

Call for proposals 2008 for International Teams in Space Science (including Geosciences)

1. Purpose

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

Teams are one of the tools of ISSI, 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 intercompared with theories and/or models.

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

1. Space Sciences (Solar and Solar Terrestrial relations, Planetary sciences, Astrobiology, Astrophysics and Fundamental physics) I.
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, because of the fact that the quality of the proposed team is a criterion of the competitive selection (Section 4, Criterion 5), changes to the original membership, as approved during the selection are not acceptable, except in cases of force majeure duly justified and kept to a strict minimum. In that case, a relevant CV will have to be provided for the replacement.

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 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 under 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 prior to submitting the proposal (www.issibern.ch) in order 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 (Section 4, Criterion 5). It will be the responsibility of the Team leader/Coordinator to secure this commitment from his/her proposed team members at the time of project submission.

4. Selection Criteria

The fundamental criteria for acceptance will be the scientific significance of the proposed research and the competence and ability of the team to carry it to a successful conclusion within the indicated time frame.

In detail these will be:

1. Scientific value in relation to the ongoing research in the area
2. Compatibility with aims and programmes (present and expected) of ISSI
3. Timeliness and feasibility.
4. Realism of planned access to necessary data
5. Quality of Team membership. Does it cover the necessary competences? Are there deficiencies?
6. Schedule and plan: is it realistic for completion of the project?
7. Is the outcome of the proposal likely to advance the field?
8. Assessment of the “ added value of ISSI” statement (see para 7 below)
9. Is the Team format particularly relevant to the attainment of the expected result.

Adequate representation of scientists from ESA Member States will be a positive element.

N.B. Weaknesses that may lead to low grading or non acceptance are 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 quality, importance for ISSI and realism and timeliness of the proposal. 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 are otherwise acceptable though not high enough on the priority scale established by the Science Committee.

The Table below offers a perspective view on the success ratio of the proposals submitted since 2003.

Year	Letters of Intent	Proposals	Approved
2003	35	33	12
2004	30	28	16
2005	53	44	18
2006	42	35	17
2007	50	51	24

Table 1: Statistics of the Team activities since 2003

6. Organization of the Team and Technical and Financial support

ISSI will freely make available meeting rooms, projection facilities, computers (PC-Mac), wireless network, Internet connection, facilities for tele-conferences, electric adaptors to the Swiss standard and... the coffee machine,. To see the latest type & number of available equipment, please click here (www.issibern.ch/computers.html).

Concerning financial support, the basic principle is that ISSI will cover 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 is not acceptable. In the exceptional case where a change is justified as mandatory, the Executive will consult with the Science Committee and make a final decision on the proposed modifications. 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. However an exception can be requested if 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. Nevertheless, ISSI requires that the list of papers published in the framework of the project be submitted 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.

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 (to be also put on the team web site)
- Scientific rationale, goals and timeliness of the project.
- List of the expected output (papers, reviews....)
- What added value does ISSI provide for the implementation of the Team activity?
- List of confirmed members with (appended) *short* CVs (1 page for each member)

- Schedule of the project (number and duration of meetings, anticipated periods, list of potential experts, etc).
- Facilities required (computer equipment, access to Internet and databases, ...)
- Financial support requested of ISSI (cfr. Section 6 above).
- Addresses, telephone, fax, e-mail of all participants (to be appended)

****** N.B.: The length of the proposal must not exceed 5 pages (excluding annexes).

8. Schedule

Issue of the Call: **January 17, 2008**

Letter (e-mail) of Intent to propose: **February 17**

Deadline for submission to ISSI: **March 23**

Review process: April- May

Science Committee evaluation and grading: **20-21 May**

Announcement of selection: **end of May.**

Earliest start of Team activity: **July 1. 2008**

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.
- 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 attaches considerable importance to this report whose role is to inform the Executive of ISSI and the various institutional and funding authorities, especially at times of request for continuation of funding and for evaluation of the ISSI's performance and scientific output.

The report should be brief (one to two pages), emphasizing the main accomplishments of the Team and be written in a language that should be understandable to a non-specialist scientist who is not necessarily familiar with the topic of the Team's work. It is advisable to have illustrations where appropriate for the understanding of the text. A list of references should be added, including all articles produced by the team.

The 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: manno@issibern.ch :

Letter of intent on February 17.

Proposal on March 23, 2008

For further information and questions contact:
Vittorio Manno at +41 31 631 4893 (phone)
+41 31 631 4897 (fax)