

**SPI Forel Grants
2026 Call for Proposals**

Deadline for applications: 15 June 2025, 12:00 (Swiss time)

About the FOREL RESEARCH PLATFORM

FOREL is a sailing boat (aluminium hull, 28 m long) managed by the Forel Heritage Association and dedicated to oceanographic research in polar and sub-polar regions, specifically in coastal areas inaccessible to larger research vessels. Technical details can be obtained here:

<https://www.forel-heritage.org/en/boat.html>.

The Forel Heritage Association is aiming at supporting Polar and sub-Polar coastal research and remediation with a strong emphasis on land – ocean – atmosphere continuum supported by converging technologies. This includes promotion of the development of technological platforms and tools. Promoting collaboration and exchanges with local communities as well as training young polar researchers are given high priority.

The SPI FOREL Grants support Swiss based scientists who wish to make use of the FOREL RESEARCH PLATFORM in such environments by allowing them to launch short-term new ideas (for example pilot projects), fund additional fieldwork 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.).

Applicants are kindly invited to take note of the following specificity for the 2026 FOREL grants

The CASCADES expedition is a joint initiative of the Institut Nordique du Québec (INQ), the Swiss Polar Institute (SPI) and the French Polar Institute Paul-Émile Victor (IPEV) aiming to foster scientific collaboration between the scientific communities of Switzerland, France and the Canadian programme Transforming Climate Action (TCA).

The CASCADES expedition will focus on the coastal region of West-Greenland, Baffin Bay and Ellesmere Island. It will be carried out in two legs of 28 days each during summer and autumn 2026 onboard the Canadian research icebreaker CCGS Amundsen.

Leg 1: From 15 June to 15 July 2026, scientific work on board FOREL will be embedded into the CASCADES expedition's scientific plan and focus on complementary regions to those covered by the CCGS Amundsen

with the goal to broaden the geographic coverage and scientific scope of the of the expedition.

Leg 2: From 15 July to 1 September, FOREL will carry out an independent campaign and focus its scientific work around the more rarely visited areas of South-East Greenland (see map).

Under the present call for proposals, eligible scientific teams are invited to apply for both leg 1 and leg 2.

Calendar:

The FOREL 2026 summer season will comprise two legs (see map):

- Leg 1: 15 June to 15 July, South-West Coast of Greenland
- Leg 2: 15 July to 1 September, South-East Coast of Greenland

Note for scientists based in Canada:

Canadian scientists wishing to apply to participate in the Leg 1 on board Forel are expected to submit their funding application to the TCA management (see below for contact details).

Eligible costs and financial support

The grants are destined to cover costs for up to CHF 75'000.- per successfully evaluated project. A detailed budget will be requested from each applicant. The total annual budget allocated to SPI FOREL Grants is capped at CHF 320'000.-.

Eligible costs:

- travel costs to port of call and back;
- per diems for access to the ship (CHF 1'000/person/day);
- shipment of scientific equipment or material, and samples;
- purchase and installation of scientific equipment aboard FOREL;
- purchase of consumables (in duly justified cases);
- rental of scientific equipment or sensing systems.

Non-eligible costs:

- overhead;
- costs relating to salaries of permanent positions;
- costs relating to scientific exchange (stay in another lab/research facility) and the organisation of workshops;
- initiatives which are not directly inserted into a research activity (sports, arts, adventure, outreach, ...).

Target public

Eligibility as Principal Investigator (PI) is 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.

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

Note: Canadian scientists wishing to apply to participate in the Leg 1 on board Forel are expected to submit their funding application to the TCA management (see below for contact details).

Geographical focus

The SPI FOREL Grants fund Swiss scientists active in coastal polar and subpolar regions, the Arctic and Antarctic, on board the FOREL vessel.

The geographic focus and calendar of the FOREL is defined annually by the Forel Heritage Association and communicated ahead of each FOREL Grant call for proposals.

For the season 2026, FOREL will be embedded into the CASCADES expedition’s scientific plan. The geographic focus, calendar and scientific scope of the 2026 expedition are outlined in the introduction to this document.

Environmental impact

In view of promoting innovative and sustainable research methods, applicants are asked to take a thoughtful approach weighing the merits of the proposed project against its environmental impact. The proposal should reflect efforts made towards the inclusion of innovative methods for data and sample acquisition, optimised coordination and planning, enhanced collaborations with partners, and the maximisation / pooling of sampling opportunities. While some projects have a greater environmental footprint than others, efforts made by applicants to reduce it must be made explicit in submitted proposals. The offset of carbon emissions should only be applied once all options to avoid and reduce emissions have been exhausted.

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 its geographic focus.

Submission

A complete application file consists of:

- A) Completed [online application form](#) (contact, main information and proposal)

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- B) Attachments to be uploaded into online application form as PDF:
- 1) CVs of the applicant and main partners, incl. publication lists as PDF (compulsory – free format, max 4 pages per person)
 - 2) Letters of support (if relevant)

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.

The deadline for submission will be 15 June 2025 (12:00 noon 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: grants@swisspolar.ch. Please note however that troubleshooting in the last minutes before the deadline cannot be guaranteed.

Evaluation

Eligible proposals submitted before the deadline will be evaluated by an ad hoc scientific evaluation panel appointed by the SPI and the Forel Heritage Association. The panel may consult the Forel Association to ensure the feasibility of the proposals.

The proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Scientific merit of the proposed project;
2. Originality of the project;
3. Feasibility (scientific and logistical);
4. Experience and expertise of the PI and partners for the proposed project;
5. Interactions and/or involvement of local communities;
6. Contribution to training of young polar researchers;
7. Added value of the requested funding.

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

Additional information and questions

For any additional information regarding applications, please contact: grants@swisspolar.ch
For any questions regarding the vessel and expedition details, please contact contact@forel-heritage.org

Canadian researchers wishing to apply for shiptime on FOREL in the context of Leg 1 can contact Marie-Helene.Forget@takuvik.ulaval.ca (Transforming Climate Action Research Program)

Map of FOREL 2026 summer season

