



A 3-minute guide to preparing an ISSI International Team proposal

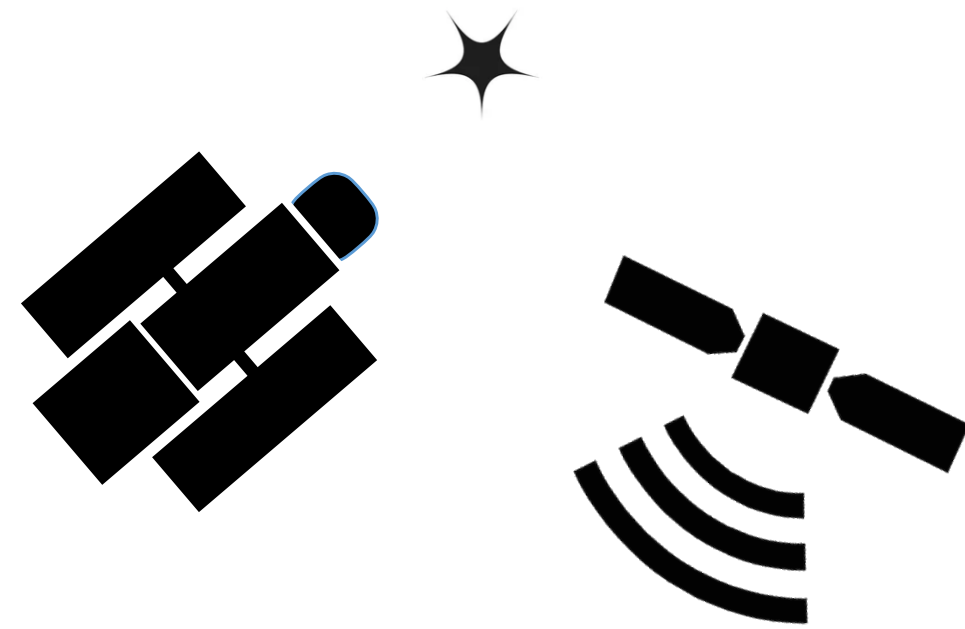
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Why apply for an ISSI/ISSI-BJ International Team?

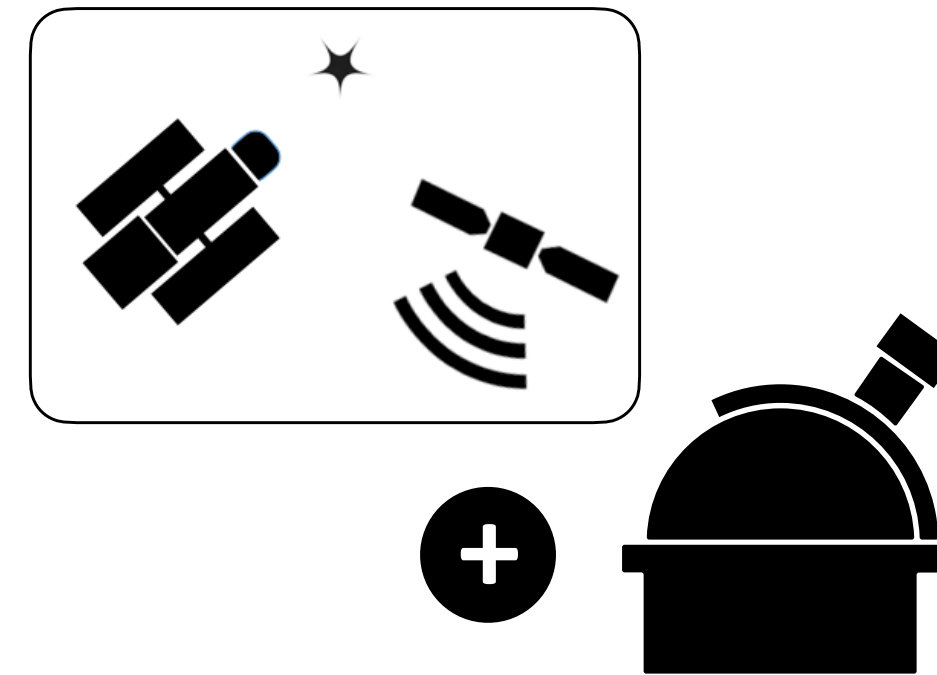
- Tackle your favourite research question with far-flung collaborators or scientists from parts of the community you rarely interact with.
- Grow your scientific network.
- Step away from your usual day-to-day environment and tasks, to just focus on research.
- ISSI hosts International Teams in an open and interactive atmosphere. We provide high quality facilities.



