



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Expedition Fund – Strategic Support Horizon

Fall 2026

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 two different horizons (Strategic Support and Major Expeditions) the Expedition Fund facilitates community access to seagoing vessels. 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 seagoing collaborations that advance Canada's ocean priorities. While we anticipate that some expeditions may leverage a complementary proposal to the NSERC Ship Time Program, eligibility for MEOPAR funding under the Strategic Science Fund (SSF; see Section D below), extends 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 collaborations with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, organizations, 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.

Project leads should 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**. This year, MEOPAR will accept applications for **expeditions that will be carried out in FY 2027-28** (i.e. taking place between April 1, 2027 and March 31, 2028). **NEW – Scientific mobilization/demobilization costs for the lead organization are now eligible**. Applicants may allocate up to 5% of the overall budget (requested to MEOPAR) for costs related to mobilization and demobilization of scientific equipment and personnel (including shipping and/or travel) to or from the vessel's port for expenses incurred by the lead organization.

D. Funding Eligibility

The project lead must be eligible to be a grant-holder within their recipient organization. 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 organization, and project lead, of each project receiving funding 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, and expedition milestones.

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 (including vessel mobilization and demobilization) and eligible costs related to scientific mobilization and demobilization only. For the vessel, 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. *“Scientific Mobilization and Demobilization costs”* includes travel and shipping costs, *incurred by the lead organization only*, of getting scientific staff, equipment, and materials to and from the vessel port. All travel related expenses, including airfare, hotel, and per diem/food expenses fall under the **“Research related travel”** category. Shipping expenses should go under the **“Professional and technical services”** category. The scientific mobilization and demobilization costs (travel and/or shipping) must be **less than 5%** of the overall budget requested to MEOPAR.

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, in the form of complete calculations and narrative in the **Appendix B1 tab** of Appendix B, is required for use of this category based on the administrative support required for the project. 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 August 2026. The submission deadline is **Oct 30th, 2026 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

[An information session](#) will be held on September 17th, at 10 am PDT. For questions regarding this Call for Proposals contact Jonathan Kellogg, Program Manager – Expeditions, at jonathan.kellogg@meopar.ca.

I. Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated by MEOPAR’s independent review committees. The Research Management Committee will evaluate: Expedition Goals and Quality, Excellence of Research Team and Talent Development, Knowledge Mobilization, and the Plan and Budget (75%). MEOPAR’s EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation expert panel will evaluate that section (20%). MEOPAR’s Program Manager will evaluate the matching contributions (5%).

Evaluation Criteria – Expedition Fund – Strategic Support Horizon (evenly weighted within categories)

	OUTSTANDING	VERY STRONG	STRONG	MODERATE	INSUFFICIENT
Project goals and quality (25%)	Project is clearly described.	Project is well described .	Project is adequately described.	Project is partially described.	Project is poorly described.
	Project is highly original/innovative	Project is original/innovative	Project is moderately original/innovative	Project is somewhat original/innovative	Project is not original/innovative
	Project will contribute to internationally competitive research, innovations, and advancements in the field.	Project will likely contribute to internationally competitive research, innovations, and advancements in the field.	Project may contribute to internationally competitive research, innovations, and advancements in the field.	Project is unlikely contribute to internationally competitive research, innovations, and advancements in the field.	Project will not contribute to internationally competitive research, innovations, and advancements in the field.
	Project alignment with Federal objectives and MEOPAR strategies is explicit and will advance federal priorities.	Project alignment with Federal objectives and MEOPAR strategies is clear and is likely to advance federal priorities.	Project alignment with Federal objectives and MEOPAR strategies is evident and may advance federal priorities.	Project alignment with Federal objectives and MEOPAR strategies is unclear and is unlikely to advance federal priorities.	Project alignment with Federal objectives and MEOPAR strategies is undefined and will not advance federal priorities.
Research Team & Talent Development (20%)	The team is composed of individuals with the discipline, expertise, and experience to achieve all of the project components.	The team is composed of individuals with the expertise and experience to achieve most of the project components.	The team is composed of individuals with the expertise and experience to achieve many of the project components.	The team is composed of individuals with the expertise and experience to achieve some of the project components.	The team is composed of individuals with the expertise and experience that is unlikely to achieve the project components.
	Expedition experience will significantly improve training and will result in skills that would not have been gained otherwise .	Expedition experience will improve training and result in skills that may not have been gained otherwise .	Expedition experience may result in training and skills that may not have been gained otherwise .	Expedition experience may result in skills that could have been gained otherwise .	The expedition access will not provide notable training opportunities for participants.
Plan, budget, matching contributions (25%)	Plan and budget elements are clearly described .	Plan and budget elements are well described .	Plan and budget elements are adequately described.	Plan and budget elements are partially described.	Plan and budget elements are poorly described.
	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 unconnected to timelines that are unrealistic .
	Plan and budget elements strongly support outcomes.	Plan and budget elements support outcomes.	Plan and budget elements may support outcomes.	Plan and budget elements are unlikely to support outcomes.	Plan and budget elements are unable to support outcomes.
	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, 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.
	The budget includes excellent matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources (ratio >> 1:1.25).	The budget includes very strong matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources (ratio 1:1.25 or higher).	The budget includes strong matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources (ratio 1:1 - <1.25).	The budget includes moderate matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources (ratio 1:0.8 - <1)	The budget includes poor matching contributions (cash or in-kind) from non-federal sources (ratio of <0.8).

