

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Early Career Research (ECR) Award 2026-2028

**Q: What should I know about the ECR Award application process and its deadline?**

- a1. Applications are due 6 January 2026 at 23:59 EST. You can submit your proposal [here](#).
- a2. The primary applicant (or Principal Investigator) must be eligible to hold a grant in their name at their organization.
- a3. Please visit MEOPAR [ECR Award Call for Proposal](#) for further information.

**Q: Will there be an annual call for this MEOPAR ECR Award?**

- a1. MEOPAR is not planning on launching another ECR Award Call for Proposal under the current Strategic Science Funds funding cycle (April 2024 to March 2029).

**Q: Can the proposal be written and submitted in French or English?**

- a1. Proposals can be written and submitted in the preferred language (French or English) of the proponent.

**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: Who may serve as the Primary Applicant (or Principal Investigator) for the proposal?**

- a1. For the ECR Award, the Primary Applicant (or Principal Investigator) is the individual responsible for leading the project and receiving the disbursed funds. This person must be eligible to hold a grant in their name at their organization.

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

- a1. 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: I am currently a Principal Investigator (Lead) on a Community of Practice funded by MEOPAR, am I eligible to apply and receive an ECR Award?**

a1. Yes.

**Q: Would someone still be considered early-career researcher if they earned their highest degree more than 10 years ago (e.g. 11 years) worked in the industry for a few years and began an independent research career at the university only 3 years ago?**

a1. No, this person would not be eligible unfortunately. The definition of ECR is clearly stated and we have to be consistent when applying this eligibility criteria.

a2. ECR definition: *Researcher within ten (10) years of receiving their highest academic diploma and within five (5) years of the date of their first independent research-related appointment).*

**Q: Could awardees hold a Discovery Grant or an Insight Grant on the same research topic?**

a1. Yes.

a2. However, 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 MEOPAR awards for the same research topic.

**Q: Does the firm appointment position can be part-time or does it have to be full-time?**

a1. Position can be either full-time or part-time.

**Q: Do Postdoctoral Fellowships count as independent research?**

a1. No, Postdoctoral Fellowship do not count as independent research as postdoctoral fellows are still under the mentorship of an academic supervisor and are ineligible to apply for or hold most Tri-Council funding agencies research grants as a principal applicant.

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

a1. Each Primary Applicant (or Principal Investigator) receiving MEOPAR funding will enter into an agreement with MEOPAR (called an Ultimate Recipient Agreement [URA], in which the Primary Applicant is the Ultimate Recipient). The URA identifies the funding schedule, reporting timeline, project milestones and key performance indicators (KPIs).

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

a1. At least one letter of support is mandatory – this letter of support must come from the organization where your ECR Award project will take place. You will not be able to submit your application until this letter of support (LoS) has been uploaded by the “recommender” in the portal. Upon submission of each letter of support, you will receive an email notification and if you wish, you can log into the portal to view the letter. Please

note that “recommenders” are unable to provide letters of support after the application deadline has passed.

- a2. Note that while there is only one LoS is mandatory (see point above), you can have more than one LoS with your application. These other LoS can come from partners providing in-kind or cash support.

**Q: Can you submit multiple proposals?**

- a1. No, you cannot submit multiple proposals to the ECR Award.

**Q: What is the timeframe for funded projects?**

- a1. Projects will begin before March 31<sup>st</sup> 2026 and must conclude by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2028.

**Q: What should include to demonstrate their relevance and impact for MEOPAR?**

- a1. Project proposals must align with [MEOPAR’s 2025-2030 Science Strategy](#) to ensure alignment with MEOPAR’s long-term vision and core priorities.

**Q: Is the ECR Award limited to supporting research activities that take place within Canada or can it take place internationally?**

- a1. The ECR Award is designed to support research activities that benefit Canadian society and economy. Proposals should demonstrate relevance to Canadian contexts and communities. Research projects must align with [MEOPAR’s Science Strategy 2025-2030](#).

**Q: What types of expenses are eligible for the ECR Award?**

- a1. Eligible expenses include personnel costs (e.g., graduate student stipend or a portion of a technician’s salary who works in your organization and will be contributing to the ECR project), direct costs (e.g., operation of core research facilities, equipment, direct cost of knowledge creation, professional and technical services, material and supplies, research-related travel and hospitality, publication costs/dissemination) and 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.
- A template ([Appendix B1](#)) is available to help you with the overhead calculations. It might happen that once the overhead for the project has been calculated, the amount does exceed the 15% allowed by the Strategic Science Fund. In this case, the amount (%) in excess of 15%, and that would be taken in charge by the proponent’s organization (non-federal government organization), can be considered as in-kind matched fund for the project. The proponent would then have to list this contribution under Appendix C – Partners Contribution.

a2. Honoraria are an eligible expenses under the Strategic Science Fund (see [here](#) for more details).

**Q: Is the salary of the Early Career Researcher an eligible expense for the ECR award?**

a1. ECR holding a position in a post-secondary institution:

- No, in this case the ECR salary is ineligible as an expense. The MEOPAR award can only be used for research.

b1. ECR holding a position in other organizations than post-secondary institutions:

- Yes, the MEOPAR award can be used to fund part of their salary, but in those cases, the applicant and their organization must demonstrate that:
  - i. 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
  - ii. the organization can support the part of the applicant's salary not covered by the award.

**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 1:0.3 matching requirement for the ECR Award Call for Proposals. These funds must be directly tied to the ECR project'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 a university, or cash from a private foundation.

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

a2. Leveraged funds are existing investments or additional contributions that support the ECR project but do not count toward the required match. These may come from federal sources (e.g., NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR, CFI-funded equipment) or other pre-existing initiatives that align with the ECR project's goals. While not eligible for matching, leveraged funds demonstrate broader support and can strengthen your application.

a3. For additional guidance about this, click [here](#).

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

- a1. Yes, international funding is eligible if it is directly related to your ECR project. Verification of matched funding may be included with your application through a letter of support or another relevant funding verification document.

**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?**

- a1. No, unlike matched funding, there is no requirement associated with leveraged funding.

**Q: I see that MEOPAR is asking applicants to provide details about how they will integrate Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) and Truth and Reconciliation principles into their projects. 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 ECR project.
- a2. To ensure your project meaningfully incorporates EDIA principles, it may be helpful to build a foundational understanding of inclusive approaches that foster equity, diversity, accessibility, and the active participation of people from all backgrounds. This includes intentionally creating space for leadership, decision-making, communication, and engagement that is representative of, and responsive to, a wide range of voices and experiences. If you require further information or resources about EDIA, you can consult [this website](#).
- a3. Understanding the Truth and Reconciliation process and its calls to action can effectively demonstrate your ECR project's dedication to these initiatives. Information about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is available [here](#).
- a4. If you need information about how to meaningfully integrate 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](#)).

**Q: Who are the reviewers of the proposals?**

- a1. The scientific portion of the proposal is reviewed by MEOPAR Research Management Committee composed of independent experts topic matters from different sectors (academia, not-for-profit, government). The EDIA and T&R Considerations portion of the proposals are reviewed by external consultants expert in that field.
- a2. Proposals will be reviewed using the merit indicators in the [Call for Proposals document](#).

**Q: Is there an information session for applicants?**

- a1. Yes, MEOPAR hosted online info sessions and the recording of these webinars are available on our website - [here](#).

**Q: Who can I contact with other questions?**

- a1. For inquiries, contact Isabelle Tremblay at [Isabelle.Tremblay@meopar.ca](mailto:Isabelle.Tremblay@meopar.ca)