

ESA PLANS TO RELEASE A CALL OF PROPOSALS FOR SMALL SPACE MISSIONS

The General Secretariat of Research and Technology (GSRT) wishes to inform the Greek scientific and technological communities that ESA plans to imminently issue a Call for Proposals (the Call, hereafter) for small, "fast" space missions (FMs). The Call is scheduled to appear within March 2012.

ESA envisions to implement FMs into the Science Programme, along with the medium (M-class) and large (L-class) missions, in rough analogy to NASA's Small Explorer (SMEX) Program. The motivation behind successful FMs is the implementation of exciting and feasible science, without restriction on the science theme(s) of a mission. The only two boundary conditions imposed by ESA are (a) the total completion time of the mission, from Phase A to launch, that will not exceed four (4) years, and (b) the total cost at completion (CaC), that will not exceed 150 M Euro. Of them, the maximum ESA contribution is not to exceed 50 M Euro with the remaining funds originating from national contributions.

Although interesting parties may refer to the Call - when released - for detailed information, we wish to draw the communities' attention to two potentially useful aspects of it: the possibility of collaborative action with teams from other ESA member-states, and the possibility of "ESA-only" missions with a total CaC not to exceed 50 M Euro. In the second possibility a well-founded, substantiated, and feasible science idea that can be realized by a low-cost (up to 50 M Euro) mission, can be undertaken completely with ESA funding. For member states with weak geographical return indices this poses an excellent opportunity for reversing the situation, at the same time securing funded work and valuable know-how to the successful proposers.

Concluding, we emphasize that ESA's intention is to impose a proposal submission deadline at the end of June 2012.

Although ESA aims to simplify the proposal composition for FMs, potential proposers are strongly advised to start considering ways to respond within this rather tight timeframe.

Upon release, the Call will be immediately posted in the GSRT www site (www.gsrt.gr). The Greek SPC Delegation will do their utmost to help potential proposers respond to the Call by providing information and helping enhance communication between Greek and other ESA member-state teams. In this respect, colleagues are encouraged to let the SPC Delegation know of ideas, needs, potential resources, and contacts that proposers may require.

For the above reasons but also for additional information and clarifications, please contact the Greek ESA/SPC Delegation, namely Manolis Georgoulis (manolis.georgoulis@academyofathens.gr), Vassilis Kaleridis (vcas@gsrt.gr), or Olga Malandraki (omaland@astro.noa.gr).