



APPLICATION GUIDE

Living Lab Fund

September 2026

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Living Lab Fund

A. Introduction

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

B. Living Lab Fund 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 Living Lab Fund supports existing, place-based partnerships to develop and operate as Living Labs by supporting coordination, relationship-building and deepening, co-design, prototyping, testing, and learning in real-world settings.

A Living Lab is an interaction space where a variety of actors (e.g. end-users, communities, companies, public agencies, universities, research institutions) form people-public-private partnerships to collaborate on creation, prototyping, validating, and testing of social innovations, new technology, services, products, and systems in real life contexts. They emphasize meaningful engagement of end-users and communities, co-design, shared learning and iterative approaches to developing and advancing locally relevant social and/or technical solutions. Note that Living Labs are not a Community of Practice and they are not just Knowledge Mobilization.

The objectives of the Living Lab fund are to:

- Strengthen existing multi-sector partnerships and the coordination and operational capacity needed to sustain collaborative work towards solutions.
- Support user-centred and community-engaged approaches that involve local partners and knowledge holders in identifying priorities and co-designing solutions.
- Enable the development, prototyping, testing and refinement of social and/or technical innovations that responds to locally identified coastal and marine challenges.
- Strengthen coastal resilience and climate change adaptation by supporting locally relevant solutions and collaborative approaches.
- Support learning and knowledge exchange, including opportunities to share experiences, practices, successes, and lessons learned with other Living Labs and Beacon Sites through the BEACONSplus initiative.

About BEACONSplus

This Fund is being delivered in connection with [BEACONSplus](#), an international Horizon Europe initiative focused on strengthening climate adaptation and resilience in coastal communities through transdisciplinary collaboration, co-design, and co-creation. BEACONSplus brings together coastal communities, researchers, and other actors to identify shared and place-specific challenges, co-develop and share locally relevant solutions, and strengthen community agency in responding to socio-ecological change.

Through this Fund, supported Living Labs will contribute to this broader learning network and will have opportunities to exchange experiences, approaches, and lessons with BEACONSplus and other coastal resilience partners.

C. Alignment with MEOPAR's Science Strategy and BEACONSplus objectives

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.

The Living Lab Fund particularly advances Objective 2 through its emphasis on end-user-driven science, innovation, place-based partnerships, and collaborative structures that strengthen community resilience. It may also contribute to other MEOPAR objectives depending on the activities proposed.

Project leads 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.

The Living lab will also have to align with BEACONSplus' objectives and approaches, including its emphasis on co-design and co-creation of locally relevant solutions for coastal resilience (more information on p.7).

D. Structure of the Call

The maximum funding level available from MEOPAR is up to \$75,000 per project of a duration of 1.5 years. The project, and associated funding, **must take place from April 1, 2027 – October 31, 2028** (*project must be completed by October 31, 2028*). MEOPAR is expecting to fund up to five Living Labs. Funded Living Labs will be asked to participate in peer-learning and knowledge-sharing activities connected to MEOPAR and BEACONSplus.

Proposals are led by one project lead, but solid partnerships with **at least two other partners (from different organizations) from at least two sectors** will need to be demonstrated with **mandatory support letters**.

E. Funding Eligibility

The applicant must be eligible to be a grant-holder within their organization. Eligible recipients of MEOPAR funds include not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations and governments, post-secondary institutions, 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).

F. Requirements of Funding

Each applicant receiving MEOPAR funding will enter into an agreement with MEOPAR called an Ultimate Recipient Agreement (URA) in which the applicant is the Ultimate Recipient (UR). The URA identifies the funding schedule, reporting timeline, project milestones, and deliverables.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all necessary certifications, permits, licenses and other necessary 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.

Additional Guidance

Indigenous Data Management:

MEOPAR strongly recommends that any MEOPAR-funded activities follow the [First Nations Principles of OCAP](#) and/or the [CARE Principles of Indigenous Data Governance](#), where relevant. These principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) or Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, and Ethics (CARE) assert that First Nations and Indigenous peoples have the right to control data collection processes, and that they own and control how subsequent data and information can be used.

Intellectual Property:

Main applicants 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.

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 maeva.gauthier@meopar.ca.

H. Living Lab Overview

This section of the application provides reviewers with an overview of the Living Lab, the place-based coastal challenge or opportunity it addresses, the outcomes anticipated from the proposed activities, and alignment with MEOPAR and BEACONSplus.

