

Collaboration between Université Laval, the Institut Nordique du Québec and the Swiss Polar Institute

Access to research infrastructures in northern regions

Background and purpose

The agreement between Université Laval (ULaval), the Institut Nordique du Québec (INQ) and the Swiss Polar Institute (SPI) offers numerous opportunities for collaboration between researchers from their respective communities. These envisaged new opportunities and processes are described below.

The overall purpose of this agreement is to strengthen collaboration between the two scientific communities. To this end, INQ and SPI stay in regular contact and ensure the necessary follow-up to enable the use of the opportunities this agreement presents, as well as to jointly reflect on institutional and strategic collaboration opportunities. The underlying costs of this agreement are borne by SPI, Université Laval and INQ respectively, and are reviewed at the end of each year.

Opportunities for collaboration and access to infrastructure in northern regions

The purpose of the agreement is to generate and facilitate collaborations between groups based in Switzerland and Quebec, Canada. To this end, the SPI and the INQ act in support of each other to create links and synergies, and to identify opportunities for collaboration.

The agreement provides opportunities for collaborative projects to access infrastructures located in Canada's North. In some instances, and for certain infrastructures, access may also be possible for "Swiss only" groups. However, projects with a collaborative component involving researchers who are members of the INQ network will receive priority evaluation.

The total number of projects and access possibilities over a defined period (typically one year) are predefined. It is therefore imperative that projects seeking multiple accesses contact SPI/INQ prior to submission to check the feasibility of their project. Requests may also be accepted but might be postponed or grouped with other projects to increase feasibility.

Submission processes are coordinated by the SPI and the INQ, which liaises with the northern infrastructure operators in its network. Submission deadlines vary depending on the infrastructure and destination. Projects submitted within the framework of this agreement are evaluated in accordance with each operator's own criteria, and in competition with all other projects submitted by the northern research community.

It is important to anticipate and consider the needs of local indigenous and non-indigenous communities, and to work with them in a spirit of co-construction of projects whenever possible. To better understand the aspirations of these communities in terms of research, please consult the following documents:

[lignes_directrices_recherche_en.pdf \(ulaval.ca\)](#)
[rapport-forum-premiers-peuples-en.pdf \(ulaval.ca\)](#)

Application terms and conditions

1) Canadian research icebreaker *CCGS Amundsen*

As part of collaborative research projects between teams from the SPI network and researchers from the INQ network, researchers based in Switzerland can have access as visiting scientists to the vessel's annual Arctic missions. This access includes round-trip air transport between Quebec City and the ship in the Arctic, logistical and technical support prior to the mission and at sea, access to the ship's laboratories and vast pool of state-of-the-art equipment, on-board meals and support from the Canadian Coast Guard.

Deadlines and processes

1) Contact SPI/INQ beforehand:

- Complete and send the declaration of intent **before 15 September of each year** preceding the mission;
- SPI and INQ must be copied on all applications submitted to the Canadian research icebreaker *CCGS Amundsen* under this agreement.
- SPI contact: Grants@swisspolar.ch
- INQ contact: admin@inq.ulaval.ca

2) Swiss-based scientists can then submit their applications in two ways:

- a. Partnership with a team from the INQ network. The Canadian team must submit its application by 30 September each year;
- b. Contact the *Amundsen Science* management team to identify a programme led by an INQ team into which they could be integrated. Applications must be submitted by 30 September each year.

Amundsen Science contact:

Phone: +1 418 656-2340

Email: info@as.ulaval.ca

3) The results of the evaluation are communicated during the winter preceding the campaign.

2) Northern research stations of the Centre for Northern Studies (CEN)

Based at ULaval, the CEN is an affiliated entity of the INQ that operates and manages a network of [9 northern research stations](#), offering its members and their partners unique access to a diversity of terrestrial and coastal northern ecozones and ecosystems in Quebec and eastern Canada that stretch over 3,000 km, from James Bay (53N) in the south to the polar desert of the Canadian High Arctic on Ward Hunt Island (83N) in the north. These stations are open to Swiss researchers as part of collaborative research projects between teams from the SPI network and [regular members of the CEN](#).

Projects in partnership with researchers who are members of the CEN are also necessary in order to ensure that the projects fit harmoniously into their social and geographical environments as well as the projects' logistical and scientific feasibility.

Deadlines and processes

1) Contact SPI/INQ beforehand:

- Complete and send the declaration of intent **before 1 November of each year** preceding the campaign;
- SPI and INQ must be copied on all applications submitted to the CEN under this agreement
- SPI contact: Grants@swisspolar.ch
- INQ contact: admin@inq.ulaval.ca

2) Swiss-based scientists can then submit their application in two ways:

- a. Partnership with [regular members of the CEN](#). The request for access is made by the CEN team. There is no deadline for submitting a request, but it is recommended to do so no later than **15 November of each year** preceding the campaign.
- b. Contact the CEN management team to identify a programme into which they could be integrated.

CEN contact : Mickael Lemay, Scientific coordinator
mickael.lemay@cen.ulaval.ca

3) The results of the evaluation are communicated during the winter preceding the campaign.

3) INQ Science Complex (from 2026)

As of 2026, the INQ scientific complex, located on the ULaval campus in Quebec City, will be able to serve as a logistical, scientific and administrative outpost for Swiss-based scientists working in northern Quebec and Canada in collaboration with researchers from the INQ network. The following aspects are foreseen:

a) Access to the mission preparation workshop in order to:

- Receive sampling equipment and supplies from Switzerland;
- receive and temporarily store samples taken in the North prior to analysis at the INQ or shipment to Switzerland.

b) Access, through joint projects, to the INQ's state-of-the-art testing laboratories.

c) Support in obtaining permits to conduct research in the Inuit territories of Nunavik and Nunavut;

d) Access to office space for Swiss-based scientists who wish to take up residence in Quebec as part of their collaboration with Quebec and Canadian teams.

4) Opportunities for collaboration and access to infrastructure in Switzerland

As part of the agreement, the SPI is providing members of the INQ network with workplaces and a "soft landing spot" on its premises in Sion, Valais. Upon registration, it is possible to spend up to 4-6 weeks at the SPI premises to explore collaboration opportunities throughout Switzerland or to benefit from a base for work in high-altitude regions. The SPI also makes its network available to facilitate visits to different scientific groups across Switzerland during such stays.

Submission process: By email

Deadline: 2 months before arrival

Contact organisation: Swiss Polar Institute secretariat@swisspolar.ch

INQ/SPI- July 2023