



MEOPAR

APPLICATION GUIDE

Early Career Researcher (ECR) Award

November 2025

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A. Introduction

This guide is designed to support applicants through each step of the application process. If you have questions that are not addressed in this guide, please contact Isabelle.Tremblay@meopar.ca for further assistance.

B. Early Career Researcher Award 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. The goal of the Early Career Researcher (ECR) Awards is to provide individual research grants to support early career investigators in establishing independent research programs. The research project must align with MEOPAR's Science Strategy 2025-2030 and must have a clear impact for communities, environment, science, etc. The ECR Awards are a unique opportunity for early career researchers to contribute to and participate in MEOPAR's broad interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral research effort, thereby growing and extending their network of collaborators and partner interactions. MEOPAR recognizes the need for support of early career researchers (researcher within ten years of receiving their highest academic diploma and within five years of the date of their first independent research-related appointment) to maximize their considerable potential.

MEOPAR is committed to actively moving forward on the path of Truth and Reconciliation and advancing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) initiatives in all its activities. Thus, MEOPAR requires that the proposed projects engage in practices that apply an EDIA lens to all activities. Priority in awarding funding will be given to applications that effectively demonstrate a commitment to EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation principles.

C. Alignment with MEOPAR's Science Strategy

Refer to MEOPAR's [Science Strategy 2025-2030](#) to ensure alignment of your ECR Award project with MEOPAR's long-term vision and core priorities.

D. Structure of the Call

The ECR Award program provides individual research grants; therefore, the only investigator to receive funds on the project will be the Principal Investigator (PI). Only one application per PI will be considered. The **maximum** funding level available is **\$75,000 per year for up to two and half (2.5) years for a total of \$187,500 per award**. MEOPAR will support research projects that are two (2) to two and half (2.5) years in length, **beginning before 31 March 2026** (*project must be completed by 31 October 2028*).

E. Funding Eligibility

For the duration of their MEOPAR ECR Award, an ECR is not eligible to hold two individual multi-year awards from MEOPAR on the same research topic and is not eligible to receive two different awards for the same research topic. Therefore, applicants who are already a PI or co-PI on such a project are not eligible to apply to the ECR award unless they expect their role of PI/co-PI to end before the beginning of the ECR award project. The eligibility conditions are as follows:

1. Eligible recipients include individuals who:
 - a. Are affiliated to 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).
 - b. Are eligible to hold a grant in their name, per their institution/organization's requirements.
 - c. Eligible recipients do not include federal departments, agencies, or crown corporations of the Government of Canada.
2. Moreover:
 - a. The applicant must demonstrate a firm appointment with a Canadian organization that supports research and will be in place by the time the award would be accepted:
 - For the duration of the award, the applicant must hold such a position with that organization.
 - b. The Canadian research organization:
 - must have a clear mandate to do research in Canada
 - needs to demonstrate its support for the research project (e.g. cash, in-kind, material, etc.)
 - needs to support the applicant (e.g. cash, in-kind)
 - c. The applicant's position must allow them to engage in research that is not under the direction of another individual and should authorize them to supervise or co-supervise the training of Highly Qualified Personnel¹ (HQP).
 - d. The appointment must be ratified by the person(s) or body responsible for approving appointments or their delegate(s) and must be in accordance with organization statutes.
 - e. The source of salary funding for the appointment must be guaranteed for the period of the contract:
 - ECR holding a position in a post-secondary institution:
 - The MEOPAR award is for research only.

¹ Highly Qualified Personnel - includes specialized staff, research staff, technicians, interns involved in research and other projects and trainees (undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, research assistants, researchers).

