

## 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.**

The first stage proposal submission opens **21st October 2022** and the deadline to submit a first-stage proposal is **16<sup>th</sup> December 2022**.

Following a first round of reviews, successful projects will be invited to submit a more detailed second-stage proposal. The second-stage proposal submission opens **16<sup>th</sup> January** and the deadline to submit a proposal is **28<sup>th</sup> February 2023**.

The successful projects will be announced on 14th March 2023. 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 for direct costs<sup>1</sup>. In addition, a substantial in-kind<sup>2</sup> contribution from the applicants' institutions is expected. The proposed project duration can be up to 24 months **ending no later than 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**.

<sup>1</sup>Direct costs are, for instance, salary, flight tickets, accommodation, consumables, equipment.

<sup>2</sup>In-kind contribution is, for instance, project overhead, hours of the principal investigator, stay at own institution's field station.

## 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.

SIOS is offering funding to successful proposals submitted by the deadlines above.

## Who can apply?

### Eligibility criteria

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).

### Evaluation criteria

Submitted proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria outlined in appendix 1. The following aspects are emphasised:

- Relevance to SIOS
- Scientific quality and project feasibility.
- Contribution to developing the observing system and advancement in Arctic Earth System Science.

- Competence of the project partners, particularly the principal investigator.

In the evaluation of Stage 1 applications, particular emphasis will be placed upon the relevance of the project to SIOS, whereas in the evaluation of Stage 2 applications, greater emphasis will be placed upon scientific quality and project feasibility.

When assessing and ranking grant proposals, SIOS will in addition to the main criteria take into consideration elements such as ethical standards, potential environmental impacts, internationalisation, gender balance and integration of gender perspectives.

## Details of the call

The purpose of the call is to stimulate cooperation within SIOS to develop the observing system and research infrastructure, and to position the SIOS community to respond to larger funding calls. The funding will support projects that seek to develop the observing system in Svalbard, with a pan-Arctic and/or interdisciplinary focus. The funding can support any kind of activity (e.g., flight campaigns, access to infrastructure, harmonisation of data, implementing new technologies, installing new infrastructure, workshops, measurement campaigns), but *does not* cover the project overhead, which should be covered by the in-kind contribution of the institution. **Successful proposals will respond to at least one recommendation from the SESS Synthesis Report.** Proposals would be strengthened by a clear aim to write a proposal for a future EU call. In-kind contributions from institutions are encouraged.

Some suggestions for topics that could be addressed include:

- Testing new observations using new technologies for remote areas that are currently observed poorly, filling geographical gaps.
- Research & development recommendations for Horizon Europe from the Copernicus programme
- Development of remote/autonomous platforms
- Pilot projects for citizen science/community-based observation to support ESS monitoring
- Production of a data product that has relevance to the local community
- Further development of a SIOS supersite (e.g., Adventdalen, Ny Ålesund, Hornsund)
- Work that investigates a gradient between Svalbard and Greenland, across the Fram Strait
- Bringing two or three Arctic science disciplines together, via project work or interdisciplinary workshops, for instance.
- A product that can be delivered fast and help to make SIOS visible, like a data package

Applicants should however not feel limited by these suggestions, as all proposals to develop collaboration within SIOS will be considered.

## Application procedure: Stage 1

Proposals must be submitted electronically at (<https://sios-svalbard.org/OptCallWebform>). A project description (not exceeding 2 pages), a preliminary budget and the CV of the principal investigator must be attached.

The project description must include:

- An outline of the proposed project
- A proposed timeline for the project



- Relevance to SIOS, i.e., how the proposal contributes to long-term ESS research and monitoring

The deadline to submit a first-stage proposal is **16<sup>th</sup> December 2022**. Successful projects will be contacted during January 2022 and invited to submit a more detailed second-stage proposal.

## Application procedure: Stage 2

Proposals must be submitted electronically. A project description (not exceeding 5 pages), a detailed budget and CVs of all partners must be attached.

The project description must include:

- A detailed description of the proposed project
- A proposed timeline for the project
- A list of the planned outcomes of the project
- Information on the relevance to SIOS, i.e., how the proposal would contribute to long-term ESS research and monitoring.

The deadline to submit the second stage proposal is **28<sup>th</sup> February 2023**. The winning proposals will be announced on **14<sup>th</sup> March 2023**.

## 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: Assessment criteria

Proposals will be assessed based on the following criteria:

### Relevance to the call and to SIOS

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 (high scientific quality, developing the observing system, interdisciplinary or pan-Arctic focus)?
- To what extent is the proposal responding to the recommendations in the SESS Synthesis Report?

### Excellence

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

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 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

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?

When assessing and ranking Stage 2 proposals, SIOS will in addition to the main criteria take into consideration elements such as ethical standards, potential environmental impacts, internationalisation, gender balance and integration of gender perspectives.



Evaluation process:

The proposal will be scored on a scale from 1-4 for the criteria outlined above. The scores will then be added together to create a ranking of the proposals. If there are more than 2 proposals led by the same institution submitted to the first stage, only the top-ranked 2 will be considered for the second stage. 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:

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 4 = Excellent    | The proposal meets the requirements in an exemplary manner, is internationally leading and can be expected to lead to ground-breaking results.               |
| 3 = Good         | The proposal meets the requirements to a high level, is internationally competitive and should lead to significant results. Shortcomings, if any, are minor. |
| 2 = Acceptable   | The proposal meets most requirements to a satisfactory standard. Relevant results are expected. Moderate shortcomings.                                       |
| 1 = Unacceptable | The requirements are not met to a satisfactory standard. Major shortcomings. Not fundable.   |

## Appendix 2: Administrative procedure

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

The evaluation panel for Stage 1 will consist of the SIOS Board of Directors, whereas the evaluation panel for Stage 2 will consist of the SIOS Board of Directors, the SIOS Science Optimisation Advisory Group and the SIOS Research Infrastructure Coordination Committee. The panel 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. **Payment of up to 50% of the granted funding will be made to the recipient up-front, and terms for the payment of the remaining 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 first stage application must be submitted using the webform on the SIOS website (<https://sios-svalbard.org/OptCallWebform>). There are three mandatory attachments that must be uploaded with your application: a proposal document (project description), budget and CV of the Principal Investigator. The project description should follow the template in appendix 3.

The second stage application must be submitted using the Stage 2 webform on the SIOS website. There are three mandatory attachments that must be uploaded with your application: a project description, budget and CV of the Principal Investigator and all work package leaders.

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: Template for project proposal (Stage 1)**

Attachments needed for first stage: proposal document, preliminary budget and CV of PI.

#### Project description

Description of the proposed project: what is the project? State the proposed duration of your project. List the project team.

#### 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 or recommendation from a SESS report does it address? How does it benefit SIOS in the long term?

#### Preliminary budget