



ISSI/ISSI-BJ 2026 Joint Call for Proposals for International Teams in the Space & Earth Sciences

This call is jointly released by the International Space Science Institute in Bern ([ISSI](#)) and ISSI–Beijing ([ISSI-BJ](#)) for Teams pursuing research using data from space missions. Applicants can apply for projects hosted by ISSI or ISSI-BJ, or for joint ISSI/ISSI-BJ projects involving meetings at both sites. All submissions are assessed on the same criteria by the joint ISSI Science Committee, irrespective of the host venue chosen. Applicants are encouraged to visit the ISSI and/or ISSI-BJ websites for information on the host venues and the scope of past/ongoing Team projects.

Proposal submission deadline: March 13, 2026

Please submit your proposal by midnight in your local time zone via [this form](#).

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1. Purpose

An International Team is composed of a small group of scientists conducting space science research by collaborating on data analysis, theory and modelling. Teams bring together researchers with complementary expertise, from different countries to tackle a specific scientific problem, often in a multidisciplinary way.

This call is open to all scientists – regardless of nationality or institutional affiliation – active in any of the following research fields: Astrophysics, Heliophysics, Planetary Science, and Earth Sciences.

All Team projects must make use of data from space missions. They may additionally draw on ground-based data where this adds scientific value.

International Teams are expected to produce peer-reviewed publications (with acknowledgement of ISSI/ISSI-BJ support). Teams are required to maintain a website on the ISSI server (or, in the case of ISSI-BJ, on an external server), which provides general information on the project and Team, as well as an up-to-date list of publications and project outcomes.



2. Team Composition & Commitment

International Teams consist of a maximum of 15 members from different institutions, who convene at ISSI and/or ISSI-BJ for two one-week in-person meetings (see also [Sect. 3](#)).

Teams must fulfil the following criteria:

- The proposal and Team shall be led by one or two Team Leaders, who are responsible for overseeing Team activities. The Team Leaders serve as the primary points of contact for ISSI and/or ISSI-BJ for all aspects related to coordination and planning.
- A maximum of 15 members can be funded (see [Sect. 4](#)). Past experience has shown that smaller Teams of 8–12 members often make for particularly dynamic research groups and are thus strongly encouraged.
- At least 20% of team members must be Early Career Researchers (ECR, max. 5 years post-PhD award¹)
- Because geographic diversity is important, a minimum of 4 different countries should be represented among the affiliations of the members. For Teams hosted at ISSI or joint ISSI/ISSI-BJ Teams, at least one member must be affiliated with an ESA member state.
- Teams should aim to achieve a good gender balance and a good mix of seniority levels. The participation of members from underrepresented groups and underserved communities is encouraged.
- All team members must commit to contributing to the project and its outcomes, and Team leaders shall secure this commitment prior to proposal submission.
- Team members are expected to attend all meetings in person, but virtual participation can be arranged in exceptional circumstances.

Any change to team membership after proposal submission should be avoided. In exceptional cases where replacing a member is justified, the Team Leaders must send ISSI/ISSI-BJ a justification for the change, along with the CV of the proposed new member and a description of their anticipated contribution to the Team.

A maximum of two additional self-funded experts can be invited by the Team Leader(s) and are expected to contribute to the work of the team at no cost to ISSI/ISSI-BJ.

3. Team Meetings

Teams can request to hold two one-week, in-person meetings, which may be held at ISSI and/or ISSI-BJ. A third meeting may be requested only in exceptional and well-justified circumstances, and must be clearly motivated in the proposal. The team size and number of meetings must be driven by the planned research goals and well justified.

Teams selected in 2026 are expected to hold their first meeting in 2027, with the final meeting taking place no later than the end of 2028. Meetings at ISSI-BJ may already be held starting in 2026.

¹ To qualify as ECR, the scientists must have received their PhD degree no more than 5 years prior to the proposal submission date or their nomination date by the Team Leader, after adjustments for career breaks where applicable.



4. ISSI/ISSI-BJ Funding

4.1. Financial support

For the duration of Team meetings in Bern or Beijing, ISSI/ISSI-BJ will support Team members through the provision of accommodation (incl. breakfast), and a contribution to local expenses (in form of a per diem at ISSI; through on-site lunch meals and a welcome dinner at ISSI-BJ).

ISSI/ISSI-BJ will re-imburse travel expenses for (one of) the Team Leader(s). In well justified cases, Team leaders may transfer their travel reimbursement to another Team member. The transfer of travel expenses must be approved by ISSI/ISSI-BJ well in advance of the meeting.

4.2. Meeting infrastructure and logistic support

ISSI and ISSI-BJ provide: meeting rooms equipped with professional audio and video systems for hybrid meetings; white boards; Wi-Fi internet access; electrical plug adaptors; the ISSI/ISSI-BJ coffee machine; and printers (only at ISSI). ISSI Teams can make use of the [ISSI Online Collaboration Apps](#) throughout the duration of their project.

4.3. International Team publications

ISSI and ISSI-BJ require that papers published as a result of Team activities include an acknowledgement of ISSI's and/or ISSI-BJ's support.

- For ISSI please include the following acknowledgment:
"This research was supported by the International Space Science Institute (ISSI) in Bern, through ISSI International Team project 'YOUR TEAM PROJECT TITLE' (ISSI Team project #YY-NNN)".
- For ISSI-BJ please include the project title and name of the team leader(s) in the acknowledgments.
- For joint ISSI/ISSI-BJ Teams please include both acknowledgements.

ISSI and ISSI-BJ do not fund publication costs for journal papers submitted by International Teams.

5. Content of the Proposal

A ≥11pt standard font should be used throughout the proposal. The proposal must be submitted by the International Team Leader(s) via the [on-line submission interface](#). As part of the submission process, applicants must submit two PDFs (Part A, see [Sect. 5.1.](#) and Part B, see [Sect. 5.2.](#)) as well as some additional information (see [Sect. 5.3.](#)).

5.1. Part A: Science Justification (anonymised)

Part A must be **anonymised** for review by the ISSI Science Committee. Guidelines and examples to help with this are provided [here](#).

Part A (max. 4 pages of single-sided A4 paper, excluding references) should include:

- Abstract (max. 250 words) summarising all key aspects of the project in plain language accessible to scientists that are non-experts in the field.
- Scientific background and context.



- Research goals, rationale, significance and impact to the field.
- Project workplan including identifying preparatory work, structure of the meetings, and the added value of holding the meetings at ISSI/ISSI-BJ.
- Expected outputs: The primary outcome of Teams is expected to be peer-reviewed publication(s) but other outputs can be listed as an added value.
- References (to be placed at the end, but not counting toward the 4-page limit)

5.2. Part B: Team composition

Part B should be submitted as a single PDF containing:

- Max. 2 pages of single-sided A4 pages containing:
 - List of team members, their expertise and respective roles in/contributions to the project and outcomes.
 - Description why the proposed team size and composition is needed to achieve the science goals.
- 2-page CV for the Team leader(s) and 1-page CVs for all further Team members. To ensure a common format as the basis for all proposal evaluations [this template](#) should be used for all CVs.

5.3. Additional Information

The following additional information will need to be provided during submission:

- Venue: ISSI, ISSI-BJ, or ISSI & ISSI-BJ
- Type of submission: first submission, resubmission, follow-up on a past accepted proposal
- For each Team Member: full name, e-mail address, affiliation, country, gender (male, female, other, prefer not to say), and seniority level (Undergraduate researcher, Doctoral researcher, Postdoctoral researcher [<5 yrs post PhD award], Postdoctoral researcher [>5 yrs post PhD award], Academic staff [group leader; professor; staff scientist], Other).

6. Selection Criteria

Proposals for International Teams are evaluated by the [ISSI Science Committee](#), composed of internationally renowned experts in the four scientific disciplines. Given the broad range of expertise of the Science Committee Members, proposals should be written in an accessible manner, ensuring that they are understandable to scientists who may not be experts in the relevant field.

Proposals shall present convincingly the Team's science goals as well as how and why the number of team members and number of meetings are needed to achieve the proposed research.

The ISSI Science Committee will assess Team proposals via a 2-stage process, of which the first involves an anonymous review of the science case. When evaluating proposals, the Science Committee will assess the following criteria:



6.1. Science (70% of final score; anonymous review of Part A)

- Scientific relevance and impact – Does the proposed research tackle an important question in the field? Will the expected outcome significantly advance the current state of knowledge in the field and/or influence the future direction of the field?
- Timeliness – Is there a strong and well-motivated case for doing this work now? (e.g., the availability of new data coming from a space mission, new developments in a rapidly evolving field)
- Feasibility – Does the proposal clearly describe the approach in achieving the science goals? Are the proposed science goals realistically achievable within the scope and duration of this project?
- Scientific outcome – Does the proposal provide a clear publication plan? Added value: 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 www.issibern.ch/scientific-opportunities/international-teams & www.issibj.ac.cn/program/it)?
- Project plan – Does the proposal include a robust workplan outlining preparatory work, meeting structure, and clearly define expected outcomes?
- Added value – Which unique attributes of ISSI/ISSI-BJ make them particularly well suited to support the International Team in achieving its science goals?
- Science related to space data – Does the project make use of space data or derived results? Ground-based data may additionally be used when it adds scientific value to the project.

6.2. Team (30% of final score; review of Part B)

- Expertise – Does the Team have the required subject-specific expertise or, where relevant, multi-disciplinary expertise to carry out the proposed research?
- Geographic diversity – Are the Team members affiliated with a minimum of 4 different countries? Do ISSI or joint ISSI/ISSI-BJ Teams contain at least one member affiliated with an ESA member state?
- Team diversity – Is the Team membership balanced in terms of gender (striving for equal representation) and career stages (including at least 20% Early Career Researchers)? Is the Team inclusive in terms of underrepresented groups?
- Project Structure – Is the Team size well justified and needed to accomplish the research goals of the Team? Are the requested number of meetings appropriate/sufficient to achieve the research goals?
- Team member roles & responsibilities – Is the contribution of each Team member clearly defined in the proposal? Have all Team members committed to attending all meetings and contributing to the respective Team activities and outcomes?

7. Reporting to ISSI at project completion

ISSI/ISSI-BJ (and their institutional partners and funding agencies) consider the final report to be of prime importance for assessing the quality and potential impact of International Team results. Final reports from Teams are a key component for the evaluation of the standard of ISSI and ISSI-BJ's performance and scientific output.



The final report consists of:

- Summary of the project outcomes (max. 350 words), outlining the key findings and their overall significance in plain language accessible to non-specialists
- Complete publication list
- Max. 2 highlight slides with the key project results (illustrated via figures & text)
- Complete Team webpage, to be kept up to date with, e.g., newly accepted Team publications also after formal project completion.

All elements of the final report should be sent to ISSI and/or ISSI-BJ no later than 6 months after the final meeting of the International Team.

8. Schedule and Decision

- **Release of call:** January 14, 2026
- **Proposal submission deadline:** March 13, 2026
Proposals must be submitted via the on-line submission form
<https://www.issibern.ch/submitproposal/>
Please submit your proposal by midnight in your local time zone.
- **Announcement of the outcome:** End of June 2026

For further information and questions please contact:

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