



# POLARIN

POLAR  
RESEARCH  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
NETWORK

TRANSNATIONAL ACCESS CALL  
2024

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

**Version 1 (1.10.2024)**

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## 1. APPLICATION

### 1.1. CALL TOPIC AND DEADLINE

Proposals must contribute to addressing at least one of the following key research challenges in the polar regions:

1. Sea Ice and Polar Oceans in the Climate System
2. Polar Ice Sheets, Glaciers and Sea Level
3. Terrestrial Carbon Cycle and Permafrost
4. Polar Ecosystems and Biodiversity
5. Atmosphere Dynamics and Chemistry
6. Paleoclimate Processes and Variability
7. Humans, Societies and Global Changes

More information about the content of each key research challenge can be found at <https://eu-polarin.eu/transnational-access-call-2024/>

**Deadline for submission of proposals: 28th of November 2024, 4 pm CET.**

The proposals applying to the POLARIN Transnational Access call must be submitted through the **POLARIN Transnational Access Platform** ([POLARIN TAP](#)) on-line system by the proposal deadline. Late submissions and submissions via any other channel will not be accepted.

The access decisions will be announced in mid-March 2025 via the [POLARIN TAP](#).

### 1.2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Proposals for access received by the notified submission date will only be accepted for evaluation if they meet the following Eligibility Criteria:

#### 1. Affiliation:

- a) The user group leader, and at least the 80% of the users must work in countries other than the country(ies) where the legal entity operating the requested infrastructure is based (when the infrastructure is composed of several research facilities, operated by different legal entities, this condition must apply to each facility), except when access is provided by an International organisation, the Joint Research Centre (JRC), an ERIC or similar legal entities with international membership.

- b) User teams with more than four users must include researchers from at least two different countries.
2. **Expertise:** The user group leader must have the appropriate expertise to lead the research at the requested research infrastructure.
  3. **Duration of the period of access to RIs:** The maximum duration of granted access at a RI is limited to the units of access offered in POLARIN and must in any case be less than three months.
  4. **Key research challenges:** Proposals must contribute to addressing at least one of the key research challenges in the polar regions as detailed in the call text. More information available at [www.eu-polarin.eu](http://www.eu-polarin.eu)
  5. **Dissemination:** Only user groups that are allowed and willing to disseminate the results they have generated under the project are eligible for access (unless the users are working for SMEs).
  6. **Data policy:** User groups must agree to comply with the POLARIN data policy (see section 3 in this document).

The non-fulfilment of any of the previous criteria implies non-acceptance of the proposal for further evaluation.

### 1.3. ACCESS MODALITIES

POLARIN provides Transnational Access (TA) free of charge to research infrastructures for selected user groups. Transnational access can be either in-person (hands-on) or remote.

**In-person access** means free of charge, transnational (or cross-border) access to research infrastructures or installations for selected user groups. The access includes the use of the RI, and the logistical, technological and scientific support and the specific training for researchers using the infrastructure.

**Remote Access** is a form of Transnational Access in which the user(s) do not visit the infrastructure/installation physically themselves; instead, the users are either provided with reference materials or samples, get access to a high-performance computing facility, or receive the data from the study that the staff of the infrastructure/installation has conducted according to their research plan and protocol.

It is also possible to combine in-person and Remote Access, meaning that users physically visit the station and set up the required field experiments/monitoring, after which study continues by using Remote Access.

### 1.4. RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES

Forty-eight (48) of the POLARIN RIs are offering Transnational Access in the 2024 Call for Proposals. Detailed information about the RIs and their conditions for access can be found on

the [POLARIN website](#) . Map-based information on the RIs can be found from [INTERACT GIS](#) (Arctic terrestrial RIs), [PolarDex](#) (Antarctic RIs and vessels), and individual websites of the RIs. A summary table about the TA offered in this call for proposals is shown on the dedicated [Transnational Access Call page](#).

### **Special access conditions for Arctic research stations and core repositories:**

In general, access to Arctic terrestrial research stations will be implemented in the following summer and winter season to the application time, unless otherwise stated in the access description. E.g. for a call opening in 2024, the research projects will be implemented spring-summer 2025 and autumn-winter 2025-2026. For some RIs, the implementation may take place until April 2026.

### **Special access conditions for Antarctic research stations:**

Access to Antarctic terrestrial research stations may be implemented any time in the duration of POLARIN (until 28.02.2029), unless otherwise stated in the access description. Applicants should be aware that the stay at the station might be longer than the time requested due to logistic constraints.

### **Special access conditions for research vessels and icebreakers:**

Access to research vessels and icebreakers might be implemented anytime in the duration of POLARIN (until 28.02.2029), unless otherwise stated in the access description. POLARIN funded research icebreaker and vessel-time may form part of longer cruises with different working groups embarked. Applicants should be aware that the allocated ship-time might be distributed over a longer onboard stay.

## **1.5. GENERAL FUNDING AND ACCESS CONDITIONS**

1. The EU project POLARIN **provides transnational access (TA) free of charge to selected user groups** to research infrastructures that are part of the POLARIN consortium (from 01.03.2024 to 28.02.2029). Transnational access can be **either in-person (hands-on)**, provided to selected users that visit the installation to make use of it, **or remote**, through the provision of remote scientific services (e.g. provision of reference materials or samples, remote access to a high-performance computing facility).
2. **Affiliation of applicants and RI users:**
  - a. The user group leader of a proposal is automatically the designated user group leader (Chief scientist of the project's TA user team). The user group leader's institution has the responsibility to sign the access agreements.
  - b. Applicants (and user groups) must comply with the rules based on which the access is granted. Any change in the user group composition must be notified to POLARIN and will be subject to approval. If affiliation regulations are not complied, the access will be denied.

- c. Researchers must be affiliated with an institution both at the time of application and during the project implementation.

**3.** The **selection of proposals** for access is based on a competitive process, implemented through calls for proposals launched by POLARIN, and through the POLARIN TAP. Proposals submitted in any other way will not be accepted. The access to any RI in POLARIN will be regulated according to the **Excellence-driven access mode**. This mode of access is dependent on the scientific excellence, originality, quality and technical and ethical feasibility of an application evaluated through peer review conducted by external experts. This access mode enables collaborative research and technological development efforts across geographical and disciplinary boundaries.

**4. Access limitations:**

- a. Access will be provided to conduct research, with an exclusive focus on civil applications in compliance with ethical principles. Access to the POLARIN RIs may be limited, amongst others, by the following: national security and defense, privacy and confidentiality, commercial sensitivity and intellectual property rights and ethical considerations in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- b. Access to users not working in an [European Union Member State](#) or [HORIZON EUROPE associated country](#) is limited to 20% of the total units of access provided by the project POLARIN.
- c. Researchers who are affiliated with and/or based at institutions in Russia will not be granted access to research infrastructures through this call.

**5. Units of access:**

- a. Access to a RI is limited to the units of access offered by the RIs in POLARIN and in any case to less than three months. Units of access can be user/day, time for instruments installation, sensor deployment, sampling day or RI/day, depending on the type of RI. For services, facilities, and units of access offered within each of the RIs, please refer to the respective RI profile on the POLARIN website.
- b. Allocated RI access time does not include mobilisation in the place of departure and demobilisation at the end of the access period (vessels) or journey to and from the RI (research stations).
- c. If the number of funded units of access is reduced by POLARIN for any reason or if the RIs are prevented from working (e.g., by adverse weather and ice conditions, technical difficulties, outbreak and spread of any disease with impacts on native wildlife and/or humans, or other natural phenomena) no form of compensation shall be payable in respect of any time lost. It should be noted that RI schedules/itineraries are subject to change.
- d. If the RI operator agrees, the length of the access can be extended if the applicant provides sufficient complementary funding. The leveraging of funds from other sources for a portion of the total amount of infrastructure time applied is encouraged and should be clearly stated in the application. However, cross funding from other EU projects is not permitted.

## 6. Eligible and ineligible costs

### a. Eligible costs:

#### **In-person access:**

POLARIN will cover:

- the use of the infrastructure (for a limited number of users), subsistence (meals and accommodation at the RI) and other standard costs associated to the use of the infrastructure, such as the logistical, technological and scientific support, and the specific training that is usually provided to external researchers using the infrastructure.
- Travel expenses of the selected users or user groups, and transport of equipment/samples to and from the RIs to the institutes of origin up to the granted amount.

