



MEOPAR

MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATION
PREDICTION & RESPONSE NETWORK

Request for Proposals:

Event Planning Services

MEOPAR Network Convening — Ottawa, ON
Person Conference & Networking Event

Two-Day In-

Issued by:

MEOPAR — Marine Environmental Observation, Prediction and Response Network

Issue Date:

July 21st

Proposal Deadline:

August 10th

Contact:

communications@meopar.ca

1. Introduction & Background

1.1 About MEOPAR

Founded in 2012, MEOPAR is an independent, national not-for-profit that strengthens Canada's ocean research, resilience, and innovation by connecting people, science, and data. Through funding interdisciplinary research, mobilizing knowledge, supporting emerging leaders, building cross-sector partnerships, and enhancing Canada's capacity to respond to ocean risks and opportunities. MEOPAR works across the full ocean ecosystem to drive meaningful impact.

1.2 Purpose of This RFP

MEOPAR is seeking proposals from qualified, experienced event planning professionals or firms based in or with strong operational capacity in Ottawa, Ontario, to support the planning and execution of a two-day, in-person network convening.

This convening will bring together approximately 150 participants from MEOPAR's funded research network, partner institutions, and key stakeholders for a strategic gathering that strengthens relationships, showcases impact, builds capacity, and positions MEOPAR for its next phase of funding and influence.

1.3 Intended Impact

This convening is envisioned as a high-value, strategic event designed to:

- Celebrate distributed funding and achievements across the MEOPAR network
- Demonstrate how MEOPAR is addressing key gaps in Canada's ocean research and policy landscape
- Reinforce collective optimism and momentum for Canada's ocean future
- Share new collaborative research funded through MEOPAR
- Strengthen community ties and cross-network collaboration
- Gather qualitative data and impact stories to support MEOPAR's ongoing reporting

MEOPAR is committed to fostering a collaborative, inclusive, and connected ocean science community. This event should exemplify that vision by creating meaningful opportunities for participants to build relationships, exchange knowledge, spark new collaborations, and strengthen the partnerships needed to address Canada's most pressing ocean challenges.

2. Event Overview

Event Type	Two-day in-person conference and networking event
Location	Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Anticipated Attendance	Approximately 150 participants
Audience	MEOPAR-funded researchers, network partners, key stakeholders, and direct partners from across Canada
Event Date	[February, exact date to be confirmed — consult with MEOPAR during contracting]
Format	Plenary sessions, breakouts, workshops, panels, structured networking, and informal engagement

2.1 Thematic Focus Areas

The following themes will guide session design and programming. The successful vendor will work with MEOPAR to refine and develop these into a coherent event narrative:

- Community Building & Network Activation
- Knowledge Sharing & Capacity Building
- Spotlighting Success & Storytelling
- Canada's Collaborative Ocean Future
- New & Innovative Science
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility (EDIA) and Truth & Reconciliation (TRC)

2.2 Session Formats

The event program will incorporate a range of session types, which would include:

- Panels
- Workshops
- World Café
- Lightning talks and short presentations
- Structured networking activities

3. Scope of Work

The selected event planner will be responsible for end-to-end event management across three phases: pre-event, during the event, and post-event. Specific deliverables within each phase are outlined below.

3.1 Pre-Event Planning & Coordination

Venue Coordination

- Identify, evaluate, and recommend suitable conference venue options in Ottawa, Ontario capable of accommodating approximately 150 participants across plenary and breakout configurations
- Negotiate venue contracts, manage relationships with venue staff, and coordinate room layouts, accessibility requirements, catering, and setup logistics
- Conduct site visits and provide MEOPAR with documented venue comparisons prior to selection

Registration & Attendee Management

- Set up and manage an online registration platform with customized fields appropriate to MEOPAR's audience and data needs
- Handle invitations, confirmations, waitlists, dietary and accessibility requirement collection, and all attendee communications
- Provide real-time registration reporting and final attendance data to MEOPAR

Travel & Accommodation Logistics

- Research and negotiate room blocks at appropriately priced hotel(s) in proximity to the venue
- Develop a travel guidance document for participants (flights, ground transportation, accommodation options, local information)
- Coordinate travel bursaries or reimbursement tracking as required by MEOPAR

AV & Production Coordination

- Source, contract, and manage AV/production vendors for plenary and breakout rooms
- Coordinate requirements for microphones, screens, projectors or LED displays, livestreaming or recording (if required), and simultaneous session support
- Conduct pre-event AV walkthroughs and technical rehearsals

Speaker Logistics

- Manage speaker invitations, confirmations, and communication on behalf of MEOPAR
- Collect speaker bios, headshots, presentation materials, and technical requirements
- Coordinate honoraria, travel, and accommodation for invited speakers where applicable

Event Scheduling

- Develop and manage a detailed master run-of-show and program schedule in collaboration with MEOPAR staff
- Build in flexibility for last-minute changes; maintain version control of scheduling documents
- Coordinate session facilitation support as needed

Vendor Management

- Source, contract, and manage all event vendors (catering, photography/videography, printing, entertainment, décor, etc.)
- Serve as primary point of contact for all external vendors, managing timelines, deliverables, and invoicing

Signage & Materials Coordination

- Develop event signage plan including directional, branded, and session-specific signage
- Coordinate printing and production of event materials (programs, name badges, lanyards, printed resources, etc.)
- Ensure all materials reflect MEOPAR brand standards

Sponsorship Coordination

- Support MEOPAR in identifying and coordinating event sponsorship opportunities
- Manage sponsor recognition logistics including signage, program acknowledgements, and on-site visibility
- Coordinate sponsor communications and deliverables in alignment with partnership agreements

