



## Sharing knowledge, skills and things: How institutes can benefit from centralised fieldwork management

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Planning fieldwork can be overwhelming and time consuming, especially for those who have never done it before, such as early stage PhD or undergraduate students. At the first day of a fieldwork, it is not uncommon to already be exhausted from extensive logistics management, selection and acquisition of adequate equipment and understanding regulations. Not having had the time or assistance to properly learn how to use a field instrument may impact the quality of collected data. Lone, inexperienced fieldworkers in difficult terrain may be confronted with additional safety challenges.

We present ideas for institutional frameworks that support researchers in their fieldwork and share experience from our work as fieldwork technicians at the Institute of Earth Surface Dynamics, University of Lausanne. We suggest that many fieldwork-related resources can be shared across research groups and demonstrate how we provide centralised support to researchers and students in the management of their fieldwork goals, equipment and logistics.

Institute-wide digital libraries managing field and safety equipment can be a useful and sustainable tool to avoid unnecessary double purchases across research groups and to re-use equipment after a project has finished. Streamlining the maintenance, repair, acquisition and improvement of equipment under one shared budget decreases the financial burden on individual research projects and groups. Dedicated technical staff can advise which field equipment best serves its purposes in the framework of the research question and provide innovative support for new instrumentation design. Centralising training on using the field equipment in a safe way not only improves the quality of the field data, but also makes sure that this knowledge is not lost in the short-term turnover of PhD projects.

We further show that safety should always be considered in fieldwork planning and that institutes should provide comprehensive guidelines for this. Safety training and advice on risk assessment adapted to various fieldwork settings should be offered and institute members should be encouraged to regularly refresh their training. Finally, accompanying researchers and students directly to the field does not only avoid risky lone working, but can provide external, more technical expertise that can benefit the quality of the fieldwork outcome.