PONANT
EXPLORATIONS GROUP

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

PROJECT CALL

Access to scientific berths on board Le Commandant Charcot

ANTARCTICA 2027

FOCUS: ANTARCTICA INSYNC

ANTARCTICA
INSYNC

Version 30.10.2026

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Ponant Explorations Group, in partnership with Antarctica InSync, is launching a call for scientific research projects focused on Antarctica and aligned with the Antarctica InSync research themes. Selected projects will be conducted onboard Le Commandant Charcot during the 2027 expedition season.

Since 2021, the Ponant Science program has invited research scientists to join expeditions aboard our polar exploration vessel, *Le Commandant Charcot*, where they conduct scientific studies such as in-situ measurements and sampling in polar regions. By revisiting the same itineraries over time, this initiative provides unique opportunities for long-term studies, allowing scientists to access multiple sites within a single cruise and furthering our knowledge and understanding of the areas in which we sail. Research projects are evaluated by an independent committee based on their scientific excellence and their work onboard is carried out independently, under a Partnership Agreement between Ponant and the researchers' affiliated institutions.

Antarctica Insync is a UN Ocean Decade-endorsed international research program aiming to improve our understanding of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean through coordinated, multidisciplinary and internationally synchronized observations. Its implementation phase (2027–2029) will bring together national Antarctic programs research institutions and international partners to address key scientific questions across seven Scientific Themes:

1. **Theme I – Closing the heat, freshwater and carbon budgets of the Southern Ocean**
2. **Theme II – Understanding rapid sea-ice decline and its consequences**
3. **Theme III – Understanding the melting of Antarctic ice shelves and ice sheets**
4. **Theme IV – Understanding Antarctic life, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning**
5. **Theme V – Assessing anthropogenic signatures in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean**
6. **Theme VI – Understanding aerosol–cloud interactions in the Antarctic climate system**
7. **Theme VII – Understanding climate variability, extremes and teleconnections**

Further information about the program, its scientific objectives and Scientific Themes is available at www.antarctica-insync.org.

Antarctica InSync welcomes collaborations with research initiatives that contribute to its scientific objectives, including projects using non-traditional research platforms, such as tourism and expedition vessels. The program aims to enhance scientific coordination, promote data sharing and maximize the scientific value of observations collected across Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

SCIENTIFIC BERTHS ON BOARD

Scientists are invited to submit ship-time proposals to carry out research activities aligned with the Antarctica Insync themes including marine, terrestrial, and social science investigations.

Le Commandant Charcot is a polar expedition ship, a state-of-the-art icebreaker (PC2 Class) owned and operated by the company PONANT (France). The vessel is equipped with scientific laboratories and facilities. Ponant offers to host up to four scientists per cruise to perform scientific projects. A full description of scientific equipment and laboratories on board can be found in the supporting documents – Le Commandant Charcot Technical Prospectus.

PONANT will assess the logistical feasibility of proposed research projects. Please note that the selected research projects will be responsible for obtaining the necessary research permits.

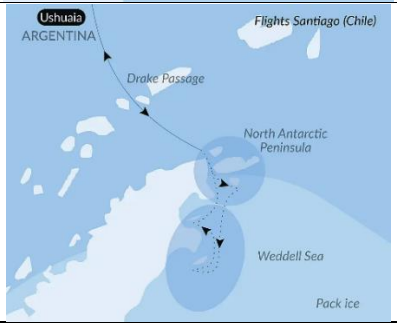
The scientific berths are offered free of charge, although travel and shipping expenses to the port of departure/arrival are at the participant's cost.

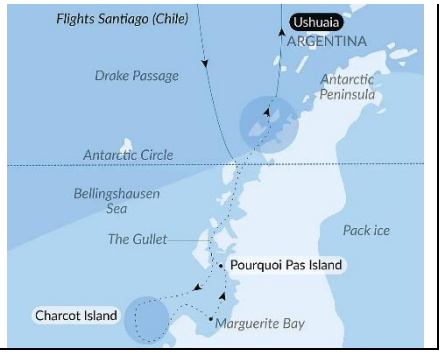
Applicants should be submitted by 19th December, 12:00 CET.

