

Ocean Collaborative – Oceans Fund Granting Process – June 2024

(for internal purposes only)

The [Oceans Fund](#) is a pooled fund, managed by the Oceans Collaborative (OC), that supports strategic, catalytic investments in projects to advance the OC's overarching goal of restoring and protecting healthy, productive oceans and coasts in Canada. This internal document is intended to outline the full cycle granting process for the Ocean Fund, from initial project identification through to final reporting consistent with the OC's Terms of Reference. It is understood that our processes are dynamic and may change over time, and that this document may be updated as they evolve.

1) Initial project identification and research

- The Oceans Fund (OF) does not currently have an open call for proposals. Potential projects come to the OC through proactive outreach, commissioned research (i.e., landscape scan), recommendations from OC members and other partners, as well as more organically through circulation/posting of the Oceans Fund overview, word of mouth, etc. All potential projects/partners are referred to the Program Consultant (PC).
- The PC determines initial high-level alignment, based on OC priorities and criteria, between a project/partner and the Ocean Fund and seeks input from the OC as needed.
- The PC may also organize a 20–30-minute exploratory call with potential partners to learn more about the project and its alignment with the OF and to share information about the OC and the Oceans Fund with the partner.

2) Project review with OC membership

- Based on the initial project identification and research, the PC reviews each potential project with the OC at monthly meetings and highlights any areas of particular interest and/or concern for discussion. In exceptional, time-sensitive situations, this review may occur by email in between monthly meetings.
- Based on the outcome of this initial review, the PC will either:
 - solicit further information about the project from the potential partner and/or other knowledgeable contacts recommended by the OC and bring this back to the OC for consideration;
 - follow up with the potential partner to relay the OC's interest in receiving a proposal; or
 - where it is determined there is no alignment, relay this decision back to the project proponent with an offer to discuss on a call.
- The PC will work with EFC to enter the project into the OC dashboard as "exploratory".

3) Proposal request and development

- Where a request for proposal has been endorsed by the OC, the PC follows up with the proponent and shares the OC's application template, while indicating that other forms of application may be considered if desired by the proponent.
- The PC is available to support the proponent through proposal development as needed/desired, which may include helping to draft the application, reviewing drafts, and/or arranging calls to discuss the project.
- The PC will also work with the proponent to determine an appropriate timeline for submission based on the proponent's needs.

- The PC will work with EFC to update the project in the OC dashboard as “proposal in development”.

4) Proposal review

- The proponent submits the proposal to the PC. The PC then completes the associated Application Appendix (key dashboard data) and cover memo, which together form the application package. The cover memo includes a project summary, brief analysis and rationale for any recommendations.
- The PC circulates the application package to the OC via Google Docs ideally at least one week in advance of an OC meeting and invites input/questions via email, phone call, or directly in the document should members wish to provide in advance of the meeting.
- If questions/comments are received from the OC, the PC strives to obtain responses, possibly through communication with the proponent and partners, to bring to the meeting.
- The application is then reviewed and discussed at the monthly meeting.

5) Decision making

- Disbursements from the Oceans Fund are approved by the OC through delegated authority of the EFC Board of Directors.
- When the OC feels that they have sufficient information, the PC will ask for a decision whether to approve the request. In general, decisions are made by consensus. In cases where time is of the essence and consensus cannot be reached, decisions are made by majority vote or other means as agreed to by the OC.
- Granting decisions are ideally made at monthly meetings and will be documented in meeting notes. However, in unique and time-sensitive situations, decisions can be made via email. Projects that are approved by email will be discussed at the subsequent meeting.
- The PC will work with EFC to update the OC dashboard with information from the Application Appendix.

6) Grant letter and reporting

- The PC relays the decision to the project proponent by email, with a cc to EFC.
- For successful proposals, EFC follows up with a standard grant letter for signature and requests recipients banking information for Electronic Funds Transfer. This typically happens within a few days of approval.
- Once completed grant documentation is received, EFC processes the full grant payment in the next available payables run (twice monthly).
- The PC discusses reporting requirements, as outlined in the grant letter, with the recipient. These typically include a final narrative and financial report, with the possibility of an informal interim report depending on the nature of the project. The OC is flexible on the format of reporting, and this is discussed with and agreed to by the recipient. The PC also advises the recipient that we’d welcome their participation in future meeting of the OC to share progress/outcomes of their work should they so wish.

7) Ongoing relationship and grant management

- The PC is the main point of contact for ongoing communication between the OC and the grant recipient regarding project implementation.

- During the grant period, the PC works with the recipient to update the OC about project progress, either through presentations at OC meetings, or other potential learning opportunities.
- Should amendments to the project be required (e.g., material changes to the project budget as defined by the grantee, extensions, etc.), these are brought forward to EFC and, where warranted, the OC for discussion and approval. EFC facilitates any amendments to the grant letter.
- At the end of the grant period once final reporting is received, the PC and EFC have a brief 'exit interview' with the grant recipient to debrief the work and the experience with the OC, receive updates about future plans, and identify any other ways that the OC may be able to support the work.