

Polar Access Fund

The Polar Access Fund enables **early-career researchers** affiliated with a Swiss public research institution to undertake a **field trip** to a polar or remote high-altitude region.

The research conducted during the field trip must be embedded in an **overarching research project** and be related to the topic of **climate change**.

The Polar Access Fund is open to **all disciplines** interested in the above-mentioned regions, including the social sciences and humanities. **Calls for proposals** are issued **annually** by the Swiss Polar Institute.

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

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SPI Exploratory Grants

The SPI Exploratory Grants offer funding to scientists active in polar and remote high-altitude regions to launch **new short-term projects and collaborations** or to fund **additional fieldwork, logistics and acquisition of remotely sensed data**.

Established scientists and postdoctoral researchers employed by a Swiss public research institution are eligible to apply. Collaborations with **new teams** or **across disciplines** are particularly encouraged, as is the participation in larger/international initiatives.

Calls for proposals are **issued annually** by the Swiss Polar Institute and are open to **all disciplines** interested in the above-mentioned regions.

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SPI Technogrants

The SPI Technogrants offer funding for the **development and testing of technologies** relevant for research in polar and remote high-altitude regions, with a specific focus on application-oriented **cleantech** research.

Calls for proposals are **issued annually** by the Swiss Polar Institute. Collaborations between natural sciences and engineering are encouraged, including with **private companies** and **start-ups**.

Scientists of **all career stages** – from Master's students to senior researchers – are eligible to apply if they are affiliated with a Swiss public research institution.

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PoIARTS

PoIARTS offers a platform for mutual exchange and **interaction between the polar sciences and the arts**. Funding is provided to establish collaborations in a transdisciplinary **tandem** team composed of an artist and a polar researcher.

Projects are selected on the basis of an open **call for proposals**. Participation is open to **scientists of all career stages** active in polar and high-altitude regions and to **artists from all fields**.

To facilitate the collaborative process, the artist can apply for **additional funding** to accompany the scientist in the field.

PoIARTS is a joint initiative of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia and the Swiss Polar Institute.

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SPI Flagship Initiatives

SPI Flagship Initiatives are ambitious **multi-annual** programmes in polar regions, combining science and technology research **across disciplines and institutions**. The funding targets coordination, fieldwork logistics and safety, data management, and outreach, thereby providing a **temporary infrastructure** for Swiss-led polar research programmes.

The two selected projects for the 2022–2026 period are:

GreenFjord

PI – Prof. Julia Schmale (EPFL)
www.greenfjord-project.ch

PAMIR

PIs – Dr Francesca Pellicciotti (ISTA/WSL) & Prof. Martin Hoelzle (UniFr)
www.pamir-project.ch

For the **2026–2030** period, projects will be selected following an **open call for proposals** to be launched in **January 2025**.

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Field and summer schools & polar training programmes

The Swiss Polar Institute supports the participation of advanced **Master's or doctoral students** in international summer / field schools and training programmes on polar topics.

Funding is available for students from **all disciplines** interested in attending academic programmes to deepen their understanding of **polar or remote high-altitude regions**.

Students can choose from the schools and programmes selected by the Swiss Polar Institute. The list is updated regularly and participation in other equivalent courses may be allowed under certain conditions.

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Health & safety in the field

The Swiss Polar Institute provides the Swiss polar science community with tools to improve their health and safety **preparedness for fieldwork**.

The SPI offers **practice-oriented training courses** related to **health and safety issues**. Researchers preparing a field trip to a polar or remote high-altitude region are encouraged to participate. The courses are given in an Alpine environment, generally last two days and are **free of charge**.

Additional support measures include hands-on training for glaciated terrain and for polar bear safety, as well as access to customised field pharmacies, telemedicine services, and advice related to medical screening.

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Outreach

The Swiss Polar Institute organises outreach events and programmes to **raise awareness** among the general public about the **importance of polar science** in better understanding the links between local and global **climate change**.

Tailored for schools, the **Swiss Polar Class** free educational programme offers **learning content in German and French**. Centred on the polar regions and their fragility, it offers various experiments, videos, exercises and illustrations. Aligned with the Swiss **primary school curricula**, the programme also includes **class visits** on demand and is accessible to everyone.

Committed to empowering an **engaging dialogue** between scientific research and local communities, the Swiss Polar Institute has also collaborated actively with public and private **museums and cultural institutions** throughout Switzerland.

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Services for the scientific community

The Swiss Polar Institute offers a broad range of services to the Swiss scientific community:

best practices in **data management** tailored to polar and high-altitude fieldwork;

health & safety courses;

networks & partners in **logistics**;

advice on **permits** & relations with the **authorities**;

access to **international operators** & expeditions;

scientific events & workshops.

This list is updated regularly. Please reach out to the Swiss Polar Institute for more details.

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International collaboration & agreements

The Swiss Polar Institute works closely with the Swiss federal administration, particularly on the **coordination** of international collaborations and agreements, and on **policy** and **geopolitical matters** related to polar science.

At the **bilateral** level, the Swiss Polar Institute has notably signed Memoranda of Understanding with the following organisations:

Australia: Australian Antarctic Division

Canada: Institut nordique du Québec & Université Laval

France: French Polar Institute, Tara Ocean Foundation

Germany: Alfred Wegener Institute

Greenland: Greenland Research Council

Japan: National Institute of Polar Research

Tajikistan: National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan

The Swiss Polar Institute also **represents Switzerland** at the European and international levels, in several organisations such as the European Polar Board (EPB) and the Forum of Arctic Research Operators (FARO).

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Collaborating with Switzerland in high-altitude & polar research

Swiss polar and high-altitude researchers actively contribute to **major international scientific programmes**. As a “vertical polar nation”, Switzerland benefits from its **Alpine environment** to **train** new generations of scientists, and to **develop** and **test** novel methods and technologies.

The Swiss Polar Institute **supports** collaboration with international partners by

acting as a **facilitator** through agreements with other polar and high-altitude research institutions;

funding Swiss-based scientists’ international fieldwork and collaborations;

organising **networking** events and scientific workshops;

hosting visiting scientists from partner institutions during short-term visits or study tours.

Please contact the Swiss Polar Institute for more details.

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