



Comisión Nacional de Investigación  
Científica y Tecnológica – CONICYT

## **CHINA-CONICYT FUND**

National Program for the Development of Astronomy and its Related Sciences

### **RULES FOR THE CHINA - CHILE CALL IN ASTRONOMY SECOND CALL**

#### **1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

In 2006, CONICYT created the Astronomy Program with the aim of supporting and fostering Chilean Astronomy, as well as to position this discipline as a strategic area for the development of Science in Chile, and turn the country into a key player worldwide.

Lines of action:

- Support, strengthen and disseminate Astronomy to position this discipline as a strategic model for the development of Science in Chile, in order to turn the country into a key player worldwide in this field.
- Promote scientific and technological cooperation, as well as attract new projects and investment in Astronomy, through both domestic and international strategic partnerships.

#### **1.1 Call for proposals:**

This program is developed within the framework of the "*Memorandum of Understanding on Scientific Cooperation for the Development of Astronomical Research*", approved under Regulation No 114 from November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013. It was signed by the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). It creates a collaborative program through the CHINA-CONICYT Fund, hereinafter the "Fund", aimed at conducting joint astronomical research. The activities set out by the Memorandum of Understanding include bilateral collaboration in astronomical research, including supporting young astronomers through postdoctoral fellowships, among others.

The Fund is managed by CONICYT and awarded by the CAS-CONICYT Joint Committee in accordance with the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by both countries.

This second call will finance proposals for postdoctoral research positions through the CHINA-CONICYT Fund.

## 1.2 Objective of the call:

The main objective of this call is to strengthen cooperation between Chile and China in Astronomy through the inclusion of young researchers with doctorate degrees, by engaging in research proposals in Chilean institutions, with the possibility of continuing them in China. Thus, they will contribute to scientific development, strengthened by the involvement of both countries.

## 2. APPLICATION

The application and all the information requested in these rules must be submitted through the online application system available at CONICYT's website <http://www.conicyt.cl/astronomia/category/concursos/>, as well as sent to the following e-mails: [postdoc.cas@conicyt.cl](mailto:postdoc.cas@conicyt.cl) and [echen@das.uchile.cl](mailto:echen@das.uchile.cl) before the deadline at 16:00 hours Continental Chile time. As for the start and deadline of this call, they will be informed through a newspaper of national circulation and/or may be checked on CONICYT's website: [www.conicyt.cl/astronomia](http://www.conicyt.cl/astronomia)

### 2.1 Type of proposal: Postdoctoral position:

CONICYT will fund postdoctoral position proposals **to be developed in Chile**, which must be submitted by foreign and Chilean researchers with a doctorate degree, and sponsored by a Chilean researcher. It must also have the support of a Chilean host organization.

### 2.2 Applicants:

For the purpose of this call, the following will apply:

Applicants	Requirements	Incompatibilities
Postdoctoral researcher	Researchers who have obtained the doctorate degree, preferably after January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2009, and until the publication date of this call.	Those researchers who have not obtained a doctorate degree at the time of the application will be excluded from taking part in the call in any way or form.

Chilean host organization	Universities, research centers, scientific societies with legal entity, public or private, who commit to carrying out research or teaching activities in Astronomy, Astrophysics and/or related sciences, and which take part in the research proposal for the postdoctoral position.	N/A
Sponsor researcher	A researcher or scholar with doctoral training, who works in the Chilean host organization, holding the responsibility of directly overseeing the academic execution of the postdoctoral fellow's research.	N/A

### 2.3 Benefits and deadlines:

Proposal	Maximum duration in Chile*	Maximum amount to finance**
Postdoctoral position	One to two years (with an option to extend the proposal for another year, depending on budget availability and the evaluation of the activities performed).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual allowance: CLP 18 000 000.</li> <li>- Annual travel and/or operating expenses: CLP 4 000 000.</li> <li>- Annual medical insurance: CLP 500 000.</li> <li>- Installation costs: CLP 2 500 000.***</li> </ul>

\*CONICYT will finance the postdoctoral position while the postdoctoral research fellow works for the host organization in Chile.

\*\*In Chilean pesos.

\*\*\*Installation costs will only be paid once by CONICYT.

### 2.4 Eligible items - benefits:

- Allowance: Annual living funding of CLP 18 000 000 (eighteen million Chilean pesos) which may be transferred to the beneficiary in 1 or 12 installments.
- Operating costs: It considers all the expenses for the development of the proposal. This includes, among others, materials or supplies required for its execution, as well as all specific services needed (computing, accounting, laboratory tests and others). It also considers the acquisition of smaller equipment, software and laboratory tools, reagents, consumables, computer supplies, library materials, stationery, secretarial expenses, office supplies and costs of bonds (mandate and promissory note) that the proposals must cover to guarantee the correct use of the resources, among others.

- Tickets and living expenses: Domestic and international tickets will be financed only in Economy class, along with all living expenses incurred during travel. This item must be strictly used for the performance of activities related to the postdoctoral position.
- Installation costs: These resources may be requested by those living abroad or in a Chilean region different from that of the host organization at the time of receiving the awarding notification. This item allows to cover the costs of installation, such as housing/rent, food and/or transportation, temporary visa or other authorized, reciprocity taxes and airfare (only Economy class).
- Health benefits: It may be used to pay for contributions to the Chilean public or private health systems (FONASA or ISAPRE, respectively), supplement a private health plan or for acquiring health insurance. These resources may also be used to supplement a third person health plan in FONASA or an ISAPRE, which covers the postdoctoral researcher. This expenditure does not support budget reallocation. All unused resources should be returned.

### 3. ADMISSIBILITY

#### 3.1 Admissibility process:

The members of the Astronomy Program review the documentation for each proposal and prepare a list of admissible valid submissions, according to the fulfillment of the requirements and documents stated on the rules. Applicants who do not comply with the rules of this call, its conditions and requirements, or who do not deliver all the requested information, will be excluded and will not enter the evaluation process.

In the event of inadmissible proposals, postdoctoral researchers will be notified by e-mail.

#### 3.2 Documents and conditions:

The proposals must be submitted in English, including all the documents listed below:

- Curriculum vitae.
- Copy of the doctorate degree or other certificate attesting to the Doctoral condition.
- Two (2) letters of recommendation.
- Letter of support from the host organization, signed by the legal representative of the institution that will host the applicant. This letter must specify the name of the research sponsor.

Applicants may expressly authorize CONICYT to send all notifications for this call via e-mail, whether they be those related to the application phase, the signature of the agreement and for the entire

duration of the project, including the monitoring of compliance with obligations phase. For the purposes stated above, the applicant shall provide an e-mail address in their application, in order to receive any relevant notifications.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the following conditions are also admissibility requirements, without which the project will not get to the evaluation phase:

1. At the time of the application and during the resolution of this call, both the postdoctoral researcher and the research sponsor cannot participate as members of the committee associated with this call.
2. Accuracy of information: Both the applicants and the awarded researchers are responsible for the veracity of the information contained within the application form and/or provided during the project execution. This means they should be in the position to provide backup documentation if required by the CAS-CONICYT Joint Committee. The omission or misrepresentation of any information within the application or during the execution of the project may be grounds for it to be declared inadmissible, to rescind the award, or an early termination of the agreement, as applicable. CONICYT may request a partial or total reimbursement of the funds awarded, if applicable.

## 4. EVALUATION

### 4.1 Evaluation and qualification process of the proposals:

The evaluation of each application will be performed by the CAS-CONICYT Joint Committee, appointed by Regulation No 9582 from October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014. This regulation offers guidelines and definitions for the implementation of the Fund, in addition to supporting the management and monitoring of the resources, as well as the call and its rules, among others.

For this call, the committee must also perform the following activities:

- a) Review the applications.
- b) Prepare a ranking according to the scores.
- c) Deliver the decision proposal to CONICYT.

## 4.2 Evaluation criteria and weighting:

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
1. Quality, relevance and impact of the research, with special emphasis on cooperation between Chile and China in Astronomy.	50%
2. Productivity of the applicant.	40%
3. Letters of recommendation.	10%

Each evaluation criterion will be assigned a score between 0 and 5. Half points might be used, but no smaller fractions. It is generally considered that the approval threshold may not be lower than three points.

Definition of scores:

0. Does not qualify	The proposal fails to meet/address the criterion under examination or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1. Poor	The proposal does not adequately meet/address aspects of the criterion, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2. Fair	The proposal broadly meets/addresses the aspects of the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
3. Good	The proposal properly meets/addresses the aspects of the criterion, although it requires some improvements.
4. Very good	The proposal meets/addresses the aspects of the criterion very well, although some improvements are possible.
5. Excellent	The proposal successfully meets/addresses all relevant aspects of the specific criterion. Any weaknesses are minor.

## 5. DECISION AND AWARDING CONDITIONS

### 5.1 Selection mechanism:

In the decision proposal given to CONICYT, the selected researchers are listed in descending order (from highest to lowest score), defining in general that the approval threshold may not be lower than three points.

### 5.2 Awarding of proposals:

CONICYT, through the corresponding administrative act, will approve the decision and award the call, based on the proposal made by the CAS-CONICYT Joint Committee. The administrative act awarding this call will be sent by e-mail to the addresses provided by the applicants for these purposes. All applicants will be notified, whether they have been favored or not, and it will also be published on CONICYT's website.

As for the awarding decision, applicants may appeal to the Head of the Service within five business days from the notification.

## 6. AGREEMENT

### 6.1 Signing of the agreement:

The financing agreements will be signed between CONICYT and the selected postdoctoral researcher for a period of one to two years, as appropriate. The financing agreement will expressly define the rights and obligations of each party, the duration and start date of the postdoctoral position, and all those clauses that best safeguard the fulfillment of the objectives of this call.

The agreement will only be valid after the complete processing of the administrative act that approves it.

When signing the agreement, the awarded must submit the following documents:

- a) Two (2) copies of the financing agreement.
- b) Letter of acceptance signed by the selected postdoctoral researcher.
- c) Special mandate and promissory note giving power to CONICYT, according to the format and the content provided by this service. Thus, in case of non-compliance with economic obligations, CONICYT may specifically fill the promissory note on behalf of the beneficiary, setting its expiration date and the due amounts.
- d) Copy of their identity card or passport, as appropriate: foreign researchers with awarded proposals must show proof of residence in the country through a permanent or temporary residence visa. For the purposes of processing the agreement, temporary visa holders must

submit the corresponding document and a valid ID card for foreigners. Those who hold a permanent residence must submit the corresponding document. It is also possible to consider a student visa with a work permit. In order to do this, applicants must provide the corresponding document and a valid ID card for foreigners.

The deadline for signing the agreements and sending the documents listed above will be provided by the Astronomy Program, considering the date of communication by CONICYT. If the awarded researcher does not sign the agreement within the prescribed period, it will be considered as they giving up the benefit.

## 7. TRANSFER OF FUNDS

The funds allocated to each postdoctoral position will be transferred in one or more installments per year, according to what the parties define in the agreement, and shall be governed, as appropriate, by Regulation No 759/2003 of the Comptroller General of the Republic.

Nevertheless, the continuity of the postdoctoral position and, consequently, the provision of funds for the following phases (year 2 or year 3, if applicable), depend on the approval of the technical progress reports and expense reports, and also on CONICYT's budgetary availability.

Beneficiaries are forbidden from investing the funds transferred by CONICYT in any financial instruments such as fixed or variable income, short or long term (mutual funds, stocks, time deposits, bonds, etc.) with or without financial risk. If the funds transferred are allocated to the above-mentioned purposes, CONICYT may demand the full or partial reimbursement of the funds already provided.

If the transferred resources are used for purposes other than those specified in the project, they must be returned to CONICYT.



## 8. MONITORING AND CONTROL

### 8.1 Technical follow-up: Progress and final reports:

The postdoctoral researcher must send an annual scientific progress report to CONICYT, as appropriate, at the end of the postdoctoral position.

