



Access Policy

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Revision history

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1. Preamble

The Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System (SIOS) is a collaborative effort to develop and maintain a regional observational system for long term measurements in and around Svalbard, addressing Earth System Science (ESS) questions related to Global Change. The observing system and research facilities offered by SIOS build on the extensive observation capacity and diverse world-class research infrastructure provided by many institutions already established in Svalbard. This includes a substantial capability for utilising remote sensing resources to complement ground-based observations. From this solid foundation, SIOS envisions a significant contribution to the systematic development of new methods and observational design in Svalbard. This knowledge can advance other observational networks in the Arctic and elsewhere.

SIOS is aiming at more efficient use and better integration of the observing system based on a distributed data management system, an open access program that includes logistical support, as well as training and education activities. Working groups, task forces and other SIOS components pursue these aims in direct and structured dialogue with scientists, user groups, policy makers and other porters of societal and scientific needs.

SIOS does not currently own any research infrastructure, but will instead facilitate access to research infrastructure owned by SIOS members and committed to the SIOS Access Programme. The terms of access are described in this document, which is approved by the General Assembly and forms Annex IV of the SIOS statutes. The policy is based on the principle of open access as decided by the General Assembly. Access shall be granted on the basis of competition and selection of applications according to procedures and criteria defined by the Science Optimisation Advisory Group and the General Assembly.

1.1 Political Framework

SIOS has been on the ESFRI road map since 2008. ESFRI “identifies Research Infrastructures (RIs) of pan-European interest meeting the long-term needs of Europe’s research communities across all scientific areas”¹. SIOS is a distributed RI which will establish a regional observation system to address Earth System Science questions in the context of global environmental change. A key part of the service provided by the SIOS Knowledge Centre (SIOS-KC) is offering a single point of contact for access to the RI of SIOS members.

European and global leaders acknowledge the role of the Arctic and the importance of improving knowledge about the region as a strategy for the better understanding of our planet. The EU, nations and international organisations are actively developing policies to support monitoring capacity, research and innovation in the Arctic. In April 2016, the European Union adopted a new integrated EU policy for the Arctic². This policy highlights the

¹ ESFRI Road Map 2016 http://www.esfri.eu/esfri_roadmap2016/roadmap-2016.php

² http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1539_en.htm

importance of international cooperation in addressing the significant challenges facing the Arctic region.

In 2016 the European Commission published a Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures³. This document highlights how open access to RI can aid knowledge transfer and drive innovation in science and technology. In the Arctic it is especially critical to improve the understanding of Earth System Science in the context of environmental change. Thus, facilitating better access to existing RI on Svalbard for inter-disciplinary research and monitoring will help meet the aims of the EU and national Arctic Policies.

The Norwegian Government, through the Svalbard White Paper (2015-2016)⁴, stated its commitment to promoting research in Svalbard. There is an acknowledgement that understanding the environmental changes happening on Svalbard and their consequences requires expertise from a range of scientific disciplines. The challenges are too large to be addressed by a single nation or by narrow fields of research. There is therefore political will in Norway for greater inter-disciplinary, international cooperation as well as sharing of data and infrastructure in Svalbard. There is also a commitment to developing and funding SIOS to aid in this cooperation.

1.2 Legal Framework

Svalbard is part of the Kingdom of Norway and as such all activity must be in compliance with Norwegian law. Svalbard has strict environmental laws that visiting researchers must adhere to. The legal authority on Svalbard is the Governor of Svalbard. The majority of research activity on Svalbard requires permission from the Governor which must be applied for at least one month prior to arrival. Acceptance onto the SIOS Access Programme is subject to obtaining permission from the Governor of Svalbard and other relevant bodies. All SIOS projects must be registered on the Research in Svalbard (RiS)⁵ database.

2. Aims

SIOS aims to develop a regional observational system for long term acquisition and proliferation of fundamental knowledge on global change within an Earth System Science (ESS) perspective in and around Svalbard. SIOS aims to facilitate access to existing research infrastructure of SIOS members in and around Svalbard in accordance with this access policy.

3. Principles

The SIOS access principles are as follows:

³ https://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/pdf/2016_charterforaccessto-ris.pdf

⁴ <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/meld.-st.-32-20152016/id2499962/>

⁵ <http://www.researchinsvalbard.no/>

- I. There will be access to SIOS infrastructure through a SIOS Access Programme to which all members will contribute;
- II. SIOS members shall allocate an agreed fraction of the capacity of their facilities and infrastructure to the SIOS Access Programme;
- III. SIOS members shall contribute to the running of the SIOS Access Programme;
- IV. Access is provided to members and non-members through applications to the Access Programme;
- V. The SIOS Access Programme will be dedicated to Earth System Science and be in line with SIOS priorities;
- VI. SIOS-KC will manage the SIOS Access Programme in partnership with the Research Infrastructure Coordination Committee (RICC).

4. Scope

This access policy is for SIOS members and third parties applying for access to SIOS infrastructure.

5. Definitions

Definitions are based on the European Commission Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures.

Research Infrastructures (RI): Research Infrastructures are facilities, resources and services that are used by the research communities to conduct research and foster innovation in their fields. They include physical space such as laboratories, scientific instruments, collections, scientific data, and e-infrastructures.

Distributed RI: A Distributed RI is a research infrastructure that forms a network of facilities and/or resources for scientific research.

Users: Users of Research Infrastructures can be individuals, teams or research institutes. Teams can include researchers, PhD candidates, students and technical staff that participate in the research.

Providers: Owners of RI that is made available through the SIOS Access Programme.