Applicants should distinguish, where relevant, between the broader work of the Living Lab and the specific activities proposed for MEOPAR funding.

a. Living Lab Summary (max 300 words)

The summary should provide a concise and accessible overview of the Living Lab, including its place and coastal context, key partners, the challenge or opportunity being addressed, and the main activities and outcomes anticipated during the MEOPAR funding period. It should allow a reviewer who is unfamiliar with the Living Lab understand its overall purpose and proposed use of the funding.

b. Place-based Coastal Challenge or Opportunity (max 350 words; 5%)

Applicants should provide enough context for reviewers to understand why the challenge or opportunity matters in this particular place and at this time. Where relevant, describe evidence that the issue has been identified or prioritized by communities, partners, end-users, or others affected.

c. Anticipated Outcomes Contributing to Coastal Community Resilience (max 300 words; 10%)

Describe the anticipated outcomes of the proposed Living Lab activities and how they will contribute to coastal community resilience, including climate adaptation where relevant.

Outcomes may include for example:

- Strengthened relationships or capacity
- Development or uptake of social or technical innovations, practices, tools, approaches or solutions that respond to locally identified priorities and support coastal resilience.

d. Alignment with MEOPAR Science Strategy and BEACONSplus Objectives (max 250 words; 5%)

Explain how the proposed Living Lab aligns with:

- MEOPAR's [Science Strategy 2025–2030](#); and
- BEACONSplus' objectives and approaches, including its emphasis on co-design and co-creation of locally relevant solutions for coastal resilience. For background, consult the CORDIS project [fact sheet](#), [All-Atlantic Coastal Resilience Hub](#), and [project announcement](#).

As public information about BEACONSplus remains limited, applicants should focus on general alignment.

I. Living Lab Approach, Existing Partnerships and Co-Design

a. Existing Partnership and History (max 400 words)

Applicants should provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the partnership has an existing foundation for collaborative work. Examples may include previous collaborations, relationship-building, knowledge sharing, capacity-building, and/or joint activities among partners.

b. Roles and Governance (max 400 words)

Reviewers should be able to understand what each partner brings to the Living Lab, how responsibilities are distributed, and how shared decision-making, accountability and coordination will occur.

c. Partnership Table

In the table provided, list confirmed, and potential partners or collaborators involved in this project. As a reminder, letters of support are mandatory for at least three partners, including the applicant.

d. Co-Design and Living Lab Approach (max 500 words)

Living Labs may be at different stages of development. Applicants are not expected to undertake every possible stage of co-design, prototyping, testing, evaluation, and refinement during the funding period. They should describe the activities that are appropriate to their current stage and how learning and feedback will inform subsequent activities.

e. Equity and Sustainability of Solutions (max 300 words)

Living Lab solutions should be developed with consideration of who benefits, who participates in shaping the solution, and whether any groups, communities, or ecosystems may experience unintended costs or consequences.

Applicants should consider:

Equity: whether benefits, opportunities, costs, and risks are distributed fairly;

Reciprocity: whether partners, communities, end-users, and knowledge holders benefit from and meaningfully contribute to the work; and

Ecological sustainability: whether proposed solutions support longer-term environmental sustainability and avoid creating or shifting environmental harms.

Applicants should explain how these considerations have influenced or will influence the design, testing, adaptation, or implementation of proposed solutions. Considerations should be appropriate to the context and stage of the Living Lab.

J. Implementation Plan, Capacity and Budget

a. Project Plan Activities, Milestones, and Timeline

Applicants are required to provide an implementation plan identifying the key activities and milestones anticipated during the funding period and when they are expected to occur. This information will be provided in a table in the Application form. Please provide a list of your project's activities, milestones and/or deliverables, as well as their target completion dates. When

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

- *Be specific*: break your project into clear, trackable components (e.g., community engagement workshop, etc.). Activities may include partnership coordination, community engagement, co-design workshops, governance development, prototyping, testing, knowledge-sharing, etc.
- Milestones are significant points of progress that demonstrate that the work is advancing. Depending on the Living Lab, milestones might include completion of a co-design process, establishment of a governance approach, development or testing of a prototype, evaluation, engagement of key partners or end-users, or completion of a learning or evaluation activity.
- *Include deliverables*: they are tangible outputs or products resulting from the work. Identify what will be produced or achieved (e.g. prototype, governance framework, workshop summary, testing findings, communications product, or reflection/evaluation summary). Not every activity is expected to result in a tangible deliverable (ie. relationship-building, coordination or engagement may have a meaningful milestone without producing a formal deliverable).
- *Set timelines*: provide anticipated completion dates for each activity and 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).
- *Build in time for reflection, learning and adaptation, recognizing the iterative nature of the Living Lab approach*.

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

Note: You will be required to report on the results of your activities/deliverables and their completion dates in your annual progress report (due at the end of April, annually) and in your final report to MEOPAR (due within 30 days of the end of the funding period). MEOPAR will provide reporting templates for submission through the MEOPAR [online portal](#).

b. **Strengthening Living Lab Capacity (max 400 words)**

Applicants should describe how the proposed activities will strengthen the Living Lab's ability to operate, collaborate, and sustain its work over time.

