MEOPAR

Carbon to Sea Initiative

APPLICATION GUIDE:

Advancing Ocean and River Alkalinity Enhancement Research in Canada

September 2026

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A. Introduction

This guide is designed to support applicants through each step of the application process. Below, we provide more detailed guidance on different sections found within the Proposal Form Worksheet. If you have questions that are not addressed in this guide, please contact kristi.carter@meopar.ca for further assistance.

B. Guidance on the Research and Development Priorities for OAE/RAE in Canada

This section builds on the thematic priorities introduced in the Call Document, expanding each into more specific sub-areas and illustrative examples. The examples are not prescriptive but signal high-priority knowledge gaps. Proposals that engage these gaps directly, in whole or in part, will be evaluated favorably (**see Evaluation Rubric on p. 11; Project Impact and Alignment with the Objectives of the Call**).

I. Measurements and models for monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV)

Here we invite proposals that seek to identify, quantify, and reduce key uncertainties governing OAE/RAE efficiency; and evaluate, develop, or improve measurement and modelling approaches that best balance data quality, accessibility, interoperability, cost, scalability, and field practicality. Proposals should demonstrate relevance for the development and integration in future MRV methodologies, protocols, best practices, and standards.

Illustrative examples of interest include:

- Develop and test feedstock characterization and evaluation frameworks that are suitable for real-world environments and integrable into CDR quantification
- Develop reduced complexity models (e.g., 1-D models) to investigate feedstock dissolution, sediment interactions, or near-field turbulence effects on efficiency and assess model skill, validity, and cost-effectiveness for MRV
- Develop and optimize scalable, cost-effective measurement strategies for constraining near field particle behavior and evaluating their representation in near-field or regional models
- Integrate and evaluate essential process parameterizations (e.g., biotic calcification) in regional models to improve MRV
- Integrate and evaluate representations of organic alkalinity speciation, transport, and reactivity in riverine and estuarine models to improve MRV for RAE

II. Environmental and ecological impact assessment

Here we invite proposals that generate new laboratory, mesocosm, and/or field observations for OAE/RAE perturbations focussed on Canadian species, ecosystems, and deployment settings; develop and validate methods for measuring biological and biogeochemical responses to OAE/RAE; and integrate these observations into predictive models that strengthen understanding of ecosystem responses, define credible risk or co-benefit profiles, and support adaptive management.

Illustrative examples of interest include:

- Quantify physiological, behaviour, growth, and reproduction responses in commercially and culturally harvested Canadian fish and shellfish species under alkalinity elevation representative of realistic plume conditions
- Develop scalable, cost-effective environmental baselining and impact-detection frameworks by integrating emerging autonomous, molecular, and AI-assisted ocean observing methods that enhance or leverage Canadian research infrastructure
- Develop region-specific adaptive management protocols that identify sentinel indicators, establish action thresholds, and define monitoring requirements to support implementable environmental oversight of OAE/RAE deployment

- Develop and apply ecosystem food-web models to test how plausible and known OAE/RAE-driven changes at lower trophic levels propagate to fisheries and ecosystem outcomes
- Assess potential biological responses of feedstock-derived particles, metals, and nutrients in Canadian filter feeder and demersal fish and invertebrate species

III. Governance, Communities, and Decision-Making

Here we invite proposals that develop and evaluate approaches to meaningful engagement, relationship-building, co-creation, and rights-holder-led governance across the research and deployment lifecycle; support the respectful and reciprocal inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems alongside other knowledge systems in research, field monitoring, and decision-making; advance understanding of public perceptions, trust, and social acceptance; and build and evaluate case studies of social impact assessment; characterize the governance, regulatory, and institutional landscape for OAE/RAE in Canada and comparable jurisdictions.

