

CHINA - CONICYT FUND
National Program for the Development of Astronomy and Related Sciences
TERMS FOR THE CHINA - CHILE CALL FOR TENDERS IN ASTRONOMY
Third 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 global powerhouse.

Lines of Action:

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

1.1. Call for proposals

This program has been 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 28th, 2013. It was signed by the Chilean National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), and creates a collaborative program through the CHINA - CONICYT Fund, hereinafter the "Fund," for conducting joint astronomical research. The activities set out by the Memorandum of Understanding comprise bilateral collaboration in astronomical research, including supporting young astronomers through postdoctoral fellowships.

The Fund is managed by CONICYT in collaboration with the CAS South America Center for Astronomy (CASSACA). The CAS - CONICYT Joint Committee is in charge of awarding this call for tenders in accordance with the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by both countries and these terms.

This call for tenders will fund proposals for postdoctoral research positions through this Third Call of the CHINA - CONICYT Fund.

1.2. Objective of the call

The main objective of this call for tenders is to foster cooperation between Chile and China in Astronomy through the inclusion of young researchers via research proposals in Chilean institutions. This will be done in collaboration with researchers in China in order to contribute to scientific development strengthened through the involvement of both countries.

2. APPLICATION

The application must be submitted with all the information requested in these terms using the online application system available at CASSACA's website <http://www.cassaca.org/en/opportunities/postdoc-programs/postdoc-application/> before the deadline at 4:00 pm, continental Chile time. The start date and deadline of this call will be announced at <https://jobregister.aas.org>, in a nationally-circulated newspaper and/or may be checked on CONICYT's website 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 or Chilean researchers sponsored by a Chilean researcher with the support of the sponsor's Chilean host organization.

It is desirable for applicants to have a doctorate degree obtained after January 1st, 2010.

2.2. Applicants

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

Applicants	Requirements
Lead researcher	Researchers who obtained a doctorate degree or a document accrediting that they passed the doctorate degree comprehensive exam or its equivalent.
Chilean host organization	This refers to universities, research centers, and scientific societies with legal entity, either public or private, that are committed 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.
Sponsoring researcher	This refers to a researcher or scholar with doctoral training, who works for the Chilean host organization and directly oversees the academic implementation of the lead researcher's project.

2.3. Benefits and deadlines

Proposal	Duration*	Maximum funding amounts (in CLP)
Postdoctoral position	Two years (with an option to extend the proposal for another year***)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Annual allowance: CLP \$20,640,000 ii. Annual travel and/or operating expenses: CLP \$4,500,000 iii. Annual Health Benefits: CLP \$456,000 iv. Relocation costs (if applicable)

*CONICYT will fund the postdoctoral position while the lead researcher works for a Chilean organization.

***Renewal will be subject to CONICYT's budget availability and a technical evaluation by the CAS - CONICYT Joint Committee, which will be ratified through the corresponding legal document (CONICYT's Exempt Regulation).

2.4. Eligible items (detailed benefits)

i. Allowance: CONICYT will allocate CLP \$20,640,000 (twenty million, six hundred and forty thousand Chilean Pesos) to the awarded researcher per year.

ii. Traveling and/or operating expenses: CLP \$4,500,000 (four million, five hundred thousand Chilean Pesos) per implementation year. Eligible expenses are:

- **Travel**: domestic and international tickets and traveling expenses. These are covered for the lead researcher of the project and for activities directly related with the research and presentation of its results. It includes:

a. Domestic travel: field trips, presenting results at scientific conferences and traveling for meetings throughout the country.

b. International travel: research residencies and presenting results at scientific conferences, etc. It only covers Economy class tickets.

- **Operation costs**: Computing supplies (software and licenses, etc.); computer equipment at the user level (computer, laptop, printers) which will become property of the sponsoring institution at the end of the project; office supplies; acquisition of books and magazines; registration in congresses; purchase of services; expenses associated with vehicle rental; travel visas for trips pertaining to the project, travel insurance, etc. Funding for scientific publications may only be requested for publications generated by the project.

iii. Health benefits: CONICYT will allocate CLP \$456,000 (four hundred and fifty six thousand Chilean Pesos) per year to the lead researchers of the projects awarded by this call for Health benefits.

iv. Relocation costs: These resources may be requested by those living abroad at the time of receiving the awarding notification. This covers relocation costs such as housing/rent, food and/or transportation, temporary visa or other authorization, reciprocity taxes and airfare (only Economy class).

To cover these expenses, up to CLP \$3,000,000 (three million Chilean Pesos) may be requested once, and only at the beginning of the first year of implementation. This does not permit the reallocation of funds to other benefits. All unused resources must be reinstated.

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1. Eligibility process

The Astronomy Program will review the documentation for each proposal and prepare a list of eligible valid submissions, according to the fulfillment of the requirements and documents stated in the terms. Applicants who do not comply with the terms of this call for tenders and its conditions and requirements, or who do not submit all requested information, will be ruled out based on the terms and will not enter the evaluation process.

