Call for Ideas

Deadline for submission: Friday 12 January 2018

The Swiss Polar Institute (SPI) was established in 2016 in order to bring together and support the Swiss scientific community in the field of polar and extreme environments. In order to best serve that community, the SPI is launching a “Call for Ideas” which shall provide bottom-up input towards SPI’s definition of scientific and technology goals.

The SPI currently has a budget of close to 350'000CHF/year as baseline funding. Additionally, the SPI will have access to funds from a private foundation (Swiss Polar Foundation) to support larger initiatives. The SPI and Swiss Polar Foundation will act in complementarity with other funding agencies like SNSF, and will, for example, support structural measures for the Swiss Polar community, the participation of Switzerland in international polar initiatives and the organisation of own scientific expeditions in Polar regions.

The Swiss science community is encouraged to submit both smaller scale and large-scale science and technology development ideas. These ideas will be used to help shape the science and technology vision of the SPI, and related funding schemes. Note that these ideas will not be evaluated as proposals and will not be used directly for funding decisions.

The response to this call will be analysed during the 1st quarter 2018 and considered during the development of a Swiss Polar Science and Technology Plan. The Swiss Polar Day 2018 will be organised to bring together the Swiss scientific community and further discuss and consolidate ideas.

The SPI warmly encourages scientists from all disciplines interested in Arctic and Antarctic regions as well as other extreme environments (e.g., remote high-altitude regions) to respond to this call for ideas and thereby support the creation of a Swiss Polar Science and Technology Plan which takes their needs and ideas closely into account. Thank you very much in advance for your time and efforts.

Geographic scope

Science and technology ideas for Polar regions and other remote high-altitude regions (e.g., Himalayas or Andes) can be submitted to this call.

For the purpose of this Call for Ideas, Polar regions are not defined strictly by latitude or specific conditions. Neither are remote high altitude regions precisely defined in terms of altitude. Relevant to this call are activities falling into the geographic scope of the Arctic Circle or north of the Köppen line and SCAR (therefore including sub-Antarctic regions/islands) and activities conducted under comparable high altitude conditions (including Alpine regions).

For further reference, various maps defining the Arctic can be found here. For indications relative to the definition of the Antarctic region, please refer to SCAR.

Thematic scope
This call is open to all disciplines interested in working in the above regions. Interdisciplinary initiatives as well as initiatives from, e.g., Social Sciences, Humanities and Economics, are also encouraged.

**Collaborative and community-building impact**
The SPI is particularly hoping for ideas from the Swiss community, which will have a structuring impact, help establish certain “niches” and utilise the specific expertise already present in Switzerland.

The SPI strongly encourages the submission of initiatives with a collaborative dimension both in Switzerland and with foreign partners. Applicants are also asked to highlight any added-value their proposal might have for helping to enhance the Swiss polar community.

**Timeline**
The SPI welcomes ideas with an immediate application (from 2018-2019) as well as long-term initiatives that could extend over a longer period.

**Financial scope**
It is crucial that a realistic costing scenario for the realisation of a new idea or participation in a wider international initiative is submitted. If possible, applicants should submit an indicative budget, including additional funding already secured, for the participation of all the Swiss partners mentioned in the form.

**Target public**
Members of the Swiss research community with an affiliation at a Swiss academic institution are welcome to participate in this call. This call is not restricted to scientists based at SPI member institutions (ETHZ, EPFL, WSL and University of Bern).

**Contact and submission**
This call for ideas is launched by the Science and Technology Advisory Board of the SPI (see organisational chart).

For any questions, please contact the SPI Secretariat: secretariat.spi@epfl.ch