Guidelines for applicants to the SIOS Access Programme

The SIOS Access Programme plans, facilitates and supports access to the research infrastructure (RI) owned by SIOS members. Access will be in accordance with the SIOS Access Policy (https://www.sios-svalbard.org/Documents).

Call management

The SIOS Knowledge Centre manages the programme and carries out the necessary administrative tasks, including:
- Preparing the call for access.
- Promoting the call and disseminating relevant information and guidelines.
- Providing support and guidance for applicants during the application process.
- Organising the evaluation of applications (scientific review and feasibility assessment).
- Communicating the decision of the selection panel.

The call text and accompanying documentation are developed with input from the Science Optimisation Advisory Group (SOAG), Research infrastructure Coordination Committee (RICC) and Board of Directors (BoD).

SIOS-KC will run webinars for applicants during the period the call is open. These will be open to all interested parties and will include a general introduction to the access call, an explanation of the application form, and an opportunity to ask specific questions. Details of the dates and times of webinars will be posted on the SIOS website (https://sios-svalbard.org/AccessCall2020).

Application process

Applicants are encouraged to contact and discuss their application with the nominated contact person at the facility they wish to access before applying. The contact details may be found on the SIOS website: (https://sios-svalbard.org/AccessCall2020_RIavailable).

Proposals must be submitted electronically at https://sios-svalbard.org/AccessCall2020_ApplicationForm. All project proposals must submit an application form with a project description (not exceeding 5 pages) and CVs of all partners attached.

Access types

The SIOS access programme includes three access types:

Physical access involves the users being hosted at facilities, including observatories, laboratories, stations, platforms, research vessels, instruments, as well as associated logistical support. Hiring equipment for a field camp is treated as physical access.

Remote access is the non-physical access of a user to a facility, including access to sensors, calibration facilities, machine time, sample collection, field work support, distribution of reference samples etc. In this call SIOS is offering remote access to airborne remote sensing platforms (flight hours) and support from SIOS field stations (sampling, deployment or recovery of equipment etc.).

Virtual access allows free access to SIOS data through the SIOS Data Management System (SDMS). Under this call users may apply for:
- Access to data from SIOS partners that are not yet standardised or available via SDMS;
- Support for making new data products that meet the FAIR data principles and are made available via SDMS.

A maximum of 200 000 NOK is available for virtual access per proposal.

Applications may be for one access type, or for a combination of two access types (e.g. remote access for project set up followed by virtual access for data processing and support for data management).

Guidance for writing a project proposal

The project proposal must not exceed 5 pages of minimum size 12 font and should include:
- General scientific background.
- Specific aims of the project.
- Methods.
- Contribution to SIOS/ESS/observing system.
- Datasets that will be generated.
- The access requirements of the project (location, timing, data etc.). Please be as specific as possible.
- A logistical plan for the project (dates, travel plans, equipment, support from facility staff etc.). Please be as specific as possible.
- Collaboration across institutions / countries / scientific disciplines.
- Training of young scientists / public outreach (if applicable).

The call text gives details of the highlighted topics in this call. Applicants must describe how they aim to address one or more of them in their project proposal.

Guidance for writing a budget

Applicants are asked to provide a budget using the template in the application form.

Those applying for physical access will receive free access to field stations, including room and board, for a maximum of 50 days per project[1]. The cost of access will be worked out internally in SIOS and does not need to be included in the budget, but

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[1] Maximum 50 days total per project, i.e. 50 days for 1 person or 25 days each for two people etc.

applicants must provide details of the number of days requested per person per location. This information should be provided in section A of the budget template.

SIOS will reimburse travel costs. The details of the planned travel and the estimated cost must be provided in section B of the budget template. Applicants must choose the cheapest reasonable travel option.

Additional costs (i.e. those not included in access to stations, such as consumables and cargo shipping) must be listed in section C of the budget template.

Costs related to remote or virtual access should be listed in section C of the budget. Such applications should select the facility they require remote / virtual access to in section A. If no travel funding is required, write N/A in all fields of section B.

Eligible costs are listed per access type in table 1 below.

Table 1: Eligible costs for the different access types in the SIOS access programme.

