

CIEE / ICEE

Canadian Institute of Ecology and Evolution
Institut canadien d'écologie et d'évolution

CALL FOR WORKING GROUP PROPOSALS

Funding Cycle: March 2027 – February 2028

Submission Deadline: **October 15, 2026**

GOALS

CIEE supports working groups in any area of ecology, evolution, and environmental science that address questions of high conceptual or applied importance. Core ecology and evolution questions are the primary focus, but proposals that extend into adjacent areas—including conservation, biodiversity science, environmental change, sustainability, and transdisciplinary integration with social sciences and Indigenous knowledge systems—are welcome and encouraged.

Proposed working groups should address significant questions through collaborative, synthesis-based research in one or more of the following forms: (a) conceptual synthesis; (b) aggregation and analysis of existing information from multiple sources (e.g., meta-analysis, data synthesis) or of multiple types (e.g., cross-disciplinary integration); (c) theoretical or applied models; or (d) application of compiled research data to problems of societal importance. CIEE provides financial support for working groups and their meetings, but applicants are expected to manage the logistics of their funded meetings.

Supported working groups must meet in person for multiple days, preceded by a short preparatory virtual meeting. In-person meetings may take place anywhere in Canada. All working groups must conclude their funded activities within 12 months.

ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITIZATION

Each working group is led by up to two Principal Investigators (PIs). At least one PI must be a faculty member at a Canadian university, so that CIEE funds can be transferred via inter-university agreement. The second PI need not hold a faculty position and may be a postdoctoral researcher, graduate student (e.g., Living Data Project alumni), government scientist, or other qualified researcher.

CIEE strongly prioritizes proposals led by PIs affiliated with a CIEE Member organization. The three categories of CIEE membership (CIEE Member Universities, the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution (CSEE), and the Canadian Rivers Institute (CRI)) are treated equally; a PI is considered

member-affiliated if they hold any one of these affiliations. The full list of Member institutions is provided at the end of this call. The mechanism by which Member affiliation enters funding decisions is detailed as part of the selection process below.

To learn how your university can join CIEE, please visit ciecee.ca/membership.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Proposals can be submitted in either official language. A complete submission consists of (i) the application form (available online at www.ciecee-icee.ca), (ii) a three-page proposal (with an optional extra page for a contingency plan), and (iii) short CVs of each participant.

The application form should be completed with the following information.

1. Project Information and PIs. Project title; names and complete contact information for the PIs (maximum two); and a project summary (max. 300 words) suitable for public circulation. For each PI, please indicate via the checkboxes provided whether (a) they are based at a CIEE Member University, (b) they are a current member of CSEE, and (c) they are a current member of CRI.

2. Participants. A list of participants, with affiliations and a short (one-paragraph) biographic profile describing the expertise each contributes to the working group. Each working group should have a total size of 8–15 participants, including the PIs, Co-PIs, HQP, and other invited contributors. Working groups composed primarily of HQP—graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and other early-career researchers—are explicitly welcome, and HQP may form the majority of the participant list. CIEE requires the participation of at least one graduate student and one postdoctoral fellow in each working group, and proposals that create meaningful, substantive roles for HQP will be viewed favourably.

Participants should be chosen to enable synergy between different disciplines, skill sets, and ways of knowing (including Indigenous knowledge), and may be drawn from both academic and non-academic sectors. Participants will ideally represent multiple universities or organizations; meetings with primarily local participants should demonstrate that those participants do not normally collaborate on a day-to-day basis. International participants are encouraged. There is strong evidence for the positive impact of institutional and demographic diversity on the productivity of working groups (Hampton and Parker 2011; Campbell et al. 2013; Crowston et al. 2015). Working groups must achieve gender balance ($\geq 40\%$ self-identified as women or gender non-binary) and should consider inclusiveness of under-represented racialized minorities, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, self-identified LGBTQIA+ individuals, and those with diverse disciplinary, social, and cultural backgrounds. Please share only identifying information that participants freely volunteer to disclose. Distinguish clearly between participants who have committed to the project and those who are potential participants.

For each participant (including Co-PIs and HQP), please also indicate via checkboxes on the application form whether (a) their institution is a CIEE Member University, (b) they are a current CSEE member, and (c) they are a current CRI member. This information helps CIEE track engagement with its member institutions over time and is used in the proposal ranking process.

3. Data Management Plan. Funded working groups are required to deposit original or derived data, and all code needed for reproducibility, in a data repository. A data management plan should address: (1) ownership of the data and conditions for accessing and publishing results based on it; (2) how the data will be compiled and integrated prior to the first meeting; (3) how the data will be stored and backed up; and (4) the plan for making metadata, original data, and

code publicly accessible at the end of the project, including timelines and the names of those responsible. CIEE encourages plans that align with principles that protect data sovereignty.

4. Budget. A budget to support the proposed activities, no more than \$15,000 total. Eligible costs include:

- Costs required for in-person meetings, including accommodation, transportation, meals, and meeting room(s)
- Professional facilitator fees, where the facilitator guides group dynamics rather than the science
- Costs associated with increasing accessibility for participants with disabilities (e.g., professional captioning for virtual meetings)
- Up to \$750 for exceptional childcare or eldercare costs to enable participation by those with caring responsibilities

Overhead costs, stipends, and equipment cannot be included as eligible expenses. Because few working groups have manuscripts accepted for publication within the 12-month funding period, publication costs should not be included. Applicants are encouraged to consult the CIEE Program Coordinator if there is any uncertainty about allowable budget items.

