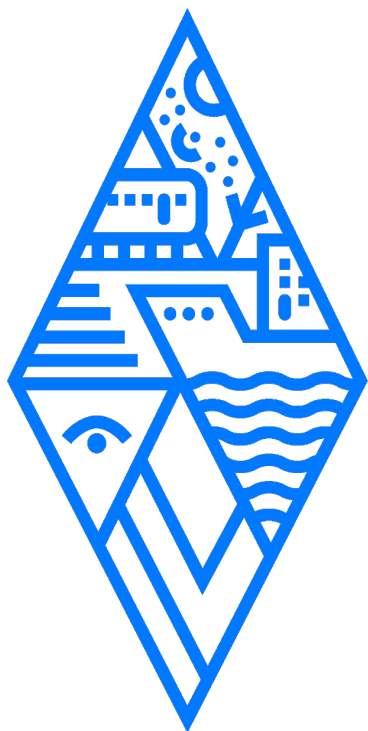




POLARIN

POLAR
RESEARCH
INFRASTRUCTURE
NETWORK

CALL FOR ACCESS TO CORE REPOSITORIES 2026

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Version 1 (20.08.2026)



Funded by
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Glossary

User: Research team member accessing the research infrastructure(s) either in person or via remote access.

User Group Leader: Principal Investigator of the User Group. The User Group Leader may or may not access the research infrastructure(s) in person. The User Group Leader is legally responsible for the implementation of the access as granted by POLARIN.

User Group: User Group Leader and the users accessing the infrastructure(s). The User Group listed in POLARIN TAP should not include any additional members that are not accessing the infrastructure(s), either in person or via remote access.

1. APPLICATION

1.1. CALL TOPIC AND DEADLINE

Proposals must contribute to addressing at least one of the following key research priorities 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
8. Closing Polar Knowledge Gaps

More information about the content of each key research challenge can be found at <https://eu-polarin.eu/core-repositories-access-call-v-2/>

Applicants should note that the scientific evaluation, in addition to the evaluation criteria, will also take into consideration the access priorities described in this document section 2.2.

Deadline for submission of proposals: 29th of October 2026, 16:00 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.

Call results are expected by mid-March 2027 and will be announced 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 the majority of the users must work in an institution based in an [European Union Member State](#) or [HORIZON EUROPE associated country](#), with the exception of user groups led by Ukrainian researchers from government-controlled territories.
- b) The user group leader and at least 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.
- c) User groups with more than four users must include researchers from at least two different countries.

The User Group listed in POLARIN TAP should not include any additional members that are not accessing the infrastructure(s), either in person or via remote access.

- 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 per person.
- 4. **Key research priorities:** Proposals must contribute to addressing at least one of the key research priorities in the polar regions as detailed in the call text. More information available on the [call page](#).
- 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](#)
- 7. **Application documents:** Proposals with Project Descriptions and CVs failing to follow the instructed structure and exceeding the maximum length will be rejected from the evaluation as non-eligible. The document templates with the embedded guidelines for the maximum length of appendices are available on the [call page](#).

The non-fulfillment 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 core repositories 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 visit to the core repository, and the logistical, technological and scientific support and the specific training for researchers visiting the repository.

Remote Access is a form of Transnational Access in which the user(s) do not visit the core repository physically themselves; instead, the users are either provided with reference materials or samples, or receive the data from the analyses (if offered) that the staff of the repository has conducted according to their research plan and protocol.

1.4. CORE REPOSITORIES OFFERED IN THE CALL

This call offers access to core repositories only. Detailed information about the repositories and their conditions for access can be found on the [Core repository Access Call page](#).

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 applicant submitting the application in POLARIN TAP must be the User Group Leader. Any proposal where the User Group Leader is not the same as the applicant submitting the proposal will not be evaluated.
 - b. The User Group Leader is legally responsible for the implementation of the access as granted by POLARIN. The user group leader's institution has the responsibility to sign the access agreements.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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**.

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 per person. 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 mobilization in the place of departure and demobilization at the end of the access period (vessels) or journey to and from the RI (research stations and core repositories).
- 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) and other standard costs associated to the use of the core repository, such as the logistical, technological and scientific support, and the specific training that is usually provided to external researchers using the core repository.
- Travel expenses of the selected users or user groups, and transport of equipment/samples to and from the core repository to the institutes of origin up to the granted amount.

