



GEOLAB second call for proposals for Transnational Access



Introduction

GEOLAB is a community of Research Infrastructures (RI), led by Deltares and funded by the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme. The GEOLAB RI consists of 11 unique installations in Europe aimed to study subsurface behaviour and the interaction with structural elements and the environment. The overarching aim of GEOLAB is to perform ground-breaking research and innovation to address the challenges faced by the Critical Infrastructure (CI) of Europe. Please consult the **Technical Background of GEOLAB** document for additional information.

The facilities are based at the following institutes: Deltares, TUDelft, ETHZ, University of Maribor / Zavod Za Gradbenistvo Slovenije, TU Darmstadt, NGI, CEDEX, Uni Eiffel and University of Cambridge. The project partners bring together several types of geo-centrifuges and other installations, such as a pile foundation test pit, a static liquefaction tank, a railway track simulator, a traffic load simulator and a set of field test sites. More information on the institutes and facilities is available on [the website](#) and knowledge platform.

Transnational Access is one of the core activities of the project, in which the GEOLAB RI is open for ground-breaking research and innovation by academic, industry and SME users outside the consortium. The Access is funded from the project and includes technical & scientific support and training of the users, resulting in **no cost for the researcher**.

Call for proposals

This Call for Proposals is an invitation to all eligible organizations to submit a proposal for an experiment to be hosted in one of the abovementioned facilities. The theme of the present call is: *'Experiments to study the pressures on CI, e.g., impact of climate change, aging, increased usage, extreme weather events and geo-hazards (opening expected in April 2022).'*

- The deadline for proposals is **September 30th, 2022, 23.59 CET**. Proposals received after this time cannot be considered.
- Proposals are reviewed by a group of independent experts (the User Selection Panel), of which the outcome is expected in **January 15th, 2023**.

To guide prospective users in preparing their proposal, further technical details on the capabilities of physical modelling at the experimental facilities can be found in the Description GeoLAB RI document. We ask prospective Users of the facilities to make clear in their proposal how their research will contribute to our understanding and enhancing of the resilience of the CI in Europe.

The GEOLAB project provides User Groups access *free of charge* to the facilities for their research project and covers travel and subsistence costs (within prescribed limits) as well. State-of-the-art measuring instruments, data-acquisition and processing systems will be available, as well as modern support facilities, such as library, computers, and internet access. Furthermore, visiting researchers are offered a scientific and intellectual environment, with assistance and guidance from experts at the host institute.

User groups are only eligible when the team leader and the majority of researchers come from the EU or Associated States, but outside the country of the host country facility. Details on the conditions for eligibility and other rules are in the [Summary of Rules and Conditions](#).

Proposals to apply for Transnational Access

Project proposal should be submitted by email to the provider of the facility you would like to use for your proposed experiment. A valid proposal should include the following items in one file:

1. **(A01)** A proposal, written in the provided template, not exceeding 8 pages (incl. text, tables and figures), with the following content:
 - a. Scientific context of the study
 - b. Explanation of how the research addresses the pressures on CI in Europe
 - c. Scientific need to use this specific installation
 - d. Experimental set-up including the detailed layout, scaling (if relevant), instrumentation type and locations, type of container, type(s) of soil materials, estimated duration of test, additional technical details and specifications to aid the facility providers in assessing the project's feasibility
 - e. Time plan for the planned experiments (preparation and testing duration)
 - f. Data management and Publication Plan
 - g. Detailed mention of the team members, indicating the female and early stage researchers in the group, along with the corresponding percentages.
2. **(A02)** CVs for each researcher in the User Group (not exceeding 1 page per researcher).

Please note that proposals exceeding the above page limits and lacking any of the prescribed sections will be rejected.

User Group Selection Procedure

GEOLAB has a common User Selection Procedure for choosing the Users Groups that will be given access to the GEOLAB installations. As part of the process, a User Selection Panel (USP) will be constituted for each proposal round. This panel will consist of 10-12 members, selected from a list of external experts in the fields covered by the facilities of GEOLAB. For every round, different experts shall be selected. This will be done in such a way as to ensure that these experts have no involvement whatsoever with any of the proposals to be reviewed. The panel will be chaired by the GEOLAB coordinator, who will guide the selection process impartially and will not have voting rights.