- ECR in other organizations than post-secondary institutions:
 - The MEOPAR award can be used to fund part of their salary, but in those cases, the applicant and their organization must demonstrate that:
 - ✎ the organization can support the costs of the research project OR that sources of funding have been secured to support the research project for its duration
 - ✎ the organization can support the part of the applicant's salary not covered by the award.
- 3. Initial funding of the project must commence before 31 March 2026, and project and associated funding must be completed by 31 October 2028.
- 4. Postdoctoral Fellowship positions **ARE NOT ELIGIBLE** for this funding opportunity.
- 5. Applicants must be within ten years of receiving their highest academic diploma.
- 6. The ECR is a researcher within five (5) years of the date of their first independent research-related appointment. This may include new appointments and researcher positions created in non-academic settings. Given that career progress for an ECR is particularly vulnerable to normal life circumstances, the eligibility window may be adjusted as follows:
 - a. Eligible leaves (e.g., maternity, parental, medical, family medical, bereavement) will extend ECR status (i.e., will not be counted towards the maximum) and credited as twice the amount of time taken;
 - For example, a researcher beginning to receive funding on 1 March 2026 and who took a seven-month parental leave within the past five (5) years must have been hired on or after 1 January 2020 in order to be considered eligible.
 - b. No adjustments are provided for professional leaves (e.g., training, sabbatical, administrative)
 - c. No adjustments are provided for time spent on non-research related duties or for the pursuit of non-research related career activities.

Before any funds can be released on a MEOPAR grant, the applicant must have taken up their position.

F. Requirements of Funding

Organizations employing each principal investigator (PI) receiving MEOPAR funding will enter into an agreement with MEOPAR (called an Ultimate Recipient Agreement [URA], in which the PI is the Ultimate Recipient). The URA identifies the funding schedule, reporting timeline, project milestones, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all necessary certifications, permits, licenses and other approvals have been obtained before any research is carried out in whole or in part (e.g. research involving human subjects, or research with effects on the environment, Indigenous peoples, and animals). If an environmental or ethics assessment is required for the proposal, MEOPAR will need a copy of the appropriate institutional certification committee approval before full funding is released.

Intellectual Property

Principal investigators are encouraged to review MEOPAR's Intellectual Property Policy as part of the application process. You can review MEOPAR's IP Policy [here](#). As outlined in that policy, the UR must provide MEOPAR with a copy of any intellectual property policy or agreement relating to ownership of Eligible Project Intellectual Property (EPIP). Such policies and agreements must:

1. permit exploitation of EPIP within Canada (including, without limitation, for the purpose of carrying out the Eligible Project),
2. not prevent the UR from fulfilling its obligations under the URA, and
3. ensure the confidentiality of sensitive and proprietary information.

G. Voluntary Self-Identification Form (EDIA)

As part of MEOPAR's commitment to advancing EDIA, and in alignment with the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action](#), we invite all applicants to complete the voluntary self-identification form.

Why We Collect This Information

This information helps us understand who our programs are reaching and informs efforts to improve access and representation. Completion of this section is entirely voluntary, and responses will be kept confidential and reported only in aggregate. Where applicable, responses may inform the assessment of applications under EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation evaluation criteria.

Key Principles

- Voluntary: You may choose to answer all, some, or none of the questions.
- Confidential: Responses are confidential and will only be reported in aggregate.

What the Form Covers

The form includes questions about:

- Indigenous identity (with options aligned to the Canadian Constitution and open-ended responses)
- If you self-identify as part of a racialized group
- Ethnic or cultural origins (with multiple-choice and open-ended options)
- Disability status (as defined by the Accessible Canada Act)
- Gender identity (including open-ended responses)
- If you self-identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community

How to Use the Form

- Begin by indicating whether you wish to complete the form or prefer not to answer.
- Proceed through each section, selecting all applicable options or providing open-ended responses where relevant.

Notes for Applicants

- The form is designed to be inclusive and respectful of diverse identities and experiences.
- You may select multiple options and/or provide your own descriptions where applicable.
- Your participation helps us build a more equitable and responsive program environment.

If you have questions or feedback about the form, please contact Isabelle.Tremblay@meopar.ca.

H. Experience, Expertise and Career Path

This section has two components:

a. Narrative (500 words) about your career path.