	Physical access	Remote access	Virtual access
Travel and subsistence	x		
Logistical support	x	x	
Technical support	x	x	
Cargo shipping	x	x	
Consumables	x	x	
Person hours for project team			x
Support from SDMS and / or contributing data centres			x

Questions regarding eligible costs may be addressed to the SIOS Access and Logistics Officer (logistics@sios-svalbard.org).

Procedure for assessing applicants

SIOS-KC will carry out a pre-screening of applications to ensure the eligibility criteria outlined in the call text are met. Applications that meet the criteria will be evaluated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined in the call text. A selection panel consisting of representatives from the SIOS working groups (https://sios-svalbard.org/WorkingGroups) will evaluate the submitted applications.

The selection process will be fair, impartial and transparent, and the focus of the selection panel is on scientific excellence and relevance to SIOS. The final decision on which projects to fund will be made by the BoD.

The detailed eligibility and evaluation criteria are described in the call text. In the interest of transparency, the guidance for reviewers is available on the call web page.

The feasibility of proposed access projects will be assessed by the access provider. Key considerations of the feasibility assessment are:
- **Availability**: Is the RI available at the time requested?
- **Scale**: Can the facility accommodate a project of the scope and size proposed?
- **Staff**: Does the proposed project make unrealistic demands on staff time at the facility?
- **Safety and permission:** Can the project be carried out safely, and is it likely to be granted the necessary permits?

Access providers may, if relevant, suggest amendments to the project plan that would increase the feasibility.

Conditions

In principle, SIOS members cannot withdraw access to their facility once an access project has been accepted. There may however be exceptional circumstances under which access must be withdrawn. SIOS does not accept liability for any losses incurred under such circumstances. All users are responsible for their own insurances.

Access is granted on the understanding that it is used for the purpose stated in the application.

Most research conducted in Svalbard requires permission from the Governor of Svalbard, and other permissions may also be required depending on the nature of the work. Information is available from Svalbard Science Forum (https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/svalbard-science-forum/svalbard-research-planning/research-permissions/). The SIOS Access and Logistics Officer can assist with determining which permits are required, but it remains the responsibility of the user to ensure permits are in place before embarking on fieldwork. If the necessary permits are not in place 2 months prior to the start date of the project the access provider may withdraw access.

All users of the SIOS Access Programme must undergo mandatory safety training appropriate to the planned project.

All users of the SIOS Access Programme must register their project on the Research in Svalbard (RiS) database.

Users are responsible for organising their own travel and cargo freight but may seek guidance from the SIOS Access and Logistics Officer if required. SIOS does not accept liability for any losses incurred due to transport delays or similar circumstances. Users must have adequate insurance to cover such losses.

All projects must submit a final report to SIOS at the end of the project. The report must consist of three parts:

- A financial report, containing a breakdown of expected (based on the budget submitted with your application) and actual costs. A template will be provided.
- A project summary, with a brief description of how successful the project was in carrying out the activity and achieving the aims stated in the application. If the project did not meet the stated aims, please indicate possible reasons why. Max 500 words.
- A field log with photos, which can be used as a SIOS news item and shared on our website. Photos may also be used for other outreach purposes. Max 300 words. Refer to https://sios-svalbard.org/RIAccess for examples from previously funded projects.

Final payment from SIOS to the project will only be released once the final report has been received and approved.

Users of the access programme commit to making their data available to SIOS, in accordance with the SIOS data policy. Both discovery metadata and the actual data generated using SIOS infrastructure must be submitted to a data centre integrated with the SIOS Data Management System. When non-SIOS data are used, discovery metadata have to be provided to the SIOS Data Management System. Guidance on data sharing and a metadata collection form may be found on the SIOS website: https://sios-svalbard.org/sites/sios-svalbard.org/files/common/sdms-guidelines4providers.pdf and https://sios-svalbard.org/metadata-collection-form.

Users are required to share information with SIOS about external publications resulting from the access. The contribution made by SIOS and by the facilities accessed must be acknowledged in any such publications.

Important! By submitting an application to the SIOS Access Programme the applicant confirms that they have received authorisation from their employer for their planned activity and that they will comply with the conditions outlined in this document.

Due to Covid-19 many projects that were due to conduct their fieldwork in 2020 are postponed until 2021. This may have knock-on effects on the ability of SIOS members to host new projects in 2021, and they reserve the right to reject proposals on these grounds.