Capacity may include, for example, coordination and operations, partnership development, governance, community and end-user engagement, facilitation, knowledge-sharing processes, or other organizational and collaborative capacities relevant to the Living Lab.

Applicants should make a clear connection between the activities proposed for MEOPAR funding and the capacity gains expected by the end of the funding period.

Where applicable, applicants should also identify important considerations related to the management of data, knowledge or intellectual property arising from the proposed activities. This may include appropriate approaches to ownership, access, sharing, Indigenous data sovereignty, or intellectual property arrangements.

c. **Budget and Partner Contributions**

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

Please name your budget files using the following format:

Appendix B: [*PIFirstInitial*][*PILastName*]_{LL_AppB}[_YYMMDD]

Appendix C: [*PIFirstInitial*][*PILastName*]_{LL_AppC}[_YYMMDD]

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

Example: If the Project Lead's name is Jordan Smith and Appendix B is being submitted on 15 November 2026, the file name should be:

JSmith_LL_AppB_261115

Appendix B Guidance

- Only include the amount of funding requested from MEOPAR for the proposal, not the total funding for the whole project. (The total cost of the whole project will be reflected in the combination of Appendices B & C).
- The greyed-out cells contain formulas that automatically calculate totals based on what you enter in other cells and cannot be edited.
- The template allows for up to 1.5 years of funding. Please complete only the columns pertinent to your request (i.e., if seeking one year of funding, you will use two columns). Specifically:
 - Column B '2027-04-01 to 2028-03-31': Include expenses from project start date to 31 March 2028.
 - Column C '2028-04-01 to 2028-10-31': Include expenses from 1 April 2028 to 31 October 2028 (i.e., latest project end date).
- In the narrative justification section of your proposal form, include specific breakdowns and explanations for bulk expenses. For example, for 'A. Personnel Costs' be specific about the number of people to be hired, their role(s), hours, and rate of pay.
 - All of these other expenses incurred by the project should be accounted for in Appendix C. Partner Contributions.
- 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 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 context).
- Justification, in the form of complete calculations and accompanying 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 these costs are not being requested, this should also be clarified, so MEOPAR understands your administrative capacity. If administrative support is required but not requested from MEOPAR, eligible administrative support provided by a partner (including applicant) may be reported as an in-kind partner contribution.

Appendix C Guidance

All anticipated project expenditures, except for expenses requested from MEOPAR, should be captured in **Appendix C**. This includes expenses for the broader project that are supported through means other than from MEOPAR, including both cash and in-kind contributions from matched and leveraged sources.

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 leveraged, and how the contribution supports your project's activities. Project Leads are strongly encouraged to secure

matching contributions from non-federal sources. The level of matching fund will weight in the score of the overall proposal. Please refer to the evaluation criteria matrix for details.

In addition to matched contributions, the project lead 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. 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 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.

It is possible for a partner organization to contribute both matched and leveraged funds. An example of this includes a university providing matching salary for faculty time while the student salary is leveraging a federal grant. Separate these funding streams in Appendix C by duplicating the partner organization but denoting one Matched and one Leveraged to accurately account for the respective contributions.

Examples of in-kind partner contributions might include staff time from partner organizations (including the project lead's own salary or the salaries of students), 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).

NOTE: All partner contributions documented should be incurred during the funding. For example, if the proposed work is taking place in FY27-28, partner contributions to the project should also be incurred in that fiscal year. Project expenses in other fiscal years are not eligible under the rules of matched and leveraged funds.

See the SSF Program Guideline for more details on [eligible and ineligible costs](#) and [Appendix C - Guidelines for calculating the value of in-kind contributions](#)).

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

At MEOPAR, we want to make these considerations more approachable: think about who is included in your project, whose voices are heard in decision-making, and how you can make participation fair and welcoming. We are providing resources below to help you turn these principles into practical actions in your project.

When completing your application, please describe how EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation principles will be integrated into your project. MEOPAR seeks 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 leadership and decision-making, programming, communication and engagement, inclusive participation, and evaluation.