- Present your career path and goals in an integrated way, establishing the links between your experiences and interests, on the one hand, and your choices of orientation, training and education, on the other.
- Please describe your achievements (scientific, professional, social, etc.), and relevant experience (related to carrying out research projects, leadership and training), your commitment and leadership skills (inside and outside academia), as well as awards received (prizes, distinctions and scholarship).
- Demonstrate how your experience and expertise best position you to carry out the proposed project and how the proposed project aligns with your career plan.
- If applicable, you might also include any EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation consideration as it pertains to this section.

b. Curriculum Vitae (CV) – document upload in the portal

- Maximum 3 pages
- Please submit your CV as a PDF document.
- Narrative and regular CV are accepted.
- Document to be uploaded in the online portal.

I. Research Plan

This section has two components:

a. Summary (250 words)

- Provide a plain language summary of your project.

b. Research Plan – document upload in the portal

- Document type & size:
 - PDF document must be single-spaced (no more than six lines per inch), 12-point font, with margins of 0.75".
 - Document to be uploaded in the online portal.
 - max 5 pages, including graphs and references
- Content - Description of your research project:
Make sure you address all the points below in your project description.

- Provide background context for the problem, knowledge gap, or technology gap that this project will aim to address, highlighting how this topic is critical to the health, economic, and social well-being of Canadians.
- Explain how the objectives of this project align with or support Federal objectives supported by MEOPAR Program under the SSF ([Blue Economy](#), [Oceans Protection Plan](#), [Climate Science 2050](#), [National Adaptation Strategy](#), the [2030 Nature Strategy](#), and the [Truth and Reconciliation Report](#)).
- Explain how your project aligns with [MEOPAR Science Strategy 2025-2030](#).
- Provide a detailed explanation of the methods your project will employ to address the stated objectives. Identify any barriers that your methodology may present to inclusion of under-represented groups in your field of study, and any strategies employed to mitigate these barriers.
- Describe the projected contribution of this project, as well as the expected value or impact of your research.

J. Project Milestones/Deliverables, Timeline and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Please provide a list of your project's **milestones/deliverables**, as well as their target completion dates.

When developing your list of project milestones/deliverables and their target completion dates, you are encouraged to:

- *Be specific:* break your project into clear, trackable components (e.g., "host community consultation," "complete data collection for monitoring program," "publish article in peer reviewed journal").
- *Include deliverables:* identify what will be produced or achieved (e.g., a dataset, a peer-reviewed manuscript, a public event).
- *Set timelines:* provide estimated completion dates for each activity. These don't need to be exact but should reflect a schedule you can justify.
- *Think ahead to reporting:* you'll be asked to confirm whether each activity was completed and to describe the results. Consider how you'll document progress (e.g., photos, links, feedback).
- *Align with your goals:* make sure your activities support your objectives and think about both quantitative and qualitative indicators of success (e.g., number of samples collected, feedback from end users, highly qualified personnel trained, community leaders trained).
- *Build in time for evaluation* so you can report not just what you did, but what you learned.

From these milestones, it should be clear to reviewers that the project is feasible in the timeline and with the resources requested.

KPIs will be used to track the progress and impact of your project. Your KPIs can be measurable metrics or ways to report the quality outcome and the intangible impacts of your project. KPIs can be qualitative and/or quantitative.

Note: You will be required to report on the results of your activities/deliverables and their completion dates, as well as your KPIs in your annual and final reports to MEOPAR. MEOPAR will provide reporting templates for submission through the MEOPAR [online portal](#) (downloadable versions will be available for offline work).