Illustrative examples of interest include:

- Develop and evaluate Indigenous- and/or community-led co-design frameworks for environmental monitoring to support responsible OAE/RAE research and future deployment across diverse Canadian coastal contexts.
- Develop Indigenous- and/or community-led social impact assessment frameworks and methodologies to support the responsible adaptive management of OAE/RAE.
- Develop evidence-based frameworks to evaluate the social legitimacy and feasibility of OAE/RAE by integrating surveys, expert elicitation, and participatory research into decision-support processes.
- Characterize and compare permitting pathways, regulatory requirements, jurisdictional authorities, and governance gaps for OAE/RAE research and deployment across Canadian jurisdictions
- Develop, employ, and evaluate innovative participatory decision-support methodologies (e.g., oceanographic model simulations, scenario exercises) to support transparent, evidence-based decision-making for OAE/RAE research, governance, and deployment.

C. Requirements of Funding

The project lead and their home organization will enter into an agreement with MEOPAR called an Ultimate Recipient Agreement (URA) that will enable the organization to pay for eligible project expenses. The URA identifies the funding schedule, reporting timeline, project milestones/deliverables, and predefined key performance indicators (KPIs) that funded projects are required to report on. MEOPAR will provide reporting templates and instructions to support KPI and project reporting requirements.

Guidance Specific to this Call

It is the responsibility of the project lead to ensure that all necessary certifications, permits, licenses, approvals and institutional authorizations are obtained before any research activities begin and maintained throughout the project as applicable. This includes compliance with relevant policies, regulations, and ethical standards governing research involving human participants, animals, biohazards or infectious agents, radioactive materials, environmental impacts, and research conducted in Northern Canada. Research involving Indigenous Peoples, communities, knowledge, data, lands, or waters. must be conducted in accordance with applicable ethical and community protocols, including Chapter 9 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Where required, copies of relevant ethics, animal care, environmental, or other institutional approvals must be provided to MEOPAR before funding is released.

It is expected that projects that involve Indigenous Peoples, communities, knowledge, data, lands, or waters will follow the First Nations Principles of OCAP®, the CARE Principles of Indigenous Data Governance, and/or a comparable, relevant framework. The First Nations Principles of OCAP®

(Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) and the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, and Ethics) affirm the rights of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples to govern the collection, management, use, and sharing of data relating to their communities, knowledge, lands, waters, and resources. For projects conducted in marine or offshore environments, applicants are expected to identify relevant Indigenous rights holders and communities and document the steps taken to determine appropriate engagement. Applicants should describe the communities considered, any engagement undertaken, and how community perspectives informed the project design and proposed activities.

PIs are encouraged to review MEOPAR's Intellectual Property Policy. 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.

D. Voluntary Self-Identification Form – Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA)

As part of our 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. Where applicable, responses may inform the assessment of applications under EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation evaluation criteria.

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 2SLGBTQI+ 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 kristi.carter@meopar.ca.

E. Project Plan

Please provide a plain language summary of the proposed work (Proposal Form Worksheet ***Section 6***). The Project Proposal document (max 5 pages, excluding graphs and references) is a narrative style document that sets out the project's rationale and strategic fit, its approach and activities, and its anticipated impact, collaboration, and complementarity with related work.

The PDF document must be single-spaced (no more than six lines per inch), 12-point font, with margins of 0.75". ***This will be uploaded into the portal as a separate PDF attachment.***

Project Proposal Instructions:

