



Polar Access Fund

Call for applications

Deadline: 20 January 2021, 12:00 (Swiss Time)

1) ABOUT THE POLAR ACCESS FUND

The Polar Access Fund should enable young researchers (see definition below) to undertake a (first) field trip to a polar region (or a remote high-altitude area). The research conducted during the field trip must be inserted into an existing overarching project (e.g. to enlarge its scope or for comparisons) and be related to the issue of climate change. Funding of up to 20'000 CHF can be granted per successfully evaluated proposal.

What the Polar Access Fund will not support... A few clarifications:

- Trips without scientific background (adventure, sports, etc.);
- Field trips which are not inserted into funded scientific projects (overarching project) carried out at a Swiss public research institution.

Furthermore, the SPI:

- Will not organise the logistics of the funded field trips. This must be done by the (successful) applicant;
- Can give supporting documents (e.g., letter of recommendation) to successful applicants but cannot take care of visa or other such processes in their name.

The Polar Access Fund is an instrument co-funded by the Swiss Polar Institute and the BNP Paribas Swiss Foundation.

2) FIELD TRIP

The field trip can last up to 12 weeks (indicative) and must be part of a broader already funded research project/PhD work (overarching project). The organisation, logistics and choice of destination must be undertaken independently by the applicant.

The field trip can be undertaken in any polar region, Arctic or Antarctic. Field trips to remote high-altitude regions, the so-called "Third pole", such as the Andes or Himalaya are also eligible.

The field trip must be completed within 18 months of the award of the grant (exceptions can be granted if duly justified).

3) TARGET PUBLIC AND THEMATIC AREAS

Any doctoral student or early post-doctoral researcher (maximum 36 months after the PhD award at the time of the proposal submission) working at a Swiss public research institution is eligible to apply.

This deadline will be handled strictly. The SPI can decide to grant exceptions and extend this period for up to 12 months for special circumstances (illness, maternity leave, etc.) if substantiated evidence is submitted. The nationality of the applicant is not an eligibility criterion.

This call is open to all disciplines interested in working in the above regions. Interdisciplinary initiatives as well as initiatives from, e.g., Social Sciences, Humanities and Economics, are also encouraged. All proposals should underline the link of their project with issues related to climate change.

4) ELIGIBILITY

Reminder about eligibility rules:

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. Proposals for field trips which are not taking place in the frame of an already approved and funded research project (overarching project) will be considered ineligible.

Applicants who have already been on field trips in polar regions will not be declared ineligible but should duly explain which trips have been completed and how the presently submitted field trip distinguishes itself from previous opportunities.

5) SUBMISSION

A complete application consists of:

- 1) Completed online application form
- 2) Attachments to be uploaded into online form as PDF
 - 2.1) CV of the applicant, including a publication list as PDF (compulsory – free format)
 - 2.2) Letter of support by supervisor at Swiss affiliated institution as PDF (compulsory – free format)
 - 2.3) Letter of support by local partner as PDF (optional – free format)

Incomplete proposals will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated.

Submission information:

The deadline for submission will be 20 January 2021, 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 and that SPI will not accept applications sent by email.

6) EVALUATION

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

The evaluation criteria will be the following:

- 1) Scientific merit of the field trip
- 2) Added-value of the field trip to the overarching research project
- 3) Potential of the applicant
- 4) Added-value of the field trip for the applicant and his career
- 5) Feasibility (methodology and logistics)

Evaluation results will be transmitted to applicants at the latest 3 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