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility & Truth and Reconciliation (20%)	The project intentionally addresses EDIA considerations and provides clear evidence of weaving EDIA principles 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 some evidence of using these principles in project activities. EDIA principles are integrated into core activities, with mechanisms for accountability and continuous improvement.	The project incorporates some consideration of EDIA principles in its structure and activities. There is a stated commitment to accountability , though mechanisms may be emerging or inconsistently applied.	The project shows minimal consideration of EDIA principles and might show some initial steps toward inclusion. Accountability measures are minimal or unclear .	The project lacks evidence of EDIA integration. There are no mechanisms for accountability in place.
	Leadership and crewing are intentionally structured to include diverse perspectives, with strong representation from equity-deserving groups, including in meaningful leadership and decision-making roles.	Leadership and crewing reflect clear consideration of diversity and inclusion, with some representation from equity-deserving groups and evidence of intentional efforts to build an inclusive team.	Leadership and crewing show an understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion, and there is some indication that equity-deserving groups have been considered, though representation or implementation is still limited or not fully demonstrated.	Leadership and crewing show minimal diversity, with little evidence of engagement from equity-deserving groups. Inclusion may be intended but actions are underdeveloped or vague.	Leadership and crewing lack diversity, with no indication of inclusion of equity-deserving groups. Accessibility and cultural safety are not addressed .
	The project demonstrates a deep, respectful understanding of the TRC's Calls to Action and cultural safety. These principles are co-developed with Indigenous partners and are foundational to the project's leadership, values, and direction.	The project clearly aligns with relevant TRC's Calls to Action and shows a strong commitment to cultural safety. Indigenous perspectives inform the project's values and approach.	The project references TRC's Calls to Action and acknowledges the importance of cultural safety. There is a stated commitment , though integration may be partial or emerging .	The project mentions reconciliation or cultural safety, but the connection to TRC's Calls to Action is vague or underdeveloped .	There is little or no evidence of understanding or integrating TRC's Calls to Action or cultural safety principles.
	The project includes sustained, reciprocal engagement with Indigenous communities. Actions are co-developed, culturally safe, and supported by clear accountability mechanisms (e.g., shared decision-making, feedback loops, long-term relationship building).	The project demonstrates meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, includes specific actions to ensure cultural safety during engagement and knowledge sharing activities. Accountability is addressed through planned reflection or reporting .	The project includes some engagement with Indigenous communities and outlines actions to support cultural safety. Accountability is acknowledged but may be limited in scope .	Engagement with Indigenous communities is minimal or one-directional . Actions are limited , and accountability mechanisms are unclear .	No meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities is described, and there are no actions or accountability measures in place.
	Knowledge mobilization strategy from the expedition and post-expedition has potential for mainstream media interest in addition to reaching diverse communities .	Knowledge mobilization strategy from the expedition and/or post-expedition will likely reach outside scientific community .	Knowledge mobilization strategy from the expedition and/or post-expedition is typical for scientific community .	Knowledge mobilization strategy from the expedition may reach select audiences. No plans for post-expedition .	No knowledge mobilization strategy is mentioned.