

## **Mount Everest Foundation (MEF) tightens its criteria for expedition support**

The MEF was established after the successful first ascent of Everest in 1953 and each year gives financial support to expeditions that apply and meet its criteria. Expeditions must take place in a mountain environment with an emphasis summarized by high, remote, exploratory, and quality of exploration. Mountaineering, scientific research, and caving applications will be considered and, indeed, caving expeditions have been successful in receiving MEF support for many years. The criteria can be found on the MEF website.

Due to the need to reduce grant expenditure, the MEF has tightened its definition of "exploratory", initially for mountaineering and science, and, as of this Spring, for caving expeditions as well.

In the future, the MEF will only support caving expeditions that plan to operate in new, relatively new, or little-visited areas, with a preference for smaller parties. It still wants to support caving under the stricter interpretation of the criteria but is very unlikely in the foreseeable future to support, for example, another large Mulu trip. The MEF won't necessarily be excluding large trips, but favouring smaller trips, should any apply.

Consequently, trips of all disciplines that would have been awarded a small grant for limited exploration in the past may now receive MEF Approval only, if the criteria have been met. Approval can be helpful when applying to other funding sources.

The MEF has strict deadlines and makes awards twice a year. Full details are on the MEF website: [mef.org.uk](http://mef.org.uk)

Howard Jones, Ghar Parau Foundation Secretary