K. Data Management Plan

Principal investigators (PI) are asked to describe the data management plan (DMP) that will be employed for the project. While this should be a living document that evolves over the course of the research project, the plan description should include the types and volumes of data generated, how you will document the data (e.g. metadata) for future re-use, how the data will be stored in the near and long-term (e.g. budget, data types), and the considerations given to legal, ethical, and/or commercial issues (including Indigenous data sovereignty). Projects needing assistance in developing a data management plan are encouraged to engage with the [Canadian Integrated Ocean Observing System](#) (CIOOS) or the [Digital Research Alliance of Canada](#) (the Alliance), who may help in the development. MEOPAR strongly encourages plans that result in data that are Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (FAIR) and follow the [First Nations Principles of OCAP](#) and/or the [CARE Principles of Indigenous Data Governance](#), where relevant. Guides to develop DMPs are provided by [CIOOS](#) and the [Alliance](#). Projects occurring in Indigenous waters/territories should contact the local Nation(s) to determine how the project may proceed in a responsible way.

Data obtained with MEOPAR funding should be made as open as possible, but as restricted as necessary in the relevant domain specific repository. In addition, metadata and a link to the data should be made available in CIOOS. Metadata should be findable through a repository within 6 months of the end of project funding. These steps will improve findability and accessibility of the data for future reuse of publicly funded observations. If restrictions are necessary, justify the reasoning.

We encourage you to have a complete Data Management Plan, of any length. However, for the benefit of reviewers, please summarize your DMP for observations, samples, and data collected or generated during this project.

L. Budget

Detailed budgets, with accompanying justifications, are required. This includes a Project Budget ([Appendix B](#)) and a Partner Contribution Budget ([Appendix C](#)). Your budgets must be submitted using the provided templates.

Please name your budget files using the following format:

[Appendix B](#): [PIFirstInitial][PILastName]_ECR_AppB_[YYMMDD]

[Appendix C](#): [PIFirstInitial][PILastName]_ECR_AppC_[YYMMDD]

Note: you will replace the square brackets and italicized text with your specific information.

Example: If the Principal Investigator's name is Jordan Smith and Appendix B is being submitted on 5 December 2025, the file name should be:

JSmith_ECR_AppB_251205

Appendix B Guidance

- Only include the amount of funding requested from MEOPAR for the project, not the total funding for the project. (The total cost of the project will be reflected in the combination of Appendices B & C.)
- For ECR in other organizations than post-secondary institutions and who want to fund (partially or totally) their salary with the ECF Award:
 - The budget item should be listed under "A. Personnel costs – staff member". In case where the award covers partially the salary, the amount indicated should reflect only the amount covered by MEOPAR ECR Award.
 - Provide clear justification on the following points in the section "Budget notes and justification" of your application:
 - Details about the salary:
 - Why the award is needed to fund the full salary
 - In cases where the award would cover the salary partially – Provide salary details including the portion covered by the ECR award and portion covered by the organization (or other sources of funding).
 - How the costs of the research project will be covered:
 - What are the sources of funding?
 - Have they been secured to support the research project for its duration?
 - *Note – Mandatory letter of support must be provided by the organisation where the ECR Award project will take place (see section O below for details)*
- The greyed-out cells contain formulas that automatically calculate totals based on what you enter in other cells and cannot be edited.
- In the narrative justification section of your proposal form, include specific breakdowns and explanations for each category. For example, for 'A. Personnel Costs' be specific about the number of people to be hired, their role(s), hours, and rate of pay.
- Examples of uses for 'Other' under 'B. Direct Costs' might include, for example, costs associated with delivering engagement activities (workshops, networking events), honoraria to engage Indigenous Elders and/or Knowledge Holders, travel costs associated with engaging with equity-deserving groups in-person.
- Please note, travel and hospitality² costs must be accounted for separately (under B. Direct Costs).
- MEOPAR can provide support for administrative overhead ('C. Indirect Costs') at a rate appropriate for the context of the project, up to a maximum of 15%. The rate must be

² See Appendix A Glossary for definitions of travel and hospitality

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. If these costs are not being requested, this should also be justified and clear, so MEOPAR understands your administrative capacity. If you require administration but do not request it in your project budget, it can be considered an in-kind (partner) contribution to assist with the matched funding requirement.

