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Third ASPERA Common Call for Proposals

Introduction

ASPERA is a network of national government agencies responsible for coordinating and funding national research efforts in Astroparticle Physics. The second phase of ASPERA (ASPERA-2) is funded within the ERA-NET 7th Framework Programme of the EU and ASPERA and started in July 2009. The objectives of ASPERA are to improve the coherence and coordination of Astroparticle Physics research within Europe including *inter alia* coordinating funding, where appropriate, in selected Research and Technology Development domains.

This call is the third of a series of common calls for R&D and design studies, for the realisation of future Astroparticle Physics research infrastructures identified in the [ASPERA Roadmap](#) and is targeted towards **future neutrino detectors and third generation interferometers (the Einstein Telescope)**. The duration of the funding period for successful proposals shall be up to 3 years.

Therefore under the umbrella of ASPERA the:

- *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF, Germany)*
- *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - Institut National de Physique Nucléaire et de Physique des Particules (CNRS-IN2P3, France)*
- *Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique et aux énergies alternatives (CEA, France)*
- *Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek - Vlaanderen (FWO, Belgium)*
- *Stichting voor Fundamenteel Onderzoek der Materie (FOM-Nikhef, The Netherlands)*
- *Narodowe Centrum Nauki (NCN, Poland)*
- *Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR, Russia)*
- *Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC, UK)*

are signatories (hereafter called Partner or Partners to an agreement) to open the third common call for proposals for transnational research projects for



**Targeted R&D and design studies in view of the realisation
of future Astroparticle Physics research infrastructures**

The call will open on the 18th June 2012 and the **deadline for the receipt of proposals will be 4pm CET on 3rd of September 2012.**

You are cordially invited to participate in this call.



Nature, Purpose and Theme of the Call

The projects eligible for funding within this common action should aim at design study activities or targeted R&D in view of the realisation of the research infrastructures described in the document “European Roadmap for Astroparticle Physics”¹. In particular they should convincingly demonstrate that they are integral parts of the formulation of a Technical Design Report linked to the future research infrastructures in the following themes:

- *R&D for low energy neutrino detectors, where low energy covers 1MeV to 10s of GeV*
- *R&D for third generation interferometers*

In particular the theme: *R&D for low energy neutrino detectors, where low energy covers 1MeV to 10s of GeV* concerns the R&D in view of the realisation of a next generation neutrino detector that would address the current issues concerning neutrino properties, that is the problems of mass hierarchy, CP violation, possibilities of sterile neutrinos etc. While the theme: *R&D for third generation interferometers* concerns R&D towards the third generation gravitational wave antennas and in particular R&D towards the Einstein Telescope (E.T.).

Proposals should demonstrate a clear added value to the applicants’ partnership over and above what could be achieved individually. Genuine transnational collaborations should comprise complementarities of expertise and methodology among partners. Parallel national projects with little interaction are not acceptable.

Eligibility of Proponents and Composition of Project Teams

Prospective applicants should refer to Annex I to this document to ascertain if their national funding agency is participating in a single or both themes of this call. If the funding agency is participating in the theme of interest to the applicant, researchers based in that Partner country, who are eligible to apply for national project funding according to the national regulations of the countries in which they are based, will be eligible to apply to this call. Applicants must belong to eligible organisations legally established in the Partner countries funding the call and must perform their planned activities within such organisations. Funding for industrial applicants may also be permitted by some national agencies, however it will not be possible for members of industrial organisations to function as Project Coordinator. Applicants from non-participating countries or non-eligible organisations may join these project consortia, and by joining strengthen a proposal, but they will not be eligible for funding via this Common Call and would not count towards the minimum of three participating countries (see below). Potential applicants should consult their National Contacts for the country they are working in for more details.

The funding applications must be made by individuals (not organisations).

Proposals must not duplicate research already funded at national or EU level within national, international or EU calls. It will be the responsibility of each project applicant to establish and declare that the submitted proposal fulfils this condition; such declarations will be subject to verification. Discovery of duplication will lead to the withdrawal of funding from approved projects.