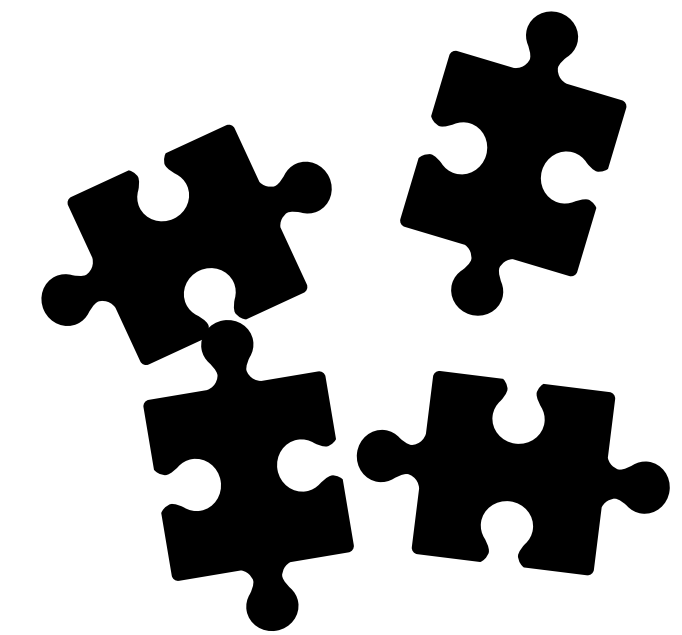
What types of research project?



Must involve the analysis of data from space missions or space-borne observatories.



Can include data from ground-based facilities where this adds scientific value.




Interdisciplinary approach to data analysis and/or theoretical modelling.

Fields of research:

- Space Science: Astrobiology, Cosmology & Astrophysics of Galaxies, Fundamental Physics in Space, Heliophysics, High Energy Astrophysical Phenomena, Planetary Sciences, Solar and Stellar Astrophysics, Space Plasma Physics
- Earth and Climate Science using space data

Who can lead or be part of an International Team?



Any scientist – regardless of nationality or institutional affiliation - can lead or be part of an ISSI Team.

Team member affiliations: representation from at least 4 countries, and at least 1 ESA member state*.



Team members nominated should achieve a good diversity in terms of multi-disciplinary expertise, geographical distribution, career stage, and gender balance. (See selection criteria detailed in Sect. 4 of the [Call for Proposals](#).)

* Requirement re. ESA representation applies to ISSI and joint ISSI/ISSI-BJ Teams, but not to Teams meeting at ISSI-BJ only.

What support do ISSI & ISSI-BJ provide to Teams?

In-kind financial support:

- Contribution towards the living costs of core Team members during Team meetings (hotel accommodation in Bern/Beijing & per diem for a max. of 24 person weeks).
- Additionally: contribution towards the living costs (accommodation & per diem) of early-career researchers, to be nominated after acceptance of the proposal (support amounts to ~20% of the person-weeks allocated to the core Team).
- For each meeting: travel allowance for 1 meeting attendee (by default: (one of) the Team leader(s))

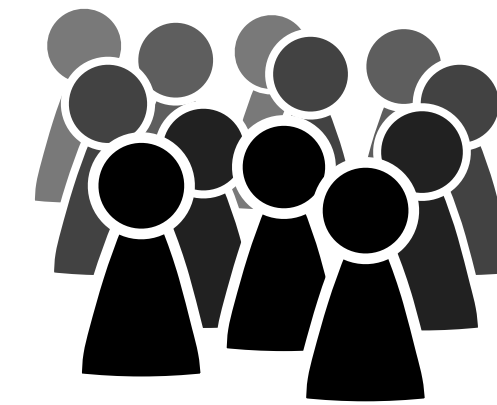
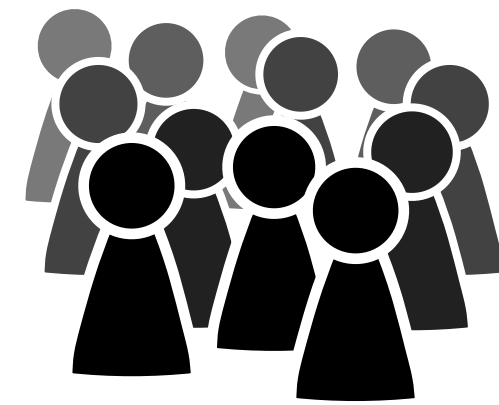
(Note: Publication costs are not an eligible expense.)

Logistical support:

- ISSI/ISSI-BJ secretariat takes care of hotel reservations for meeting attendees.
- Meeting rooms professionally equipped for hybrid conferencing (incl. Zoom licences), [On-Line Collaboration Apps](#) & ISSI-hosted Team web page, plus: the ISSI coffee machine(!).
- Child care, reduced mobility or other special needs.

