

Guidelines for applying to the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports for fieldwork permits.

* This text is based on the Greek Law 4858/2021 and the guidelines published by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and the British School at Athens on their websites.

Carrying out archaeological fieldwork in Greece is only possible for foreigners under the auspices of a Foreign Archaeological School/Institute based in Athens (Law 4858/2021 «[Για την προστασία των Αρχαιοτήτων και της εν γένει Πολιτιστικής Κληρονομιάς](#)»/“[Regarding the protection of antiquities and cultural heritage in whole](#)”, updated by the Ministerial Decision ΥΠΠΟΑ/ΑΤΝΕΚΕ/97550/263/05.03.2018 ΥΑ (ΦΕΚ Β/970/19.03.2018) «[Έννοια της αρχαιολογικής έρευνας πεδίου, προϋποθέσεις και διαδικασία αδειοδότησης συστηματικής αρχαιολογικής έρευνας και κανονισμός συστηματικών ανασκαφών](#)»/“[The notion of archaeological fieldwork research, conditions and procedure for the authorization of systematic archaeological fieldwork research, and regulations for systematic excavations](#)”).

Permits for fieldwork projects are given for a duration of no more than 5 years.

Deadlines for submission:

- 1st November of the year preceding the project (for files submitted in GREEK)
- 15th October of the year preceding the project (for files submitted in ENGLISH)

Address to:

director NIA (director@nia.gr)

cc deputy-director (wledeboer@nia.gr)

All applications for fieldwork permits, both for new and ongoing archaeological projects, must be submitted annually, **no later than November 30**, by the **director of the NIA** to the relevant Ephorates of Antiquities, to the Foreign Schools Service of the Ministry of Culture, to the Directorate of Prehistory and Classical Antiquity and/or the Directorate of Byzantine Antiquity, and, if necessary, to all other competent authorities.

Take the following into account:

- The NIA can claim a maximum of six permits: three projects as an independent organization and three projects in collaboration (synergias) with the Greek Archaeological Service. Types of fieldwork projects include: **Excavation** (any project that involves digging test pits or trenches, or otherwise modifying a site); **Survey** (any project which involves systematic intensive or extensive exploration of the landscape. Please note that, according to the current Greek archaeological law, the area under survey in any one season cannot be larger than 30,000 stremmata/30 km²); **Synergasia** (any excavation or survey carried out in collaboration with a member of the Greek archaeological service).
- New fieldwork projects must first be approved by the NIA's Scientific Advisory Board, WAR. The WAR meets twice a year. Proposals can be submitted to the Director of NIA until April 15 and until September 15 of each year.
- A permit for **systematic excavation** will only be issued if the site has been bought expropriated and transferred to the Greek state prior to the project (See below 1.10).
- Archaeological research under water is only possible in collaboration with the Ephorate for Underwater Archeology (synergasia). If this research is done in combination with research on the mainland, the research program is considered as two separate projects.
- When conducting geological research (including clay or any geological sampling for any scientific reason), the relevant Ephorate of Antiquity must first give its permission before the Institute of Geology & Mineral Exploration (IGME) can issue a permit.
- Use of drones for photographing or filming at an archaeological site is permitted to registered operators **subject to HCAA and EASA regulations** (outlined in the website of the Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority: [General Aviation & Drones | HELLENIC CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY - HCAA](#)) and **only after permission of the Ministry of Culture and Sports**. Applications are submitted to the local Ephorates illustrating the purpose of the project. For scientific reasons, permit is provided under terms free of charge. However, for commercial or other publication purposes a fee may be requested.

Language

The applications are submitted in Greek. Therefore, if you choose to submit your files to the institute in Greek, it is imperative that you have the translation done by a native Greek speaker who is familiar with archaeological terminology. You should also send us, then, the source text in English so that we can better clarify any ambiguities in the Greek translation. If you cannot rely on a translator, the NIA can arrange for the translation of your file (or parts thereof) for a fee to be determined.

Composition of the application file:

1. Application for NEW fieldwork projects (Maximum duration 5 years):1.1.

Research purpose, objectives, and expected results of the project. An estimation of the project's contribution to the relevant archaeological scholarship.

1.2. A schedule of work for up to five years, with a detailed description of the activities planned for the first year and a preliminary planning of the activities for the following years.