Recent initiatives by federal funding agencies, such as the Tri-Agency [EDI Action Plan](#), reflect a growing emphasis on creating a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive research ecosystem in Canada. We recognize that the language and requirements around EDIA can sometimes feel abstract or highly technical, and we aim to make these considerations more accessible in practice. To support applicants, we are providing some resources to help translate EDIA principles into meaningful actions that can be embedded throughout the research process. If you need additional resources about EDIA in research, you can consult [this website](#) from the University of Calgary. We invite you to also [watch the recording of the MEOPAR webinar on "Exploring Inclusion and Reconciliation in Proposals" for guidance and examples to support your application.](#)

In alignment with the Tri-Agency EDI Action plan, we recognize that First Nations, Métis and Inuit are rights-holding as First Peoples of Canada, and initiatives should be developed through distinctions-based approaches. Truth and reconciliation in research means respecting Indigenous rights, knowledge, and leadership. Questions to ask yourself or your team include: “Are Indigenous voices centered in decision-making? Are cultural practices and protocols respected? Are communities supported through fair compensation and safe spaces for participation?” Even if your project is not Indigenous-led, it’s important to consider how your work connects to the land and water, and how you can engage Indigenous communities respectfully and meaningfully.

Understanding the Truth and Reconciliation process and its calls to action can effectively demonstrate your project’s dedication to these initiatives. Information about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission reports and access to the Calls to action are available [here](#).

L. Supporting Materials

1. Letters of Support

Letters of support are mandatory for each confirmed partner of the Living Lab, including the applicant’s organization. A Living Lab must include a **minimum of three confirmed partners (from different organizations), which means that at least three letters of support are required**. Letters should confirm the partner’s involvement in the Living Lab, and describe, as applicable, their role, existing relationship with the partnership, anticipated contributions, and any cash or in-kind contributions.

There is no limit on the number of letters that may be submitted. We recommend that letters of support not exceed 2 pages each.

Supported file formats include PDF (.pdf), Word documents (.doc, .docx), or image files (.jpg, .jpeg, .png).

You can submit letters of support in two ways:

- Upload directly: use the “Letters of Support | Attach a file(s)” form in the [online portal](#).
- 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](#).

Note: The portal will not allow final submission of a proposal until initiated letters of support have been submitted. Ensure letter authors have ample time to upload their letters before the deadline.

2. 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 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 based on the same evaluation criteria.

M. Submission Procedure

The application deadline is **18 November 2026 at 23:59 Eastern time**.

Submit your proposal in the MEOPAR online portal: <https://meopar.smaply.io/>. Keep submission sections to the word limits indicated. Reviewers will not receive or review information after the noted limit. MEOPAR will also be creating a peer learning group for all the successful recipients and participation in these knowledge sharing meetings is expected.

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.

MEOPAR will receive proposals and provide an initial compliance screening. Proposals that do not follow these requirements explicitly will be returned to the applicant(s) and given one 1-week period to comply and resubmit. Proposals that still do not comply with these criteria will be removed from the competition and will not be considered.

N. Inquiries

To help with proposal development and having a good understanding about the Living Lab Fund, MEOPAR will host:

- ENGLISH – October 1, 2026 at 11:00 am Pacific time (2:00 pm Eastern time) - register [here](#).
- FRENCH – October 8, 2026 at 11:00 am Pacific time (2:00 pm Eastern time) - register [here](#).

For questions regarding this Call for Proposals contact Maéva Gauthier, Program Manager – Community-led Research, at maeva.gauthier@meopar.ca.

O. Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated by MEOPAR's independent review committee.

The Research Management Committee will evaluate:

- Scope and Alignment with MEOPAR's objectives and Science Strategy (20%)
- Living Lab Approach, Existing Partnerships & Co-Design (40%)
- Implementation Plan, Capacity & Budget (20%)

MEOPAR's Program Manager will evaluate:

- Matching contributions (5%)

MEOPAR's EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation expert panel will evaluate:

- EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation Considerations 15%

Evaluation Criteria – Living Lab Fund

		OUTSTANDING	VERY STRONG	STRONG	MODERATE	INSUFFICIENT
Scope and Alignment with MEOPAR's objectives and Science Strategy 20%	Criteria 1: Relevance and Timeliness of the place-based coastal challenge/opportunity (5%)	The place-based coastal challenge or opportunity is clearly defined and compelling, with a well-documented rationale demonstrating its relevance and timeliness in the local context.	The place-based coastal challenge or opportunity is clearly defined with a strong rationale demonstrating its relevance and timeliness in the local context, with only minor gaps.	The place-based coastal challenge or opportunity is adequately described and its relevance and timeliness in the local context are generally demonstrated, although some aspects could be more fully developed.	The place-based coastal challenge or opportunity is identified, but its relevance, timeliness, or connection to the local context are only partially demonstrated.	The place-based coastal challenge or opportunity is unclear, poorly defined or its relevance and timeliness are not demonstrated.
	Criteria 2: Anticipated outcomes contributing to coastal community resilience (10%)	Anticipated outcomes are clearly defined and significant, with a compelling and well documented connection to strengthening coastal community resilience and/or climate adaptation.	Anticipated outcomes are clear and significant, with a strong and credible connection to strengthening coastal community resilience and/or climate adaptation.	Anticipated outcomes are adequately described and demonstrate a credible contribution to coastal community resilience and/or climate adaptation, although the connection could be more fully developed.	Anticipated outcomes are somewhat unclear or their contribution to coastal community resilience is only partially demonstrated.	Anticipated outcomes are unclear, minimal, or not meaningfully connected to coastal community resilience.
	Criteria 3: Alignment with MEOPAR Science Strategy and BEACONSplus (5%)	The proposal demonstrates comprehensive and substantive alignment with both MEOPAR's Science Strategy and the objectives and approaches of BEACONSplus with clear connections to the proposed Living Lab.	The proposal demonstrates clear and strong alignment with both MEOPAR's Science Strategy and BEACONSplus objectives and approaches with only minor gaps in how the connections are articulated.	The proposal demonstrates credible alignment with MEOPAR's Science Strategy and BEACONSplus objectives and approaches, although some connections are general or could be more fully explained.	The proposal partially demonstrates or weakly explains alignment with MEOPAR's Science Strategy and/or BEACONSplus objectives and approaches.	The proposal does not demonstrate or is unclear on alignment or is unclear with MEOPAR's Science Strategy and/or BEACONSplus objectives and approaches.
Living Lab Approach, Existing Partnerships & Co-Design 40%	Criteria 4: Existing partnerships & History (10%)	Demonstrates highly credible and well-substantiated foundation for the Living Lab, with clear evidence of meaningful previous collaboration, relationship-building, knowledge sharing and/or capacity building among partners. The partnerships demonstrate a high level of readiness to advance the Living Lab.	Demonstrates strong foundation for the Living Lab, with clear evidence of previous collaboration, relationship-building, knowledge sharing and/or capacity building. Minor gaps remain in demonstrating the depth or readiness of at least one of the partnerships.	Demonstrates credible existing partnerships and relevant history of collaboration, although the depth of collaboration or the readiness to advance the Living Lab could be more fully demonstrated.	Some partnerships history is demonstrated, but previous collaboration and/or relationship-building is limited or insufficiently described to establish a strong foundation of the Living Lab.	Little or no evidence of an existing partnership or previous collaboration that provides a credible foundation for the Living Lab.

		OUTSTANDING	VERY STRONG	STRONG	MODERATE	INSUFFICIENT
	Criteria 5: Partners complementarity, roles and governance (10%)	Partners bring highly relevant and complementary perspectives, expertise, knowledge systems and/or sectoral representation with more than three confirmed partners from at least two different sectors including the applicant (with letters of support). Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, with well-developed and appropriate governance arrangements for shared decision-making, accountability, and coordination.	Partners demonstrate strong complementarity, and more than three partners are confirmed from at least two different sectors (with letters of support). Roles and responsibilities are clear, with appropriate governance arrangements for shared decision-making, accountability, and coordination.	Partners bring relevant complementary contributions and there are three partners confirmed from at least two different sectors (with letters of support). Roles, responsibilities and governance arrangements are credibly described, although some aspects of decision-making, accountability, and coordination could be further developed.	Partners complementarity is only partially demonstrated and/or roles, responsibilities, decision-making or coordination arrangements require significant further development. Three partners are confirmed (with letters of support) from at least two different sectors.	Partners complementarity is not demonstrated and/or roles, responsibilities, decision-making or coordination arrangements are unclear or absent. The proposal does not include a minimum of three partners (including applicant) from at least two different sectors confirmed with letters of support.
	Criteria 6: Co-Design & Living Lab Approach (10%)	Demonstrates a comprehensive and credible co-design approach appropriate to the Living Lab's current stage of development, with meaningful and well-integrated engagement of relevant community members, end-users, knowledge holders and partners in advancing locally relevant solutions. Clear and integrated processes for learning, feedback, iteration are embedded in the approach, with different perspectives and forms of knowledge informing activities and solutions over time.	Demonstrates a strong co-design approach appropriate to the Living Lab's current stage of development, with meaningful engagement of relevant community members, end-users, knowledge holders and partners in advancing solutions. Clear processes for learning, feedback and iteration are incorporated into the approach and inform how activities or solutions will evolve over time.	Demonstrates a sound co-design approach appropriate to the Living Lab's current stage of development, with meaningful engagement of community members, end-users, knowledge holders and partners. Processes for learning, feedback and iteration are evident, although some aspects of how these will inform activities or solutions require further development.	Demonstrates a partially developed co-design approach in relation to the Living Lab's current stage of development. Engagement of relevant community members, end-users, knowledge holders, and partners is limited or uneven. Processes for learning, feedback and iteration are underdeveloped or unclear.	Demonstrates little or no evidence of a co-design approach appropriate to the Living Lab's current stage of development. Meaningful engagement of relevant community members, end-users, knowledge holders, and partners is minimal or absent, and there is little or no indication of processes for learning, feedback and iteration.