Applicants for funding must form project consortia in which a minimum of three members from a minimum of three participating countries will participate.

¹ <http://www.aspera-eu.org/images/stories/roadmap/SAC-Roadmap-Nov-1-2011-final.pdf>



The consortia will consist of a principal proponent (Project Coordinator) and consortia members (co-applicants). The Project Coordinators will be responsible for preparing all necessary documents for the application process and for handling the communication with the Common Call Secretariat and with his/her own national funding agency. The other team members (co-applicants) will be responsible for communication with their country's own national funding agency.

In some countries there may be specific rules or exclusions concerning permissible consortia constellations. Prospective applicants are strongly advised to consult their National Contacts for the country in which they are working for more details.

Funding Model, Eligible Costs and the Duration of Projects

The call will use the so-called "virtual pot" model in which each Partner funding agency will fund its "own" share of a particular project according to the rules and regulations usually employed when financing their national projects.

In total up to €2,18M of funding will be provided by the Partner agencies for highly-rated transnational projects. The maximum contributions of individual national funding agencies to the "virtual pot" (and thus the maximum that can be applied for from that national agency by researchers) are listed in Annex 1. There will be no funding from the European Union.

The budget of each partner in a consortium cannot exceed the limit fixed by the national funding agency unless supplemented by a contribution from industry or other funding source. Such contributions have to be approved by all the funding agency Partners participating in the project and by the Programme Committee.

Eligible costs are defined by the rules of the participating national agencies. Overheads and Value-Added Tax (VAT) will be handled according to the usual national rules for that Partner. The total available budget for projects submitted from a particular country will be fixed by that country's national funding agency.

Country-specific information concerning funding agency limits, rules and regulations can be sought via the National Contacts.

Funding for a national sub-project will normally cover costs such as those for:

- PhD student or Post Doc position for the duration of the project;
- travel expenses for the person(s) under contract and other staff that are active in the project (according to the rules of the National Funding Agencies);
- project related equipment/consumables.

All personnel, equipment and consumables need to be fully justified and cost effective.

The duration of the funding for the successful proposals under this Common Call shall be up to 3 years, starting not earlier than January 2013.

Evaluation Criteria and Process

Proposals submitted to this call will be evaluated and ranked by the ASPERA Evaluation Panel (EP). The EP will comprise 5 to 10 high level scientists, from within Europe and outside, relevant to the themes of the call. The EP will also seek additional scientific opinion from external referees for each proposal and applicants will be given the opportunity to comment on these referees reports in terms of a rebuttal before the ranking process begins. Following completion of the refereeing stage, the Evaluation Panel will meet to consider the proposals submitted. Applicants will be invited to make a presentation of their proposal to the Evaluation Panel and there will be a Question and Answer session. Two members of the Evaluation Panel will be assigned to each proposal to act as rapporteurs. The rapporteurs will assess the proposal using the evaluation criteria below based on the proposals submitted, the referee reports and rebuttals and the presentation and responses to questions. The rapporteurs will present their conclusions to the Panel and initiate discussion of the proposal. The Panel will consider and rank them according to agreed criteria for assessment to produce an overall grade (highly fundable, fundable and not fundable) for each proposal.

The criteria for assessment of the projects will include primary and secondary (or supporting) criteria. The primary criteria are related to the assessment of scientific excellence and strategic fit to the ASPERA Roadmap aims and objectives. Scoring highly against the primary criteria is an absolute pre-requisite, without which an application will not be recommended for funding. The secondary criteria, largely associated with project management and the track record of the proponents, would be used to assess confidence that the project would have a successful outcome.

