

SPI Exploratory Grants Call for Proposals

Deadline for applications: 19 October 2020, 12:00 (Swiss time)

COVID-19: The current sanitary situation generates uncertainties with regards to fieldwork. Should the situation so require, SPI will show flexibility in the management of selected projects

1) ABOUT THE SPI EXPLORATORY GRANTS

The SPI Exploratory Grants support Swiss based scientists active in polar regions (including remote high-altitude regions such as the Andes and the Himalayas) by allowing them to launch short-term new ideas (for example pilot projects), fund additional field work or launch new collaborations with financial support for logistics. Collaboration with new teams or across disciplines are particularly encouraged, as well as participation in larger/international activities. The grants can be used to complement the funding of initiatives supported by larger funding schemes (e.g. SNSF, EU, etc.).

2) ELIGIBLE COSTS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The grants are destined to cover costs for up to 40'000 CHF per successfully evaluated project. A detailed budget will be requested from each applicant. For this year (2020), the total budget allocated to SPI Exploratory Grants will be capped at 150'000 CHF.

Eligible costs include:

- travel costs to scientific stations/infrastructure in polar regions (including for the performance of technical/maintenance work);
- shipment of scientific equipment or material, samples;
- costs for scientific analysis;
- purchase of small equipment (in duly justified cases) and consumables;
- rental of scientific equipment or sensing systems;
- valorisation or integration of datasets;
- offset of carbon emissions, if not an option already offered by the institution of affiliation.

The SPI Exploratory Grants will not support:

- overhead;
- costs relating to salaries of permanent positions;
- costs relating to the organisation of workshops and scientific exchange (stay in another lab/research facility);

- initiatives which are not directly inserted into a research activity (sports, arts, adventure, outreach, ...).

3) TARGET PUBLIC

The SPI Exploratory Grants are complementary to the existing Polar Access Fund (specifically focused on early-career scientists) and SPI Technogrants (focused on technology developments). Consequently, eligibility will be limited to established researchers or post-docs (at least 3 years after PhD graduation). The grants are open to all researchers employed by a Swiss public research institution.

Researchers from all fields of research, also fields considered as “non-typical” for polar sciences (eg. engineering, materials, medicine, humanities and social sciences, etc.), are encouraged to apply if they have a project to be conducted in a polar context.

For field trips funding targeted at early-career scientists, please consider the [Polar Access Fund](#) .

4) GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The SPI Exploratory Grants funds Swiss scientists active in polar regions, the Arctic and Antarctic, according to the SPI’s high latitude focus.

High-altitude research is an essential part of SPI and an important complementary area of interest to high latitude poles. However, funding of fieldwork and logistics for high-altitude research will concentrate on projects contributing to comparative high-altitude studies in support of polar issues and on complex and expensive logistics for fieldwork in remote high-altitude areas.

5) ELIGIBILITY

Applicants are reminded to study the eligibility rules for this call closely. Ineligible applications will not be submitted for evaluation. To be eligible, proposals must notably respect the call’s general aims, the definition of the call’s target public, eligible costs as well as geographic focus.

6) SUBMISSION

A complete application file consists of:

- A) Completed online application form (contact, main information and proposal)
- B) Attachments to be uploaded into online application form as PDF:
 - 1) Letters of support
 - 2) CVs of the applicant and main partners, incl. publication lists as PDF (compulsory – free format)

All application documents must be uploaded through the online application form. Applications sent by email will not be accepted. Incomplete proposals will be considered ineligible.

Submission information:

The deadline for submission will be 19 October 2020 (12:00 Swiss time). The online application form will be closed on the deadline date. No late applications will be accepted – no exceptions!

Should you encounter any problem in the submission process, contact: spi-grants@epfl.ch . Please note however that trouble-shooting in the last minutes before the deadline cannot be guaranteed.

7) EVALUATION

Eligible proposals submitted before the deadline will be evaluated by an external scientific evaluation panel appointed by the SPI.

The proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Scientific merit of the proposed project;
- Originality of the project;
- Feasibility (scientific and logistical);
- Experience and expertise of the PI and partners for the proposed project;
- Impact of the requested budget on the overall project.

Evaluation results will be transmitted to applicants at the latest 4 months after the application deadline. Successful applicants will receive a grant agreement (contract) from SPI specifying the grant's conditions (reporting, payments, etc.).

For any additional information or clarification, please contact: spi-grants@epfl.ch .