Living Lab Fund
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Fund Overview and Eligibility

1.1. How much funding is available, and what is the project duration?

The Living Lab Fund provides up to **$75,000 per project**. Funded projects are expected to begin on April 1, 2027, and conclude by October 31, 2028.

1.2. Who is eligible to apply?

The lead applicant must be based in Canada and eligible to receive and administer grant funding through their organization.

Eligible organizations may include:

- Indigenous organizations
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Post-secondary institutions
- Municipal governments
- Other eligible Canadian organizations

Federal government departments and agencies cannot be direct recipients of MEOPAR funding but may participate as project partners.

The project lead must also be eligible to hold a grant through their institution or organization.

1.3. Can organizations that are already receiving MEOPAR funding apply to the Living Lab Fund?

Yes. Organizations currently receiving MEOPAR funding, including those supported through the Knowledge Mobilization Fund or other MEOPAR programs, are eligible to apply.

Receiving existing MEOPAR funding does not automatically provide an advantage or disadvantage during the evaluation process.

Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed Living Lab activities are distinct from those supported by existing grants. The same activities or expenses cannot be funded twice.

For example, an organization whose Knowledge Mobilization Fund project ends on March 31, 2027, may apply for Living Lab funding beginning April 1, 2027, provided the proposed activities align with the Living Lab Fund's objectives and eligibility requirements.

2. Living Lab Approach and Geographic Scope

2.1. Does our Living Lab need to be established before applying?

No. The fund supports Living Labs at different stages of development, including newly forming Living Labs and existing initiatives seeking to strengthen or expand their activities.

However, applicants should demonstrate that a foundation of collaboration already exists among their core partners.

Proposed activities should be appropriate to the Living Lab's current stage of development. These may include establishing governance structures, co-designing solutions, prototyping, testing, evaluating, or refining approaches.

2.2. What types of innovation are eligible? Can Living Labs focus on social innovation?

Yes. Living Labs may focus on technical innovation, social innovation, or a combination of both.

Technical innovation might include developing or testing monitoring tools, digital platforms, technologies, or infrastructure solutions.

Social innovation may include new governance models, community decision-making processes, stewardship approaches, services, policies, or partnership structures.

What matters is that the proposed innovation responds to a locally relevant challenge or opportunity and is developed collaboratively with relevant partners, communities, and end users.

2.3. Can educational activities and community-based monitoring be supported?

Potentially. Educational activities, capacity building, and community-based monitoring may contribute to an eligible Living Lab project when they form part of a broader collaborative innovation process.

For example, co-developing a community-based coastal monitoring approach that engages schools, community members, and knowledge holders could align with the fund's objectives.

However, projects focused primarily on developing educational materials or disseminating existing knowledge may be better suited to other funding programs.

Applicants should clearly explain how their activities contribute to co-design, experimentation, learning, and coastal community resilience.

2.4. How local does a Living Lab need to be? Can a project involve multiple communities or a larger region?

Yes. While the Living Lab Fund emphasizes place-based approaches, projects may involve multiple communities or operate at a regional scale.

For example, a project spanning the Gaspé Peninsula in Québec, may be eligible where participating communities face similar challenges, share geographic or jurisdictional contexts, and would benefit from developing collaborative solutions.

Applicants should clearly define the geographic scope of their Living Lab and explain how their approach responds to shared regional or local priorities, supports meaningful co-design, and contributes to coastal community resilience.

2.5. Are projects located along the St. Lawrence River or in the Saguenay region eligible?

Yes. Projects situated along the St. Lawrence Estuary and Gulf, including the Saguenay Fjord region, may be eligible.

Applicants should clearly demonstrate the connection between their proposed activities and coastal or marine environments, as well as their contribution to coastal community resilience.

The Living Lab Fund is open to eligible projects across Canada's Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic coastal regions.

2.6. Can our Living Lab connect with other Living Labs or similar proposals in different locations?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to identify opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and learning across Living Labs.