#### **Remote access:**

The use of the infrastructure and logistics costs (freight, shipping) up to the granted amount.

### b. Ineligible costs

Grantees cannot invoice the POLARIN Consortium or respective RI operator for any additional or third-party costs, such as salary costs, equipment manufacture, insurance costs, repair and rental of (scientific) equipment, consumables, sub-contracting and assistance, publication costs and overheads.

**7. Liability:** RI users should note that installation and operation of any equipment that they bring to the RI is done at their own risk, even when it is carried on board or deployed from the vessel or used at a research station. Further details will be provided during the negotiation phase when the access agreements are signed (see below). Users are responsible for the insurance coverage of their own instrumentation.

## 8. Signature of agreements:

Two agreements will be signed by the user group leader's institution to accept the granted access in the negotiation phase:

- a. Between the user group leader's institution and the POLARIN Consortium laying out the responsibilities and obligations (e.g. reporting, acknowledgement of POLARIN in publications).
- b. Between the user group leader's institution and the RI operator giving access laying out the terms and conditions of access, including the support granted, liability, applicable safety/security regulations, and the modalities of reimbursement for travel and subsistence costs of the TA user group.

## 1.6. HOW TO APPLY

### POLARIN TRANSNATIONAL ACCESS PLATFORM (POLARIN TAP)

Fill in the application form carefully. You can work on the application in several sessions and store the application in-between the sessions, but you can submit only one application per call.

You can access the platform here:

To apply, applicants must comply with the [POLARIN Data Privacy Policy](#).

### TEMPLATES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS REQUIRED AT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants are requested to provide a Project Description, the CV of the user group Leader, and a preliminary TA Data Management Plan in the application. The templates including guidelines can be downloaded from the POLARIN website dedicated [Transnational Access Call 2024](#) and the [POLARIN TAP](#).

**Project description:** Read carefully the [Project Description Template and Guidelines](#) and follow the instructions. The Research Plan must follow the structure provided in the Project Description Guidelines and adhere to the maximum number of pages depending on the type of RI you are applying for access. Research plans failing to follow the instructed structure and exceeding the maximum length will be rejected from the evaluation. Pay special attention to providing information on research permits and specific logistic needs that are required by some infrastructures (visa, import and export permits etc.), and what has been studied at the infrastructure previously. Consult the relevant Research Infrastructure manager(s) (see [individual RI descriptions](#)) about the required permits, if needed.

**CV of the User group Leader:** Use the [POLARIN CV template](#) to fill in the CV of the user group leader. The page limit is 1 page.

**TA Data Management Plan:** Use the [POLARIN Preliminary TA Data Management Plan template](#) to describe the management of data gathered by your project. The DMP will only be assessed if the project is selected for implementation, but a preliminary version must be submitted with the proposal.

**Letter of recommendation:** Early career researchers (undergraduate, graduate or post-graduate level up to 5 years active in science after last degree) applying as user group leader must provide 1-2 letters of recommendation from their academic supervisor and/or other relevant person in support of their application.



## 1.7. VISA AND PERMITS

Assistance and support are available to the selected applicants for application of visas and required permits to infrastructures. Please contact the relevant POLARIN RI manager(s) for additional information.

## 1.8. DISCLAIMER

All travel arrangements to POLARIN research infrastructures are the responsibility of the applicant. In case of technical or logistical challenges, user groups should first contact the Research Infrastructure Manager/Operator. Only in exceptional situations, where local personnel cannot assist, should POLARIN coordination be contacted.

POLARIN is not liable for any injuries, damages, or losses that may occur during access to its infrastructures. User groups are responsible for organizing their own travel, ensuring they have appropriate travel and health insurance, and fulfilling all passport, visa, vaccination, and other entry requirements for each destination. It is also the responsibility of the user groups to be aware of safety and security conditions at their respective research sites throughout their travel and stay.