Access: Access refers to the legitimate and authorised physical, remote and virtual admission to, interactions with and use of Research Infrastructures and to services offered by RI Providers to Users.

SIOS RI: SIOS RI is research infrastructure that is owned by SIOS members and made available to SIOS users through the SIOS Access Programme.

SIOS Access Programme: The Access Programme is a plan for access to SIOS RI. It is based on the concept of excellence-driven access, where admittance is obtained via application to SIOS. Regular Calls for Access will be based on, but not restricted to, a set of prioritised themes outlined by SOAG.

SIOS-KC: The SIOS Knowledge Centre, the hub for coordinating SIOS activity. SIOS-KC is based at Svalbard Science Centre in Longyearbyen.

RICC: Research Infrastructure Coordination Committee, a committee consisting of representatives from SIOS member institutions and the SIOS-KC Access and Logistics Officer.

6. Policy

6.1 Open access principles

SIOS promotes open access to infrastructure to Users wishing to conduct research activities (monitoring or field campaigns) on subjects related to Earth System Science in and around Svalbard.

6.2 Commitment to SIOS Access Programme

SIOS members shall make a commitment to provide access to their research infrastructure through the SIOS Access Programme. The commitment shall detail what infrastructure will be made available, for how long and at what time of year. It shall also detail any restrictions to access, including the maximum number of researchers that can be accommodated at any one time or over the course of the year.

When SIOS members make a commitment to the Access Programme that commitment shall be binding for the rest of the period specified. Members cannot withdraw access to RI once the Call for Access has been issued.

The cost of RI committed to the SIOS Access Programme may be included in the calculation of members' in-kind contribution to SIOS, subject to approval by the General Assembly. Once applications to the Access Programme have been assessed and access has been granted, any capacity offered by members that has not been allocated to a SIOS project is released from the commitment. This spare capacity may be offered to other programmes without entailing any reduction in the in-kind contribution to SIOS.

6.3 Selection to SIOS Access Programme

SIOS-KC will invite SIOS members and third parties to apply for access through the Access Programme via a Call for Access, normally once a year. The theme for the access call will be indicated by SIOS Science Optimisation Advisory Group (SOAG) and approved by the General Assembly. Applications will be assessed by a scientific committee, according to criteria set by SOAG, and by RICC. The general principles of the assessment criteria are:

- I. Relevance of the project to the goals of SIOS;

- II. Scientific merit of the project;
- III. Feasibility of the project in terms of access to infrastructure and logistics.

Access will generally be granted in autumn for the following year. The detailed timings will be outlined in each call.

6.4 Authorisation for access

It shall be a prerequisite that the users of SIOS RI undergo authentication and authorisation to ensure they satisfy SIOS requirements and are approved by SIOS. It is also a requirement that relevant permissions are sought and approved by the Governor of Svalbard, and the project is registered in RiS, prior to travel. It is the responsibility of Users to check which additional permissions, if any, are required for their research and to ensure these are in place. SIOS-KC will provide advice on which permissions are required and how these may be obtained.

6.5 Responsibilities of users and providers

It is the responsibility of the Users to ensure that all the equipment they require for their project is available at the time it is needed. Once Access has been granted, Users must check what equipment is offered. If anything additional is required, SIOS-KC will provide advice on what is available on site and what Users need to bring with them. If Users are unsure about the availability of what they need, they should contact the Access and Logistics Officer before the start of the project.

It is the responsibility of the Provider to guarantee that RI that is made available through SIOS is of a suitable standard and fit for purpose.. All equipment that was included in the offer for the Access Call must be available at the time and place required by the User.

6.6 Cost

The cost of providing access and support to SIOS projects will be calculated according to the principles outlined in the SIOS statutes. These costs will be met through funded calls for access via the SIOS Access Programme, or directly by the User. Owners of facilities may agree to provide access for free or at a lower rate as part of their in-kind contribution to SIOS.

6.7 Health, safety and environment

SIOS, in collaboration with partners and the owners of RI, will provide the necessary information and training to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of Users. Everyone intending to conduct fieldwork on Svalbard must have safety training that is appropriate to their needs. SIOS approved safety training will be offered to Users of the Access Programme. It is the responsibility of Users to ensure they comply with the guidance provided. Users must also ensure they comply with all environmental regulations and procedures and take the necessary steps to minimise the environmental impact of their work.

Users are responsible for their own insurances.

6.8 Acknowledgement

Users of SIOS RI shall acknowledge in any publication or any other derived work, the contribution provided by the host institution and its staff and the support given by SIOS in managing the access. In accordance with good scientific practice, Users are encouraged to offer co-authorship to those working at the RI that have made genuine scientific contributions to their work.

6.9 Feedback

Users of SIOS RI commit to providing feedback to SIOS-KC on their experience through a feedback form on the SIOS web portal.

6.10 Data management

SIOS allows Users virtual access to data made available by SIOS and the owners of RI, and provides guidance on making their own data available. Access to data follows the SIOS Data Policy and other guidelines set by the SIOS Data Management System. Access to SIOS RI is conditional on agreeing to share all data produced while using SIOS facilities.

6.11 Disclaimer

The application process will be conditional on accepting a Disclaimer outlining the legal responsibilities of SIOS and of Users. Applicants must accept the terms of the disclaimer for the SIOS Access Programme in the application in order to continue the application process.

7. Implementation

This Access Policy will be implemented by RICC.

8. Approval and Review

This Access Policy was approved by the SIOS General Assembly 2018 01 26. The Access Policy may be reviewed by the General Assembly at the request of SIOS members.