- Provide background context for the problem, knowledge gap, opportunity, or challenge that this project will address, and explain its relevance to Canada, including potential environmental, economic, societal, community, or decision-making benefits. Describe how the project addresses one or more of the knowledge gaps and strategic research priorities for OAE/RAE in Canada (See ***Section B*** in this guide for additional details and illustrative examples)
- Provide a detailed explanation of the methods and activities that will be undertaken to achieve the project objectives. Where relevant, identify any barriers to participation, engagement, or inclusion associated with the proposed approach and describe strategies to address them.
- Describe how the project aligns with MEOPAR's objectives and scientific strategy
- Describe how the project addresses federal priorities (see for example: Blue Economy, Oceans Protection Plan, Climate Science 2050, National Adaptation Strategy, the 2030 Nature Strategy, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action).
- Describe the anticipated impacts of this project, including contributions to scientific knowledge, research capacity, evidence-informed decision-making, environmental stewardship, and/or economic, societal, or community benefits in Canada. Describe how the project will increase collaboration and knowledge exchange among partners and/or end-users (e.g. among Indigenous governments, organizations, communities and/or rights-holders, academia, research institutes, non-profit and/or community organizations, industry, and private- or public- sector organizations).
- Describe how the project will contribute to knowledge mobilization assets such as frameworks, best-practice documents, standard operating procedures, and decision-support guides—that help build and shape the oCDR field and enable uptake by researchers, practitioners, regulators, and rights holders in Canada and abroad
- Identify any related projects and describe how this funding will complement existing or anticipated partner contributions, including matched or leveraged cash or in-kind support. Note: you will include details about partner contributions in Appendix C.

F. Project Milestones and Deliverables

Please provide a list of your project's milestones and deliverables, as well as their target completion dates (Proposal Form Worksheet ***Section 7***).

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., workshop to organize planning, sensors deployed / recovered, lab experiments initiated, report-writing, etc.).
- *Include deliverables*: identify what will be produced or achieved (e.g. a report, a public event, dataset, etc.)
- *Set timelines*: provide estimated completion dates for each activity. These don't need to be exact but 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).
- *Align with your goals*: make sure your activities support your project's objectives and think about both quantitative and qualitative indicators of success (e.g., number of samples collected, partnerships developed, highly qualified personnel trained, community engagement activities completed, etc.).
- *Build in time for evaluation* so you can report not just what you did, but what you learned.

Note: You will be required to report on the results of your activities/deliverables and their completion dates. MEOPAR will provide reporting templates for submission through the MEOPAR online portal.

G. Project Team; Training and Capacity Development

The project team should collectively demonstrate the expertise, experience, partnerships, and perspectives needed to achieve the proposed OAE/RAE objectives (Proposal Form Worksheet ***Section 8***). You are encouraged to highlight any relevant scientific, technical, monitoring, regulatory, governance, community engagement, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems[1], as applicable, as well as interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships that strengthen the proposed work. Projects are encouraged to provide meaningful opportunities for trainees, early-career professionals, and other highly qualified personnel (HQP) to contribute to the project and develop skills relevant to OAE/RAE in Canada. You are encouraged to consider approaches that foster inclusive, accessible, and supportive learning environments and that promote collaboration across disciplines, sectors, knowledge systems, and communities, including through the application of EDIA and reconciliation principles where relevant.

You might include:

- Relevant OAE/RAE, marine, coastal, carbon removal, monitoring, modelling, governance, or community-engaged experience;
- Interdisciplinary, cross-sector, and cross-cultural partnerships;
- Opportunities for training, mentorship, and experiential learning;
- Approaches to advancing EDIA, reconciliation, accessibility, and participation by individuals from diverse backgrounds and career stages;
- Contributions to developing Canada's capacity for responsible OAE/RAE research, assessment, monitoring, governance, and potential implementation.

H. Knowledge Mobilization

Describe how the project will accelerate the exchange of knowledge and translate project results into action, decision-making, practice, policy, research, or future OAE/RAE activities in Canada and, if applicable, internationally (Proposal Form Worksheet ***Section 9***). Explain who the intended users of the knowledge are and how they will be engaged throughout the project, where relevant.

Describe the approaches they will use to share project findings with relevant audiences, which may include researchers, governments, regulators, Indigenous Nations and organizations, industry, community organizations, rights holders, educators, and the public. Consider the accessibility, timeliness, and appropriateness of planned knowledge mobilization activities and outputs for different audiences.

Examples may include reports, peer-reviewed publications, data products, guidance documents, decision-support tools, workshops, webinars, conferences, training activities, community engagement activities, policy briefings, or other mechanisms that support awareness, uptake, and application of project results.