All members of user groups must have sufficient travel and health insurance and be clear on their legal responsibilities through their employers. POLARIN does not cover the cost of insurance or any additional expenses arising from unforeseen circumstances such as travel delays, cancellations, customs, shipment, or other logistical issues. POLARIN also assumes no legal responsibility for the health and welfare, including emergency and accident situations, of those awarded access to its infrastructures.

By applying for access through POLARIN, you confirm that you have read and accepted these terms and agree with our [Data Protection Policy](#).

## 2. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

### 2.1. EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation of proposals consists of different phases: Eligibility Check, Scientific Evaluation, Logistic Evaluation and the Feedback and Negotiation Phase.

#### 1. Eligibility check:

Eligibility check of the submitted proposals is performed soon after the call is closed, based on the eligibility criteria listed in *1.2 Eligibility*.

**2. Proposal Evaluation:** The proposal evaluation consists of two steps: the scientific evaluation and the logistic evaluation. Only proposals ranked as excellent in the scientific evaluation are recommended for the logistic evaluation and implementation.

**a. Scientific evaluation:** The scientific evaluation is managed by the POLARIN Scientific Evaluation Secretariat, with the support of a Scientific Liaison Panel (SLP), a panel of experts with >50% of members from institutions not affiliated to POLARIN. Each proposal is assigned with a Watchdog from the SLP. The Watchdog oversees the whole evaluation process of the proposal and nominates external reviewers according to their expertise. The external experts then evaluate the proposal following the evaluation criteria described in *section 2.3*.

The Scientific Liaison Panel reviews the external expert evaluations together with the Watchdogs. Based on the review, the SLP submits their scientific evaluation statement and either recommends or not recommends the proposal for access. The recommended proposals move to logistic evaluation.

**b. Logistic evaluation and access decision:** The logistic evaluation is performed by the RI operators, who evaluate the logistic feasibility of the proposed work, use of equipment, area of operation and timing of access. RI operators provide a short Logistic Evaluation Statement and make the access decision based on the scientific and logistic evaluation results.

The applicants receive the access decisions, including the amount of granted access and travel and logistic costs, together with the scientific and logistic evaluation statements, via POLARIN TAP.

Proposals accepted for implementation go through a negotiation phase with possible adjustments according to recommendations by the SLP or the RI operator(s) and sign the agreements with the POLARIN Consortium and with the RI where access is granted.

## 2.2. ACCESS PRIORITY

The selection of user groups for access is based on scientific excellence, but at equal scientific merits priority will be given to user groups composed of users who:

- Have not previously used the installation
- Are working in countries where no equivalent research infrastructure exists

POLARIN encourages the submission of proposals that consider:

- Multidisciplinary and multinational user groups, requesting either a combination of RIs or with a two-pole approach.

- User groups with gender balance and involvement of early career researchers
- Ukrainian researchers from government-controlled territories as user group leaders.

### 2.3. SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria	Scoring	Weight
<p><b>1) Background and objectives: Scientific quality of the planned research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is the current state of knowledge in the research area well described?</li> <li>● Will the proposal substantially contribute to knowledge beyond the state of the art?</li> <li>● Is the research innovative?</li> <li>● Are the research objectives and expected deliverables clearly stated and realistic from a scientific point of view?</li> </ul>	1-5	30%
<p><b>2) Scientific and societal impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is the expected scientific and societal impact well addressed?</li> <li>● Is the proposed research contributing to addressing the key research priorities in polar regions? is this clearly explained?</li> <li>● To what extent is the proposed project embedded and contributing into larger research programmes on a national, EU or international level? *</li> </ul>	1-5	10%
<p><b>3) Quality of the work plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Are the methodology and the work plan clearly described and adequate for the objectives?</li> <li>● Is the work plan feasible considering resources (manpower/equipment) and time?</li> <li>● Are ethical issues, logistic needs and research permits required clearly identified?</li> <li>● For larger user groups (4 members or more) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Is the proposed work multidisciplinary?</li> <li>(2) Does the proposed project maximise the use of the requested infrastructure(s)?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	1-5	15%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the number of users accessing the infrastructure and their contribution justified?</li> </ul>		
<b>4) Scientific competence of the user group leader and user group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the background/track record of the user group leader sound enough, in proportion to his/her career stage?</li> <li>Are the roles and responsibilities of the user group clearly stated?</li> <li>Is the user group solid, complementary and suitable to achieve the objectives of the proposed research?</li> <li>Are early career researchers included in the user group?</li> </ul>	1-5	15%
<b>5) Expected results and possible risks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the expected results achievable and adequately described?</li> <li>Has the research potential for scientific breakthroughs?</li> <li>Are potential risks and contingency plans well addressed?</li> </ul>	1-5	15%
<b>6) Exploitation of results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a realistic plan for scientific publications?</li> <li>Is there funding or other kind of support available or being requested for a proper exploitation of gathered data and samples?</li> <li>Will the project contribute to making data FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable)?</li> <li>Are dissemination activities and public outreach planned, during and after the access, to rise awareness among potential end-users, the scientific community and the general public?</li> </ul>	1-5	15%