3.2 Onsite Event Execution

- Provide full onsite event management team for both days of the event
- Serve as primary point of contact for venue, vendors, and logistics staff throughout the event
- Manage delegate registration and welcome desk
- Oversee room setups, session transitions, and catering service timing
- Troubleshoot issues in real time and maintain event flow
- Coordinate with speakers, facilitators, and MEOPAR staff to ensure smooth session delivery

3.3 Post-Event

Post-Event Reporting

- Prepare a comprehensive post-event report including final attendance numbers and demographic summary, budget actuals vs. estimates, vendor performance summary, event timeline review, and lessons learned and recommendations for future events

Post-Event Communications

- Support MEOPAR in drafting and distributing a post-event thank-you communication to participants

- Distribute session recordings, presentations, or resource documents as directed by MEOPAR
- Assist with participant survey distribution and compilation of results

4. Proposal Requirements

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the following requirements. Incomplete submissions may be disqualified.

4.1 Required Submission Components

A. Organizational Overview

- Brief description of your company or practice, including years in operation and relevant areas of specialization
- Description of your team's capacity to deliver this project, including key personnel who would be assigned
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B. Relevant Experience

- Minimum three (3) examples of comparable event planning engagements (conferences, multi-day events, or professional convenings of 100+ participants)
- For each example, please provide: event name and brief description, size and audience profile, scope of services provided, and outcome or key achievement.

C. Technical Approach and Timeline

- Describe your proposed methodology and timeline for managing this engagement, including how you would approach venue selection, vendor coordination, and attendee management
- Outline your communication and project management approach (tools, platforms, and frequency of check-ins with MEOPAR)
- Describe your experience working with academic, research, or not-for-profit sector clients
- Describe how your team would approach EDIA and accessibility considerations in event design and logistics

D. Budget Proposal

- Provide an itemized budget estimate for all services outlined in Section 3
- Clearly distinguish between professional fees (planning and management) and pass-through costs (venue, catering, AV, printing, etc.)
- Include your fee structure (flat fee, hourly rate, or percentage-based) and payment terms
- Note any contingency provisions or budget assumptions

E. Ottawa-Based Capacity

- Describe your local knowledge of Ottawa venues, vendors, and service providers

- Confirm your availability and onsite staffing capacity for a two-day event

F. Supplementary Materials (Optional)

- Sample event run-of-show or work-back timeline from a past project
- Sample post-event report
- Portfolio of signage or materials from past events

5. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by a MEOPAR review committee using the following weighted criteria:

Criterion	Weight	Notes
Relevant experience with comparable events (100+ attendees, multi-day, professional or academic context)	30%	Strength and recency of examples provided
Technical approach and proposed methodology	25%	Clarity, comprehensiveness, and feasibility
Local Ottawa knowledge and vendor network	20%	Familiarity with local venues and service providers
Budget competitiveness and transparency	15%	Value for money; clarity of fee structure
EDIA and accessibility approach	5%	Demonstrated sensitivity and practical strategies
Team qualifications and key personnel	5%	Relevant credentials and availability

MEOPAR reserves the right to request clarifications, conduct interviews with shortlisted firms, and to accept or reject any proposal at its sole discretion.

6. Submission Instructions

Submission Format	PDF
Submission Method	Via form at the following link (link to come)
Proposal Deadline	August 10th
Interviews	August 12th-20th
Questions Contact	communications@meopar.ca
Expected Award Date	August 26th

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to the contact listed above.

7. Terms & Conditions

7.1 Right to Accept or Reject

MEOPAR reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive irregularities, and to award a contract in its best interest. This RFP does not constitute a commitment to award a contract.

7.2 Costs of Proposal Preparation

All costs associated with preparing and submitting a proposal are the sole responsibility of the proponent. MEOPAR will not reimburse any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of proposals.

7.3 Conflict of Interest

Proponents must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest in their proposal. MEOPAR reserves the right to disqualify any proponent with an undisclosed or unresolved conflict of interest.

7.4 Accessibility & EDIA

MEOPAR is committed to accessible and inclusive events. The selected vendor will be expected to actively support MEOPAR's obligations under applicable accessibility legislation and to incorporate EDIA principles throughout event design, logistics, and communications. MEOPAR presents to a bilingual audience and conference delivery must be adapted for both French and English speakers

7.5 Indigenous Relations & Truth and Reconciliation

MEOPAR acknowledges that Ottawa is located on the unceded, Territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation. The selected vendor is expected to support the incorporation of Indigenous protocols, acknowledgements, and respectful engagement practices throughout the event planning process.

7.6 Insurance

The selected vendor will be required to carry adequate commercial general liability insurance and provide MEOPAR with a certificate of insurance prior to contract execution. Minimum coverage requirements will be specified in the contract.

7.7 Contract

The successful proponent will be required to enter into a written agreement with MEOPAR. MEOPAR's standard contract terms will apply; any requested modifications must be raised during contract negotiations.



Photo credit: Rosie Poirier

Appendix A: Proposal Checklist

Proponents are encouraged to use this checklist to confirm their proposal is complete before submission:

☐	Organizational overview and team description
☐	Minimum 3 relevant event examples with reference contacts
☐	Technical approach and timeline
☐	Itemized budget proposal with fee structure and payment terms
☐	Ottawa-based capacity and local vendor knowledge
☐	Confirmation of availability for event dates
☐	Optional: sample run-of-show, post-event report, or portfolio materials

Thank you for your interest in supporting MEOPAR's network convening. We look forward to reviewing your proposal.

For questions, please contact: communications@meopar.ca