1.3. Curriculum Vitae of the project leader(s), showing that he/she has at least five years of excavation experience and has at least two scientific publications relating to excavations or excavation finds to his/her name.

1.4. List of scientific participants with their expertise and their 2-page (max.) CVs of the key members of the team. Particularly in the case of surveys, it is necessary that the team consists of archaeologists/scientists whose expertise covers all periods relevant to the research (prehistory, classical, Byzantine, etc.).

1.5. Information demonstrating the adequacy of the project's technical infrastructure and budget, including sources of financing.

1.6. Dates of the coming fieldwork season.

Fieldwork must be limited to a maximum of six weeks per year (8, including any site preparatory work before the start of the season, as well as any site work after the end of the season¹) and cannot take place during the months of January, February and March. Also keep in mind that it is often a long wait for the advice of the Central Archaeological Council. It is therefore advisable not to plan fieldwork in April and May.

1.7. Indication of the research area on an orthophoto map.

For **excavations**: the exact research area of the first year must be specifically marked and the areas of subsequent years approximately.

For **surface surveys**: the total area of the research project may not exceed 30,000 stremmata (3,000 hectares).

For **geophysical/geomorphological surveys**: detailed description of the method(s) used and topographical map of the entire survey area; zones in which the geophysical/geomorphological research takes place must be clearly indicated.

¹ Activities may involve (but are not limited to) taking site protective measures (vegetation clearing, coverage or backfilling of trenches, fencing) or transportation of finds to storage location/museum.

In the event of a request to carry out **core extractions/ soil sediments**, the sampling locations should be noted in a map of suitable scale. As long as sufficient data are included in the application regarding the processing and analysis of the samples (method and laboratory for analysis) the permission to carry out core sampling is sufficient for all the stages of transportation and processing of the obtained samples and no further approval by the Directorate of Conservation of Ancient and Modern Monuments is required, according to no. prot.

[YPPOA/GDAPC/DSANM/Φ77/217149/ 140435/2243/9.6.2017](#) circular of the Ministry of the Interior.

1.8. A description of the research methodology.

1.9. Information about the protection status of the research area (archaeological site, buffer zones, etc.). The relevant information can be accessed through the site of the Archaeological Cadastre (arxaiologikoktimatologio.gov.gr)

1.10. Documentation on the ownership status of the area to be excavated. According to Greek law, systematic excavations may not take place on private properties. Any privately owned land that is intended for excavation must first be purchased or expropriated and transferred to the Greek State (Article 18 of the Law 3028/2002). It is possible to conduct excavation of limited duration in trial trenches without ownership of the land, but with the landowners' permission (Article 36, par. 15-16 of the Law 3028/2002).

In the event of surface or geophysical surveys, the landowners of the area to be surveyed must be notified beforehand by the research institute(s) involved or, if necessary, via local authorities.

1.11. For field projects carried out in collaboration (synergasia) with the Archaeological Service, a memorandum of understanding (collaboration protocol) must be signed by the project directors and the directors of the collaborating institutions.

According to the Ministerial decision (Prot. Num. YPPO/GDA/ARX/A3/F30/45857/1750, Regarding the Drafting of memorandum of collaboration between the Greek Archaeological Service and foreign Archaeological Schools/Institutes for conducting archaeological research, ([original text in Greek](#), [English translation](#)), the principles for drafting a memorandum of collaboration are the following:

- I. The protocol of collaboration must include a description of the purpose, the content, the duration and the budget of the research project.
- II. The collaboration must be based on the principle of absolute equality on scientific as well as financial terms.

- III. The research project is considered as a research of the Greek State and is subject to the provisions regarding excavations and archaeological research conducted by the Greek State.
- IV. The head of the Greek scientific team will be the director of the research project.
- V. The research project must include the care for the preservation of antiquities through the necessary studies and work of conservation, stabilization and restoration.
- VI. Annual reports on the progress and the results of the research project must be submitted in Greek to the Archaeologikon Deltion (Αρχαιολογικών Δελτίον), regardless of any other Greek or foreign publications.
- VII. The protocol of collaboration must also include the reasons for its termination.

1.12. Approval of the competent Forest Service, if the investigation is carried out in a **forestry area** and it is necessary to clear the vegetation. Approval is secured by responsibility of the research team.

