



NEWSLETTER No. 40

Antarctic Research with Comparative Investigations in Arctic Ice Areas

Content

Dear colleagues,

Even though we are already several weeks into 2026, we retrospectively wish you a good start and great success in the new year.

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Current application round of the SPP 1158 2025/2026

In November 2025, 44 scientific proposals were submitted to the DFG.

- 9.181.119 million € requested in this application round → universities asked for 82% of the total volume

A DFG expert committee will evaluate the proposals during a meeting on 29th- 30th April 2026 in Bonn.

- The panel recommendations can be obtained from the SPP coordinator or the coordination office from ca. mid-May 2026 on.
- Details of positive or negative evaluations can be inquired from the DFG at the beginning of July (but NOT earlier), when the reviewer's reports have been received.

SPP 1158 Coordination Workshop, September 28-30, 2026, Rostock

The annual coordination workshop of the DFG Priority Program "Antarctic Research" will take place from **September 28th to 30th, 2026, at the TRIHOTEL in Rostock**. It targets scientists from German universities and research institutions involved in Antarctic research.

The annual coordination workshop aims to stimulate collaboration and networking between funded researchers and provide information to new applicants. Therefore, **participation in the SPP coordination workshop is mandatory** for **(1)** all currently funded projects and **(2)** all new applicants and renewal applications.

- All currently funded projects **(1)** are required to show their first research data, concept, and/or ideas as a **poster** (in DIN A0).
- Prospective new and renewal applicants **(2)** are obliged to provide a **5 min presentation**, which includes the **project idea, assignment** to one or more of the **overarching topics** of the SPP application period 2025-2030, rough **budget** information, indication for **collaboration within the SPP**, as well as **collaboration obligation** for non-university applicants.

Please consider the following points when preparing the presentation and your proposal, and also check the SPP website for more information:

- The main focus of the SPP is research in **Antarctica**. Comparative studies in the Arctic are possible, but NOT as the main topic.
- The SPP aims to support researchers from **German universities**. If you work at non-university research institutions, such as AWI or MPIs, you are **obliged to collaborate with a university partner**. Please note that scientists from non-university research institutions, who are currently on a fixed-term contract and are applying for their position, are exempt from the duty to cooperate.
- The project idea must fall under at least one of the **four overarching questions** of the SPP application period 2025-2030. <https://www.spp-antarktisforschung.uni-rostock.de/forschung/antragsperioden/antragsperiode-2025-2030/>
- Please include a **modest & justified** budget. Please remember that the annual budget of the SPP is around 2.5-3.0 Mio €, which has to be shared between 30-40 applications/10-15 funded projects! Experiences of the last 5 years indicate: PhD students were always funded at 65% TVL13, but now can also be funded at 75% TVL13; in case of Postdocs, consider 2 instead of 3

years; technicians will usually not be funded; student helpers are possible. Consumables and travel costs are fine; investments in infrastructure (over 10,000 euros) will not be supported.

- Please provide **contact details** to promote networking with other applicants and researchers with current projects.
- Please carefully address the **aspects of gender equality and diversity**. The DFG review panel of this year took both points very seriously; you should also explain your motivation behind your approach.

Important: Please book your **accommodation** on time. The hotel rooms reserved by the SPP are **now available** for booking. Please see the hotel list attached to this email!

More **detailed information** about the registration procedure will be provided in the next Newsletter just before the summer vacations.

The DFG call for proposals to the SPP 1158 (via the "Aufforderungsschreiben") for 2026 is expected to be published in mid-July 2025. Project proposals have to be submitted in the beginning of **November 2026**. Exact date coming soon in the summer newsletter and will be announced via Email to the SPP mailing list and on the website.

We expect you to stay for the entire SPP workshop. According to DFG guidelines, active contributions and engagement with other disciplines in the frame of the overarching goals of the SPP are mandatory and are explicitly required by the DFG review panel.

POLARSTUNDE: Active participation of the SPP 1158

The German Society for Polar Research (DGP), the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) Germany, and, since 2025, also the SPP 1158 "Antarctic Research" jointly invite you to get to know the "research of extremes" of German polar research in the form of short and lively lectures.

<https://www.polarforschung.de/veranstaltungen/polarstunde>

The dates for lectures with SPP participation will be published at the beginning of September and announced via the SPP1158 mailing list.

- **Registration** via polarstunde@polarforschung.de (one day before the respective event at the latest!). ALL lectures will be held in German.
- The corresponding (free) Zoom link will be sent to all participants on the day of the event.

