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Frascati, 6 April 2022

Subject: The Living Planet Fellowship: Call for Research Proposals 2022 (under ESA EISI procedure)

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of the European Space Agency (ESA), I am pleased to invite you participate to the Call for Research Proposals of the Living Planet Fellowship 2022.

The main objective of this initiative is *"to support young scientists, at **post-doctoral** level, to undertake **cutting-edge research** in Earth Observation, Earth System Science or Climate Research, **maximising the scientific return** of ESA and European EO missions and datasets through the development of **novel EO methods, techniques and products**, and by delivering **excellent scientific results addressing the grand Earth Science challenges of the next decade**, enabling improved predictions of the physical interaction of society with the Earth system."*

Host Organisation's Candidates shall propose a 2-year research plan contributing to at least one of the following areas:

A. **Advancing Novel Methods and Techniques:** Targeted research projects aimed at developing innovative methods, novel algorithms and new EO products and datasets expanding the scientific use of the Sentinel missions, the Earth Explorers or the ESA long-term data archives into new scientific areas and application domains. Activities shall establish a solid basis to expand the missions' product portfolio and stimulate novel science results and innovative applications. Priority will be given to develop and validate novel algorithms, data processing techniques, advanced methodologies and new EO-based products that may maximise the novel capabilities offered by the Sentinel missions, the unique data offered by the Earth Explorers, the long-term series of ESA data archives, and its synergies also in combination with meteorological and non-ESA missions.

B. **Advancing Earth System Science:** Cutting-edge scientific activities aimed at maximizing the scientific impact of ESA and European missions in terms of new discoveries and advances in Earth system science addressing the challenges of the ESA EO Science Strategy (Section 3). Projects shall contribute to answer major open questions in Earth system science, address global scientific challenges and community priorities posed by international Earth System Science communities and international science groups (e.g., WCRP, SOLAS, GCP, etc…). Priority will be given to activities that maximise the scientific return (in terms of scientific results and publications) of ESA and European EO assets including Sentinel, Earth Explorers and Meteo mission data, the long-term ESA archive and existing EO-based long-term datasets (e.g., ESA project results).

1. Call for Research Proposals Package

Please note that this Call for Research Proposals package was published on the Living Planet Fellowship Web Page (accessible from https://eo4society.esa.int/2022/04/06/living-planet-fellowship-call-for-proposals-2022/) on the date of this letter. The Call for Research Proposals package includes the following documents:

- LPF - EISI - Call For Research Proposals 2022;
- Appendix 1 - Draft LPF EISI Agreement;
- Appendix 2 - LIVING PLANET FELLOWSHIP EISI Project Proposal;
- Appendix 3 - PSS form.

2. Conditions for proposal submission

In order to respond to this Call, you must submit all of the documents described at Section 5 of the LPF – EISI - Call for Research Proposals 2022.

Your attention is drawn in particular to the requirement to submit with your proposal a specific statement from the Host Institution confirming acceptance of the draft LPF EISI Agreement (Appendix 1). Offers without such a statement or with reservations to the LPF EISI Agreement will not be considered for evaluation.
Only in the case national laws do not allow conditions to accepted in the partnership agreement, this should be clearly pointed out in the required letter from the Host Institution and proposal template.

3. Eligibility criteria

You shall satisfy the eligibility criteria defined in Article 18 of the ESA Procurement Regulations applicable mutatis mutandis, as identified in annex to the Innovation Project Summary.

Projects will be funded under the Block 4 of FutureEO-1 (2020-2022), which is the extension in time and in scope, as well as the rebranding of the well-established EOEP-5. EOEP-5 Block 4 is an optional programme of the Agency, and participation is restricted to institutions which have their registered office in one of the following Participating States: **Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Latvia, Slovenia and Canada.**

Your proposal and all supporting documents must be sent by e-mail to: EOScience@esa.int and should be written in English using exclusively the documents contained in Appendix 1 to 3 above or referred to therein.