2. Applications for the EXTENSION of a 5-year fieldwork project (max. 5 years)

2.1. A report of the activities and results of the last year of the past research period, accompanied by maps, drawings and photos with captions. The report must provide a composite picture of the project and the way in which the project contributes to the enrichment of the available archaeological data of the wider environment.

Include an overview of the progress of the study and publication of the results of previous year(s). Copies of publications related to the project must be submitted to the competent Ephorates and to the Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and/or the Directorate of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Antiquities.

2.2. Detailed description of the work planned for the following year.

2.3. Indication of the research area on an orthophoto map, where the correlation of the proposed research area with the already measured/excavated area will be clearly shown.

2.4. Update list of project members with their expertise and short CVs (2-page max.). Provide a CV for the project director(s).

2.5. Dates of the coming fieldwork season.

Fieldwork must be limited to a maximum of six weeks per year (8, including any site preparatory work before the start of the season, as well as any site

work after the end of the season²) and cannot take place during the months of January, February and March. Also keep in mind that it is often a long wait for the advice of the Central Archaeological Council. It is therefore advisable not to plan fieldwork in April and May.

2.6. Study or technical report relating to the consolidation and conservation of exposed/exposed antiquities, according to the Ministerial circular (Protocol no. ΥΠΠΟΑ/ΓΔΑΠΚ/ΔΙΠΚΑ/ΤΕΕΑΕΙ/432596/309866/9548/1396, ([original text in Greek, English translation](#))). The care of uncovered/exposed antiquities, which is the responsibility of the excavating institution and the excavator, is a prerequisite for processing any application for permit. Conservation, consolidation and restoration studies are submitted by the foreign archaeological schools/institutes to the relevant Ephorates, the Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and/or the Directorate of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Antiquities, as well as to the relevant directorates of the Central Service (Directorate for the Restoration of Ancient Monuments, Directorate for the Restoration of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments, Directorate for the Conservation of Ancient and Modern Monuments). At the same time, the institution conducting archaeological research and the excavator are responsible for consolidating and caring for the appearance and safety of the site, in accordance with the needs and specific features of the site (e.g. removal of vegetation, fencing, drainage). Threats to an archaeological site may include: human intervention, erosion, flood, fire, or collapse. *Failure to meet these obligations may lead to termination of the research project.*

This part of the application is prepared in consultation with the local Ephorate. Issues that need to be referenced are (but not limited to): existing antiquities on the site, environmental setting and possible threats, accessibility to the site and safety precautions. As fieldwork proceeds this plan needs to be updated in consultation with the local Ephorate.

2.7. Financial statement of the previous research period, followed by a budget and funding sources for the coming research period.

3. Applications for ONGOING fieldwork projects

3.1. A report of the activities and results of the last year of the past research period, accompanied by maps, drawings and photos with captions. The report must provide a composite picture of the project and the way in which the project contributes to the enrichment of the available archaeological data of the wider environment.

3.2. Detailed description of the work planned for the following year.

² Activities may involve (but are not limited to) taking site protective measures (vegetation clearing, coverage or backfilling of trenches, fencing) or transportation of finds to storage location/museum.

3.3. Indication of the research area on an orthophoto map, where the correlation of the proposed research area with the already measured/excavated area will be clearly shown.

3.4. List of project members with their expertise. Provide a CV for the project director(s).

Any changes to the scientific team members should be clearly indicated along with their expertise. Excavators should also care for the provision to the local Ephorate a catalogue of all members participating in the research (including a list of students who may participate, with their capacity and affiliation) before the beginning of the fieldwork period.

3.5. Dates of the coming fieldwork season.

Fieldwork must be limited to a maximum of six weeks per year (8, including any site preparatory work before the start of the season, as well as any site work after the end of the season³) and cannot take place during the months of January, February and March. Also keep in mind that it is often a long wait for the advice of the Central Archaeological Council. It is therefore advisable not to plan fieldwork in April and May.

