

Announcement of Opportunity for a Community Scientist in the PLATO mission

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and scope

This Announcement of Opportunity (AO) solicits the participation of the scientific community in the role of Community Scientist (CS) in the PLATO mission. Through the appointment of the CS, ESA intends to gather independent advice for optimising the exploitation of the mission by the general scientific community.

The PLANetary Transits and Oscillations of stars mission (PLATO) is the medium mission “M3” in ESA’s Science Programme. PLATO aims at finding and studying a large number of extrasolar planetary systems, with emphasis on the properties of terrestrial planets in the habitable zone around solar-like stars. PLATO aims also at investigating seismic activity in stars, enabling the precise characterisation of the planet’s host star, including its age. In addition, PLATO will address a large number of complementary science topics in various areas of astronomy.

The Science Programme Committee adopted the PLATO mission at its meeting in June 2017, therefore the mission is now in its implementation phase.

ESA aims to appoint up to two CSs: the present call is to appoint the second CS. The CSs are appointed for a first period of three years, renewable. With the exception of expenses incurred while travelling to Science Working Team (SWT) meetings, ESA does not fund the activities of the CSs and each proposer is responsible for securing his/her own funding from other sources.

The schedule for this AO cycle is given in Table 1.

Table 1: AO schedule and deadlines

Date	Event
12 October 2022	Release of this AO
29 November 2022, 12:00 hrs (noon) CET	Proposals due
1 st quarter 2023	Appointment of Community Scientist

1.2 AO documentation package

[AO-D1] PLATO Science Management Plan; ESA/SPC(2020)40

[AO-D2] PLATO Definition Study Report; ESA-SCI(2017)1

1.3 Mission summary and CSs tasks

A mission summary is included in Section 2 of [AO-D1]. A more detailed description of the PLATO mission science objectives, science measurements and mission requirements, payload, observation strategy and management organisation can be found in [AO-D2].

The PLATO Science Management Plan (SMP, AO-D1) describes the approach that will be implemented to ensure the fulfilment of the scientific objectives of the PLATO mission and to optimise its scientific return, with special emphasis on payload procurement, science operations and data generation and management. The SMP also outlines the data generation approach and data rights, and how the scientific community can participate in the mission. It describes the tasks and responsibilities of PLATO mission stakeholders up to the data distribution and archiving, and the principles for the publication policy and public relations. The responsibilities and tasks of the CSs are described in Section 5.2.1 of [AO-D1].

2 APPOINTMENT REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS

This call is open to scientists based in ESA Member States. Scientists involved in the PLATO Mission Consortium (PMC) management (programmatic, scientific, or technical) or being responsible for hardware or software development and procurement activities are not eligible.

The CSs are members of the PLATO Science Working Team (SWT). Their main responsibility is to advise ESA on the means to optimise the use of PLATO data by the general scientific community. This includes looking after the interests of the scientific community that will be involved in the PLATO complementary science programmes (see Section 5.2.2 of [AO-D1]). The CSs are expected to provide support to the communications activities of ESA. In particular, the CSs advise ESA on:

- Communicating the mission capabilities to maximize the community involvement and the mission scientific return;
- Defining the user requirements for the mission archive;
- Optimising the capabilities for complementary science within the mission constraints;
- Preparing the guest observers open calls (e.g. documentation, tools, support);
- Releasing of scientific data products to the community;
- Optimising the exploitation of the PLATO mission data by the general community.

The CSs, as part of their role, interact with the SWT members, the Project Scientist, and the Science Operations Centre.

Candidates will have to describe in the proposals their expertise relevant to the PLATO science objectives described in Chapter 2 of [AO-D2] and/or to other complementary science fields that PLATO could address. Candidates will also have to describe their proposed contribution to the responsibilities and tasks defined above, and the relevance of their contribution to the mission. Candidates will have to declare their time commitment to the

SWT activities and their willingness to take up specific and time-limited tasks as assigned by the SWT. The applicants shall guarantee their participation in the SWT meetings (3 meetings per year are expected). The proposals should include the explicit endorsement and support from their institutes.

The successful candidate will be appointed by the ESA Director of Science. The CS appointment is *ad personam*. The selected CS will be required to submit a short annual report of his/her PLATO related activities to ESA.

The CSs are full members of the SWT with the same rights and responsibilities as the other SWT members, as described in [AO-D1]. In particular, the CSs have the same publication rights and rules as the members of the PMC ([AO-D1], Section 8).

3 CONTENTS OF THE PROPOSAL

Proposals submitted in response to the AO are limited in length to 9 A4 pages (minimum font size 11 pt), and must contain the following information:

- A cover letter stating the proposer's name and affiliation and explicitly mentioning the proposer's title, position, institute, address, telephone number and e-mail address (max. 1 page).
- A brief curriculum vitae also including the 10 most relevant publications (max. 2 pages).
- A description of the scientific expertise relevant to the PLATO science objectives (max. 2 pages).
- A description of the proposed contribution to the responsibilities and tasks defined in Section 2, and a statement concerning the time availability (max. 3 pages).
- A Letter of Endorsement, signed by the proposer's Head of Institute, with the endorsement to the proposer's application and the explicit support with respect to the proposed activities and the availability of facilities and infrastructure, as needed by the proposer for the accomplishment of the CS tasks (max. 1 page).

Details of the personal data protection measures that apply to this Announcement of Opportunity can be found in the privacy notice on the submission website.

4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used (in no particular order) in assessing and evaluating individual proposals:

- Candidate's competence and experience relative to the PLATO science objectives.



- The level to which the proposal identifies specific competences and addresses the contribution to the tasks described in Section 2.
- Adequacy of the time that the candidate intends to devote to activities related to the CS role.
- Adequacy of resources available to the candidate to carry out activities related to the CS role.

5 LETTERS OF INTENT AND PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals shall be submitted electronically in PDF format (file size cannot exceed 10 MB) according to the instructions on the following webpage:

<https://cosmos.esa.int/web/plato-cs-2022>

and according to the deadlines listed in Table 1.

Proposers will receive confirmation upon successful receipt of their Proposals.

Further queries should be addressed to:

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ACRONYMS

AD	Applicable Document
AO	Announcement of Opportunity
CET	Central European Time
CS	Community Scientist
ESA	European Space Agency
PLATO	PLANetary Transits and Oscillations of stars
PMC	PLATO Mission Consortium
SMP	Science Management Plan
SWT	Science Working Team