In the event of ineligible proposals, CONICYT will notify the applicant of the corresponding administrative decision by registered mail or e-mail. The latter will be done only if the applicant expressly authorizes it on their application. The applicants will have five business days to appeal from the time of receipt of the notification, according to what is stated in Law 19,880, which sets the Terms for Administrative Procedures governing the decisions of the bodies of the State Administration.

3.2. Documents and conditions

The proposals must be submitted in English and include all the documents listed below:

- **Research proposal**, free format.
- **Curriculum vitae** including a list of publications.
- **References**, these must be submitted on the application platform described in section 2 entitled "Application."
- **Certificate of the doctorate degree** or other document accrediting that they passed the doctorate degree comprehensive exam or its equivalent.
- **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 sponsoring researcher and the post-doctorate applicant.

If this document is not submitted in compliance with the required formalities by the deadline of this call, the lead researcher of the project will have up to five business days after the deadline to submit the letter of the host institution in response to the request of the Astronomy Program or on their own initiative.

Applicants may expressly authorize CONICYT to give all notifications for this call via e-mail, whether relating to the application phase, the decision of the tender, or the signature of the agreement, and for the duration of the project, including the monitoring phase of compliance with obligations. For the purposes stated above, the applicant shall provide a current e-mail in their application in order to receive all relevant and necessary notifications.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the following conditions are also eligibility requirements, without which the project will not enter the evaluation phase:

A. At the time of the application and during the resolution of this call, both the lead researcher and the sponsoring researcher cannot participate as members of the committee associated with this call or its evaluation panel.

B. Accuracy of the information: Both the applicants and the awarded researchers are responsible for the veracity of the information contained in the application form and/or provided during the implementation of the project. They should be able to provide backup documentation if required by the CAS - CONICYT Joint Committee. The omission or misrepresentation of any information in the application or during the implementation of the project may be grounds for being ruled out based on the terms, 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 scoring process of the proposals

The evaluation process consists of two stages:

Stage 1) Evaluation process by an external panel:

- a. The CAS - CONICYT Joint Committee will appoint the members of the external panel, which will assign the proposals to all its members.
- b. Each proposal must be evaluated according to the criteria set out in section 4.2.

Stage 2) Evaluation by the CAS - CONICYT Joint Committee:

The evaluations will be reviewed and analyzed by the CAS - CONICYT Joint Committee, appointed by Exempt Regulation No 9582 from October 17th, 2014 and its amendments. 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.

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

- a. Review the evaluations of the external panel for all proposals.
- b. Assign a score or confirm the average score issued by the external panel for each proposal, which may consider each evaluation criterion or an average (following the evaluation criteria of section 4.2).
- c. Prepare a ranking according to the scores.
- d. Submit the decision on the 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	40%

2. Scientific value of the applicant	30%
3. Letters of recommendation	20%

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 limit 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 AWARDDING CONDITIONS

5.1. Selection scheme

In the decision proposal for CONICYT prepared by the CAS - CONICYT Joint Committee, the selected researchers are listed in descending order (from highest to lowest score), defining in general that the approval limit may not be lower than three points.

The decision may include a waiting list in the following cases:

- Withdrawal of any of the awardees or if any of them is unable to implement the project.
- Budgetary availability during the current financial year.

The waiting list will be effective according to the number of vacancies and budgetary availability of CONICYT. It may select projects from the waiting list, in descending order (from highest to lowest score) starting with the top of the list.

In case there are equal scores on the waiting list, the proposal that has achieved a higher score in the criterion "Quality of the proposal" will be given preference.

5.2. Awarding of proposals

Through the corresponding administrative act, CONICYT 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 announced 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 this also will be published on CONICYT's website.

6. AGREEMENT

The funding agreements will be signed between CONICYT and the selected lead researcher for a two-year period (with the possibility to extend the project for a third year). The funding agreement will expressly define the rights and obligations of each party, the duration and start date of the postdoctoral position, and all clauses that best safeguard the fulfillment of the objectives of this call.

The validity of the agreement will begin after the complete processing of the administrative act that approves it.

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

- a. Two (2) copies of the funding agreement.
- b. Letter of acceptance signed by the selected lead researcher.
- c. Letter of institutional support **signed by the legal representative** of the Chilean institution that will host the lead researcher awarded by this call.
- d. Copy of the doctorate degree or other certificate accrediting their doctorate status.
- e. 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 permanent residence must submit the corresponding document. It is also possible to consider a student visa with working authorization. In order to do this, applicants must provide the corresponding document and a valid ID card for foreigners.
- f. Special mandate and promissory note in the name of CONICYT, according to the format and the content provided by this service. Thus, in case of non-compliance with financial obligations, CONICYT may specifically collect the promissory note on behalf of the beneficiary, setting its expiration date and the owed amounts. Such amounts shall be those owed due to funding granted by CONICYT, and must be restored in accordance with the provisions of these terms and the respective agreement. These documents and their signatures must be duly authorized by a notary.
- g. The awarded lead researchers must set a personal address in the city of Santiago de Chile, in the respective agreements and promissory notes, for the purpose of receiving notifications regarding the enforcement of the promissory note.

