



Call for proposals in Arctic Earth System Science

SIOS seeks proposals of high scientific quality to develop the observing system and research infrastructure in the field of Earth System Science in Svalbard in preparation for the International Polar Year (2032-2033).

About the call for proposals

The proposal submission will open on **4th June 2024** and the deadline to submit a proposal is **2nd September 2024**. The successful projects will be announced in December 2024.

The total available funding for this call is up to 4 000 000 NOK. Each successful project will be awarded between 500 000 and 1 000 000 NOK. The duration of proposed projects can be up to 23 months, ending no later than 1st December 2026.

The purpose of the call is to develop the SIOS observing system and research infrastructure. Priority in this call will be given to activities that contribute to the following:

- Harmonising observations of [SIOS Core Data](#) by reviewing and updating protocols to ensure coherent and comparable Core Data,
- Developing platforms to host equipment (long- or short-term) in parallel with existing research infrastructures,
- Extending the observing system by adding observations of SIOS Core Data or laying foundations for future consideration of new SIOS Core Data variable(s).

Background

The Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System (SIOS) is a regional observing system for long-term measurements in and around Svalbard, Norway, addressing Earth System Science (ESS) questions related to Global Change. The observing system builds on the extensive and diverse world class research infrastructure already established in Svalbard by institutions from many nations. This includes a substantial capability for using remote sensing resources to complement ground-based observations. SIOS currently has 28 member institutions from 10 countries who collaborate to develop the observing system and share infrastructure, data and knowledge.

Who can apply?

The following eligibility criteria must be met by a proposal:

- The proposal must be led by a SIOS member institution and include a minimum of 3 SIOS member institutions as project partners from a minimum of 2 countries.
- Each scientist can only be involved in 1 proposal.

While institutions that are not SIOS members can participate in proposals (and access project data as it is generated), they cannot receive direct funding by the project (i.e., non-SIOS institutions must pay for access to research infrastructure, travel etc. with in-kind contributions).

What can you seek funding for?

Definitions

Direct costs are, for instance, salary, flight tickets, accommodation, consumables, equipment.



In-kind contribution is, for instance, project overhead, hours of the principal investigator, staying at the applicants' own institutions' field stations.

The funding available in this call will be awarded for direct costs only. In addition, a substantial in-kind contribution from the applicants' institutions is expected.

The funding is primarily to support buying new equipment and developing research infrastructure. It can support any kind of activity, for instance, flight campaigns, access to infrastructure, harmonisation of data, implementing new technologies, installing new infrastructure, measurement campaigns, and in connection with these main activities, workshops. The funding does **not** cover the project overhead, which should be covered by the in-kind contribution of the institution. Applications should show in the budget the proportion of salary that is overhead, and make sure that this is covered by an in-kind contribution from their institution.

Application procedure

Proposals must be submitted electronically. Requirements for proposals are in appendix 3.

Contact details

For further guidance, contact the SIOS observing network infrastructure officer (<https://sios-svalbard.org/Staff#ONIO>)

GDPR

In order to be compliant with the EU's data privacy law, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), SIOS would like to inform you how we use your personal information. You can find our GDPR policy here: <https://sios-svalbard.org/SIOSPrivacyPolicy>

Appendix 1: Evaluation criteria⁽¹⁾

Relevance to the call and to SIOS (20%)

To what extent does the project meet the requirements and guidelines set out in the call for proposals?

- To what extent does the proposal contribute to the core priorities of this call?

Excellence (20%)

To what extent does the project represent an ambitious development of the observing system or research infrastructure that will support high quality Arctic Earth System Science?

- To what extent does the project represent something new?
- To what extent does the project build on relevant and updated knowledge?
- To what extent does the project employ relevant and recognised methods?

Impact (20%)

To what extent does the project pave the way for significant benefits for the Project Owner, project partners, and SIOS members, and lay a foundation for other positive impacts for society?

- To what extent will the project contribute to the SIOS Core Data?
- To what extent will the project entail a potential for sustainable value creation for SIOS members and other polar researchers?
- To what extent can the project have positive external impacts, such as:
 - improving Earth System Science research or monitoring, or providing a substantial environmental benefit;
 - helping to disseminate knowledge through networks and publications;
 - producing results that can be used by other industries, the public sector or in society at large;
- To what extent are the expected impacts of the project clearly formulated and plausible?

Implementation (20%)

To what extent does the work plan provide a good basis for implementing the activities and delivering meaningful results?

- To what extent will the project have access to the necessary expertise and adequate capacity to carry out the tasks?
- To what extent does the project manager have appropriate expertise and experience to lead their proposed project? Is the relevant competence demonstrated in the project description and attached CVs of the project team?
- To what extent is the proposed timeline for the project realistic, and will it deliver results within a reasonable time?