\* Not relevant if the user group leader is an Early Career Researcher.

## 2.4. INFORMATION TO SELECTED APPLICANTS

The access decisions will be announced in mid-March 2025 via the POLARIN TAP.

All applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful, will receive feedback on the outcome of their proposal evaluation. This will be made available to the applicants, together with the access decision, in POLARIN TAP.

Successful applicants will be invited to sign Agreements with the POLARIN Consortium and with the RI where access is granted in POLARIN TAP.

## 2.5. DISPUTES AND COMPLAINTS

POLARIN aims to provide smooth access to research infrastructures, but we recognize that complaints may arise regarding e.g. administrative procedures or access decisions. Complaints should be directed to the POLARIN management team, which will investigate and provide feedback within 10 working days. The following are considered not grounds for complaints:

- Rejection of proposals following standard procedures
- SLP composition

Formal complaints should be submitted by email, to the POLARIN management team ([polarin.info@awi.de](mailto:polarin.info@awi.de)) for resolution.

## 3. DATA MANAGEMENT

### 3.1. POLARIN DATA POLICY: MANAGEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC DATA RESULTING FROM POLARIN TRANSNATIONAL ACCESS

All digital research data and outputs resulting from POLARIN Transnational Access will be managed in accordance with the general POLARIN Data Policy, which adheres to the FAIR principles. Applying these principles ensures that research data is Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable throughout the entire data lifecycle, and helps to maximize the project's data outcomes and use of the data beyond its lifetime.

The User Groups granted POLARIN TA must comply with the POLARIN Data Policy and agree to publish their data in a trusted repository the latest within 24 months from the completion of their access and provide the DOI or relevant persistent identifier of the dataset in POLARIN TAP.

POLARIN advocates for adopting the Creative Commons framework and using the CC BY 4.0 license for digital data wherever possible. An embargo period of maximum 24 months is allowed, during which access to a dataset is temporarily restricted. Requests from external users for data access during the embargo period will be forwarded to the data originators for their decision.

Metadata should be made available under the CC0 license as soon as possible. The trusted data repository where the data will be published should be specified in the metadata. Once

the data is ready to be made publicly available, the metadata should also include a Persistent Identifier (e.g. a DOI).

The information on published metadata and datasets must be provided by the TA User Group leader in POLARIN TAP.

### 3.2. PRIVACY POLICY

Personal information supplied to the POLARIN Consortium will be stored in electronic format (e.g. in database) and used only in connection with the handling of proposals, provision of access and project reporting. All personal data supplied to the POLARIN Consortium shall be processed in accordance with the highest ethical standards and all applicable international, EU and national laws (in particular, the GDPR, national data protection laws and other relevant legislation). The TA/RA related issues and procedures concerning the EU GDPR are provided in **POLARIN's [Data Privacy Policy](#)**.

## 4. CONTACT INFORMATION

General questions about POLARIN TA applications: [polarin\\_ta@listserv.dfn.de](mailto:polarin_ta@listserv.dfn.de)

For any inquiries regarding the Scientific Evaluation of Proposals, please contact [polarin\\_evaluation\\_secretariat@ogs.it](mailto:polarin_evaluation_secretariat@ogs.it)

Technical matters regarding POLARIN TAP: [polarin@inkode.it](mailto:polarin@inkode.it)