Project organisation & duration

~2-year project duration, with Team meetings at ISSI and/or ISSI-BJ for a total of max. 24 person weeks*.



core Team of max. 12 persons for 2 meetings



core Team of max. 8 persons for 3 meetings

Year 1

Year 2

* In addition to the max. 24 person weeks for core members, after approval of the International Team project, early-career researchers can be added to the Team for a total of ~20% of the person-weeks allocated to the core Team. You can also add a couple of self-funded collaborators, but these should have clear responsibilities within the project.

Timeline: proposal submission to project implementation

March 13, 2025: submission deadline

April/May: ISSI/ISSI-BJ [Science Committee](#) evaluates proposals

June: results of International Team selection process announced

late summer/early autumn 2025: earliest possible dates
for first on-site meetings of accepted Team projects

summer 2027: latest target date for project conclusion and final reporting

Proposal components & review process

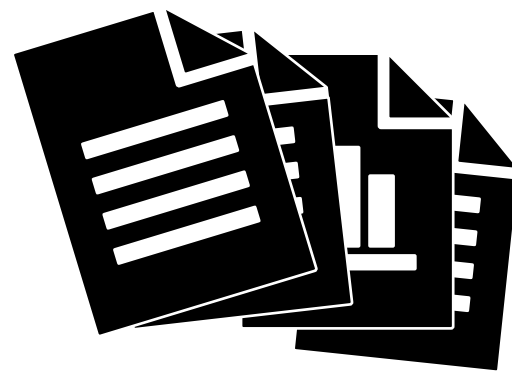
International Team proposals are evaluated via a 2-stage process:

1. Anonymous review of the underlying science case and of basic community representation statistics
2. Assessment of Team member expertise and of rationale for ISSI/ISSI-BJ added value

Proposal components (to be completed/uploaded via the [proposal submission portal](#)):

1. Science justification*

("Part A" - max. 4 pages of single-sided A4 paper, excl. references)



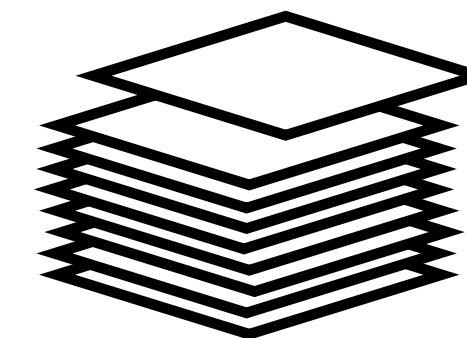
2. Team member expertise & ISSI added value

("Part B" - max. 2 pages)



3. CVs for core Team members

(Please use [this template](#))



4. On-line forms

(Team member affiliations & basic community representation stats)



* Should be anonymised for blind review as per our [guidelines](#).

Selection criteria

The main requirements for the acceptance of International Team proposals are the:

- Significance and timeliness of the research proposed
- Ability of Team members to successfully complete the project within 2 years' time, as well as the diversity of Team members in terms of multidisciplinary expertise, geographic distribution, career stage and gender balance
- Added value of ISSI and/or ISSI-BJ, and the appropriate use of ISSI/ISSI-BJ resources

Detailed assessment criteria are published in Sect. 4 of the [Call for Proposals](#):

- Team & ISSI/ISSI-BJ Resources:
- Resources requested – Are the demands on ISSI and/or ISSI-BJ realistic and compatible with the guidelines in this proposal call?
 - Geographic diversity – Are the International Team members affiliated with a minimum of 4 different countries incl., for ISSI or joint ISSI/ISSI-BJ Teams, at least one member from an ESA member state?
 - Community representation – Is Team membership balanced, or is it at least representative of the relevant community, in terms of gender, minorities/underrepresented groups, career stage, etc. ...
 - Added value of ISSI – What are the unique attributes of ISSI and/or ISSI-BJ that enable the International Team to achieve their science goals?
 - Competence – Do the International Team combine sufficient subject-specific expertise, and if relevant multi-disciplinary expertise?
 - Range of expertise – Is the range of expertise sufficiently broad to address the mission?
 - Team member – Is the team composition in the proposal?
- Science:
- Scientific impact – Is this an important question in the field? Will the outcome of the project address long-standing questions or influence the future direction of the field in a multi-disciplinary context? Will the project result in an incremental improvement to existing work, or could it lead to a step change in the relevant field?
 - Timeliness – Is there a good reason for doing this work now? (E.g. new data coming from a space mission, new developments in a rapidly evolving field.)
 - Innovation – Does the International Team address a novel topic, or propose to synthesise existing knowledge in a new way, e.g. through multi-disciplinary tasks be completed in the time available?
 - Feasibility – Is a work plan included and can all associated tasks be completed in the time available?
 - Scientific legacy – Will the project develop and provide to the community, e.g., techniques, codes, and datasets with long-lasting impact? Is there any overlap with currently active teams (see <http://www.issibern.ch/program/teams.html> & <http://www.issibj.ac.cn/program/it/>)?
 - Science related to space data – Are Team activities aligned with the ISSI remit of supporting (a) research that directly uses existing space data, and/or (b) theory with direct application to existing data? Projects involving both ground- and space-based data are also eligible for support.