Appendix C Guidance

For partner contributions, clearly identify the contributing partner, the value of the contribution, whether it is cash or in-kind, whether it is expected or secured, whether it is matched or leveraged³, and how the contribution supports your project's activities. **Applicants are required to secure matching contributions from non-federal sources that equal or above the ratio of 1:0.3 from non-federal government partners.**

Matched Funding Examples:

Ratio	Funding Requested from MEOPAR	Matched Funding Required	Total Project Budget
1:0.3	\$150,000	\$45,000 (cash or in-kind)	\$195,000
1:0.3	\$187,500	\$56,250 (cash or in-kind)	\$243,750
1:0.5	\$187,500	\$93,750 (cash or in-kind)	\$281,250
1:0.8	\$187,500	\$150,000 (cash or in-kind)	\$337,500

In addition to matched contributions, applicants may also report leveraged funds, which are existing contributions (cash or in-kind) that support the project but are not eligible to count toward the matched funding requirement. These may include donations, existing investments, or revenues from federal sources that enhance the overall scope or sustainability of the project. While leveraged funds cannot be counted toward the minimum 1:0.3 matched funding ratio, they are valuable indicators of broader support and alignment with your project's goals. [Click here](#) for further guidance on determining if your partner contributions are considered matched or leveraged.

As previously mentioned, if your project necessitates administrative support but you are not seeking MEOPAR funding for this purpose, those expenses can be considered an in-kind (partner) contribution to fulfill the matched funding requirement.

³ See Appendix A Glossary for definitions of matched and leveraged funds

Examples of in-kind partner contributions might include staff time from partner organizations, access to facilities, use of equipment, technical expertise or advisory support, or knowledge dissemination support (e.g., using a collaborator's mailing list, social media, or networks).

M. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) & Truth and Reconciliation Considerations

When completing your application, please provide details about how you will integrate EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation principles into your project. 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 your project, including leadership and decision-making, programming, communication and engagement, inclusive participation, and evaluation.

A foundational understanding of EDIA approaches may be necessary in the formulation of an EDIA plan. Understanding the Truth and Reconciliation process and its calls to action can effectively demonstrate your project's dedication to these initiatives. If you need information about how to meaningfully EDIA and Truth & Reconciliation priorities into proposals for MEOPAR funding, please watch the recording of MEOPAR's webinar entitled "Exploring Inclusion & Reconciliation in Proposals" (available [here](#)). If you need more information about EDIA, you can consult [this website](#). Information about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is available [here](#).

If you have not yet developed collaborative relationships with Indigenous partners, your project can still meaningfully reflect one or more of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. 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 for Indigenous expertise shared during the project.
- Hiring Indigenous-owned businesses for services such as facilitation, translation, or design.
- Using Indigenous-authored resources and/or cultural safety training to guide project design and delivery.
-

N. Optional Multimedia Submission

You may also choose to submit a short video or audio file to complement your written responses. This is an opportunity to share your vision, community connections, or other elements of your proposed project that may be more effectively conveyed through spoken or visual storytelling.

Submission guidelines:

- Maximum length: 5 minutes
- Maximum file size: 1000MB
- Accepted video formats: .avi or .mp4
- Accepted audio formats: .mp3 or .wav
- Accepted linked media: YouTube or Vimeo

This submission is entirely optional and will be considered alongside your written responses.

O. Letters of support

We encourage you to include letters of support that demonstrate your partnerships, community relationships, anticipated impacts, and/or the commitment of cash or in-kind contributions. These letters may provide additional context or endorsement for the project. For example, letters of support could be from:

- Federal Government Department participating or contributing (cash or in-kind) the project.
- Indigenous organization participating or contributing (cash or in-kind) to the project or that will benefit from the results of the project.

The content of these letters should reflect the commitments of partners/end-user described in your proposals or listed in your Appendix C (Non-SSF Partner Contributions).

