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Announcement of Opportunity for China-Chile Joint Research Fund 2019 (Issue date: 16th December 2019)

1. Overview

The China-Chile Joint Research Fund (CCJRF) has been implemented since 2015, and has successfully awarded a total of 12 two-year projects involving China-Chile collaboration in astronomical research. This opportunity is provided based on the principles established in a 2013 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the National Commission of Scientific and Technological Research of the Republic of Chile (CONICYT), and the more specific guidelines described in the Agreement between the National Astronomical Observatories of China (NAOC), the Chinese Astronomical Society, the Chilean Astronomical Society (SOCHIAS) and CONICYT to support proposals that involve collaboration in astronomical research from both Chinese and Chilean astronomy communities.

The last AO was announced in September 2018, and 11 applications were received by the deadline of October 31st, 2018. However, due to various logistics factors, the evaluation process took much longer time than expected. The decisions were made in October 2019, and CASSACA office is now working with the PIs on relevant paperwork and final budget refinement. Although it is late in 2019, we have still decided to issue this new AO for 2019. As usual, we are aiming to support 3-4 projects for this call.

In response to this Announcement of Opportunity, funding requests for research projects proposed based on a collaboration including astronomers from both China and Chile will be considered. The PI of the proposal must be from either country, with the Co-PI from the other country. The subject can be in any area of astronomical research, including observations, instrumental development, and theory. In 2019, we also encourage areas of research related to site testing for astronomical observatories, and experiments that help expanding capabilities in astro-engineering.

2. Funding

Duration of each project should be two years at maximum, but requests for extension of a currently-funded, successful project may be considered. The funds provided by CASSACA are to be used as seed money for larger projects or to cover exploratory efforts. The expected funding level per project is \$75,000 USD per year at maximum. The possible items to support include:

- 1) support for exchanges of students or visitors, excluding regular salaries for faculty or postdocs;
- 2) small equipment purchases (such as filters), but not regular office supplies;
- 3) cost of academic activities such as travel for conference and observing, organization of small scientific meetings/workshops;

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- 4) site testing for astronomical observatories;
 - 5) a standard rate of overhead as compensation for the administrative support at the host institution(s) of the PIs and Co-PIs.

3. Evaluation and Assignment of Funds

According to the agreement signed by NAOC, SOCHIAS, and CONICYT, the Joint China-Chile Committee (JCCC) is a committee composed of Chinese and Chilean astronomers with the mission to foster scientific and technical cooperation between China and Chile. This committee is the formal body to define the framework of the co-operation and evaluation of the proposals supported by these funds. For this Announcement of Opportunity, each proposal will be evaluated by at least four experts, always keeping a 50% representation of Chinese and Chilean reviewers. The possibility to involve external reviewers, and the nomination and coordination of reviewers will be in charge independently by the Chilean and Chinese sides of the JCCC. In order to avoid conflict of interest, JCCC members are not permitted to take the role of PI and Co-PI, but are permitted to participate as Co-investigates (Co-Is), in a proposal to this call.

The evaluation criteria will follow these given weights to obtain final scores:

- a) For Scientific Projects:
 - 60% Merit of the project,
 - 20% Scientific/technical expertise of the team, and its qualifications to conduct the project,
 - 20% Feasibility and budget appropriateness
- b) For Instrumentation Projects
 - 50% Merit of the project
 - 20% Scientific/technical expertise of the team, and its qualifications to conduct the project
 - 30% Feasibility and budget appropriateness

The final ranking will be decided by the JCCC, and it will be sent to the Director of CASSACA for his/her consideration. The same Director will communicate back to JCCC the projects which will be finally funded by CASSACA, and make them public on a dedicated CASSACA webpage. The Director will be responsible to verify that the proposed budget of approved proposals complies with the financial rules of the funding agencies, and communicate to JCCC the written procedure, timescale, and rendering of the allocated funds and the expected date for transferring the funds to the grantees. Once notified, the Chilean PI or Co-PI should obtain the consent of his/her host institution in the form of an official letter, and will need to sign a contract with CASSACA before the grant is finally awarded. One middle-term report (only for 2-year project) and one final report will be required to submit to CASSACA for tracking and evaluation purposes.

4. Proposal Structure

All proposals must include the following essential elements:

- 1) Proposal cover page (one page maximum), including:
 - a) Project title and abstract.
 - b) Type of project (Scientific or Instrumentation) and Area of Research (e.g. Planets, Stars, Interstellar Medium, Galaxies, Cosmology, Instrumentation, Experiment, Site surveys, etc.).
 - c) Project duration (one or two years)

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- d) Names of project PI, Co-PI and Co-Is including their host institutions.
- 2) Scientific Justification (less than five single-spaced pages, including text, graphics, tables and references, using font size 11pt at minimum). Supporting evidence such as allocated observing times, approved experiment plans, etc. are welcome.
- 3) Implementation Plan of research including project duration (one or two years).
- 4) Itemized budget requested for the project with brief justifications (for each year if it is multi-year).
- 5) CV of the PI, a list of currently supported research programs, and a list of the proposer's publications relevant to the proposal. (2 pages maximum).

5. Submission

All proposals should be submitted electronically to CASSACA's Santiago office at ccjrf@nao.cas.cn, and will be acknowledged after the deadline. The deadline of submission is **March 6th, 2020**. Inquiries can be directed to Dr. Jiasheng Huang, Chief Scientist of CASSACA, at jhuang@nao.cas.cn, or Dr. Wei Wang, Deputy Director of CASSACA, at wangw@nao.cas.cn.