The deadline for signing the agreements and submitting the documents listed above will be provided by the Astronomy Program, considering the date of notification by CONICYT.

If the awarded researcher does not sign the agreement within the defined period, it will be understood that they are not accepting this benefit.

7. TRANSFER OF FUNDS

The funds allocated to each postdoctoral position will be transferred according to the conditions set by the parties in the agreement and shall be governed, as appropriate, by Regulation No 30/2015 of the Comptroller General of the Republic, which sets procedure standards for expense reporting, or the rules that might replace them in the future.

For the purposes of monitoring the project, the starting date of the project will be understood as the date of the administrative act approving the agreement.

The researcher must allocate a bank account that exclusively manages the funds of the project, in which they will deposit the contributions received from CONICYT. In addition, the corresponding bank statements for the transactions must be submitted, considering such documents as mandatory and part of the expense report.

Resources will be allocated in non-indexed national currency and transferred in one installment per year of project implementation. Disbursements will be made once the following is complied with: the administrative act approving the respective agreement is completely processed, the respective guarantees have been properly granted according to these rules, there is budgetary availability of CONICYT, and both academic and expense reports of the funds already granted have been timely submitted, except for the first disbursement.

CONICYT will suspend disbursements of the grant, as well as recognition of every expense made, if it finds a breach of the obligations set by the contract or these rules.

The lead researcher may propose to CONICYT the suspension of disbursements under the following circumstances:

- a. If they believe the project will not achieve the expected results.
- b. If they believe the project cannot be implemented within reasonable parameters.
- c. If they believe the project has lost its validity.

CONICYT shall make a decision regarding this request for suspension within a maximum period of 30 calendar days. The lead researcher will be informed by letter of the conditions that must be met and the deadline for compliance in order to lift the suspension. The suspension will be effective from the date set on the corresponding administrative act declared by CONICYT, which may reasonably extend this period at the request of the lead researcher.

The suspensions referred to above may not exceed a total of six additional months from the deadline originally approved for the implementation of the respective funding agreement.

Whether the suspension has been declared by CONICYT or by the initiative of the lead researcher, if the deadline for compliance is met without complying with the conditions,

CONICYT may order the early termination of the project, with or without refund of the funds provided and can enforce the guarantees provided by the beneficiary.

Beneficiaries are forbidden to invest the funds transferred by CONICYT in any financial instruments such as fixed or variable income, short or long term (mutual funds, stocks, term deposits, bonds, etc.), with and without financial risk. If the funds transferred are allocated to the above-mentioned purposes, CONICYT may demand 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. MODIFICATION

During the implementation of the project, the post-doctorate may request CONICYT, through its Astronomy Program, in writing and in a well-funded and timely manner, to make modifications to the project, such as duration of project implementation, change of sponsoring institution, etc. Such modifications shall become effective once authorized by CONICYT, after a favorable report from the Astronomy Program.

9. PROJECT CONTROL

9.1. Submission of reports

The lead researcher must strictly and timely comply with dates and presentation forms of academic and expense reports as set out in these terms and in the respective agreements.

Technical reports

The lead researcher must send CONICYT an annual progress scientific report as well as a final report upon completion of the project.

Expense report

Expense reporting must follow the rules provided in the relevant instructions delivered by CONICYT when transferring the resources corresponding to the first year of implementation.

The continuity of the project and, consequently, the provision of resources for the following phases will depend on the approval of academic and expense reports, plus the budgetary availability of CONICYT. To make further money transfers, all funds provided for the previous implementation year must be reported.

9.2. Maternity leave

Lead researchers who make use of maternity leave and/or face the sickness of a child under one may apply for postponing the date of completion of the project, keeping the monthly allowance (monthly fee) and health insurance for the corresponding period during the validity of the project.

Men who choose to use medical leave to care for sick children under one may also apply for this benefit. To access these benefits, the lead researcher must submit a request accompanied by a health certificate issued by a competent professional, or a copy of the notification of this maternity leave for female researchers.

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 dissemination materials according to the following suggested text (or its equivalent in another language): "***This work was supported by CONICYT and CASSACA through the third call for tenders of the CHINA - CONICYT Fund.***" For purchasing 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

CONICYT, 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. Severances

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

12. COMPLIANCE AND INTERPRETATION OF THE TERMS

CONICYT reserves the right to interpret the meaning and scope of these terms in case of doubts and conflicts that may arise regarding its content and application.

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

In case of any inconsistencies, omissions and/or incompatibilities, CONICYT may terminate the agreement early.

13. RESTRICTIONS

- The lead researcher (defined in section 2.2) that holds debts or other overdue contractual obligations with CONICYT at the time of the awarding may not be awarded projects 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 questions 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 terms will only be valid if they are informed by the Astronomy Program in writing.

15. RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be accepted through CASSACA's website, on the platform specifically designated for this purpose. The deadline for the receipt of proposals will be published on the websites of CONICYT (Astronomy Program - *concursos abiertos*) and CASSACA and in a nationally-circulated newspaper, where the opening date and deadline of this call for tenders will be stated.