insurance, annualized maintenance costs, and crew fees; describe the breakdown of these costs in the budget justification. Inquire if you are unsure if an expense is eligible. In Appendix B, all vessel fees fall under the **“Operations of core research facilities”** expenses category.

In accordance with the SSF guide, MEOPAR can provide support for overhead (indirect costs) at a rate appropriate for the context of the expedition (recommend 2.5%), and not exceeding 15% of expedition costs. The rate must be established considering the scale of the expedition (e.g., the host organization may be expected to pay just one invoice for the vessel charter). 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. If you require administration, but do not charge it to the expedition, it may be described as an in-kind contribution to assist with the matched funding requirement.

For non-MEOPAR contributions, indicate in the attached template (**Appendix C**) whether partner contributions are cash or in-kind, matched or leveraged, and if the contribution is expected or secured. Matching funds must be equal to or above the ratio of 1:0.8 from non-federal government partners for every dollar of MEOPAR funding requested, with additional points awarded for increasing matched funding. Please see the [explanation of matched and leveraged partner contributions](#) for clarification.

## G. Submission Procedure

Proposals will be submitted via the online MEOPAR Portal at <https://meopar.smapply.ca/>. The portal will open in September. The submission deadline is **Dec 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 23:59 EST**.

Information required to apply to the Expedition Fund – Strategic Support Horizon are provided in the Application Guide and **Appendix A**, the application worksheet. Keep submission sections to the word or page limits indicated. Reviewers will not receive information after the noted limit. For PDF uploads, documents are to be single-spaced (no more than six lines per inch), regular 12-point font, with margins of 0.75”.

## H. Inquiries

[Attend an info session](#) on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10 am PDT. For questions regarding this Call for Proposals contact Jonathan Kellogg, Program Manager – Expeditions, at [jonathan.kellogg@meopar.ca](mailto:jonathan.kellogg@meopar.ca).

## I. Proposal Evaluation

MEOPAR’s Research Management Committee will review and evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

## Evaluation Criteria – Expedition Fund – Strategic Support Horizon

		OUTSTANDING	VERY STRONG	STRONG	MODERATE	INSUFFICIENT
Project goals and quality (25%)	6.25%	Project is <b>very well</b> described.	Project is <b>well</b> described.	Project is <b>satisfactorily</b> described.	Project is <b>somewhat</b> described.	Project is <b>poorly</b> described.
	6.25%	Project is <b>highly</b> original/innovative	Project is original/innovative	Project is <b>moderately</b> original/innovative	Project is <b>somewhat</b> original/innovative	Project is <b>not</b> original/innovative
	6.25%	Project <b>will</b> contribute to internationally competitive research, innovations, and advancements in the field.	Project <b>will likely</b> contribute to internationally competitive research, innovations, and advancements in the field.	Project <b>may</b> contribute to internationally competitive research, innovations, and advancements in the field.	Project is <b>unlikely</b> contribute to internationally competitive research, innovations, and advancements in the field.	Project <b>will not</b> contribute to internationally competitive research, innovations, and advancements in the field.
	6.25%	Project alignment with federal and MEOPAR objectives and strategies is <b>explicit and will advance</b> federal priorities.	Project alignment with federal and MEOPAR objectives and strategies is <b>clear and is likely</b> to advance federal priorities.	Project alignment with federal and MEOPAR objectives and strategies is <b>evident and may</b> advance federal priorities.	Project alignment with federal and MEOPAR objectives and strategies is <b>unclear and is unlikely</b> to advance federal priorities.	Project alignment with federal and MEOPAR objectives and strategies is <b>undefined and will not</b> advance federal priorities.
Excellence of Research Team (20%)	5%	<b>Canadian leadership</b> of an <b>interdisciplinary</b> research team	<b>Canadian leadership</b> of a <b>multidisciplinary</b> research team	<b>International leadership</b> of an <b>inter-, multidisciplinary</b> research team	<b>Canadian</b> leadership of a <b>single-discipline</b> research team	<b>International</b> leadership of a <b>single-discipline</b> research team
	5%	Team involves <b>many partners</b>	Team involves a <b>few partners</b>	Team involves a <b>couple partners</b>	Team has a <b>partner</b>	Team is <b>without partners</b>
	5%	Team is <b>clearly suited</b> to address <b>all</b> the project objectives.	Team is <b>well suited</b> to address <b>most</b> of the project objectives.	Team is <b>suited</b> to address <b>many</b> of the project objectives.	Team <b>may</b> address <b>some</b> of the project objectives.	Team is <b>not suited</b> to address the project objectives.
	5%	<b>Highly attractive</b> project that <b>will</b> develop and retain talent	<b>Attractive</b> project that <b>will likely</b> develop and retain talent.	Project that <b>may develop</b> and retain talent.	Project <b>unlikely</b> to develop and retain talent.	Project is <b>will not</b> develop and retain talent.
Plan, budget, matching contributions (30%)	5%	Plan and budget elements are <b>very clearly</b> described.	Plan and budget elements are <b>clearly</b> described.	Plan and budget elements are <b>adequately</b> described.	Plan and budget elements are <b>partially</b> described.	Plan and budget elements are <b>unclear</b> .
	5%	Plan and budget elements align with <b>realistic and appropriate</b> timelines.	Plan and budget elements align with <b>realistic</b> timelines.	Plan and budget elements are <b>likely to support a realistic</b> timeline	Plan and budget elements are <b>weakly connected</b> to a timeline that <b>may not be realistic</b> .	Plan and budget elements are <b>unconnected</b> to timelines that are <b>unrealistic</b> .
	5%	Plan and budget elements <b>strongly support</b> outcomes.	Plan and budget elements <b>support</b> outcomes.	Plan and budget elements <b>may support</b> outcomes.	Plan and budget elements are <b>unlikely to support</b> outcomes.	Plan and budget elements are <b>unable to support</b> outcomes.