While **one letter of support is required (mandatory)**, there is not a limit on the number of letters.

- **Mandatory letter of support (1): *This letter of support must come from the organization where your ECR Award project will take place.*** In this letter, the organization must confirm:
 - the ECR mandate to carry out independent research with their organization
 - the support (cash and/or in-kind) to the ECR and its project for the duration of the project

We recommend that letters of support are **no more than 2 pages**. When including letters of support:

- Ensure they are current and specific to your proposed ECR Award project.
- Clearly indicate the role or contribution of the supporting organization or individual.

Please submit letters in one of the following formats: PDF (.pdf) or Word document (.doc, .docx).

- Submit via Recommender: invite a 'Recommender' to submit a letter of support directly into the portal using the "Letters of Support | Request a recommendation(s)" form in the [online portal](#).

P. Submission Procedure

The application deadline is **6 January 2026 at 23:59 EST**.

Submit your proposal via our online portal: <https://meopar.smapply.io/>. Keep submission sections to the word limits indicated. Reviewers will not receive or review information after the noted limit.

A working version of the proposal is provided [here](#) to offer the option of working offline and copying/pasting completed sections into the online portal when convenient.

Q. Inquiries

MEOPAR is hosting an online information session about the ECR Award and prospective applicants are encouraged to attend (or watch the recording) to help with proposal development.

- English - 4 December 2025 at 1:00pm EST – [Register here](#)
- French – 11 December 2025 at 1:00pm EST – [Register here](#)

For questions regarding this Call for Proposals contact Isabelle.Tremblay@meopar.ca.

R. Proposal Evaluation

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

Merit Indicators – ECR Award

		OUTSTANDING	VERY STRONG	STRONG	MODERATE	INSUFFICIENT
Excellence of the candidate 25%	12.5%	Research excellence, accomplishments, and service significantly exceed others at similar career stage.	Research excellence, accomplishments, and service exceed others at similar career stage.	Research excellence, accomplishments, and service compare favourably with others at similar career stage.	Research excellence, accomplishments, and service are typical relative to others at similar career stage.	Research excellence, accomplishments, and service are below others at similar career stage.
	6.25%	Project alignment with candidate expertise and career path is clearly evident and influential for long term career.	Project alignment with candidate expertise and career path is clearly evident for long term career.	Project alignment with candidate expertise and career path is evident .	Project alignment with candidate expertise and career path is somewhat evident .	Project alignment with candidate expertise and career path is not clearly evident .
	6.25%	Capacities to carry out research projects and lead project teams are clearly stated and far exceed others at similar career stage. These capacities are clearly evident based on the past experience of the candidate.	Capacities to carry out research projects and lead project teams are stated and exceed others at similar career stage. These capacities are clearly evident based on the past experience of the candidate.	Capacities to carry out research projects and lead project teams are stated and compare favourably with others at similar career stage. These capacities are evident based on the past experience of the candidate.	Capacities to carry out research projects and lead project teams are mentioned and typical relative to others at similar career stage. These capacities are somewhat evident based on the past experience of the candidate.	Capacities to carry out research projects and lead project teams are not clearly mentioned and are not clearly evident based on the past experience of the candidate.
Project goals, quality and impact 25%	6.25%	Project is very well described.	Project is well described.	Project is satisfactorily described .	Project is somewhat described.	Project is poorly described.
	6.25%	Project is highly original/innovative.	Project is original/innovative.	Project is moderately original/innovative.	Project is somewhat original/innovative.	Project is not original/innovative.
	6.25%	Project will likely lead to groundbreaking advances , and/or lead to a technology or policy that addresses socio-economic or environmental needs.	Project will likely lead to advancements , and/or addressing socio-economic or environmental needs.	Project is likely to have impact , and/or address socio-economic or environmental needs.	Project may have impact , and/or address socio-economic or environmental needs.	Project is unlikely to address socio-economic or environmental needs.