Proposals may reference related initiatives or potential connections with other Living Labs, including those working on similar challenges in different locations.

However, **each proposal must be independently developed and assessed on its own merits**, as different reviewers may evaluate related applications.

Applicants should ensure their proposal clearly describes its own place-based objectives, partnerships, activities, and anticipated outcomes.

3. Partnerships and Governance

3.1. What are the minimum partnership requirements?

Each proposal must include:

- At least **three confirmed partners**, including the applicant organization.
- Representation from at least **two different sectors**.
- A letter of support, or an accepted equivalent, from each of the three confirmed partners, including the applicant organization.

Partnerships should demonstrate complementary expertise, meaningful collaboration, and clearly defined roles.

3.2. What qualifies as a different sector?

Sectors may include academic institutions, Indigenous organizations, not-for-profit organizations, private industry, municipal governments, and provincial governments.

For example, a partnership involving a university, an Indigenous organization, and a municipality would represent three different sectors.

A partnership consisting exclusively of researchers from different universities would generally represent only one sector.

Applicants should consult Appendix A of the Application Guide for definitions and additional guidance.

3.3. What qualifies as an existing partnership? Do partners need to have completed projects together?

An existing partnership does not necessarily require a history of completed or funded projects.

Previous collaboration may include joint planning, proposal development, regular discussions, knowledge exchange, or other activities demonstrating an established working relationship.

Applicants should describe the history of their collaboration, the priorities they have identified together, and how the Living Lab Fund would help strengthen their partnership.

3.4. Can two partners have an established working relationship while a third partner is relatively new?

Yes. A proposal may include two partners with an established history of collaboration and a third partner who is joining or becoming more actively involved.

Applicants should explain the existing relationships, the discussions or activities that have taken place with the newer partner, and how the proposed project will strengthen collaboration.

The third partner must be confirmed and provide the required documentation of support.

3.5. Does the Living Lab governance structure need to be established before applying?

No. Applicants are not required to have a fully established governance structure at the time of application.

The fund may support activities to develop or formalize governance arrangements, including decision-making processes, partnership agreements, and shared responsibilities.

Proposals should describe any governance arrangements already in place and explain how partners intend to develop or strengthen governance throughout the project.

3.6. Can international organizations participate as project partners?

Yes. International organizations may participate as an additional collaborator (in addition to the three local/regional ones) in a Living Lab project, bringing additional expertise, knowledge, and opportunities for collaboration.

However, **international collaborators are not eligible to receive funding from the MEOPAR Living Lab Fund**.

International collaborators may contribute cash or in-kind resources to support the project. These contributions may qualify as **matching funding**, provided they meet the fund's eligibility and contribution requirements.

Applicants should clearly describe the roles of international collaborators and identify any financial or in-kind contributions in Annex C (Partner Contributions).

3.7. Can an organization participate in more than one Living Lab application?

Yes. Organizations may participate as partners in multiple proposals, and there is no stated restriction against submitting or participating in more than one application.

However, each proposal will be evaluated independently through a competitive process. Applicants should ensure that each project presents a strong, distinct approach with clear partnership commitments and adequate capacity to deliver the proposed activities.

4. Budget and Partner Contributions

4.1. Can funding be used for salaries, coordination, and travel?

Yes. Funding may support eligible personnel costs, project coordination, travel, and other expenses directly related to implementing Living Lab activities.

There is no specific % limit on salaries or travel expenses. The budget should reflect the proposed activities and provide a clear justification for each expense.

4.2. What is the 15% limit on administrative or indirect costs?

Indirect or administrative costs may represent up to **15% of the requested funding** and must be appropriately justified.

These may include eligible expenses associated with grant administration, payroll administration, or other indirect project support.

Applicants should use the B1 worksheet within Annex B to identify and justify these costs. Direct project expenses, such as personnel delivering Living Lab activities, should be distinguished from indirect administrative expenses.