[1] See Appendix A Glossary for a definition of Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Strong applications will demonstrate how knowledge generated through the project will contribute to Canada's capacity to evaluate, govern, and, where appropriate, responsibly advance OAE/RAE research and potential implementation.

I. Data Management Plan

A detailed data management plan (DMP), with accompanying justifications, is required (Proposal Form Worksheet ***Section 10***).

- Describe your approach to managing observations, samples, and data collected or generated through this project. While the DMP should evolve throughout the project, your description should outline the types and expected volumes of data, plans for documentation and metadata, short- and long-term storage and preservation, and any relevant legal, ethical, commercial, or Indigenous data governance considerations.
- MEOPAR's Data Management Policy is the governing policy for all projects funded through this call. It establishes what must be shared, the rights and obligations of researchers, handling of sensitive data, and the process for reviewing access disputes.
- The OAE Data Management Protocol, v1.0.0 is the technical standard. It outlines recommendations for producing consistent data and metadata, controlled vocabularies, variable names, file structures, repositories, and submission timelines that make OAE and RAE data comparable across research projects.
- Projects should demonstrate early and ongoing engagement with the relevant Indigenous Nation(s), grounded in respect for their rights, knowledge systems, governance, priorities and protocols.
- DMPs that are Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (FAIR), and that follow the CARE Principles of Indigenous Data Governance and/or First Nations Principles of OCAP are strongly encouraged.

For help structuring and writing a DMP, you are also encouraged to review the Data and Research Output Management Plan provided by the Canadian Integrated Ocean Observing System (CIOOS) and/or the DMP Assistant provided by the Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance).

What governs the DMP

	Document	What it covers
Governing Data Policy	MEOPAR's Data Management Policy	Whether and when data must be shared, researchers' rights, permitted restrictions, sensitive data, appeals. A condition of funding for this call
Technical Standard	OAE Data Management Protocol, v1.0.0	Technical and metadata guidance for OAE research. Recommendations for metadata fields, controlled vocabularies, variable names, file structures, and repository criteria your data is strongly encouraged to meet.
Principles	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (FAIR), CARE Principles of Indigenous Data Governance First Nations Principles of OCAP	The commitments your DMP is strongly encouraged to demonstrate.

Authoring Aids	Data and Research Output Management Plan provided by the Canadian Integrated Ocean Observing System (CIOOS) DMP Assistant provided by the Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance).	***Optional*** help structuring and writing the DMP document.

J. Budget

Detailed budgets, with accompanying justifications, are required (Proposal Form Worksheet ***Section 11***). This includes a Project Budget (**Appendix B**) and a Partner Contribution Budget (**Appendix C**). Your budgets must be submitted using the provided templates.

Please name your budget files using the following format:

Appendix B: [*PIFirstInitial*][*PILastName*]_OAE_AppB_[*YYMMDD*]

Appendix C: [*PIFirstInitial*][*PILastName*]_OAE_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 5 October 2026, the file name should be:

JSmith_OAE_AppB_260605

Appendix B Guidance

- Only include the amount of funding requested from this call for the project, not the total funding for the project. (The total cost of the 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.
- In the narrative justification section of your proposal form, include specific breakdowns and explanations for project costs. For example, 'A. Personnel Costs' be specific about the number of people to be hired, their role(s), hours, and rate of pay.
- Examples of uses for 'Other' under 'B. Direct Costs' might include, for example, costs associated with delivering engagement activities (workshops, networking events), honouraria to engage Indigenous Elders and/or Knowledge Holders, and other project-specific costs not captured elsewhere in the budget.
- Administrative overhead costs may be requested under "C. Indirect Costs" at a rate appropriate to the context of the project, up to a maximum of 15% of eligible project costs. Indirect costs must be based on actual project requirements and cannot be calculated using a standard flat-rate percentage (such as 15%). Applicants requesting indirect costs must complete Appendix B1 to document the calculation, intended use of funds, and rationale for each expense.
    - You should also indicate whether administrative support is required but not being charged to the project. In such cases, these costs may be identified as an in-kind contribution and may support matched funding requirements.
    - Worksheet B1 is provided to identify eligible indirect costs, calculate expenses, and document the associated rationale and justification.