In case of a selection of a Proposal for award, the Applicant shall complete their ESA-STAR registration from "Light Registration" to "Full Registration" upon notification by the Agency. Full Registration is a pre-condition for placing an EISI Agreement. The registration as an ESA Entity includes the obligation to subsequently fill in the Agency Questionnaire and its yearly updating through "ESA-STAR". Further information on the registration process can be found on the Industry Portal pages.

4. Conditions and contract with the Host Organisation:

For selected project proposals, ESA will place a contract (see **Appendix 1 - Draft LPF EISI Agreement** of this call for proposals) with the Host Organisation for a maximum of **110KEuro per 2-years**, as a co-funding contribution to a standard post-doctoral position.

ESA funding shall contribute to cover at maximum 70% of costs associated to the salary, travel and publications of the Candidate. This maximum ESA contribution to this cost is **110kEuro**.

5. Timeline

Below are the indicative dates and the steps relevant to the present LPF A Call:

1) **06/04/2022**: call issue;
2) **15/06/2022**: deadline for the submission of Proposals.
3) Eligibility assessment and evaluation;
4) Decision to award the Agreement;
5) **Tentatively Third Quarter 2022**: Notification of results and dispatch of the EISI Agreement signed by the Agency
6) **Fourth Quarter 2022**: Kick-off of activities

6. Evaluation criteria and selection process

All Proposals which meet the eligibility conditions will be evaluated by the Evaluation Committee against the evaluation criteria identified here-below. Over a maximum of 100 points given to the proposals during evaluation, only Proposals scoring above 60 will be considered for funding by the Award Authority.

Proposals will be selected on the basis of a peer review process by the Evaluation Committee including members of Scientific Advisory Bodies to ESA and ESA senior staff. The selection process will be carried out on the basis of the following criteria:

1) Scientific background and experience of the Candidate;
2) Scientific background and experience of the Host Organisation, as well as adequacy of the proposed laboratory facilities, data sets availability;
3) Required EO data and planned use of ESA data and European missions, with main focus on Earth Explorers or Sentinels;
4) Relevance of the proposed work with respect to the specific areas of interest;
5) Excellence of scientific proposal demonstrating a contribution to science beyond the state of the art and providing a significant advancement with respect to the specific objectives of the programmatic areas of interest;
6) Adequacy of the proposed methodology, work plan, scientific approach, proposed EO data procurement and available data sets;
7) Impacts of concrete project outputs in terms of scientific results, data sets, products, models and target publications and potential further developments;
8) Financial capacity to perform the project.

After the selection process, ESA will send an e-mail to all candidates informing them about the outcome of their application.

The Agency reserves the right to award several agreements.

7. Communications:

Any questions relating to this Call must be sent, by e-mail to EOScience@esa.int, not later than two (2) weeks before the Closing Date.

The Agency will publish an anonymous copy of the question together with the Agency's answer, through a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) list on:
https://eo4society.esa.int/communities/scientists/living-planet-fellowship/frequently-asked-questions/

Applicants are asked to note that each response which the Agency makes goes through an internal review process, and that the response will be published once this internal review process has been completed.

8. Confidentiality:

Any document submitted in reply to this Call for Proposal shall become the property of ESA. However ESA will solely use any commercial, confidential or proprietary information included in the Proposal for cost reference purposes and for the purpose of the evaluation of the Proposal and the selection of a Beneficiary.
Unsuccessful Proposals will be disposed of in accordance with ESA's regulations.

9. Kick-off

Successful proposals will receive the EISI Agreement signed. Should any Candidate wish to withdraw from the procedure, that Candidate shall write to EOScience@esa.int before the EISI Agreement's Kick-Off date.

10. Closing Date

Your proposal and all supporting documents must be sent by e-mail to: EOScience@esa.int by no later than **15th June 2022** (the Closing Date).

Yours faithfully,

Benjamin Jeusset
Digitally signed by Benjamin Jeusset
Date: 2022.04.06 09:40:23 +02'00'

Benjamin Jeusset
Head of Operations & Ground Segment
Procurement Division