4.3. Can the budget be distributed among multiple partner organizations?

Yes. Although MEOPAR provides funding to one eligible lead organization, the project budget may be distributed among several eligible Canadian partners to support their respective activities and responsibilities.

For example, a Living Lab may allocate funding to different partners for coordination, community engagement, co-design workshops, or other eligible activities.

Applicants should clearly explain the allocation of resources and the responsibilities of participating organizations.

4.4. What is the difference between matching and leveraged contributions?

Partner contributions may be classified as matching or leveraged funding, depending on their original source.

- **Matching contributions** come from non-federal sources, such as provincial or municipal governments, foundations, private organizations, or other eligible non-federal contributors.
- **Leveraged contributions** come from Canadian federal funding sources, such as federal research grants and other federally supported programs.

Both types of contributions may be reported in the application.

Applicants should consult MEOPAR's Matching and Leveraged Funding infographic for additional guidance.

4.5. Is matching funding required to apply?

No. Matching funding is **strongly encouraged but not mandatory**.

Matching contributions are considered within the evaluation process and account for up to 5% of the total proposal score.

Applications without matching contributions may still be eligible and competitive based on their strengths across the other evaluation criteria.

4.6. Can partner contributions be in-kind, or must they be financial? Do they need to be confirmed?

Partner contributions may include both cash and eligible in-kind contributions.

Examples of in-kind contributions may include staff time, professional expertise, or eligible waived administrative expenses.

Contributions may be either confirmed or anticipated at the time of application. Applicants should clearly identify the status, source, nature, and estimated value of each contribution.

4.7. Can existing MEOPAR funding be included as a leveraged contribution?

Existing MEOPAR funding that an applicant organization holds for a different project **cannot** be considered a leveraged contribution for a new project or this Living Lab Fund call.

4.8. Which budget templates are required?

Applicants should use the budget templates provided on the Living Lab Fund webpage:

- **Appendix B:** Budget requested from MEOPAR, including eligible direct and indirect expenses.
- **B1 worksheet (within Appendix B):** Breakdown and justification of indirect or administrative costs.
- **Appendix C:** Partner contributions, including matching and leveraged funding, whether cash or in-kind.

A clear budget justification should accompany the requested expenses.

5. Application and Evaluation Process

5.1. How do we submit an application?

Applications must be submitted through MEOPAR's online SurveyMonkey Apply portal.

A Word version of the application form is available on the fund webpage to help applicants prepare their responses before entering them into the online portal.

Applicants will also need to upload the required budget templates and letters of support or accepted equivalent documentation.

5.2. When is the application deadline, and when will funding decisions be announced?

The application deadline is **November 18, 2026**.

Funding decisions are expected before the project start date of April 1, 2027, with notifications anticipated around early March 2027.

This notification timeline is preliminary and may be adjusted.

5.3. How will proposals be evaluated?

Proposals will be assessed across four main categories:

Evaluation category	Weight
Living Lab scope and alignment	20%
Living Lab approach, existing partnerships, and co-design	40%
Implementation plan, capacity, and budget	25%
Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA), and Truth and Reconciliation	15%

Applicants are encouraged to consult the Evaluation Matrix when preparing their proposals, particularly the descriptions of strong and exceptional applications.

5.4. How many projects will be funded?

MEOPAR anticipates supporting up to **five Living Lab projects** across Canada's coastal regions.

Approximately two projects are expected to be supported in the Atlantic region, including the St. Lawrence, in connection with the BEACONSplus initiative. The final distribution will depend on the proposals received and the evaluation process.

5.5. Will the Living Lab Fund be offered again after October 2028?

At this stage, future funding rounds have not been confirmed.

MEOPAR is considering opportunities for continued support beyond its current funding cycle, and there is interest in further developing the Living Lab approach. However, future calls will depend on available funding and organizational priorities.

For additional details, applicants should consult the Living Lab Fund Call for Proposals, Application Guide, and Evaluation Matrix, or contact MEOPAR's program manager for this fund at maeva.gauthier@meopar.ca.