Appendix C Guidance

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[2], and how the contribution supports your project's activities. Applicants are required to secure matching contributions from non-federal sources at a minimum 0.3 : 1 matching ratio (30 cents for every dollar requested from MEOPAR and Carbon to Sea Canada).

In addition to matched contributions, you 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 requirement. These may include donations, existing investments, or revenues from Canadian federal sources that enhance the overall scope or sustainability of the project. While leveraged funds cannot be counted toward the minimum 0.3 : 1 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.

As previously mentioned, if your project necessitates administrative support but you are not seeking funding through this call for this purpose, those expenses can be considered an in-kind (partner) contribution to fulfill the matched funding requirement.

Examples of in-kind partner contributions might include staff time from partner organizations, 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 matched and leveraged contributions must be provided during the project funding period. For example, if project activities are funded in FY 2027-28, only partner contributions provided during FY 2027-28 may be counted toward matching or leveraged funding requirements. Contributions made outside the approved project period are not eligible.

K. EDIA & Truth and Reconciliation Considerations

When completing your application, please provide details about how EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation principles have been considered and/or integrated into your project (Proposal Form Worksheet ***Section 12***). You might provide details about any measures that will be taken to create meaningful opportunities for individuals from equity-deserving groups (i.e., First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, persons living with a disability (including invisible and episodic disabilities), racialized persons, and women), which might include leadership and decision-making, programming, communication and engagement, inclusive participation, and evaluation.

Examples of advancing Truth and Reconciliation principles may include taking active steps to identify and engage with Indigenous rights holders and communities connected to the project area, recognizing that these connections may extend beyond the immediate research location, including for projects conducted in offshore or remote marine environments. This might include building respectful relationships that support meaningful engagement and cultural safety throughout project development, planning and implementation; involving Indigenous organizations, businesses, or vessel operators; creating opportunities for Indigenous youth and trainees; and establishing a data management plan that follows the First Nations Principles of OCAP or the CARE Principles of Indigenous Data Governance.

[2] See Appendix A Glossary for definitions of matched and leveraged funds

For additional information on EDIA, individuals can consult this website, and can access the reports created and issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) here. MEOPAR's webinar on EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation considerations in proposals can be viewed here.

L. Supporting Materials

1. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Please upload the CV of each member of the project team and any collaborators who are playing a major role in the project (Proposal Form Worksheet ***Section 13***).

We ask proponents to submit a CV in the format they best feel highlights their contributions to the field, and ability to contribute to the project. It may be of any length, but the file must be a .pdf, .doc, or .docx and is limited to 25 MB.

2. Letters of Support

You are encouraged to provide letters of support that demonstrate your partnerships, community relationships, anticipated impacts, and/or the commitment of cash or in-kind contributions (Proposal Form Worksheet ***Section 14***).

- Where Indigenous partners, communities, governments, organizations, or rights holders are identified in the proposal, letters of support from those partners are **required** to confirm their awareness of, and support for, the proposed project.
- Letters may provide additional context or endorsement for your project and should explain the involvement of the partner/end user with concrete examples of how they will utilize the project deliverables.
- Letters can also reflect the commitments of partners/end users listed in your Appendix C (Partner Contributions).
- There is no limit to the number of letters you can provide. We recommend that letters of support are no more than 2 pages.

If you are unable to include letters of support, you have the option to upload a statement explaining any barriers, hardships, or challenges you faced in obtaining them. To upload a statement, use the "Letters of Support | Attach a file(s)" form in the online portal.

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.