		OUTSTANDING	VERY STRONG	STRONG	MODERATE	INSUFFICIENT
	Criteria 7: Equity & sustainability of solutions (10%)	Equity, reciprocity and ecological sustainability are meaningfully and thoroughly integrated into the development of proposed solutions, with clear consideration of who may benefit, who may bear costs or unintended consequences, and longer-term sustainability. These considerations clearly shape how solutions are developed.	Equity, reciprocity and ecological sustainability are clearly integrated in the development of proposed solutions, including clear consideration of potential benefits, costs or unintended consequences, and longer-term sustainability with only minor gaps in how these considerations shape the solutions.	Equity, reciprocity and ecological sustainability are credibly considered in the development of proposed solutions although some aspects of potential benefits, consequences, or longer-term sustainability could be more fully developed.	Equity, reciprocity and ecological sustainability are acknowledged, but consideration is limited, generic, or weakly connected to the proposed solutions.	Equity, reciprocity and ecological sustainability are not meaningfully considered in the development of proposed solutions.
Implementation Plan, Capacity & Budget 25%	Criteria 8: Project Plan: Activities, Milestones, and Timeline (10%)	The implementation plan is exceptionally detailed, clear, realistic, and well structured. The table of activities, milestones, and deliverables is well sequenced and demonstrate excellent feasibility within the proposed timeline.	The implementation plan is clear and realistic, with well detailed and defined table of activities, milestones and deliverables. The proposed work demonstrates strong feasibility within the timeline, with only minor details missing.	The implementation plan and table of activities, milestones and deliverables is generally clear and realistic, although some details or sequencing could be further developed.	The implementation plan is partially developed or lacks clarity with a table of activities, milestones and deliverables that have significant gaps, raising some questions about feasibility.	The implementation plan is unclear, incomplete, or unrealistic. The table of activities, milestones and deliverables has clear gaps or demonstrate low feasibility within the proposed timeline.
	Criteria 9: Strengthening Living Lab Capacity (5%)	Proposed activities demonstrate a clear, compelling and well-substantiated pathway to meaningfully strengthening the Living Lab's capacity in relevant areas, such as coordination, operations, partnerships, governance and/or community engagement.	Proposed activities demonstrate a strong and credible pathway to strengthening the Living Lab's capacity in relevant areas, with only minor gaps.	Proposed activities demonstrate a credible contribution to strengthening Living Lab capacity, although the connection between some activities and anticipated capacity gains could be further developed.	The contribution of the proposed activities to strengthening Living Lab capacity is only partially demonstrated or unclear.	Little or no evidence that the proposed activities will meaningfully strengthen Living Lab capacity.

		OUTSTANDING	VERY STRONG	STRONG	MODERATE	INSUFFICIENT
	Criteria 10: Budget justification (5%)	The proposed budget is exceptionally clear, appropriate and proportionate to the proposed activities and objectives. Costs are very well justified and demonstrate thoughtful investment in the people, coordination, engagement and operational capacity needed to implement the Living Lab, including appropriate and fair compensation.	The budget is clear, appropriate and well justified, with costs strongly aligned with the proposed activities and objectives. Investment in people, coordination, engagement, and operational capacity, including fair compensation where appropriate, is clearly demonstrated.	The budget is generally appropriate and justified, with costs reasonably aligned with the proposed activities and objectives. Compensation and other investments in implementation capacity are generally appropriate, although some details could be strengthened.	The budget contains notable gaps or insufficient justification, and/or some costs appear disproportionate or weakly connected to the proposed activities and objectives. Questions may remain regarding appropriate compensation or investment in implementation capacity.	The budget is unclear, unrealistic, inadequately justified or inappropriate for the proposed activities and objectives.
	Criteria 11: Partner Contributions (5%)	Matched contributions are clearly identified, valued, and justified, and demonstrate strong partner commitment (matching Ratio $\geq 1:1.25$).	Matched contributions are clearly identified, valued and justified and demonstrate good partner commitment (matching ratio, 1:1.00 to $<1:1.25$).	Matched contributions are appropriately identified and valued and demonstrate credible partner commitment (matching ratio is 1:0.80 to $<1:1.00$).	Matched contributions demonstrate some partner commitment but may have gaps in documentation, valuation, or justification (matching ratio is $>1:0.50$ to $<1:0.80$).	Matched contributions are minimal, unclear, or inadequately demonstrated (matching ratio is $\leq 1:0.50$).
EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation Considerations 15%	Criteria 12: EDIA Principles embedded in the Living Lab (7.5%)	EDIA principles are meaningfully and comprehensively embedded across the Living Lab's leadership, governance, partnerships and activities. Barriers to meaningful participation are clearly identified and addressed through specific, context-appropriate measures that support inclusive and accessible participation.	EDIA principles are clearly embedded across relevant aspects of the Living Lab. Barriers to participation are identified, with clear measures to support inclusive and accessible participation, although some measures may lack detail or may not yet be fully integrated across all relevant aspects of the Living Lab.	EDIA principles are incorporated into relevant aspects of the Living Lab, with demonstrated consideration of barriers to participation and identified approaches to support inclusive and accessible participation, although some elements require further development.	EDIA principles are acknowledged, but their integration is limited or generic. Barriers to participation and/or measures to support inclusive and accessible participation are only partially addressed.	EDIA principles are minimally addressed or not meaningfully integrated, with little or no consideration of barriers to participation, inclusion or accessibility.

