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Harwell, 25/11/2021

Subject: Call for Proposals - ESA Initial Support for Innovation "ASPIRE WITH ESA"

REF: 21.1AE.02

Dear Madam/Sir,

The European Space Agency (ESA) hereby invites you to submit a proposal for the ESA Initial Support to Innovation EISI “ASPIRE WITH ESA” - Commercially-driven Services and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

1. Introduction – ESA S2 and ASPIRE WITH ESA

ESA Space Solutions (ESA S2, ESA’s business innovation program) supports businesses willing to bring new Space-related products and services to market. Specifically, ESA S2 aims at:

- advancing the growth and global competitiveness of the **Space Downstream** and **NewSpace** industries of the relevant ARTES Participant States;
- multiplying the Space-dependent range of products and services (i.e. **services**) delivered to customers (i.e. **innovation**) sustained through private / customer investment or funding sources;
- attracting a wider range of actors into the end-to-end Space value chain, especially in **sectors of major economic importance**; and
- generating direct **social and commercial benefits** to Participant States economies and citizens worldwide.

ASPIRE WITH ESA is the name of a series of ESA S2 Calls for Innovation targeting mission-led innovation. The Calls rely on a new, more agile and responsive way to access ESA programmes named *EISI (ESA Initial Support for Innovation)*, and providing innovators (i.e., economic operators requesting funds through the Call):

- a streamlined funding request process with **short and guaranteed response times**;

- funding **up to €200,000**, linked to the conditions of the present Call; these include satisfactory progress and compliance with ESA S2 programmatic element;
- a light implementation process requiring **minimum formal reporting**; and
- a **package of benefits** from ESA S2 to innovators, including amongst others, technical expertise, business know-how and access to ESA S2 business networks.

2. ASPIRE WITH ESA Call for Proposals

Call for Proposals scope:

ASPIRE WITH ESA supports Innovators in bringing Space-enhanced mission-led innovations closer to market. Main goals are to:

- evidence customer engagement and market traction (**Proof of Market**);
- consolidate service elements (**Proof of Concept**); and
- demonstrate social impact and business sustainability, i.e., Socio-Economic Impact (**Proof of Sustainability**);

Innovators shall be commercially-driven businesses with a clear case for **business benefit and social impact**. They shall demonstrate relevant utilisation of Space assets & technologies within their proposed innovations.

ASPIRE WITH ESA is mission-led: the Proposal shall demonstrate social impact through the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals Framework (SDG)** together with immediate and long-lasting **Socio-Economic Impact (SEI)**. Both are linked: without economic impact, there will not be any social or sustainable ones. ASPIRE WITH ESA will use both sets (SDG and SEI) to measure the success of the project.

Call for Proposals steps:

The present Call invites you as an eligible Innovator to submit your Proposal. Your Proposal is required to conform to the conditions specified in this Cover Letter and in the applicable Appendices. This Call for Proposals announcement is published also on [ESA STAR Publication news](#) and is issued in English only.

The application process has two steps, as requested by the ESA Member States supporting ASPIRE WITH ESA:

1. Pitching stage:

The present call invites you as an eligible Innovator to submit a Pitch. Only pitches coming from eligible innovators, as described in this cover letter, will be considered.

Your pitch shall be submitted at the latest on 15th January 2022 through the [Electronic pitch submission tool](#), where you will find the [guidelines](#) on how to prepare the pitch. Your pitch should be in English. Eligible innovators, those ones meeting the conditions stated below under “Eligibility criteria” are invited to defend their pitch. Not retained innovators will be informed.

2. Proposal stage:

Should your pitch be considered for ASPIRE WITH ESA, you will be invited to submit a Proposal. Your Proposal is required to conform to the conditions specified in this cover letter and in its the applicable Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Draft ASPIRE EISI Agreement
- Appendix 2 - Activity costs breakdown form
- Appendix 3 - Innovation Project Summary

that can be found on <https://business.esa.int/news/aspire-esa-live>

Your Proposal shall be composed of the ASPIRE EISI Innovation Project Summary completed in all of its questions. The Proposal shall be supported by the documents required in the ASPIRE EISI Innovation Project Summary and shall bear the written authorisation from the relevant National Delegation.

Your Proposal shall be submitted through the [Electronic submission tool](#), and should be written in English using exclusively the documents contained in Appendix 1 to 3 above or referred to therein.

Eligibility criteria:

The following applies to all stages of the submission process:

The ASPIRE with ESA Beneficiary 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.

In particular, the Agency will admit for evaluation only Proposals from Applicants residing in any of the **Participating States** supporting both ESA S2 and ASPIRE WITH ESA:

Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The following applies only to stage 2 (Proposal):

At the time of submission of their Proposal, Applicants need to attach to the Proposal the **written authorisation** from their [National Delegations](#).

Through your application you will be required to make **declarations** in relation to the **eligibility conditions**. If it would appear during the evaluation that the declarations are incorrect, the Agency reserves the right to either significantly down-mark a Proposal or eliminate the Proposal as a whole.

Please note that **no reservations or amendments** to the Draft ASPIRE WITH ESA Agreement other than in the section specifically left to the Applicant to fill in will be accepted. After stating compliance with the ASPIRE WITH ESA Agreement, no negotiation on the terms and conditions will be allowed.

Please note that a pre-requisite for submitting a Proposal is to have completed the **on-line questionnaire for registration** as an entity wishing to do business with the Agency, as follows:

The Member States of the Agency have made it mandatory for the Agency to register economic operators wishing to do business with the Agency. Economic operators not yet registered as potential Applicants, are requested to complete the online questionnaire on the [“ESA-STAR registration” website](#). Any entity, at the time when a Proposal is submitted, should at least have already completed the **“Light Registration”** as described in the [“ESA-STAR” Registration User Manual](#).

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 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](#).

Application submission and selection

Calendar:

Below are the indicative dates and the steps relevant to the present ASPIRE WITH ESA Call:

1. 01/12/2021: *Call opening*
2. 22/01/2021: *Deadline for pitch submission*
3. 05/02/2022: *Notification on the selected pitches to submit a proposal*
4. 26/02/2022: *Deadline for Proposal submission*
5. 22/04/2022: *Notification of results and dispatch of the ASPIRE EISI Agreement signed by the Agency*
6. 02/05/2022: *Kick-off*

Evaluation and feedback:

All ASPIRE WITH ESA 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 replies provided in the Innovation Project Summary, only Proposals **scoring above 65** (weighted) will be considered for funding by the Award Authority.

The Agency will inform the economic operators of the outcome of the evaluation, accompanied by the final scoring achieved by their Proposal within timelines set forth above.

Applicants are not entitled to contact ESA during the evaluation and selection period to ask for information on the evaluation except if strictly limited to the overall time schedule (planned date for notification of the Applicant selection results) Such contact with ESA, if any, is authorized only if made in writing to aspirewithesa@esa.int.

Should your Proposal be recommended by ESA for award, it is envisaged to have the kick-off meeting by telephone shortly after notification of the Agency’s intention. Assuming a successful outcome, the electronic copy of the Agreement will be countersigned by ESA and then sent to you in due course.

In the case of minor modifications or clerical errors, the Agency may ask you to modify the submitted EISI Agreement.

Criteria	Weight
Team and co-financing capability.	25 %
Credibility of business idea & market potential, incl. utilisation of space technology.	25 %
Credibility of implementation plan.	20 %
Socio-Economic Impact to deliver during and after the Agreement.	30 %

Communications:

Any communication or query on the EISI procedure shall be done in writing to aspirewithesa@esa.int at the latest fourteen (14) calendar days before the deadline for the submission of Proposals stated above. The Agency aims to respond within 10 days after carefully assessing any communication received.

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://business.esa.int/aspire-esa-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.

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.

Unless otherwise specifically required in the Proposal with reasonable justifications, unsuccessful Proposals shall be disposed in accordance with ESA's regulations.

Kick-off

Successful innovators will receive the Final ASPIRE WITH ESA Agreement signed. Should any innovator wish to withdraw from the procedure, that innovator shall write to aspirewithesa@esa.int before the Agreement's Kick-Off date.

Yours faithfully,

Stefano Fiorilli
Head of ESA Procurement and EU Administration Department

Annex 1: Glossary

Agreement	The written agreement between the Agency and the Beneficiary which formalises the particular EISI terms and conditions and awarding a fixed amount to the Beneficiary
Applicant	Economic operators submitting an ASPIRE WITH ESA Proposal, also referred to as Innovators
Beneficiary	Economic operator who has entered into an ASPIRE EISI Agreement with the Agency
Customer	Entity paying in exchange of services provided
EISI	<i>ESA Initial Support for Innovation</i> , ESA's new scheme as per ESA Council Document ESA/C(2020)6
ESA	European Space Agency
ESA S2	ESA Space Solutions
Innovation	Bringing services to market
Innovator	Individual or company willing to do innovation in the setting of the ASPIRE WITH ESA initiative
New Space	Private development of Space Economy
Service	In the scope of this call, generic name to group both products (one-time sale offering) and services (recurrent sales offering)
Space asset	Any space technology, data or capability allowing innovators to develop new services. Examples of Space Assets are Earth Observation Data, GNSS tracking / timing data, Satellite Telecommunications, Human Spaceflight technologies or ESA Patents
Space Downstream	Exploitation of Space Assets as services on ground on any economic sector