3. Optional Multimedia Submission

You may also choose to submit a short video or audio file to complement your written responses (Proposal Form Worksheet ***Section 15***). This is an opportunity to share your vision, community connections, or other elements of your expedition 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 submission deadline is **3 December 2026 at 23:59 EST**.

Submit your proposal online through the MEOPAR portal: https://meopar.smapply.io/.

A working version of the proposal form is provided for offline drafting, and your content can be copied into the online portal when ready. Responses must remain within the specified word limits, as the portal will not accept overages.

N. Inquiries

An information session was held on 9 October 2026 at 1 pm EDT. To watch a recording, click here.

For questions regarding this Call for Proposals contact kristi.carter@meopar.ca.

O. Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be assessed through an independent review process involving external experts. Reviewers will evaluate proposals using the criteria and scoring rubric provided below. The weighting assigned to each assessment component is outlined in the rubric and contributes to the overall proposal score.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Outstanding	Very Strong	Strong	Moderate	Insufficient
Project Impact and Alignment with the Objectives of the Call **30%**	The project has strong potential to significantly advance the evidence base needed to support responsible OAE/RAE research, decision-making, policy, or future deployment in Canada. Expected contributions are substantive and address gaps whose resolution would materially shape the field.	The project has clear potential to meaningfully advance the evidence base needed to support responsible OAE/RAE research, decision-making, policy, or future deployment in Canada. Expected contributions are important, well-defined, and address recognized priority gaps in the field.	The project has potential to advance the evidence base needed to support responsible OAE/RAE research, decision-making, policy, or future deployment in Canada. Expected contributions are relevant and address recognized gaps in the field, though their influence on broader research, policy, or practice may be more limited.	The project has limited potential to advance the evidence base needed to support responsible OAE/RAE research, decision-making, policy, or future deployment in Canada. Expected contributions are modest or address gaps of narrower relevance to field priorities.	The project shows little potential to advance the evidence base needed to support responsible OAE/RAE research, decision-making, policy, or future deployment in Canada. Expected contributions are minimal or do not address recognized field priorities.
	The project demonstrates exceptional alignment with MEOPAR's objectives and science strategy and with one or more thematic priorities detailed in the Application Guide (Section B). Connections are explicit, compelling, and-thoroughly integrated in the project's objectives, design, and approach.	The project demonstrates strong alignment with MEOPAR's objectives and science strategy and with one or more thematic priorities detailed in the Application Guide (Section B). Connections are explicit and well justified, and are reflected in the project's objectives, design, and approach.	The project demonstrates clear alignment with MEOPAR's objectives and science strategy and with one or more thematic priorities detailed in the Application Guide (Section B). Connections are identified and justified, and are visible in the project's objectives, design, and approach.	The project demonstrates partial alignment with MEOPAR's objectives and science strategy or with the thematic priorities detailed in the Application Guide (Section B). Connections are asserted but not fully justified, or are inconsistently reflected in the project's objectives, design, or approach.	The project demonstrates weak or unclear alignment with MEOPAR's objectives and science strategy or with the thematic priorities detailed in the Application Guide (Section B). Connections are absent or not reflected in the project's objectives, design, or approach.
Scientific Rigour, Technical Feasibility, and Research Team **30%**	Approach is exceptionally rigorous; hypotheses, methods, controls, and analysis plan are state-of-the-art, well integrated, and exceptionally well matched to the research question(s).	Approach is rigorous and well designed; methods, controls, and analysis plan are clearly appropriate and well matched to the research question(s).	Approach is sound; methods and analysis plan are appropriate and adequately address the research question(s).	Approach is broadly sound but has notable methodological weaknesses, gaps, or limitations that reduce confidence in the proposed outcomes.	Approach lacks scientific rigour; methodological weaknesses or gaps substantially limit its ability to address the research question(s).
	Approach is clear, well-scoped, and highly feasible within the proposed timeframe.	Approach is clear and feasible within the proposed timeframe.	Approach is generally feasible within the proposed timeframe.	The feasibility of achieving the project objectives within the proposed timeframe is uncertain due to identified weaknesses or gaps in the approach.	Significant weaknesses or gaps raise serious concerns about the feasibility of achieving the project objectives within the proposed timeframe.

Criteria	Outstanding	Very Strong	Strong	Moderate	Insufficient
	Project Lead and team demonstrate exceptional expertise and experience to deliver all proposed activities, with participating HQP receiving substantial training and skill-building directly related to OAE/RAE in Canada.	Project Lead and team demonstrate substantial expertise and experience to deliver all proposed activities, with participating HQP receiving meaningful training and skill-building relevant to OAE/RAE in Canada.	Project Lead and team demonstrate the expertise and experience needed to deliver the proposed activities, with participating HQP receiving training and skill-building relevant to OAE/RAE in Canada.	Project Lead and team demonstrate partial expertise or experience to deliver the proposed activities, or important gaps in team capacity have not been fully addressed. Training and skill-building opportunities for participating HQP in areas relevant to OAE/RAE in Canada are limited.	Project Lead and team lack the expertise or experience required to deliver the proposed activities, with minimal or no training and skill-building opportunities for participating HQP relevant to OAE/RAE in Canada.
Project Plan, Milestone and Deliverables, Knowledge Mobilization, and Matching Contributions **20%**	The plan, data management considerations, budget, and timeline are clear, highly detailed, demonstrate strategic foresight, and are contextually appropriate.	The plan, data management considerations, budget, and timeline are clear, detailed, well-considered, and contextually appropriate.	The plan, data management considerations, budget, and timeline are clear, appropriately detailed, and contextually appropriate.	The plan, data management considerations, budget, or timeline lack detail or clarity in places, or are not fully appropriate to the project context.	The plan, data management considerations, budget, or timeline are unclear, insufficiently detailed, or poorly matched to the project context.
	Milestones and deliverables are well-defined and demonstrate a deep understanding of implementation needs, with clear alignment to expected outcomes.	Milestones are clear with logical sequencing and directly linked to expected outcomes.	Milestones are present but could be more specific or better linked to outcomes.	Some milestones may be unclear or poorly aligned with expected outcomes.	There is little to no alignment with expected outcomes.
	The project demonstrates an exceptional knowledge mobilization strategy that translates results into action for clearly identified end-users through audience-appropriate approaches. Activities are likely to support uptake and application of project results.	The project demonstrates a strong knowledge mobilization strategy that translates results into action for identified end-users through audience-appropriate approaches.	The project demonstrates a sound knowledge mobilization strategy that shares results with identified end-users through appropriate approaches.	The project demonstrates a partial knowledge mobilization strategy, with end-users identified only in general terms or approaches that are not fully matched to intended audiences.	The project demonstrates a weak or absent knowledge mobilization strategy, with end-users unclear or approaches poorly matched to intended audiences.