	5%	Data management plan <b>comprehensively addresses</b> expected data, metadata, near- and long-term storage, and legal and ethical considerations.	Data management plan <b>provides details</b> of expected data, metadata, near- and long-term storage, and legal and ethical considerations.	Data management plan <b>describes</b> expected data, metadata, near- and long-term storage, and legal and ethical considerations.	Data management plan <b>lacks clarity of</b> expected data, metadata, near- and long-term storage, legal and ethical considerations.	Data management plan is <b>unclear and/or missing one or more of:</b> expected data, metadata, near- and long-term storage, and legal and ethical considerations.
	5%	The budget includes <b>excellent</b> matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources ( <b>ratio</b> >> 1:1.25).	The budget includes <b>very strong</b> matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources ( $\approx$ 1:1.25 or higher).	The budget includes <b>strong</b> matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources ( <b>ratio</b> 1:1 - <1.25 ).	The budget includes <b>moderate</b> matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources ( <b>ratio</b> 1:0.8 - <1)	The budget includes <b>poor</b> matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources ( <b>ratio of</b> <0.8).
	5%	Administrative costs are <b>very well justified and minimized.</b>	Administrative costs are <b>well justified and minimized.</b>	Administrative costs are <b>justified.</b>	Administrative costs are <b>poorly justified.</b>	Administrative costs are <b>not justified.</b>
Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility & Knowledge Mobilization (25%)	5%	Expedition crewing <b>applies an EDIA lens</b> to all its activities.	Expedition crewing is made with <b>EDIA in mind.</b>	Expedition crewing <b>references EDIA</b> policy.	Expedition crewing <b>references EDIA</b> policy.	<b>No EDIA policy</b> is referenced.
	5%	Team is <b>well-balanced</b> between established and emerging leaders.	Team <b>will have representation</b> of both established and emerging leaders	Team <b>may have representation</b> of both established and emerging leaders	Team has <b>unclear composition</b> for leadership balance.	Team has <b>unbalanced composition.</b>
	5%	Team <b>includes</b> equity deserving groups in the <b>expedition leadership.</b>	Team <b>includes</b> equity deserving groups in the expedition.	Team <b>may include</b> equity deserving groups.	<b>Unclear</b> if team will include equity deserving groups.	Team <b>lacks</b> equity deserving groups.
	5%	The project <b>will advance</b> Truth & Reconciliation objectives by <b>including Indigenous partners and businesses</b> (e.g. Indigenous owned vessels) as well as priorities/perspectives.	The project has <b>strong potential to advance</b> Truth & Reconciliation objectives through inclusion of Indigenous priorities/perspectives.	The project <b>may advance</b> Truth & Reconciliation objectives through aspects of its design and implementation.	The project is <b>unlikely to advance</b> Truth & Reconciliation Objectives.	The project will <b>not advance</b> Truth & Reconciliation objectives.
	5%	Knowledge mobilization strategy from the expedition and post-expedition has <b>potential for mainstream media interest</b> in addition to reaching diverse communities.	Knowledge mobilization strategy from the expedition and/or post-expedition <b>will likely reach outside scientific community.</b>	Knowledge mobilization strategy from the expedition and/or post-expedition is <b>typical for scientific community.</b>	Knowledge mobilization strategy from the expedition may reach <b>select audiences.</b> <b>No plans for post-expedition.</b>	<b>No knowledge mobilization strategy</b> is mentioned.