3.6 Study or technical report relating to the consolidation and conservation of exposed/exposed antiquities, according to the Ministerial circular (Protocol no. ΥΠΠΟΑ/ΓΔΑΠΚ/ΔΙΠΚΑ/ΤΕΕΑΕΙ/432596/309866/9548/1396, ([original text in Greek, English translation](#))). The care of uncovered/exposed antiquities, which is the responsibility of the excavation institution and the excavator, is a condition for processing any request. Conservation, consolidation and restoration studies are submitted by the foreign archaeological schools/institutes to the relevant Ephorates, the Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and/or the Directorate of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Antiquities, as well as to the relevant directorates of the Central Service (Directorate for the Restoration of Ancient Monuments, Directorate for the Restoration of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments, Directorate for the Conservation of Ancient and Modern Monuments). At the same time, the institution conducting archaeological research and the excavator are responsible for consolidating and caring for the appearance of the site, in accordance with the needs and specific features of the site (e.g. removal of vegetation, fencing, drainage). *Failure to meet these obligations may lead to termination of the research project.*

³ Activities may involve (but are not limited to) taking site protective measures (vegetation clearing, coverage or backfilling of trenches, fencing) or transportation of finds to storage location/museum.

This part of the application is prepared in consultation with the local Ephorate. Issues that need to be referenced are (but not limited to): existing antiquities on the site, environmental setting and possible threats, accessibility to the site and safety precautions.

3.7. Financial statement of the previous research period, followed by a budget and funding sources for the coming research period.

4a. Applications for STUDY SEASONS (for on-going 5-year projects):

Projects conducting study seasons must also submit their request by October 15 (for English-language texts) or November 1 (for Greek-language texts) every year with the following information:

- 4.1. A report on the work of the previous season, accompanied by photographs, plans and catalogues of finds that were studied.
- 4.2. Detailed description of activities for the coming season.
- 4.3. Dates of coming field season.
- 4.4. List of project members with their specialties

4b. Applications for STUDY SEASONS (for past 5-year projects):

- I. Brief description of the work planned
- II. Dates/Period during which the scheduled work will take place.

5. Applications for INDIVIDUAL STUDY:

A permit is required to:

- I. study, photograph and/or draw objects, coins and inscriptions held in Greek museums;
- II. take samples for analysis, whether conducted in Greece or overseas;
- III. undertake geological, geomorphological or environmental research, whether or not within the context of an archaeological project.

These applications can be made at any time and there is no restriction on number, however they may take several months to process.

Applications should include the following:

- I. the specific nature of the research;
- II. a list of the objects with inventory or catalogue numbers, description, photograph (especially in case of taking samples) and dating where possible

- III. where the material has been published and by whom; if the material is unpublished, the permission of the excavator (if alive) or otherwise of the relevant foreign school or institution
- IV. the museum/s, collection/s or site/s where the material is located
- V. the purpose of the study (whether for primary research or for comparative purposes), and details of any publication envisaged
- VI. whether drawing and/or photography are required in addition to making notes and handling the material
- VII. where material comes from a project of another foreign school or institute, the application must be accompanied by a letter from that school giving permission to the applicant to study and/or publish the material.
- VIII. when (ideally with dates) the study is envisaged to take place.

Especially for sampling applications, the following should also be included in the application:

- I. details of the analytical technique/s, sampling equipment to be used and how the sample will be prepared, and the location where the sampling and analysis is to be carried out (NB the export from Greece of samples requires specific justification)
- II. if material is organic, what quantity of the whole object is to be used.

Notes

The Institute is required to submit all applications for excavation and survey work to the relevant Ephorates and the Department(s) of Foreign Schools of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports by **November 30 every year**. The Ephorates submit their recommendation to the Department(s) of Foreign Schools by **December 31** of the same year. Applications for new projects are examined by the Central Archaeological Council (KAΣ) and the final decision is issued by the Minister of Culture and Sports. Permits for ongoing projects are issued directly by the Minister, without being examined by the Council. Study season permits are issued directly by the local Ephorates of Antiquities.

ATTENTION: Even though the Institute submits its requests to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports in November, it does not usually receive replies from the Ministry until the end of April. In some cases, the replies are negative. Project directors who need to expend funds before this time are warned that they may have to cancel their plans if the Ministry denies permission. In this case, they are advised to make other arrangements in order not to pay penalties if air tickets are purchased earlier than the end of April.

Reporting

At the end of each season and by October 15 of each year, all projects should submit to the Institute a report of activities accompanied by photos and/or maps. This report will be sent to the British School at Athens or the French School of Athens for inclusion in Archaeological Reports and Archaeology in Greece Online/Chronique des fouilles en ligne. This report can also be translated into Greek (on your own expense) and sent to the relevant Ephorates and Directorates of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports and to the Archaeological Receipts Fund (TAPA) in order to be published in the *Archaologikon Deltion* (Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον).