

Call for Proposals 2012 for International Teams in Space and Earth Sciences

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Call is to invite proposals for study projects from International Teams

Teams are one of the ISSI tools, through which relatively small groups of scientists involved in Space Research can work together in an efficient and flexible format of several subsequent meetings, during which data are analysed and compared with theories and models.

This call is open to scientists of any nationality, and active in research in:

1. Space Sciences (Solar and Heliospheric Physics, Solar-Terrestrial Sciences, Space Plasma and Magnetospheric Physics, Planetary Sciences, Astrobiology, Cosmology, Astrophysics, and Fundamental Physics in Space)
2. Earth Sciences using space data

2. Modus Operandi

Proposals for study projects are solicited from international Teams of scientists from different institutions. Projects are carried out through a number of meetings at ISSI over a maximum period of two years from the time of approval. Teams would typically consist of about 8-12 members (with a minimum of three) firmly committed to jointly carry out the project in the allotted time. One Team leader/coordinator will take the responsibility for the activity of the Team in all its phases and will ensure the interface with ISSI. Although a certain degree of flexibility is desirable and acceptable during the course of the activity, changes to the original membership, as approved during the selection process, must be avoided. Cases of force majeure must be duly justified and approved by the Science Committee Chairperson. A Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the new member shall be provided.

Typically a Team would hold two to three one-week meetings over a period of 12-18 months. The first meeting should preferably be organized within the first 6 months but in no case later than 12 months. Projects extending beyond two years will not be considered. The teamwork shall lead to scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals. Authors shall include an appropriate acknowledgement of ISSI's support. The Teams will be requested to maintain a web site on the Institute web page. The site should include an abstract of the intended research, the Team membership, schedule, and a final report (see Section 9.) as well

as the list of papers published in the framework of the project. A password-protected section may be included for use by the Team.

Team leaders and members are strongly encouraged to visit the ISSI web page (www.issibern.ch) prior to submitting the proposal to become familiar with the modus operandi of ISSI and avoid proposing excessive or unrealistic demands for financial support, computing power, and duration of the project.

3. Conditions for Eligibility

Members of the Team will generally hold a doctorate and must firmly commit to their presence during the foreseen periods of activity at the institute. One important criterion for selection is the availability of members to participate in the activities and meetings (Section 4, Criterion 8). It will be the responsibility of the Team leader/coordinator to secure this commitment from the proposed Team members at the time of project submission. Additional conditions to be considered when submitting a proposal include:

- Proposals for study projects are solicited from international Teams of scientists from different institutes and different countries. A minimum of 4 different countries is recommended.
- Teams typically consist of 8-12 members and meet for either two or three one-week meetings not exceeding a total of 24 man-weeks, i.e. for up to 8 members not more than 3 one-week meetings and for 9-12 members not more than two one week meetings.
- Once a Team is accepted, 20% of the total grant will be added for young scientists.
- In addition to the ISSI supported core members the team may propose to add a few self-supported experts (no per diem, accommodation nor travel costs will be covered by ISSI).

4. Selection Criteria

The fundamental criteria for acceptance will be the scientific significance of the proposed research, the competence and ability of the Team to carry it to a successful conclusion within the indicated time frame, and the added values to ISSI. In detail these will be:

Scientific relevance:

1. Scientific value in relation to the ongoing research in the area
2. Is the outcome of the proposal likely to advance the field?
3. Realism of planned access to necessary data
4. Grasp of the scientific problem

Quality of proposal & Team:

5. Timeliness and feasibility
6. Schedule and plan: is it realistic for completion of the project?

7. Is the Team format relevant to the attainment of the expected result?
8. Does the Team membership cover the necessary competences? Are there deficiencies?

Added value of ISSI:

9. Compatibility with aims and programmes (present and expected) of ISSI
10. Assessment of the “added value of ISSI” (see Section 7).

International representation of scientists (including ESA Member States) is fundamental.

N.B. Weaknesses that may lead to low grading include: lack of focus of the scientific aims, vagueness or lack of realism in planning and schedule, unevenness of the Team membership, non commitment of members, excessive demands on support, or an overstretched schedule.

5. Selection Procedure

As a first step the proposed study projects will be evaluated by ISSI for compatibility with the Institute’s guidelines and constraints. Subsequently the applications will be reviewed and evaluated by the ISSI Science Committee against the set of criteria established by the Committee. The outcome will lead to the grading of each proposal regarding the scientific relevance, quality of the proposal and Team, and the added value of ISSI. Based on these elements, and furthermore on considerations of fair distribution among the disciplines covered by the various projects, and of the amount of support requested, ISSI will approve for funding a number of projects consistent with an optimum apportionment of the available resources. The process being entirely based on competition and the resources being limited, it may become necessary to deny funding to Teams that in absolute terms are of good quality but fail to score high enough on the priority scale established by the Science Committee.

6. Organization of the Team, Technical, and Financial support

ISSI will freely make available meeting rooms, projection facilities, white boards, computers if required (PC-Mac), wire or wireless network, Internet connection, facilities for teleconferences and for video-conferences using Skype, electric adaptors to the Swiss standard etc. and the coffee machine. To see the latest type and number of available equipment, please click here (<http://www.issibern.ch/localguide/facilities.html>).

Concerning financial support, the basic principle is that ISSI will support through a per diem the living expenses of Team members while residing in Bern. Travel costs will only be reimbursed to the Team leader/coordinator. The leader, whenever an alternative funding source is available, could renounce his/her right to the travel refund in favour of another member. Furthermore some members may be able to secure full or partial financial support for their participation from alternative sources, which would allow for a larger Team to be set up. In principle, as stated clearly in Section 2, after approval, any change to the Team membership has to be avoided. In the exceptional case where a change is recommended and justified as highly desirable, the Executive will consult with the Science Committee

Chairperson and make a final decision on the proposed modification. Requests for additional members and for replacements must be supported by adequate motivations and by a CV of the candidate. Additional Experts invited by the Team leader are expected to participate in the work of the Team on a time limited basis at no cost to ISSI. Exceptions can be considered and must be duly justified.

ISSI as a rule does not fund the publication in the scientific literature of the papers resulting from the Team activity in the execution of their project. However, ISSI requires that the list of papers published in the framework of the project be sent to ISSI on an annual basis and that acknowledgements to ISSI be incorporated in the relevant publications. This list will be part of ISSI's annual report and will be used to provide metrics to the institutional and funding agencies.

Once the proposal is approved, the Team will have access to the Young Scientist scheme, whereby Young Scientists about +/-2 years of the PhD, may be included in the Team, by a determination of the Team leader. As a guideline, that addition is expected to be of the order of 20% of the person-weeks allocated to the Team. The Young Scientists are not expected to be nominated prior to approval of the Team.

7. Contents of the Proposal

The proposal should be sent to ISSI by the Team leader/coordinator and should include:

- A one page maximum concise abstract summarizing all features of the proposal
- Scientific rationale, goals, and timeliness of the project
- List of the expected output e.g., Scientific breakthrough, papers, reviews
- What added value does ISSI provide for the implementation of the Team activity?
- List of confirmed members with (appended) short CVs, i.e., one page for each member
- Schedule of the project, i.e., number and duration of meetings, anticipated periods, list of potential experts etc.
- Facilities required, e.g., computer equipment, access to Internet etc.
- Financial support requested of ISSI (see Section 3 and 6)
- Addresses, telephone, fax, e-mail of all participants (to be appended)

** N.B. The length of the proposal must not exceed five pages (excluding annexes), and should be sent as a single .pdf file (<5 Mb).

8. Schedule

Issue of the Call: January 17, 2012

Letter (e-mail) of Intent* to propose: **February 15, 2012**

Deadline for submission to ISSI: **March 30, 2012**

Review process: April-May

Science Committee evaluation and grading: June 6-8, 2012

Earliest start of Team activity: July 1, 2012

*The letter of Intent should contain: Title, abstract, and research domain. We welcome any additional information.

9. Duties of the Team Leader/Coordinator

After selection the successful Team leader shall:

- Refine the schedule of Team meetings in collaboration with the ISSI staff.
- Establish the list of attendees in advance of each meeting so that appropriate hotel block bookings can be made and facilities allocated within ISSI.
- Set up and maintain a site on the ISSI web page describing the aims of the project, the membership of the Team and the schedule.
- Provide to ISSI, on an annual basis, the list of papers published in the framework of the project.
- Commitments to contribution to ISSI outreach activities in providing ISSI with outstanding achievements and highlights in connection to the Team work.
- Acknowledge ISSI's support in the papers published in the framework of the project.
- After completion of the Team activities, provide a written report describing the achievements of the Team.

10. Final Report

ISSI consider this report to be of major importance for the Executive of ISSI (and the various institutional and funding authorities) to be able to assess the quality and potential impact of the team results. It constitutes a key element in evaluating the standard of ISSI's performance and scientific output.

The report should be brief (one to two pages), stipulating the main accomplishments, i.e. scientific highlights, of the Team and should be written in such a way that it is understandable to a non-specialist scientist. It is advisable to have illustrations where appropriate for illuminating the text. A list of references should be added, including all articles produced by the Team.

This final report should be available to ISSI not later than 3 months after the completion of the Team's activities.

11. Application

By e-mail to: mfalanga@issibern.ch

Letter of intent on February 15, 2012
Proposal on March 30, 2012

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