Criterion	Scope
Scientific Merit	Quality of the science in terms of originality, innovation and new understandings.
Strategic fit	How does the project align with the priorities identified in the ApPEC/ASPERA Roadmap?
International competitiveness	The project's scientific quality in relation to the global competition and its timeliness in respect to competing projects.
Track record of scientific groups involved	The ability of the proponents to carry out research based on past performance, international reputation and expertise.
Quality of project management	Does the project have a sound project plan and clear management structure and processes?
Technical readiness and risk	Will the project achieve its stated goals, deliver on time and within budget?
Potential for knowledge transfer and industrial engagement	Will the research, and any resulting technology developments be exploitable by other research areas and industry/commerce?
Added value through transnational cooperation	What project outputs can only be achieved through transnational cooperation?
Cost effectiveness	The cost of the resources requested in relation to the activities to be undertaken and to the proposed goals of the project.



Scoring Scheme

1) Each of the above criteria will be scored using the following scheme:

- 4: Excellent – all relevant aspects successfully addressed;
- 3: Good – all relevant aspects are well addressed, though minor improvements are possible;
- 2: Fair - significant weaknesses that would need corrections, though proposal broadly addresses the criterion;
- 1: Poor - criterion addressed in a cursory and unsatisfactory manner, serious inherent weaknesses.

2) In addition to scoring each criterion, a weighting (in brackets) would also be assigned to differentiate between primary and secondary criteria e.g.

Primary criteria

- Scientific quality (5)
- Strategic fit (5)
- International competitiveness (5)

Secondary criteria

- Added value of transnational cooperation (4)
- Track record of scientific groups involved (4)
- Quality of project management (4)
- Technical readiness and risk (3)
- Potential for Knowledge Transfer and industrial engagement (2)

The scoring and weighting could then be combined to give an overall score, which would put the proposal initially into one of three categories e.g. highly fundable, fundable and not fundable. This initial ranking would be confirmed during Panel discussion. However, projects failing to score excellent or good in all of the primary criteria would not be considered to be fundable.

The results of this exercise will then be considered by a Programme Committee of high-level representatives of the Partner funding agencies which will assign resources to the projects on the basis of the Evaluation Panel's recommendations and to achieve a coherent package of support according to funding available and the principle of a virtual common pot.

Application Procedure and Deadlines

In addition, in some countries, it may be necessary for applicants to send additional forms or hardcopy applications to the national funding agencies of those countries. This is so that financial, eligibility checks and approvals may be undertaken. Potential applicants should consult with their National Contacts for more details of these requirements and where/how to send any additional information.

The application procedure will be as follows:

The Coordinator for each project should submit the proposal on behalf of all the applicants and this should consist of an application form plus a case for support, which can be submitted on line at <http://commoncall.aspera-eu.org/>. The partners' declaration must be signed by a duly authorised signatory in each of the applicants' organisations.



The case for support should include the following information:

- Project title and acronym
- Executive summary (max. 1000 characters)
- Background, rationale and a review of the state-of-the-art (max. 1 page);
- Objectives of the project (max. 1 page);
- Detailed description of the proposed research (max. 10 pages) including:
 - the scientific questions to be addressed and expected results;
 - justification of research approach;
 - added value of transnational collaboration;
 - scientific importance and urgency of the proposed research;
 - relationship to similar research being done at other locations;
 - A full picture on other funding secured or pending for the project outside your ASPERA proposal (amount, to whom and what for);
 - relationship of proposed research to the expertise of team members.
- Project planning (max. 10 pages), including:
 - time plan including milestones and deliverables;
 - structure of the project, including workpackages and management structure;
 - the role of each team member in the project including the time they will spend on the project;
 - potential risks and the risk mitigation plan;
 - and a results dissemination plan.
- Financial planning, including:
 - detailed costs estimates (per year) for each partner (according to the accounting rules of their national funding agency) – templates will be provided;
 - the cost motivation and information concerning any co-funding.
- CV of the team members, including a description of the main domain of their research and a list of the 5 most relevant publications (max 2 pages per team member).