ACCESS UNITS

Successful proposals will be implemented in 2027. Participation would cover the 2027 cruise(s) under an initial three-year agreement, with the possibility of extension.

Cruise Information:

Cruise Code	Start Date	End Date	Region	Available Berths	Map
CC271026	27/10/2027	08/11/2027	Weddell Sea	2	
CC161227	16/12/2027	28/12/2027	Weddell Sea	2	

CC281227	28/12/2027	14/11/2026	Bellinghausen Sea	4	

ITINERARIES

More details on the itineraries can be found on the Ponant website by searching for the cruise code listed above or by clicking on the hyperlink attached to the cruise code above.

Station work: Generally speaking, the vessel will stop for at least 4 hours per day for passenger activities. During these stops, a dinghy should be available for scientific operations, such as oceanic sampling or transportation to terrestrial sites. This, however, will be subject to the captain's discretion, and availability depending on passengers' activities. Researchers must adapt to the tourist schedule and plan, and while the captain and crew will make their best efforts to support the scientific objectives, flexibility is required. Ultimately, priority will always be given to the paying passengers' experience.

PERMITS

Research activities must comply fully with national laws and regulations implementing international agreements on environmental protection, pollution and safety.

The responsibility for obtaining the necessary permits rests fully with the researchers. All required permits should be applied for as soon as an application is deemed successful, as processing times can be lengthy. Researchers undertaking work in Antarctica must also obtain the appropriate authorization from their relevant national competent authority, in accordance with applicable Antarctic Treaty requirements. Once obtained, copies of all permits and authorizations, including Antarctic research authorizations where applicable, must be sent to PONANT Science at **Science@ponant.com**.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Access will be provided to selected 'user-groups', e.g. teams of one or more researchers (users) led by a 'user group leader' of up to 2 or 4 members (dependent on available berths). Proposals will be accepted for evaluation if they meet all the following **criteria:**

1. **Expertise:** The designated cruise leader of a proposal must have the appropriate scientific/technical expertise to conduct on board research surveys with proven excellent record (CV to be provided by all participants at the time of submission).
2. **Outreach:** Applicants must be willing to perform outreach activities related to their onboard research.
3. **Dissemination:** Only user groups that are entitled to and willing to disseminate the knowledge they will generate under the project are eligible to benefit from access free of charge.

The non-fulfilment of any of the previous criteria implies the non-acceptance of the proposal for further evaluation.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

GENERAL FUNDING AND ACCESS CONDITIONS

1. Up to four scientific berths on board the vessel are provided free of charge by the company PONANT in single or multiple legs. These cabins are designed for shared occupancy by two (2) scientists. Scientists will need to share their cabin.

2. Travel and shipping expenses to and from the port of departure/arrival to the institutes of origin must be covered by the applicants.

3. Navigation is at the mercy of weather conditions; itineraries may vary.

4. Grantees will not invoice PONANT for any additional or third-party costs, such as salary costs, equipment manufacture, repair and rental of equipment, consumables, sub-contracting and assistance, publication costs and overheads.

5. If the number of days is reduced by PONANT for any reason or if the vessels are prevented from working (e.g. by poor weather or technical difficulties) no form of compensation shall be payable in respect of any time lost. Please note that cruise schedules could change during the year.

6. Vessel users should note that installation and operation of any equipment that they bring on board the vessels is done at their own risk, even when it is carried on board or deployed from the vessel. Further details will be provided during the negotiation phase.

7. The Principal Investigator is obliged to comply with the cruise reporting within one month after cruise completion.

8. A contract will be signed between PI's institution and PONANT laying out terms and conditions of access, including the support granted, reporting, liability, applicable safety/security regulations and other topics under consideration.