		OUTSTANDING	VERY STRONG	STRONG	MODERATE	INSUFFICIENT
	Criteria 13: Truth, Reconciliation & Indigenous self-determination (7.5%) *	Demonstrates a comprehensive and well-substantiated approach to advancing Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination through respectful and reciprocal relationships, recognition of Indigenous rights and priorities, cultural safety, and respect for Indigenous knowledge and data sovereignty. These principles are clearly reflected in relationships, activities, and decision-making affecting Indigenous communities, knowledge, lands and waters.	Demonstrates a strong and clearly articulated approach to Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination, with clear evidence of respectful and reciprocal engagement, cultural safety, and recognition of Indigenous rights, priorities and knowledge, although some aspects of how these principles will be implemented in relationships, activities or decision-making could be more fully described.	Demonstrates a credible approach to Truth and Reconciliation and respectful Indigenous engagement, with appropriate consideration of Indigenous rights, priorities, knowledge and/or self-determination, although some elements require further development.	Truth and Reconciliation is acknowledged, but proposed actions or relationships are limited, underdeveloped or insufficiently connected to Indigenous self-determination.	Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination are not meaningfully addressed, or there is little evidence of respectful engagement where Indigenous communities, rights, knowledge, lands or waters are relevant.

* Note: For projects that are not Indigenous-led, assessment should consider the extent to which respectful and reciprocal engagement with Indigenous communities connected to the land/water is demonstrated, where relevant.

Appendix A - Definitions:

"Background Intellectual Property" means any pre-existing Intellectual Property that is developed prior to, or independent of, the project but is necessary to carry out the funded project.

"Co-design" is a collaborative process in which relevant partners, including community members, end users and knowledge holders, are meaningfully contributing to identifying priorities and shaping activities or solutions. Co-design involves shared influence over decision-making, reciprocal learning, feedback and iteration in ways appropriate to the context and current stage of the Living Lab.

"Collaborators" are individuals who contribute to the delivery of activities.

"Diversity" is about representation. It brings a focus to the representation of groups that have traditionally been under-represented and have faced systemic discrimination in spheres as varied as employment, participation in clinical research, or in attracting research funding. Diversity is a dynamic concept. Some individuals may identify in ways that do not change over time. For others, the ways in which they identify may evolve over time. For example, sexual identity may change over time.

"End Users" are individuals who use a particular product (including a knowledge product) or service. They can be, but are not limited to, a practitioner, policymaker, educator, decision-maker, health care administrator, community leader, or an individual in a charity, patient group, private sector organization, or media outlet.

"Equity" is about fairness. It is about deliberate efforts to ensure processes for allocating resources and decision-making are fair and do not discriminate on the basis of personal characteristics. Equity is a summative concept that is the outcome of deliberate efforts to create more diverse and inclusive approaches to organizational practices and to program delivery, including research. Equity results in parity of outcomes for members of under-represented groups or for those who face discrimination.

"Equity Deserving Groups" means racialized persons (including Black Canadians), persons living with disabilities (including invisible and episodic disabilities), Canadians who identify as 2SLGBTQI+, and First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples as founding peoples of Canada who are under-represented in positions of economic influence and leadership.

"Foreground Intellectual Property" means any Intellectual Property conceived, produced, developed or reduced to practice in carrying out the project by the Recipient.

"Governance" is the framework of rules, roles, processes, and practices used to guide, manage, and oversee the activities and decision-making of a group, organization, or initiative. In a group such as the Living Lab, governance defines how partners collaborate, make decisions, assign responsibilities, and ensure accountability.