Having established the USP, the User Groups selection will then proceed in a three-step process:

Step 1: Knockout round where the proposals for a specific facility will be pre-screened by the respective facility owners based on the following criteria:

- Technical feasibility with respect to the capability of the facility
- Relevance to GEOLAB theme
- Compliance with the EU requirements e.g., TA definition, eligibility
- Compliance with formal requirements, e.g., number of pages, format, required attachments

The facility owner may decide to return a proposal to the proponent for a quick revision in case of non-compliance, only with the last criterion.

Step 2: USP members independently evaluate the proposals for the facility/ies assigned to them based on the following selection criteria and weighting:

- A. Relevance of the proposal to the theme of the Call: 20%
- B. Quality of the research plan: 40%
- C. Relevant experience of the User Group: 20%
- D. Level of achieving gender balance, Early Stage Researcher (ESR) involvement¹, and non-academic (CI network managers and/or private sector) participation²: 20%

¹According to the EC, "ESRs are considered individuals in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience) of their research careers and have not been awarded a doctoral degree. Full-time equivalent research experience is measured from the date when the researcher obtained the degree (Masters or equivalent), entitling him or her to embark on a doctorate either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in

which the researcher is recruited even if a doctorate was never started or envisaged. Part-time research experience is counted pro-rata”.

²In order to encourage higher participation from non-academic circles, a proposal will be awarded additional points, if **both** of the following criteria are fulfilled:

1. In the text of the proposal there is clear and tangible proof that the problem at hand addresses existing and realistic needs from the industry/engineering practice. A support letter from an industrial partner would greatly benefit the applicants to that end.
2. Members affiliated with CI network managers and/or private sector are included in the applying User Group.

Step 3: A USP meeting will be organised where the panel, jointly with the TA providers, will evaluate the proposals, discussing differences in ratings. A decision will ultimately be made based on the total score obtained by each prospective User Group for each facility. For acceptance of a proposal, a majority agreement of the external USP members is required, and the agreement of the relevant facility manager is mandatory.

The possibility to shift a proposal to another facility within GEOLAB, should this be deemed advantageous for both the User Group and the Facilities involved, may be considered. If any of the proposals show close similarities, and where the research outcomes could be improved by combining these proposals, the TA providers will actively assist the prospective users in the development of an integrated proposal in consultation with the USP.

During the proposal preparation, prospective users are strongly encouraged to contact the facility for which they are applying to ensure that the proposal is relevant to the theme of the call and consistent with the capabilities offered by the facility. The facility provider supports the potential User Groups in proposal drafting to alleviate the latter’s lack of experience with the Infrastructure or possible lack of experience in writing research proposals in English. This will be especially beneficial for first time users.

In case of non-acceptance of the proposal, the applicant will be informed including a summary of comments made by the USP in order to revise the proposal. The proposal may be submitted again to the facility provider, unless the USP has decided that the proposal had to be rejected unconditionally, or the drafted list of recommended users already exceeds the total amount of access available. The proposer will be informed accordingly.

For more information please contact the representatives of the GEOLAB installations, as presented table 1.

Table 1. Contact details of installation representatives.

Installation	Location	Name of Representative	Telephone	Email
Deltares	Delft, The Netherlands	Suzanne van Eekelen	+31 88 335 7287	Suzanne.vanEekelen@deltares.nl
TU Delft	Delft, The Netherlands	Stefano Muraro	+31 64 459 3916	S.Muraro@tudelft.nl
ETH Zurich	Zurich, Switzerland	Evangelia (Eva) Korre	+41 44 633 3410	eva.korre@igt.baug.ethz.ch
U Maribor	Maribor, Slovenia	Stanislav Lenart	+386 31 347 826	stanislav.lenart@zag.si
TU Darmstadt	Darmstadt, Germany	Mary Antonette Beroya-Eitner (Tonette)	+49 61 511 622827	ma.beroya-eitner@geotechnik.tu-darmstadt.de
NGI	Oslo, Norway	Thi Minh Hue Le	+47 93 001 834	thi.le@ngi.no
CEDEX	Madrid, Spain	Maria Santana	+34 91 335 7344	Maria.S.Ruiz@cedex.es
Uni Eiffel	Bouguenais, France	Matthieu Blanc	+33 24 084 5818	matthieu.blanc@univ-eiffel.fr

U Cambridge	Cambridge, United Kingdom	Giulia Viggiani	+44 12 233 32713	gv278@cam.ac.uk
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