ACCESS LIMITATION

Access will be provided to conduct research, with an exclusive focus on civil applications and comply with ethical principles. Access may be limited, amongst others, by the following: national security and defense, privacy and confidentiality, commercial sensitivity and intellectual property rights and ethical considerations in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND DEADLINE

Proposal submission **must include a single pdf file composed of:**

1) **Application document**: using the dedicated application template. This document should be short and concise. A Times New Roman 12pt should be used with 14pt spacing.
2) The **CVs of PI and the participants** who will board the vessel using the dedicated CV template **Please note: The names and CVs of all participants expected to embark on the vessel must be included in the proposal.** If the participation of certain team members has not yet been confirmed, applicants should identify the potential participants and provide the CVs of any individuals who may replace them. The proposal will be evaluated and approved based on the personnel and project description submitted. Any subsequent changes to the research team, principal investigator, objectives, methodology, or scope of work must be communicated as soon as possible. Such changes may require re-evaluation of the proposal and must be reviewed and approved by Ponant Science before participation in the expedition can be confirmed.
3) **A letter from the PI's-institution authorized-representative:** confirming that the PI is allowed to lead/participate in this cruise.
4) **A letter of Support from Antarctica InSync :** In order to be eligible, applicants must submit a project supported by Antarctica Insync.
5) **PDF Copies of your three most recent scientific publications** describing the material and methods that you plan to replicate during your cruise

Incomplete proposals or proposals not following the template will be rejected.

Requesting a Letter of Support from Antarctica Insync

Applicants must request a letter from Antarctica InSync to demonstrate how their proposed project contributes to the programme's scientific objectives and international coordination efforts. To request a Letter of Support from Antarctica Insync, applicants should provide:

- **Project title and principal investigator(s)**, including institutional affiliations.
- **Short project summary**, outlining the scientific objectives, methodology and expected outcomes.
- **Relevance to Antarctica InSync**, explaining how the project aligns with one or more of its seven Scientific Themes or Cross-cutting Themes.
- **Planned research activities**, including geographical areas, expected timing and potential opportunities for collaboration or data sharing.
- **Submission deadline** for the PONANT application.

Each request will be reviewed for its scientific relevance and alignment with Antarctica InSync's objectives. Letters of Support are issued on a case-by-case basis and do not imply financial or logistical commitments from the program.

Completed Proposals must be submitted to science@ponant.com

REPORTING

Following completion of a funded cruise **the PI must submit** a Cruise Report. The cruise report is designed to report on the science carried out during the cruise. It must explicitly refer to and comment on the fulfilment of the points of the work plan outlined in the proposal**.** A dedicated template will be provided. **This report must be submitted one month post disembarkation -** a template will be provided.

Additionally, researchers are meant to send a communication form (template provided) and photos that showcase the scientific work conducted during the cruise.

DATA POLICY

Ponant aims at its research data to be findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable (FAIR).

We are actively working on enhancing our data management systems to better align with oceanographic data management standards and the Committee's guidelines. **Data generated from cruises, along with relevant metadata, should be submitted within two months of completion.** These data sets should undergo quality assurance procedures, with details of these QA/QC processes included in the metadata. All relevant data can be added to our DSHIPS management system, ensuring that datasets remain accessible in line with our open data policy. We encourage the submission of any data generated to be incorporated into this growing database.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All results/publications/presentations/publicity arising from a Ponant funded cruise should include the following acknowledgment**:**

“We would like to thank PONANT EXPLORATIONS GROUP, particularly the Ponant Science Program, as well as the crew aboard the “vessel name”, for their support during this research project”

Additionally feel free to add an additional sentence if there are any individuals that you would like to thank personally!

A copy of every publication with data arising from a Ponant cruise must be sent to science@ponant.com

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND DATA PROTECTION

Personal information will be stored by electronic means (e.g. database) for use only in connection with the handling of proposals. All personal data supplied shall be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. You have the right to access and update the personal information about you and to ask for such information to be deleted.

All applicants who wish to query the outcome of their application and/or regarding the treatment of personal data may contact science@ponant.com.

DISCLAIMER

The information contained here and in the related documents is true and accurate to the best of our knowledge. Ponant disclaims any and all liability, including any express or implied warranties whether oral or written for third party services such as the access to a vessel