

SESS report 2024: Guidelines for applicants

Background

The Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System (SIOS) produces the annual State of the Environmental Science in Svalbard (SESS) report. The SESS report is a summary of the knowledge about the current state and development of key parameters as well as analysis of how different parameters interact.

For more information about the SESS report and previous issues refer to the SIOS website (<https://www.sios-svalbard.org/SESSreport>). Contributions to the SESS report are regularly sought through calls for SESS contributions. These guidelines are intended to support applicants to these calls.

Organisation

The SIOS Knowledge Centre (SIOS-KC) administrates the preparation of the SESS report and carries out the necessary administrative tasks. These include:

- Promoting the call and disseminating relevant information and guidelines.
- Providing support and guidance for applicants during the application process and during the preparation of the SESS report chapters.
- Administering the proposal evaluation process.
- Communicating the decisions to the applicants.
- Establishing an editorial board for the current SESS report.
- Administering the review process of the submitted contributions.

The call text and accompanying documentation are developed by SIOS-KC with input from the Science Optimisation Advisory Group (SOAG) and the Board of Directors (BoD).

Procedure for proposal evaluation

SIOS-KC will screen the proposals to ensure the eligibility criteria outlined in the call text are met. SOAG will evaluate and rank the proposals based on the evaluation criteria outlined in the call text. The final decision will be made by the BoD. The selection process will be fair, impartial and transparent.

General information

- **Eligibility criteria**

The detailed eligibility criteria are stated in the call text. Applicants must make it clear in the application that these criteria are met; otherwise, they risk the application being rejected.

The eligibility criteria specify how many countries must be involved in a SESS contribution and how many of the authors must be from SIOS member institutions. Provided these criteria are met, there is no restriction on the number of non-members that may be co-authors.

- **Instructions for authors of SESS contributions**

Applicants may refer to the documents and web forms on the SIOS web page (https://sios-svalbard.org/SESS_Issue7) for details on what is expected from SESS contributors.

- **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 find our GDPR policy [here](#).

- **How to apply**

Proposals must be submitted through the [online application forms](#) (found on the webpage https://sios-svalbard.org/SESS_Issue7).

The mandatory attachments which must accompany the form are listed in the application form and in the call text.

Guidance for writing the project description

The project description must not exceed 2 pages of minimum size 10 font and should include information about:

- General scientific background;
- Specific aims of the contribution;
- Contribution to SIOS / ESS / observing system in line with SIOS priorities;
- Methods and expected outcome;
- Datasets that will be described, generated or made available;
- Collaboration across institutions / countries / scientific disciplines;
- Involvement of young scientists;
- If you are applying for funding for meetings or workshops as part of your proposal then the need for these must be explained in the project proposal.

Details, including a tentative list of participants, should be included in the application form.

Update chapters do not need to attach a separate project description.

Guidance for data description

Datasets used in the SESS report must be submitted to the SIOS Data Management System through [SIOS partner data repositories](#) or the [metadata collection form](#) (which requires the URL to the dataset) before the release of the report. Note that using the metadata collection form does not exempt you from sharing the data in an open repository. The metadata collection form is used to make the data findable and accessible through the SIOS data access portal if the data are stored in data repositories that are not connected to the SIOS Data Management System;

Please provide information about data sets that you plan to include in the update chapter and that have not been published in earlier SESS chapters (data set name, provider/owner, and anticipated repository).

Do you need support from SIOS data management to make your data available? If so, please specify what help you need (e.g. [change of data format to a format compliant with FAIR standards](#), help in preparing the standardised metadata, choosing the repository, receive the DOI for datasets).

Guidance for writing the budget

The details of what applicants can apply for funding for and the maximum amount of funding per contribution is stated in the call text for each call. Applicants are asked to provide a basic budget in the application form and submit a detailed budget as an attachment. The budget must include:

- The expected number of hours of writing time per contributing author.
- The cost per hour for each contributing author – this should be set to no more than 0,16% of annual salary.
- Cost of meetings or workshops, if applicable (the need for these must be justified in the application).
- Other costs related to working with data, if applicable (the need for these must be justified in the application).

Person hours may be included as billable costs or be provided as an in-kind contribution to SIOS. Please indicate the number of hours that will be in-kind in the budget. An example table is shown below.

All cost estimates must be given in NOK. If, at the finalisation of the chapter, there were costs exceeding the total sum allocated to the project, these will be counted as an in-kind contribution to SIOS if specified in the financial report.

EXAMPLE: Overview of person hours:

Contributing authors	Total hours	In-kind hours	Billable hours	Cost per hour (NOK)	Total cost (NOK)
Person 1	40	40		X	X*0
Person 2	20		20	Y	Y*20
Person 3	40	20	20	Z	Z*20
Total	100	60	40		C

The person hour costs can then be included in the full budget. An example is shown below.

EXAMPLE: Project budget:

Item	Budgeted cost (NOK)
Workshop costs (total)	A
Travel	a1
Meeting room	a2
Accommodation	a3
Other costs	a4
Data management costs	B
Person hour costs	C
TOTAL	A + B + C

Conditions

Funding for SESS contributions is granted on the understanding that it is used for the purpose stated in the proposal. A financial report, containing a breakdown of projected (based on the budget submitted with your proposal) and actual costs has to be submitted together with the invoice for reimbursement of expenses.

Payment from SIOS will only be released once all parts of the contribution to the SESS report have been received and approved.

By submitting a proposal to the SESS call, the applicant agrees to adhere to the [SIOS Data Policy](#).

Details of obligatory workshops and meetings for SESS authors are given in the call text. By submitting an application, the applicant commits to ensuring the presence of the stated number of authors at such events.

SIOS encourages researchers to register their projects in the Research in Svalbard (RiS) portal. Data used in the SESS report are expected to be linked to one or more projects in RiS.

Users are required to share information with SIOS about external publications related to their SESS report contributions. The contribution made by SIOS and SIOS member institutions must be acknowledged in such publications. Reporting of publications may be done in RiS.

Practical information concerning the contract

Upon acceptance of a proposal, the lead author must ensure their institution signs a contract with SIOS. The contract must be signed by an appropriate authoriser at the institution of the lead author and by the SIOS Director. The applicant shall state the name of the authoriser in the application form.

Funding in the form of reimbursement of expenses will be released through an invoice from the institution of the lead author to SIOS. The full invoice requirements and instructions will be detailed in the contract.