"Highly Qualified Personnel" (HQP) are trainees, specialized staff, and research staff, such as undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, research assistants, and technicians.

"Hospitality" consists of the provision of meals, beverages, or refreshments in events which are necessary for the effective conduct of the Living Lab activities. These costs must follow the standards

set out in the [Government of Canada's Directive on Travel, Hospitality, Conference and Event Expenditures](#).

"Honorarium" refers to monetary payments made on a one-time or non-routine basis to an individual as a "thank you" for a service for which fees are not traditionally paid (i.e., speeches, lectures, seminars, etc. by a guest lecturer/speaker). Honoraria should not be used if a service contract exists or would be more appropriate and are not an entitlement, as there is no expectation of payment or gift in exchange for the service rendered.

"Inclusion" is about belonging. It is socially constructed. It brings into focus the climate or culture that fosters belonging in workplaces or when participating in activities or programs. Belonging cannot be mandated; it is experienced. While diversity is measured more objectively, inclusion relies on qualitative metrics.

"Indigenous" refers to First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples as founding peoples of Canada.

"Indigenous research": Research that is conducted by, grounded in or engaged with First Nations, Inuit, Métis or other Indigenous nations, communities, societies or individuals, and their wisdom, cultures, experiences or knowledge systems, as expressed in their dynamic forms, past and present.

"Intellectual Property" means all inventions, whether or not patented or patentable, all proprietary technical information, whether or not constituting trade secrets, and all copyrightable works, industrial designs, integrated circuit topographies, and trademarks, whether or not registered or registrable.

"Intellectual Property Rights" means all rights recognized by law in or to Intellectual Property, including but not limited to Intellectual Property rights protected through legislation. These shall include patents, copyrights, industrial design rights, integrated circuit topography rights, rights in trademarks and trade names, all rights in applications and registrations for any of the foregoing, and all rights in trade secrets and confidential information.

"Knowledge Mobilization" means the reciprocal and complementary flow and uptake of research knowledge between researchers, knowledge brokers and knowledge users—both within and beyond academia—in such a way that may benefit users and create positive impacts within Canada and/or internationally.

"Learning Opportunity" means an educational engagement that exposes short-term learners to new knowledge that is not generally intended to create or enhance professional skills. Including but not limited to outreach sessions in classrooms, community engagement sessions, and exhibitions.

"Leveraged Funds" means existing investments being leveraged to further the objectives of the project. Includes cash or in-kind from federally-funded entities (e.g., organizations primarily funded by the federal government) and from federal departments and agencies.

Examples of leveraged funds:

- *Existing NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR projects with work that are complementary to the activities.*
- *The rental value of CFI-funded equipment that is essential to the delivery of the activities.*
- *Projects funded in collaboration with other federally funded organizations.*

Living Lab: A Living Lab is an interaction space where a variety of actors (e.g. end-users, communities, companies, public agencies, universities, research institutions) form people-public-private partnerships to collaborate on creation, prototyping, validating, and testing of social innovations, new technology, services, products, and systems in real life contexts (Definition modified from [Westerlund & Leminen, 2011](#)). Example of Living Labs on Agriculture Canada [website](#).

"Matched Funds" means new, incremental contributions (of cash or in-kind) for the Living Lab activities that would not be available without MEOPAR's funding support. Eligible sources include non-federal partners or revenues (including donations). Ineligible to be considered matched funds:

- Leveraged Funds (see definition)
- funding from federally-funded entities (e.g., organizations primarily funded by the federal government) and from federal departments and agencies.
- funding already used to meet a matching requirement for a federal program.

Examples of matched funds:

- *Private-sector contributions earmarked to advance specific Living Lab activities*
- *Provincial awards to support the advancement of Living Lab activities or research projects in that province*

"Partner Funding", depending on the nature, can be considered either:

- Leveraged Funds (see definition)
- Matched Funds (see definition)

"Sectors" means distinct categories or divisions within society or the economy, each characterized by its own unique set of organizations, activities, and goals (e.g. non-profit organizations, academia, private sector, NGO, Indigenous governments or organizations, community organizations, public sector, and academic or research institutions).

"Seminars and workshops" are structured educational events designed to facilitate learning and discussion on specific topics or skills.

"Training Opportunity" means a short-to-medium term engagement that exposes trainees to new knowledge and skills that are generally intended to create or enhance professional skills. It includes but is not limited to, internships, placements, and time-limited positions in labs or organizations with specific training outcomes.

"Travel" means the movement of an authorized individual for purposes linked to operational activities, engagement with key collaborators, supporting sound governance, training, or other reasons. Costs associated with transportation and meals during travel are eligible and must be aligned with the [National Joint Council's Travel Directive](#).