In order for the Programme Committee to compare the costs for staff, travel, equipment etc. applicants are required to separately identify the direct and indirect cost elements within any proposal and report how the indirect costs have been calculated according to their funding agency's rules. Personnel should also be shown in units of FTE (as well as cost) to allow comparison of effort given the different salary levels in the partner countries. VAT should also be shown separately.

Proposals should then be submitted electronically via the Common Call [website](#). **The deadline is 4 pm CET on 3rd of September 2012.**

In the event of any difficulties in submitting proposals, applicants should contact one of the following members of the Call Secretariat:

Ino Agrafioti, CNRS, email iagrafioti@admin.in2p3.fr, tel: +33.(0)1.44.96.51.36

Emanuela Pistoia, INFN, email epistoia@unite.it

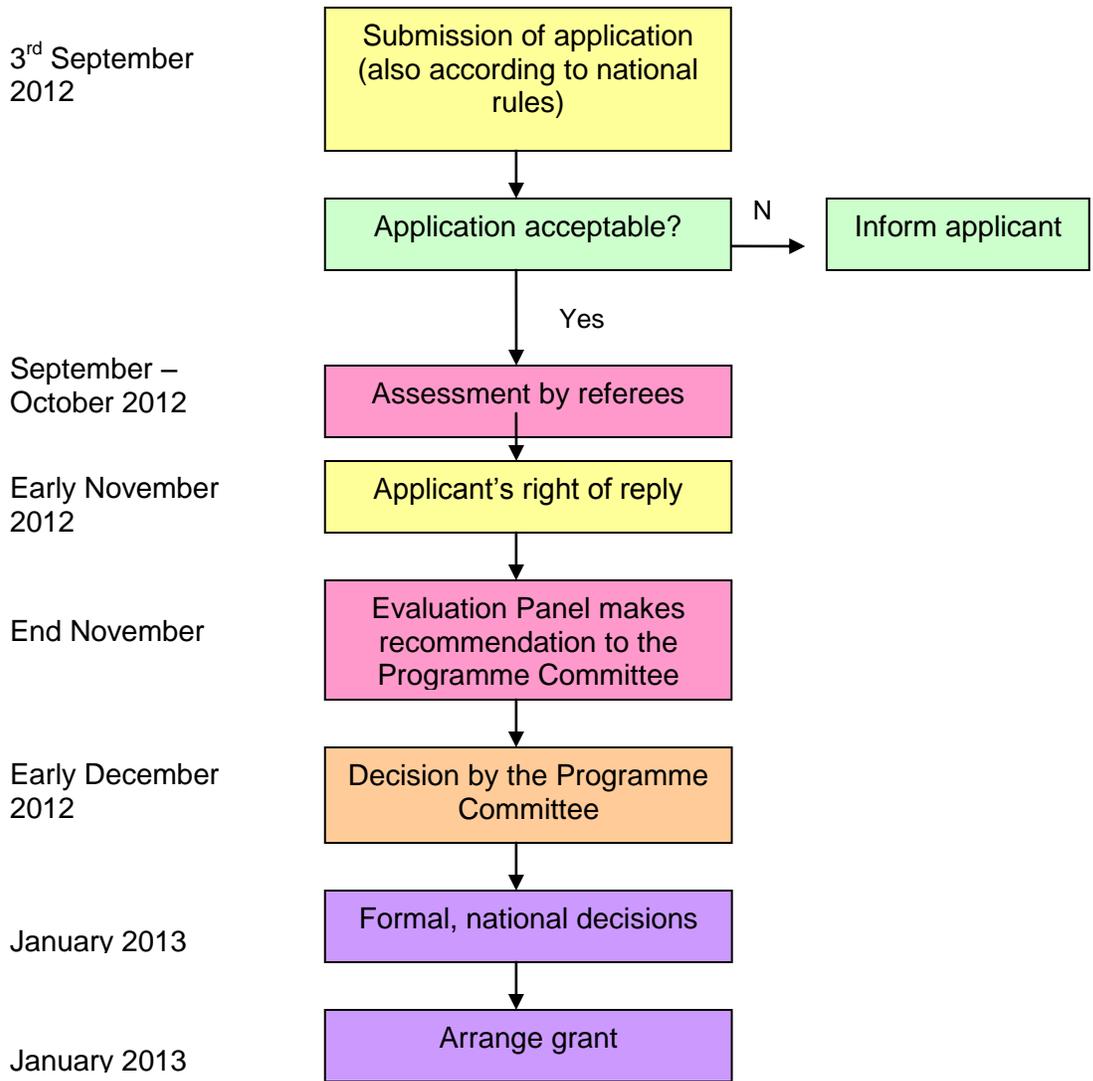
For technical issues with the website: webmaster@aspera-eu.org (but make sure you cc iagrafioti@admin.in2p3.fr)



