



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Living Lab Fund

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.

The Living Lab (LL) Fund supports existing, place-based partnerships working collaboratively to advance solutions to coastal and marine challenges. The fund aims to strengthen the capacity of these 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.

The Fund is designed 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 coastal resilience Beacon Sites through the BEACONSplus initiative.

Funded Living Labs will address a range of coastal resilience priorities and will support social and/or technical innovations, including new or improved practices, processes, governance approaches, services, tools, technologies, or other locally relevant solutions. A Living Lab must include a **minimum of three confirmed partners (from different organizations), including the applicant's organization, representing at least two sectors**. Each confirmed partner must provide letter of support (including the applicant's organization).

Activities can include Living Lab coordination and operations; partnership and governance development; community engagement and facilitation; co-design activities; prototyping and testing, knowledge mobilization, and monitoring, evaluation and learning. Note that Living Labs are not a Community of Practice and they are not just Knowledge Mobilization. The Fund is being delivered in connection with [BEACONSplus](#), an international Horizon Europe initiative focused on strengthening climate adaptation and resilience in coastal communities through co-design, co-creation, and transdisciplinary collaboration. Funded Living Labs will contribute to this broader learning network and will have opportunities to exchange experiences and lessons with BEACONSplus and other coastal resilience partners.

B. 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.

Applicants 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.

MEOPAR is committed to actively moving forward on the path of Truth and Reconciliation and advancing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) initiatives in all its activities. Thus, MEOPAR requires that the proposed projects engage in practices that apply an EDIA lens to all its activities. Project activities should involve a diversity of members that includes Indigenous Peoples and those from equity deserving groups in its leadership and overall organizational composition. Priority in awarding funding will be given to successful applications from diverse teams and to those that effectively demonstrate a commitment to EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation principles.

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.

C. Structure of the Call

The **maximum funding** level available is up to **\$75 000 per project of a duration of 1.5 year**. 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.

D. Funding Eligibility

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. Applicants must be eligible to hold a grant in their institution/organization.

E. Requirements of Funding

Each successful applicant will enter agreement with MEOPAR (called an Ultimate Recipient Agreement [URA], in which the project lead is the Ultimate Recipient). 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 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.

F. Budget

Detailed budgets (i.e., project and partner contribution), with accompanying justification, are required in addition to the work plan. The budget must be submitted in the format of the template available [here](#) (**Appendix B/B1**).

In accordance with the SSF guide, MEOPAR can provide support for overhead (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 project context). Justification is required for use of this category in the form of a narrative description that explains how the funds will be used under this category, how each expense is calculated, and why it is required. If you require administrative support but do not charge it to the project, it may also be described as an in-kind contribution to assist with the matched funding requirement.

For non-MEOPAR contributions, indicate in the template available [here](#) (**Appendix C**) whether partner contributions are cash or in-kind, matched or leveraged, and if the contribution is expected or secured. **Matching contributions are strongly encouraged and will be considered in the evaluation.** See the [explanation of matched and leveraged partner contributions](#), the SSF Program Guideline for details on [eligible and ineligible costs](#), and [Appendix C - Guidelines for calculating the value of in-kind contributions](#).

G. Submission Procedure

Submit your proposal via our online portal which will open in October: <https://meopar.smapply.io/>. The **submission deadline is November 18th, 2026 at 23:59 Eastern time.**

H. Inquiries

To help with proposal development and having a good understanding about Living Labs and matching fund requirements, MEOPAR will host webinars:

- 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.

I. Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated by MEOPAR's independent review committee using these criteria:

- Living Lab Scope and Alignment with MEOPAR's objectives and science strategy (20%)
- Living Lab Approach, Existing Partnerships and Co-Design (40%)
- Implementation Plan, Living Lab Capacity, and Budget (25%):
- EDIA & Truth and Reconciliation Considerations (15%)

See below for the full evaluation rubric for this call.

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.

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	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.
	Criteria 7: Equity & sustainability of solutions (10%)	Equity, reciprocity and ecological sustainability are meaningfully and thoroughly integrated into the development of proposed	Equity, reciprocity and ecological sustainability are clearly integrated in the development of proposed solutions, including clear	Equity, reciprocity and ecological sustainability are credibly considered in the development of proposed solutions although some	Equity, reciprocity and ecological sustainability are acknowledged, but consideration is limited, generic, or weakly	Equity, reciprocity and ecological sustainability are not meaningfully considered in the

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		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.	consideration of potential benefits, costs or unintended consequences, and longer-term sustainability with only minor gaps in how these considerations shape the solutions.	aspects of potential benefits, consequences, or longer-term sustainability could be more fully developed.	connected to the proposed solutions.	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.
	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.

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	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.
	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,	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.

		OUTSTANDING	VERY STRONG	STRONG	MODERATE	INSUFFICIENT
		knowledge, lands and waters.				

* 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.