
Networking Support – Terms of Reference

1 Definition

Networking Support is a flexible resource open to all members aimed at supporting networking activities like conferences, colloquia, seminars, workshops, and the like. Networking Support opportunities are available through a permanent call. Networking Support applications are selected by the COPL Directorate once per month.

2 Scope of applications to the Seed Funding programme

The scope of the Networking Support that may be requested should address core scientific objectives of the COPL:

- Defining the chemical and physical processes that generate the molecular building blocks for life and drive the transition to emergent biological entities.
- Characterising the diversity of planetary environments.
- Quantifying the capability of planetary environments to meet, maintain and diversify conditions for complex life and how life shapes planetary environments.
- Investigating non-standard life and life in extreme environments.

3 Funding, Duration and Start Time

3.1 Budget

Per calendar year, a total amount of CHF 10'000 is available for applications. As a default, on the last Directorate meeting of a month, the COPL Directorate will assess the applications that have been submitted since the previous assessment.

4 Eligibility

4.1 Eligible Persons and Restrictions

Activities under the Networking Support are conducted under the responsibility of a Principal Investigator (PI). The application may include one or more Co-Investigators (Co-Is).

The PI and the Co-Is must be members of the research groups of COPL affiliated group leaders, i.e., formal COPL members, at the time of the call and remain members until the supported networking event has been completed.

Each member of a COPL affiliated research group is eligible to propose **one** networking event at a time for each assessment (as PI or Co-I).

4.2 Eligible Cost

The eligible cost of Networking Support typically includes:

- Coffee or tea breaks, lunches, dinners, apéros, conference Ice-breaker events and similar activities.

5 Assessment

Applications are assessed by the COPL Directorate. The PI or a Co-I of an application cannot be a member of the Selection Committee.

The assessment of all applications is made according to Assessment Guidelines. Applications will be assessed by the Selection Committee against the following criteria:

- Appropriateness of the proposed activities to the objectives of COPL (see 2 above)
- Scientific impact and interdisciplinarity of the proposed activity.
- Feasibility and resource justification.
- Added value in comparison with existing program of COPL

6 Timeline

On monthly basis, the COPL Directorate will consider applications that have been submitted.

7 Applications

7.1 Project Applications

Applications must include the following:

- **Networking Support proposal:** a general description of the proposed activities to be carried out. This should include context and objectives.
- **Relevance to COPL scientific objectives:** a brief discussion of how the proposed research aligns with the COPL scientific objectives and facilitates cross-disciplinary research among COPL-affiliated research groups.
- **Requested resources:** a detailed explanation of resources requested. Requested resources should include appropriate and realistic estimation of costs supporting.
- **Justification of resources:** a brief justification for resources requested to support the proposed work, and information about any other support that might be available to contribute to the proposed activity.

7.2 Successful Applications

The PI and Co-I(s) of successful applications will conduct their activities in line with the general guidelines for the relevant activities at ETH Zurich.

8 Documents

The following documents are relevant for the definition and operations of 'Networking Support':

- Internal Rules of Procedure of the Centre for Origin and Prevalence of Life
- Terms of Reference (this document)
- Assessment Guidelines (for internal use)
- Networking Support Application Form (public to COPL)
- Award Letter (and condition) (for each successful application)

ToR (this document) and assessment guidelines must be reviewed by SSC.

9 Acronyms

Acronym	Description
Co-I	Co-Investigator
COPL	Centre for Origin and Prevalence of Life
MO	COPL Managing Office
PI	Principal Investigator
RP	Research Project
SC	Selection Committee
SSC	Scientific Steering Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference

10 Document Changes

Date	Author	Change Description
05 Dec. 2023	MB	Issue 1.0 following feedback from the Directorate.
28 Nov. 2023	MB	New document based on the ToR for RPs.