Criteria	Outstanding	Very Strong	Strong	Moderate	Insufficient
	Strong matching contributions are evident. For every dollar MEOPAR/CtSC contributes, the applicant will secure at least 1 dollar from non-federal sources (cash or in-kind) as well. Ratio of 1 : 1, or higher.	Matching contributions are present and reasonable. For every dollar MEOPAR/CtSC contributes, the applicant will secure 0.7 to 0.99 dollars from non-federal sources (cash or in-kind), as well. Ratio of 0.7-0.99 : 1.	Matching contributions are modest or not fully explained. For every dollar MEOPAR/CtSC contributes, the applicant will secure 0.5 to 0.69 dollars from non-federal sources (cash or in-kind), as well. Ratio of 0.5-0.69 : 1.	Matching contributions are minimal or unclear. For every dollar MEOPAR/CtSC contributes, the applicant will secure at least 0.3 to 0.49 dollars from non-federal sources cash or in-kind), as well. Ratio of 0.3-0.49 : 1.	There are minimal or no matching contributions. For every dollar MEOPAR/CtSC contributes, the applicant will secure less than 0.3 dollars from non-federal sources (cash or in-kind), as well. Ratio of < 0.3 :1 . If this box is triggered the application should not pass the pre-screening.
EDIA & Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action Considerations* **20%**	EDIA principles are foundational and explicitly guide leadership, decision-making, communication, and engagement. These values are co-developed with equity-deserving communities and are reflected in the project's plans for implementation and evaluation.	EDIA principles are clearly articulated and integrated into project structures and processes. There is evidence of meaningful engagement with equity-deserving groups in shaping these principles.	EDIA principles are acknowledged and present in some areas of the project. There is a stated commitment to inclusion, though integration may be uneven or emerging.	EDIA is mentioned as a value, but its influence on leadership, decision-making, or engagement is limited or unclear.	There is no evidence that EDIA principles are considered or embedded in the project, or it includes only superficial references.
	The project includes concrete, sustained actions to implement EDIA across all activities. Accountability is embedded through regular reflection, feedback mechanisms, and adaptive practices.	The project outlines clear actions to support EDIA, with mechanisms for monitoring and improvement. Accountability is addressed and partially implemented.	Some actions are taken to support EDIA, and there is a general commitment to accountability, though plans may lack depth or consistency.	Initial steps toward EDIA action are visible, but accountability mechanisms are vague or underdeveloped.	No meaningful actions or accountability measures related to EDIA are described.
	The project demonstrates a deep, respectful understanding of the TRC's Calls to Action and cultural safety. These principles are co-developed with Indigenous partners and are foundational to the project's leadership, values, and direction.	The project clearly aligns with relevant TRC's Calls to Action and shows a strong commitment to cultural safety. Indigenous perspectives inform the project's values and approach.	The project references TRC's Calls to Action and acknowledges the importance of cultural safety. There is a stated commitment, though integration may be partial or emerging.	The project mentions reconciliation or cultural safety, but the connection to TRC's Calls to Action is vague or underdeveloped.	There is little or no evidence of understanding or integrating TRC's Calls to Action or cultural safety principles.

Criteria	Outstanding	Very Strong	Strong	Moderate	Insufficient
	The project includes sustained, reciprocal engagement with Indigenous communities. Actions are co-developed, culturally safe, and supported by clear accountability mechanisms (e.g., shared decision-making, feedback loops, long-term relationship building).	The project demonstrates meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, includes specific actions to ensure cultural safety during engagement and knowledge sharing activities. Accountability is addressed through planned reflection or reporting.	The project includes some engagement with Indigenous communities and outlines actions to support cultural safety. Accountability is acknowledged but may be limited in scope.	Engagement with Indigenous communities is minimal or one-directional. Actions are limited, and accountability mechanisms are unclear.	No meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities is described, and there are no actions or accountability measures in place.
We recognize that Indigenous-led projects may express EDIA and Truth and Reconciliation commitments through community-based practices, oral traditions, and relational accountability. This matrix is intended to support reflection and recognition of diverse approaches to equity and reconciliation.					

Appendix A - Glossary

"**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.

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

"**Digital Knowledge Platforms**" are internet-based services where knowledge can be disseminated among various communities. Includes, but is not limited to: social media platforms, online repositories, discussion forums.

"**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.

"**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.

"**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). Honorariums 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.

"**Hospitality**" consists of the provision of meals, beverages, or refreshments in events which are necessary for the effective conduct of the project's activities. These costs must follow the standards set out in the Government of Canada's Directive on Travel, Hospitality, Conference and Event Expenditures.

"**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 Knowledge System**” refers to a knowledge system that has been used and uniquely identified as approaches and learnings from Indigenous peoples.

"**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.

"**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 project.*
- *Projects funded in collaboration with other federally funded organizations.*

"**Matched Funds**" means new, incremental contributions (of cash or in-kind) for project costs. 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 project activities*
- *Provincial awards to support the advancement of project 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. academia, private sector, NGO).

"**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 must be aligned with the National Joint Council's Travel Directive.