Working groups can be co-sponsored with other organizations. For example, CIEE has previously sponsored an additional meeting for working groups already or simultaneously funded by other synthesis centres. CIEE working group costs have also been supplemented by funding from other organizations or grants. In such cases, please inform all sponsors that co-funding is being sought.

The following materials should be appended to the application form.

5. Proposal Narrative (max. 3 pages). Single-spaced, 12-point font, 2.5 cm margins. Proposals longer than 3 pages will not be accepted. The narrative should include:

- 5.1. Brief introduction to the project goals.
- 5.2. Work plan, including a schedule of pre-meeting activities (a preparatory virtual meeting of all participants, minimum 1 hour, is required), the agenda of the planned in-person meeting(s), and the follow-up plan to reach the expected outcomes.
- 5.3. For projects involving data synthesis: the source(s) of the data, whether the database is already constructed or will be constructed in advance of the meeting, and the methods of analysis.
- 5.4. How the working group will ensure a broad diversity of participants (see item 2 above) and create an equitable, inclusive, and productive working environment.
- 5.5. Expected outcomes (e.g., publications, white papers, open-access databases).
- 5.6. Importance to Canada (e.g., benefit to Canadian environmental, social, and/or economic well-being).

6. CV(s). Short (2-page) CV of each participant.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

CIEE's funding decisions for new Working Groups are based on confidential peer reviews. The CIEE Directors determine the final level of funding for each awarded project and provide all applicants with formal feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their proposals. In the case of a conflict of interest, the CIEE Directors defer to the CIEE Management Board.

Funding decisions follow a two-stage process designed to protect both scientific excellence and CIEE's commitment to its member institutions.

Stage 1: Scientific Quality Threshold

Every proposal is scored against the seven evaluation criteria listed below. Proposals must score highly across all criteria; those that do not clear the scientific quality threshold are not funded, regardless of the affiliations of their PIs. This stage protects the scientific standard of CIEE-funded work.

Stage 2: Member-Organization Priority

Proposals that clear the Stage 1 threshold are then sorted into priority tiers based on the member affiliations of their PIs. CIEE allocates funding from the highest tier downward, until the available budget for the cycle is committed. Within a single tier, allocation is determined by the Stage 1 scientific scores.

In allocating funding within and across tiers, CIEE will give priority to a portfolio of working groups that reflects diversity along multiple dimensions, including institutional diversity and balanced representation across its three Member categories (Member Universities, CSEE, and CRI). While membership in any single category is sufficient for a PI to be considered Member-affiliated, holding affiliations in more than one category (e.g., a CSEE member who is also based at a CIEE Member University) may be noted favourably as evidence of broader institutional engagement with CIEE. These considerations help ensure that funded working groups collectively represent the full breadth of CIEE's membership base.

Tier	PI Affiliation	Participant Threshold
1A	Both PIs member-affiliated	≥50% of participants member-affiliated
1B	Both PIs member-affiliated	<50% of participants member-affiliated
2A	Exactly one PI member-affiliated	≥50% of participants member-affiliated
2B	Exactly one PI member-affiliated	<50% of participants member-affiliated

Membership in any of the three CIEE Member categories (Member University, CSEE, CRI) counts equally. Co-PI and other-participant Member affiliations are tracked, noted favourably in the review, and used to break ties between proposals with equal scientific merit scores.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The seven evaluation criteria used in Stage 1 are listed below. Funded projects must score highly on all of them.

- 1. Project Rationale.** Scientific and/or applied significance of the questions; likelihood to advance understanding in ecology, evolution, and/or environmental science—including, where relevant, conservation, biodiversity science, sustainability, transdisciplinary integration with social sciences, and Indigenous knowledge systems; evidence of novel synthesis; and evidence of benefit to Canada.
- 2. Project Description.** Clarity of objectives, outcomes, work plan, and meeting schedule.

3. Data Management Plan. Quality and feasibility of the plan for data ownership, compilation, storage, preservation, and open access, reflecting CIEE's emphasis on data stewardship and the Living Data Project, as well as OCAP, and FAIR and CARE principles.

4. Expertise of the Team. Expertise and appropriateness of the PIs and participants, as evidenced by the participant and organizers' resumes.

5. Participant Diversity and HQP Engagement. Career, geographic, and demographic diversity (as defined under item 2 of the Application Procedures) and attention to equity and inclusion. Proposals are evaluated specifically on the extent to which they create meaningful, substantive roles for HQP—graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and other early-career researchers—beyond the minimum required participation.

6. Anticipated Outcomes. Potential for impactful products, such as refereed publications, white papers, and open-access databases.

7. Budget Adequacy and Feasibility. Complete estimates and coherent justification. The presence of matching funds or partner organizations should be indicated.

DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION

Submit the full proposal as a single document by **October 15, 2026**
to ciee-icee@uvic.ca

Applicants are encouraged to contact the CIEE Director or Program Coordinator with any questions, including those on content, budget, and facilities.

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CIEE MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

University Members

- Brock University
- Carleton University
- Concordia University
- McGill University
- Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Queen's University
- Simon Fraser University
- Université de Montréal
- University of British Columbia
- University of Guelph
- University of Regina
- University of Toronto
- University of Victoria

Society and Institute Members

- Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution (CSEE)
- Canadian Rivers Institute (CRI)