NARODOWE CENTRUM NAUKI

Applications will only be accepted after the announcement of this call for proposals on 18th June 2012 and must be received by the above deadline.

All proposals should be submitted in English.



Following a successful project application, project participants will be required to have signed a collaboration agreement and supplied proof of this agreement to the call Common Call Secretariat and the Partner national funding Agencies before project funding will start. All consortia will also be expected to sign contracts with their national funding agencies according to the regulations of that country in which they are working.

In addition to any monitoring and final evaluation of sub-projects by the national agencies, successful projects will be required to provide regular (annual) written progress reports at the project level to the Programme Committee and also to give a presentation of their final report.

National Contacts

Individual consortium members should inform their relevant national contact below by 30th June 2012 of their intention to submit a proposal to this call². Please also use the contacts below for any queries relating the national funding, rules and regulations and any requirement for a parallel submission to the national agency. A link is also provided, where available, to the relevant website for further information.

Partner Country	Agency	Contact	Website
Belgium	FWO	Olivier Boehme olivier.boehme@fwo.be	http://www.fwo.be
France	CEA	Bijan Saghai bijan.saghai@cea.fr	http://www.cea.fr
France	CNRS-IN2P3	Gabriel Chardin Gabriel.Chardin@admin.in2p3.fr	http://www.in2p3.fr
Germany	BMBF/ PT-DESY	Franz-Josef Zickgraf Franz-josef.zickgraf@desy.de Marc Hempel Marc.hempel@desy.de	http://pt.desy.de
Poland	NCN	Anna Plater-Zyberk anna.plater@ncn.gov.pl	http://www.ncn.gov.pl/
Russia	RFBR	Alexander Sharov a.sharov@rfr.ru Yaroslav Sorokotyaga ysorokot@rfr.ru	http://www.rfbr.ru/rffi/eng/about/n_601
The Netherlands	FOM-Nikhef	Frank Linde f.linde@nikhef.nl Ad M. van den Berg berg@kvi.nl	www.fom.nl and www.nikhef.nl
UK	STFC	Jenny Hiscock jenny.hiscock@stfc.ac.uk	http://www.stfc.ac.uk

² Researchers thinking of applying to the RFBR do not need to inform national contact on intentions to submit a proposal.

National contributions to the virtual common pot

The total amounts for the entire funding period up to which national funding is possible are as follows:

Agency	Themes	Level of contribution to the "virtual" common pot. (up to k€)
BMBF	Neutrino detectors/ Third generation interferometers	500
CEA	Neutrino detectors	80
CNRS-IN2P3	Neutrino detectors	300
FWO	Neutrino detectors	200
FOM-Nikhef	Third generation interferometers	150
NCN	Neutrino detectors/ Third generation interferometers	300
RFBR	Neutrino detectors/ Third generation interferometers	500
STFC	Third generation interferometers	150
TOTAL		2180

Unless indicated otherwise, agencies have no preference between the two areas in how the funds are allocated. This will be decided on the basis of the report of the Programme Committee.

Przewodniczący
Rady Narodowego Centrum Nauki



prof. dr hab. Michał Karoński