



Call for proposals:

CHINESE-SOUTH AFRICAN COLLABORATIONS IN ASTRONOMY: WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

1st Call
November 2015

CHINESE-SOUTH AFRICAN COLLABORATIONS IN ASTRONOMY: WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

China and South Africa share common aspirations for scientific and technological development, and for the growth of human capital resources. The countries are members of the BRICS consortium. Their shared goals are particularly apparent in the area of astronomy and astrophysics, and they wish to formulate a bi-lateral agreement and identify specific opportunities for collaborative initiatives of mutual benefit to foster joint progress in these areas.

Astronomy captures the imagination of people everywhere, and touches a fundamental human desire to understand the universe that surrounds us, and our place in it. It provides an ideal way to attract young learners into scientific and technical studies, developing the human capacity for the knowledge-based economy of the future. Its appeal transcends boundaries that divide peoples and speaks to all members of our societies. The goal of the China-South African collaboration in Astronomy is to exploit these basic strengths for the mutual betterment of our general populaces.

The projects of this programme will be built on the principles of equity, sharing the benefits. Supported activities must speak to common interests and must draw upon complementary strengths of the partners. Proposals will require joint participation from both countries, will be openly solicited from the astronomical communities of the partners, and will be evaluated both on scientific and technical merit as well impact and on contribution to human capacity development.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), represented by the National Astronomical Observatory of China (NAOC), and the National Research Foundation (NRF) wish to establish a Workshop Programme in Astronomy through this call for proposals.

1.2 Validity for the call for proposals

This call for proposals sets out information about the possibilities for submitting applications, the conditions these applications must meet, and the procedure for assessing these applications. Please check the CAS and NRF websites for the most recent version of the Call for Proposals.

2. Aim

The Workshop Programme, which is for the period from 01 April 2016 to 31 March 2019, is aimed at strengthening research collaborations between Chinese and South African scientists that have a mutual interest in cooperating. The Programme promotes group interaction between Chinese and South African researchers by providing funds for a series of Workshops, each in an area of strategic importance to both countries, to be held either in China or in South Africa, including pre-Workshop planning and post-Workshop follow-up. A central goal is to establish long-lasting and productive research partnerships for many years into the future. This Workshop Programme will ensure that scientists on both sides will become more familiar with the opposite country's astronomy environment including key research infrastructures, institutions, lead scientists, and areas of interest and expertise.

3. Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Proposals should be jointly submitted by a Chinese-based and a South African-based Principal Investigator (PI). The programme is open to applications from both senior and young researchers. The two PI's must be in the possession of a PhD (or equivalent qualification).

Chinese-based PI's must be employed by institutions of CAS.

South African-based PI's should be employed at a recognized higher education or research institution such as a university, university of technology, science council or national facility in South Africa.

Researchers employed at private companies are not eligible.

3.2 What can be applied for

Researchers can apply for a contribution towards the costs of a Workshop in the field of Astronomy. The Workshop should be held either in China or in South Africa, and not in any other country.

The travelling side can apply for the costs of international travel, and the hosting side can apply for local travel and subsistence costs, as well as for the operational costs for hosting the Workshop. The amount available for each Workshop is approximately R400 000 on the South African side and RMB 200 000 on the Chinese side, including pre-workshop planning and post-workshop follow-up. Post-workshop follow-up comprises relevant activities as approved by both PI's.

Costs that will not be funded include travel to countries other than South Africa and China, consultant's fees, educational expenses (bursaries, fellowships and scholarships), insurance and medical care, equipment, project management fees, salaries, temporary staff fees; etc.

3.3 When can applications be submitted

The deadline for applications for the 1st call is 15 January 2016, and the call is for activities ending no later than 31 March 2019. Note that the year for each activity begins on 01 April and ends on 31 March the following year.

3.4 Submitting an application

The application form is available on the CAS website (see www.nao.cas.cn) and on the NRF website (see www.nrf.ac.za). IDENTICAL applications should be submitted simultaneously to both CAS and NRF.

The application form together the scanned signature page must be emailed directly to ycliang@nao.cas.cn and dlamini@nrf.ac.za. **No hard copies will be accepted. Please request an acknowledgement of receipt.**

4. Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

Selection of the proposals is performed according to a joint Chinese – South African assessment and selection procedure.

1. The admissibility of the proposals is checked both in China and in South Africa, i.e. CAS and NRF check whether the applications meet the requirements in Section 3 of this Call for Proposals. Applications that do not meet the requirements will not enter the assessment procedure.
2. CAS will send the proposals for assessment by external review.
3. The NRF Astronomy sub-Agency Standing Astronomy Grants Panel will adjudicate on the proposals and make recommendations to the DCEO: Astronomy.
4. CAS and NRF will subsequently jointly decide on the final allocated grants in the Joint CAS-NRF Committee based on shared assessments.

4.2 Criteria

Proposals will be assessed on the basis of scientific quality, originality and relevance, quality of the applicants, and added value to Chinese-South African cooperation in Astronomy as highlighted in the Concept Note for Chinese-South African Collaborations in Astronomy (May 2015). Areas of strategic importance to this partnership will be prioritised. Involving historically disadvantaged individuals and/or institutions in South Africa is strongly encouraged.

5. Contact details

For specific questions about this programme please contact:

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