	6.25%	Goals, objectives, activities, and expected benefits are explicitly and comprehensively aligned with MEOPAR's Objectives and Science Strategy.	Goals, objectives, activities and expected benefits are clearly aligned with MEOPAR's Objectives and Science Strategy.	Goals, objectives, activities and expected benefits show general alignment with MEOPAR's Objectives and Science Strategy.	Goals, objectives, activities and expected benefits are only partially aligned with MEOPAR's Objectives and Science Strategy.	Goals, objectives activities and expected benefits do not align with MEOPAR's Objectives and Science Strategy, or no effort is made to demonstrate alignment.
Plan, budget, support 25%	5%	Plan and budget elements are very clearly described .	Plan and budget elements are clearly described .	Plan and budget elements are adequately described .	Plan and budget elements are partially described .	Plan and budget elements are unclear .
	5%	Plan and budget elements align with realistic and appropriate timelines.	Plan and budget elements align with realistic timelines.	Plan and budget elements are likely to support a realistic timeline.	Plan and budget elements are weakly connected to a timeline that may not be realistic .	Plan and budget elements are unclear .
	2.5%	Data management plan comprehensively addresses expected data, metadata, near- and long-term storage, and legal and ethical considerations.	Data management plan provides details of expected data, metadata, near- and long-term storage, and legal and ethical considerations.	Data management plan describes expected data, metadata, near- and long-term storage, and legal and ethical considerations.	Data management plan lacks clarity of expected data, metadata, near- and long-term storage, and legal and ethical considerations.	Data management plan is unclear and/or missing one or more of: expected data, metadata, near- and long-term storage, and legal and ethical considerations.
	10%	The budget includes excellent matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources (ratio 1:1 or higher).	The budget includes strong matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources (ratio 1:0.7 - <1).	The budget includes some matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources (ratio 1:0.5 - <0.7).	The budget includes very few matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources (ratio 1:0.3 - <0.5).	The budget has minimal or no (ratio <1:0.3) matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources.
	2.5%	Support of the host organization for the ECR and the project is very clearly described and appropriate .	Support of the host organization for the ECR and the project is clearly described and appropriate .	Support of the host organization for the ECR and the project is described and appropriate .	Support of the host organization for the ECR and the project is partially described &/or appropriate .	Support of the host organization for the ECR and the project is not clearly described &/or appropriate .

EDIA and Truth & Reconciliation Considerations 25%	12.5%	The project's approach to EDIA is shaped in collaboration with equity-deserving communities and is woven into everyday project activities . These principles guide decision-making, engagement, and the project's evolution. Accountability is embedded through ongoing reflection, shared responsibility, and transparent practices.	The project demonstrates a clear commitment to EDIA, with meaningful engagement of equity-deserving groups in shaping practices. EDIA principles are integrated into core activities , with mechanisms for accountability and continuous improvement .	The project incorporates EDIA principles in its structure and activities, with some engagement of equity-deserving groups. There is a stated commitment to accountability , though mechanisms may be emerging or inconsistently applied .	The project acknowledges the importance of EDIA and shows some initial steps toward inclusion . Engagement with equity-deserving groups is limited , and accountability measures are minimal or unclear .	The project lacks evidence of EDIA integration . There is no meaningful engagement with equity-deserving groups, and no mechanisms for accountability are in place.
	12.5%	The project meaningfully integrates the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, particularly those related to education, knowledge sharing, and relationship-building. Commitments are explicit and embedded in project design and delivery.	The project demonstrates strong engagement with Truth and Reconciliation principles, with evidence of respect, collaboration, and learning .	The project acknowledges the importance of Truth and Reconciliation and includes some steps to integrate Indigenous perspectives, though efforts are limited or developing .	The project shows some awareness of Truth and Reconciliation, but actions are minimal, symbolic, or inconsistent .	Truth and Reconciliation is not addressed . There is no evidence of Indigenous engagement or awareness of related responsibilities.