### 8.2 Changes:

During the execution of the project, the postdoctoral researcher may request in writing, in a justified and timely manner, that CONICYT, through its Astronomy Program, make modifications to the agreement. For example: changes in activities and/or members of the project, redistribution of benefits, project deadlines, among others. Such modifications shall become effective once authorized by CONICYT, after a favorable report from the Astronomy Program.

## 9. EXPENSE REPORTS

After each execution period of the project, the postdoctoral researcher must submit the expense report to CONICYT's Expense Control Unit of the Department of Administration and Finance (UCR/DAF), along with the original documentation supporting the expenditures.

For expense report purposes, only those expenses issued to the postdoctoral researcher will be accepted, under no circumstances shall they be issued to CONICYT.

CONICYT will request a checking account meant exclusively for the management of the funds given to projects receiving over 50 million pesos or 20 million, annually. In addition, the corresponding bank statements for all transactions must be submitted, considering such documents as mandatory and part of the expense report.

All expenses related to the execution of the postdoctoral position must be declared (installation costs item, travel, health benefits and/or operating expenses), following the guidelines for expense reporting, according to the instructions contained in the aforementioned guidelines.

Any kind of compensation will not be accepted as project expenses (for instance: in replacement of legal notice, legal vacations and years of service, all event, etc.), as they do not align with the objectives of projects funded by CONICYT.

The expense reports will be returned to the postdoctoral researcher once they have been reviewed.

If a document is declared to more than one of CONICYT's programs or on more than one occasion, CONICYT reserves the right to terminate early, ipso facto, all the projects involved and to request full or partial repayment of the funds provided.

UCR/DAF will be responsible for validating (approving or rejecting) the expenditure submitted by the beneficiary or the beneficiary institution of the project, as appropriate.

To make further money transfers, all funds provided for the previous execution year must be reported.

## 10. RECOGNITION

The contribution from the fund must be recognized in every activity funded by it, such as publications and scientific reports (journal articles, theses, papers, etc.) and promotional materials according to the following suggested text (or its equivalent in another language): "***This work was supported by CONICYT, the Astronomy Program and the second call of the CHINA-CONICYT Fund***". In case of purchase of equipment, a plaque stating the above must be attached to the equipment.

## 11. EARLY TERMINATION AND CLOSING OF THE POSTDOCTORAL POSITION

### 11.1 Early termination:

The CAS-CONICYT Joint Committee, in accordance with relevant information, has the power to suspend, modify or terminate the postdoctoral position early, ending the transfer of funds, which will be conducted through the corresponding administrative act.

### 11.2 Severance package:

This will occur once the deadline of the postdoctoral position is reached, in addition to having complied with its objectives and results to the satisfaction of CONICYT, having received the approval of the academic reports (final technical report), as well as the final expense report of all the funds transferred.

## 12. COMPLIANCE AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES

CONICYT reserves the right to interpret the meaning and scope of these rules in case of any doubts and conflicts that may arise regarding their contents and application.

At any time, prior to the signing and during the execution of the respective agreements, CONICYT may verify full compliance with these rules and, more specifically, the accuracy and completeness of the information submitted in the respective applications carried out due to this call, as well as regarding the support of the required documentation.

In case any inconsistencies, omissions and/or incompatibilities are found, CONICYT will declare the award void or may terminate the agreement early.

## 13. RESTRICTIONS

- It is expressly stated that individuals who hold debts or other overdue contractual obligations with CONICYT at the time of awarding may not be awarded the project under this call.
- Members of the CAS-CONICYT Joint Committee may not apply to this call.
- No applications submitted after the deadline will be accepted.

## 14. QUERIES

All queries must be sent through CONICYT's Information, Complaints and Suggestions Office (OIRS) <http://www.conicyt.cl/OIRS/>, up to five days before the published deadline of the call. Clarifications of the rules will only be valid if they are informed in writing by the Astronomy Program.

## 15. RECEPTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will only be accepted by CONICYT through the e-mail addresses mentioned under paragraph 2. The deadline for the reception of proposals will be published on CONICYT's website, Astronomy calls, open calls.