Environmental impact (10%)

To what extent does the proposal demonstrate a clear and feasible plan to reduce and mitigate the environmental impact of the project?

Internationalisation and gender balance (10%)

- To what extent does this project include, and benefit, international partners?
- To what extent is the project team gender-balanced?

⁽¹⁾ Assessment criteria modified from the Research Council of Norway.

Evaluation process

The proposal will be scored on a scale⁽²⁾ from 1-7 for the criteria outlined above. The scores will be summed with the weightings in brackets applied to create a ranking of the proposals. The final decision on the winning proposals will be made by the SIOS Board of Directors.

Scores will be allocated according to the following definitions:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 7 = Exceptional | The proposal addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion exceptionally well. Shortcomings are not present or are only very minor. |
| 6 = Excellent | The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Only minor shortcomings are present. |
| 5 = Very Good | The proposal addresses the criterion very well. A small number of shortcomings are present. |
| 4 = Good | The proposal addresses the criterion well. A number of shortcomings are present. |
| 3 = Fair | The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are a number of significant weaknesses. |
| 2 = Weak | The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses. |
| 1 = Poor | The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information. |

⁽²⁾This scale is from the Research Council of Norway.

Appendix 2: Administrative procedure

SIOS Knowledge Centre (SIOS-KC) oversees the administrative procedures in relation to the Optimisation Call.

The evaluation panel will consist of members of the SIOS Science Optimisation Advisory Group and the SIOS Research Infrastructure Coordination Committee, who will make a recommendation to the SIOS Board of Directors for a final decision. The SIOS Board of Directors will be responsible for balancing the distribution of spending in the optimisation programme in the final funding decision. The panel and Board of Directors must perform their work impartially and take all measures to prevent any situation that could cast a doubt on their impartiality. The evaluation must not be influenced by economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). Panel members with a conflict of interest are excluded from the evaluation. SIOS is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion and will ensure a fair and non-discriminatory selection process.

The recipients of funding will each need to sign a contract with SIOS which will stipulate terms such as the criteria for reporting to SIOS. Terms for the payment of the funding will be agreed upon during the contract negotiation. Failure to comply with the contract may result in SIOS seeking reimbursement of the awarded funds.

The application must be submitted using the webform on the SIOS website (https://sios-svalbard.org/OptCallWebform_2024). There are three mandatory attachments that must be uploaded with the application: a project description, budget and CV of the Principal Investigator and all work package leaders. The project description should follow the template in appendix 3.

Applications that include any related information, data, and documents received by SIOS-KC, will be treated confidentially. An obligation of confidentiality also binds the evaluators. Applicants retain full and exclusive ownership of their prior information and intellectual property rights. The recipients of funding undertake to ensure the confidentiality of the ideas and projects presented and developed throughout the project period.

If the project plans to collect Earth System Science data that are relevant to the SIOS community these data must be shared via the SIOS Data Management System according to the SIOS data policy. Refer to the Guidelines for Data Sharing for further information.



Appendix 3: Requirements for project proposal

The finished proposal should be no longer than 7 pages (11 pt. Arial), excluding the risk management plan, data management plan, and references, all of which are mandatory appendices.

Please fill in the webform and attach the following documents:

- (1) proposal document,
- (2) budget (template provided),
- (3) CVs of PI and work package leaders.

Template for project proposal

Introduction

Short introduction to the scientific background to the proposal and the problem that your proposal is aiming to solve.

Project description and implementation

Description of the proposed project: what is the project?

Provide work package descriptions, including clear milestones.

Project team

List the project team and the contributions of each to the proposed project.

Relevance to SIOS

Describe the relevance of the proposed project to SIOS. How can it be used by SIOS members? How does it contribute to developing an observing system for Earth system science in Svalbard? Which SIOS goal and/or call priority does it address? How does it benefit SIOS in the long term?

Planned contribution to SIOS Core Data

Environmental impact

Your plan to reduce and mitigate the environmental impact of the project.

Outcomes of the proposed project

Timeline

Propose timeline for your project, including major milestones and a date for delivering project results. You must include a Gantt chart in this section. This will be used by SIOS to set a deadline for delivery in your contract in the event you obtain funding.

Mandatory appendix 1. Risk management plan

Give a brief account of possible risks that might endanger achievement of project objectives and describe how to manage these risks. Use the following headings to construct a table:

| Description of risk | Likelihood | Consequence | Work Package | Proposed risk mitigation measures |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
|---------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|

Mandatory appendix 2. Data management plan

If the project outputs include data, the proposal must include a data management plan with resources allocated for data management. The data should be published through a repository that is connected to the SIOS Data Management System (SMDS) through machine interfaces that allow for interoperability between the SDMS and the chosen repository. The preferred file formats are NetCDF-CF and Darwin Core Archive. For advice, get in touch with the SIOS Science Integration and Data Officer.

Mandatory Appendix 3. References