Remote access:

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

b. Ineligible costs

Grantees cannot invoice the POLARIN Consortium or respective core repository 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. Users are responsible for the insurance coverage of their own instrumentation, if needed.

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). (Mandatory)
- 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. (Optional by RI request)

Failure to comply with any clause of the contracts, or to obtain the required training, medical certificates, or other prerequisites set by the research infrastructure, will result in the cancellation of the granted access.

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: <https://polarin-tap.eu.inkode.org/>

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

ENTERING BUDGET AND RI UNITS IN POLARIN TAP

1. Proposal budget:

Applicants are required to provide an estimate of the travel and logistic costs for their planned access. These include:

- b. Travel to and from the core repository (e.g. flights, train tickets, local transport). The costs estimates should be for refundable tickets in economy class.
- c. Logistic costs directly related to the access (e.g. freight/shipment of samples or equipment, visas, permits, insurance if applicable).

Please provide a realistic budget estimate in the application form. The budget should reflect the expected costs per person. You can consult the [Budgeting Guidelines](#) to provide a budget for the proposed access.

Note: Costs related to the use of the Research Infrastructure itself (e.g. access fees, instrumentation, facilities) are covered internally by POLARIN and do not need to be included in the applicant's budget request.

2. RI units:

Applicants should carefully check what is the access unit offered by the RI (e.g. Research Infrastructure/day or user/day) and request an appropriate number of units needed for their planned activity.

The amount of units offered by each RI in the call is provided in the [dedicated call page](#) on the POLARIN website.

Calculation of units for Remote Access (RA)

- **Estimation of sampling/data collection time per day:** *Estimate the time in hours that the sampling/data collection will take per (sampling) day. This should include:*
 - *Planning and preparation (e.g. setting up instruments)*
 - *Actual sampling/measurement*
 - *Basic handling, metadata, shipping (if applicable)*
- **Estimation of the equivalence in sampling days for the duration of the access:**

One sampling day (remote) is generally defined as one full working day of a technician/scientist dedicated to the external user's request (≈7-8h/day).

TEMPLATES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS REQUIRED AT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applicants are requested to provide a Sample Request form, 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 [call page](#) and the [POLARIN TAP](#).

Sample Request form: Read carefully the [Sample Request form](#) and follow the instructions. The Sample Request form must follow the structure provided and adhere to the maximum number of pages. It must contain sufficient information to allow the scientific evaluation of the proposal as well as its feasibility. Sample Request forms failing to follow the

instructed structure and exceeding the maximum length will be rejected from the evaluation as non-eligible.

Pay special attention to providing information on research permits and specific logistic needs that might be required (visa, import and export permits etc.). 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. CVs failing to follow the instructed structure and exceeding the maximum length will be rejected from the evaluation as non-eligible.

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.

Templates and further instructions are available on the [dedicated call page](#) on the POLARIN website.

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. Applicants will be reimbursed of the costs incurred to access the core repository. User Groups can only book travel arrangements after agreement with the core repository. 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 and 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*.

Proposal Evaluation: The proposal evaluation consists of the scientific evaluation and the logistic evaluation. Only proposals evaluated as excellent will be granted access. The applicants receive the access decisions, including the amount of granted access and travel and logistic costs, together with an evaluation statement via POLARIN TAP.

Proposals accepted for implementation go through a negotiation phase with possible adjustments required by 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.
- Multidisciplinary and multinational user groups.
- User groups with gender balance and involvement of early career researchers.
- Ukrainian researchers from government-controlled territories as user group leaders.

Or projects that consider:

- Remote access to RIs, access to multiple RIs or a two-pole approach.
- Making a contribution to Large Scale Polar Initiatives or to “Closing Polar Knowledge Gaps” key research priority.

2.3.INFORMATION TO SELECTED APPLICANTS

The access decisions will be announced by mid-March 2027 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.

2.4. 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 failing eligibility criteria.

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

Researchers failing to adhere to the [POLARIN Code of Conduct](#) will be denied access to RIs in any form.

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 and CARE 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 the ethical use of the data beyond POLARIN.

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 the application process: Contact Hannele Savela and Vanessa Spadetto through [polarin_ta\(at\)listserv.dfn.de](mailto:polarin_ta(at)listserv.dfn.de)

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