Polarstern Planning Workshop 2026

An initiative of: National Committee SCAR/IASC Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research, DFG priority program "Antarctic Research" (SPP 1158)

When: 19–20 March 2026

Where: Haus der Wissenschaft, Bremen

Purpose: The workshop will present the current status of AWI's Antarctic and Arctic research strategy with a particular emphasis on sea-going polar expeditions during the final operational phase of POLARSTERN, the transition to a new research vessel, and the anticipated use of that new ship from 2030 onwards.

Key themes to be addressed:

- The workshop will focus on a distinct transitional phase in Germany's ship-based polar research program.
- How to maximize scientific return during the final years of POLARSTERN's service by planning a final series of high-impact expeditions.
- The need for operational flexibility during the final construction and sea-trial phase of the new research vessel.
- Contingency planning in the event of delays to the successor ship: ensuring the community can respond with strong, adaptable expedition proposals and, if necessary, continue operations with the proven POLARSTERN platform.

Call for contributions:

We invite all scientists to submit concept notes and expedition ideas addressing scientific priorities, logistical requirements, and flexibility needs for the 2029–2033 timeframe. Submissions should highlight how proposed campaigns would exploit either the remaining POLARSTERN capability or the capabilities expected from the new vessel after 2030. Further details on submission formats, deadlines, and the workshop program will follow in a formal workshop announcement.

Polarstern Expedition Proposals Coordinated by SPP1158

In December 2025, a main user proposal for a Polarstern expedition to the Cosmonaut Sea was submitted to the SPP 2520 "Research vessels". A second main user proposal for a Polarstern expedition to the eastern Weddell Sea is planned for submission to SPP 2520 by the end of this year. The contact person and coordinator for both proposals is Julia Ehrlich.

Gender equality measures

If you are funded by the SPP and require, for example, childcare during fieldwork, we would like to draw your attention again to additional funding available within the framework of the SPP. Gender equality measures also include funding to organize gender-specific workshops at conferences and travel grants to attend such workshops. Please contact the coordination office for details.

Acknowledgements of the SPP 1158 for publications

Acknowledgments section of publications: *"This work was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) in the framework of the priority program SPP 1158 "Antarctic Research with comparative investigations in Arctic ice areas" by the following grant ... (grant number)."*

- In addition, if you participate in any Antarctic or Arctic review paper, etc., which is somehow related to your SPP project, **please do not forget to mention the SPP 1158** in the acknowledgments.

Data storage

During and at the end of DFG-funded projects, results have to be made accessible to the public by open-access publications. Moreover, all data produced with funding from the DFG must be available on a **publicly accessible database** (such as **PANGAEA**) under the keyword "**SPP 1158**" (be sure to indicate the SPP 1158).

- The SPP pays an annual fee for data processing services centrally for all funded projects to PANGAEA.
- In addition, there is currently a strong initiative between SPP Antarctic Research, SPP Research Vessels and DFG to jointly support PANGAEA with a part-time position for a data manager for both priority programs
- Archiving and publication of the results are mandatory and will be controlled by DFG.

Changes in personnel for funded projects

Please note that all personnel changes of funded and running projects, such as contract extensions, interruptions, parental leave, etc., require prior approval by the DFG. Please contact Ms. Bennerscheid with all relevant details (ute.bennerscheid@dfg.de). Furthermore, any personnel changes in projects must also be communicated to the coordination office, including new contact details, if necessary.

Personnel information from the coordination office

Dr. Sandra Kammann has unfortunately left our team at the end of January for a new job outside academia. Dr. Julia Ehrlich is, of course, still part of the team, while Dr. Angelika Graiff remains on parental leave until spring 2026.

Best wishes,

Ulf Karsten, Sonja Berg, Petra Quillfeldt, Tilmann Harder, Julia Ehrlich, Sandra Kammann

Appendix

SPP 2520 Research Vessels

The application for ship time on any German research vessel takes place exclusively online via an updated submission system (<https://www.portal-forschungsschiffe.de/>). Here, the applicants can find any relevant information, such as current cruise plans, guidelines, contact persons, etc.



In September 2024, the Senate of the German Research Foundation (DFG) decided to implement the **new infrastructure priority program SPP 2520 “Research Vessels”** to fund the expedition (logistics and travel costs) and initial evaluation phase of ship expeditions on German research vessels.

- The call for proposals for projects/cruises starting in 2027 or later is expected to be available from mid/end of July 2025 under the following link:
<https://www.dfg.de/de/foerderung/foerdermoeglichkeiten/ausschreibungen>
- Cruise projects that require funding via this SPP must, in the future, be submitted as a DFG grant proposal as part of the annual calls for proposals for **SPP 2520 “Priority Program”** section in ELAN.
- Details on application preparation and submission can be found under: <https://www.portal-forschungsschiffe.de/>