Note: Panelists have a broad range of expertises. The proposal should convey the timeliness and broader significance of your project in language that is accessible to both experts in your field and scientists specialising in other disciplines.

Proposal preparation: checklist

- ☒ Start assembling the Team early. You will need to gather information/documents from your collaborators.
- ☒ Does your project involve the interdisciplinary analysis/interpretation of data from a space-borne facility?
- ☒ Will the science justification section convince all reviewers of the timeliness and broader significance of your research project, regardless of whether they are familiar with the topic or experts in another discipline?
- ☒ Does your project proposal include a realistic work plan?
- ☒ Is the composition of your Team sufficiently diverse in terms of scientific expertise, geographical distribution, academic age and gender balance?
- ☒ Does the proposal text address all assessment criteria listed in Sect. 4 of the Call for Proposals?
- ☒ Do you have a good rationale for your choice of meeting venues? (Either ISSI or ISSI-BJ, or both?)
- ☒ Are you only budgeting eligible expenses? Does the support requested remain within the limits of the scheme?
- ☒ Have you suitably anonymised your science justification section in preparation for double-blind review?
- ☒ After submission: Did you receive the e-mail confirming the successful submission of your proposal?

FAQs

My project focuses on data from a future space mission. Is it fundable under the International Teams scheme? - *ISSI/ISSI-BJ do require that Team projects use data from existing space-borne facilities. The extent to which this is the case in your project plans will thus determine how likely it is to be approved. If in doubt, feel free to contact us.*

Are ISSI and ISSI-BJ Teams graded on the same criteria? - *Yes, they are.*

How should the Team budget be presented in the proposal? - *The “currency” for Team budgets is person weeks. Typical wording used might be: “We require in-kind support for two 1-week meetings with 10 core members, for a total of 20 person weeks.”. Do not attempt to estimate the corresponding cost in, e.g., CHF or RMB.*

Can the Team budget be used to cover publication costs? - *No, it cannot.*

Can funding earmarked for covering accommodation costs and per diems be re-allocated to cover the travel expenses of several Team members? - *Only one Team member per meeting can receive the travel allowance. The default recipient is (one of) the Team leader(s), but it can be transferred to another meeting attendee if desired.*

Is it possible to be listed as a Team member or lead applicant on several parallel proposals? - *Both are possible, and it is not infrequent to be listed as a Team member on more than one proposal. (Co-)Leading more than one proposal is not common.*

FAQs

When are early-career researchers (ECRs) added to the Team? - *Formal nomination of ECRs happens after acceptance of a Team proposal. It is possible, but not mandatory, to name these ECRs already at proposal submission; however, this information is not formally assessed/graded by the selection panel. It is thus up to applicants to decide whether naming these ECRs in the proposal provides useful context or not. Note that it is also possible to already include ECRs as core Team members. This does not impact the number of additional ECRs you can add to the Team after proposal acceptance.*

Are ECRs funded from the Team budget, and who can benefit from the ISSI/ISSI-BJ ECR funding? - *The Team budget covers meeting costs for core members. Separate, additional funds are used to sponsor the inclusion of (further) ECRs. Anyone with academic age no more than +2 years post-PhD graduation - after compensation for career breaks, if relevant - is eligible (i.e. MSc students, plus doctoral and some post-doctoral researchers).*

Can ECRs lead an International Team? - *Yes, ECRs can and are encouraged to (co-)lead proposals. The proposal should evidence that the project will be brought to a successful conclusion within the ~2-year time span of an International Team. If the ECR lead applicant does not have a stable position for this entire period we recommend nominating a researcher with a longer-term contract as co-lead.*

Whom to contact with questions during proposal preparation/submission? - *For questions re. science or proposal preparation: [Mark Sargent](#) (ISSI science program manager).
For technical questions on the submission portal: [Willi Wäfler](#) (ISSI system administrator).*

ISSI is grateful for the support received from our funders and partners:

