



D.D. n. 85

Selection procedure based on qualification and possible interview for the awarding of seven research fellowships entitled: “ASTRONOMY FELLOWSHIPS IN ITALY call 1”

Category: n. 3 Incoming mobility fellowships and n. 4 Re-integration fellowships co-funded by FP7 M. Curie Actions

(in accordance with Article 22, Law 240/2010)

THE DIRECTOR

Having seen	The Statute of the Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF), adopted by INAF Administrative Council on 7 March 2011 and entered into force on 1 May 2011;
In accordance with	Italian Law n. 240 dated 30 December 2010, Article 22;
Having seen	the INAF Regulations for the awarding of research fellowships approved by INAF Administrative Council on 22 June 2011, Resolution n. 06/11 and subsequent modifications and integrations;
In accordance with	the Grant Agreement n. 267251, signed between the Research Executive Agency and INAF for the implementation of the project “Astronomy fellowships in Italy”, started on the 1 st of November 2011;
Considering	it appropriate to issue an announcement of competition for the award of n. 3 Incoming mobility fellowships and n. 4 Re-integration fellowships co-funded by FP7 M. Curie Actions;
Given	the availability of finance form fund CRAM 1.09.08.17 “FP7 AstroFit COFUND”, chapter 1.05.08. “Borse di studio, assegni di ricerca e finanziamento di dottorati”, 0.01 “Ufficio Bilancio” of the 2011 INAF budget;

DECREES

Art. 1 – Research fellowships

A selection based on qualifications, possibly integrated by an interview, is open to award n. 3 Incoming mobility fellowships and n. 4 Re-integration fellowships co-funded by FP7 M. Curie Actions under the project “Astronomy fellowships in Italy” (hereinafter referred to as “AstroFit”), Grant Agreement n. 267251.

Researchers who receive a grant from co-funded fellowship programmes are considered as *Marie Curie Fellows*.

Each candidate proposes a research project within a scientific area (one or more in case of interdisciplinary projects) which INAF research activities are related to:

- Galaxies and Cosmology
- Stars, Stellar Population and Interstellar medium
- Sun and Solar System
- Relativistic and Particle Astrophysics
- Advanced Technology and Instruments.

Art. 2 – Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the following requirements, on pain of exclusion, in order to participate in the selection:

to be eligible, researchers have to demonstrate transnational mobility (incoming or re-integration) and must have at least 4 years of research experience or be holders of a doctorate.

Applicants to **Incoming Mobility Fellowships** have to be researchers who have not resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Italy for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the Call deadline. Short stays, such as holidays, are not taken into account.

Applicants to **Reintegration Fellowships** must be Italian nationals who have carried out research in a Third Country¹ for at least 3 years in the last 4 years prior to the deadline of proposal submission. Short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

A professional level of knowledge of English language is required.

Art. 3 – Application procedure

Each candidate will identify the most suitable INAF structure of carrying out her/his proposed research project and may indicate a scientific staff member of the hosting structure as contact point and supervisor of her/his project. If the application does not contain any indication, the local supervisor will be assigned by the Director of the hosting structure in agreement with the fellow, after the selection. In any case the indication of a supervisor will not have any impact on the evaluation.

If useful for the research theme, the fellow could spend periods of time in different INAF structures. This option could be foreseen in the application and it will be evaluated by the Selection Committee (SC) or it could be agreed between the fellow and her/his supervisor during the preparation of the career development plan.

A researcher can apply just for one of the following fellowship types:

- Incoming mobility fellowship
- Reintegration Fellowship.

If necessary, the applicant can replace a submitted proposal and send a new one before the deadline. In any case only the last proposal received will be evaluated.

The applications must be drawn up in English, signed and sent, in pdf format, only by e-mail to the following address astrofit@inaf.it. Should be clearly specified as subject the acronym of the project and the family name of the applicant (eg. Acronym_Family name).

The applications have to include the following documents:

- application form, containing curriculum vitae and description of the research proposal;
- copy of a valid identity document (ID card or passport);
- a letter of commitment signed by the Director of the selected INAF Research Structure, in which she/he will ensure the appropriate conditions (office, laboratory space, equipment etc) for the correct development of the proposed project, together with the necessary administrative support;
- two signed letters of reference to be sent directly by the referees by e-mail to astrofit@inaf.it, having as subject “Letter of reference_family name of the applicant”.

Templates of the application form and the letter of commitment are available on the AstroFit website (<http://www.astrofit.inaf.it/>).

Applications must be submitted before the 1st of February 2012, 12.00 (Rome local time). Late submissions will not be considered.

¹ Third Countries are countries which are neither EU Member States nor associated to FP7 (Associated countries).

The EU Member States are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom.

The Associated Countries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Faroe Islands, FYR Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Republic of Moldova, Switzerland and Turkey.

In the unlikely event of a failure of the INAF web service due to breakdown of the server during the last 24 hours of the call, the deadline will be extended by a further 24 hours from the date of the re-establishment of communications. This will be notified by e-mail to all the applicants who had submitted their proposal by the time of the original deadline and also by a notice on the call web page.

The INAF staff will send an acknowledgement of receipt to the e-mail address of the researcher given in the submitted proposal.

The acknowledgement of receipt does not imply that the proposal has been accepted as eligible for the evaluation.

After the deadline of the call for proposal, the applications will be analysed by the INAF administrative staff in order to check their eligibility.

The rejection due to ineligibility will be promptly communicated to the applicants, explaining the reasons. The candidate can submit a request for redress within 20 days from the receipt of the communication.

INAF accepts no responsibility for lost applications or documents where this is due to the applicant having provided incorrect contact details or having failed or delayed in notifying changes to these details, or to problems with postal delivery not due to INAF.

Art. 4 – Ineligibility and incompatibility with other funding

Full professors, associate professors and researchers in Italian universities and employees of Italian research public institutions are all excluded from entering the competition.

The grant cannot be held contemporarily with attendance at academic courses, “laurea specialistica” academic courses, and “laurea magistrale” academic courses, as well as with attendance at PhD courses with fellowship.

The grant cannot be held contemporarily with other fellowships of whatever kind, except those awarded with the aim of integrating the training or research activity of the fellowship holder through a period spent abroad.

Aggregation of income from working activities, also part-time, carried out continuously is not accepted. Instead, limited self-employed occasional work is compatible with the grant, only if this is not prejudicial to the research activity carried out for INAF. This must be authorized in advance by the Director of the INAF structure where most part of the research activity of the grant is carried out.

When formally accepting the grant, the successful candidate will issue a declaration of absence of inadmissible cumulating of grants/fellowships.

Art. 5 – Duration of the Research fellowship

The fellow must devote himself full time to his/her project for an extended period of 24 months, unless there are duly justified reasons connected to personal or family circumstances and subjects to prior approval of the Board of the Programme.

The fellow, however, may propose to suspend part, or all, of the project due to personal, family (including parental leave) or professional reasons. The request of suspension by the fellow must be accompanied by the necessary justifications. When such a suspension request does not result in an extension exceeding by 30% the duration of the project, the Board of the Programme will approve the request if duly justified and provided that the total duration of the project does not overcome the duration of the grant agreement.

Art. 6 – Host Institution

The fellow will carry out the research at one of the following INAF structure chosen in the application:

<u>Osservatorio Astronomico di Bologna</u>	<u>Osservatorio Astronomico di Brera (Milano)</u>	<u>Osservatorio Astronomico di Cagliari</u>
<u>Osservatorio Astrofisico di Catania</u>	<u>Osservatorio Astrofisico di Arcetri (Firenze)</u>	<u>Osservatorio Astronomico di Capodimonte (Napoli)</u>
<u>Osservatorio Astronomico di Padova</u>	<u>Osservatorio Astronomico di Palermo</u>	<u>Osservatorio Astronomico di Roma</u>

<u>Osservatorio Astronomico di Teramo</u>	<u>Osservatorio Astronomico di Torino</u>	<u>Osservatorio Astronomico di Trieste</u>
<u>Istituto di Astrofisica Spaziale e Fisica Cosmica di Bologna</u>	<u>Istituto di Astrofisica Spaziale e Fisica Cosmica di Milano</u>	<u>Istituto di Astrofisica Spaziale e Fisica Cosmica di Palermo</u>
<u>Istituto di Astrofisica Spaziale e Fisica Cosmica di Roma</u>	<u>Istituto di Fisica dello Spazio Interplanetario di Roma</u>	<u>Istituto di Fisica dello Spazio Interplanetario di Torino</u>
<u>Istituto di Radioastronomia di Bologna</u>		

Art. 7 – Funding per fellowship

- **Living allowance**

The employment contract for the Incoming and Re-integration fellows will fix an yearly reference rate for monthly living allowances of 40.000 EUR/year. This amount, paid in different monthly installments, includes the provisions for all compulsory deductions under national applicable legislation.

- **Travel allowance**

Fellows are entitled to 2 travel allowances. The first travel allowance shall be paid first upon taking up appointment and yearly after. It amounts to 1500EUR/year and it is subject to national applicable deductions, irrespective of the actual travel costs incurred by the researcher.

- **Research cost contribution**

The host INAF structure will receive from the INAF headquarter a yearly amount of 5.000 Euro for the benefit of the fellow. This amount will be used by them for any expense needed to carry out the project, including travel expenses for the annual meetings.

- **Accident insurance**

It will be paid by INAF in favour of the fellow, to provide coverage for work accidents, occupational diseases and invalidity.

During the period of obligatory maternity leave the allowance paid by INPS (Italian National Institute for Social Security) is supplemented by INAF up to the total amount of the grant.

Art. 8 – Selection Committee and selection procedure

The Selection Committee (SC) will be composed by 5 members including the Chair and 2 substitute components are also appointed.

The SC (both members and substitutes) will be appointed according to the following criteria:

- a high level of expertise;
- an appropriate and wide range of competencies in astrophysics;
- a gender balance (at least one third);
- two experts non-resident in Italy.

Referees will perform evaluations on a personal basis, not as representatives of their employer, their country or any other entity. They are expected to be independent, impartial and objective, and to behave throughout in a professional manner. They will sign an appointment letter including a declaration on confidentiality and conflict of interests before beginning their work.

Conflicts of interests may include: a) family or other close relationship, b) previous close collaboration with the candidate; c) a direct involvement on the specific proposal.

The components with such conflicts, will refrain to evaluate the proposal(s) of the candidate(s) concerned. In any case, each proposal will be evaluated by at least three members of the SC. In the cases for which this cannot be ensured (more than two SC members have conflict of interest versus a proposal/candidate), the substitutes will be involved in the evaluation.

The selection procedure will be the following:

- A) each SC member will visualise and/or download all the documents sent by the candidates, available in a site with restricted access.
The proposals will be assessed independently by each Committee member free from conflicts. The SC members will read the applications and provide a preliminary grade for each evaluation criterion, accompanied by a short report. These preliminary grades will be collected by the chair of the SC and distributed among the members (Remote evaluation).
- B) The SC will meet to discuss the evaluations for each proposal in order to reach a common view by consensus. Two initial ranked lists (one for each mobility type) will be created (Consensus meeting).
- C) Only in presence of a disagreement among the individual scores and of the impossibility to reach a common view, a candidate will be called for an interview (either in person or via teleconference). At the interview, all the SC members will be present.
- D) A written evaluation for each candidate will be prepared and a final complete ranked list will be produced (Final decision). The final qualified ranked list will include all the ranked candidates with a grade above the threshold. The fellowships will be offered to the candidates with the highest grades. In case of withdraw the position will be offered to the next in the final qualified ranked list.

Considering the bottom-up approach of AstroFit, the first ranked proposals will be accepted regardless of the thematic area or the requested research Structure.

In case of even score, the gender balance, returning after a career break as well as the provenience of the applicant from a less favoured EU region will be taken into account.

Criteria and method of judging merit

Scientific and technological quality of the proposal as well as the curriculum of the applicant and the content of the reference letters will be the main aspects to be evaluated, as indicated in the following table:

S&T Quality Weighting: 60%	Researcher Weighting: 40%
Scientific/technological quality, including the originality and innovative nature of the project	Research experience as research activities in public and private institutions including previous fellowships or appointments
Timeliness and relevance of the project as well as integration with the hosting structure	PI-ship/CoI-ship of scientific programmes, and capability of programme management
Research methodology	Research results including publications in international refereed journals, patents, invited talks at international meetings, international award/prizes etc

Each criteria, will be scored out of 10. A threshold of 6 will be applied to each criterion and an overall threshold of 70% will be applied to all proposals.

Proposals failing to meet the overall threshold will not be placed on the final qualified ranked lists.

The SC will take into account the career breaks possibly occurred for justified reasons, such as civil or military service, parenthood, or family care and/or unconventional research career paths, especially in the case of women.

In particular the SC will evaluate the research experience and results obtained by the applicant, referring to the time actually spent in the research activities and not simply to the time passed from the PhD fulfillment.

The selection procedure will be concluded not later than five months from the deadline for applications and the final qualified ranked lists will be published on the AstroFit website.

If an awarded researcher resigns after the beginning of the fellowship, it may be assigned to the following candidate on the condition that she/he may be appointed for at least 12 months.

Redress procedure

The redress procedure may be submitted by a candidate:

after the communication on his/her application ineligibility;

or

upon reception of the feedback on the outcome of the evaluation, if she/he thinks that there has been a shortcoming in the way a proposal has been evaluated.

The redress procedure is not meant to call into question the scientific judgment made by the SC; it will look procedural shortcomings and into factual errors. The request for redress will be raised within 20 days from receiving the related communication.

The Board of the Programme will examine all such complaints and does not itself evaluate the proposal.

The Board may recommend the evaluation or the re-evaluation of the proposal. A reply will be sent to the complainants not later than one month after the deadline for redress request.

The final ranked lists (one for each mobility type) will be published on the AstroFit website.

Art. 9 – Awarding of the fellowship

The highest ranked candidate will receive a notification of award of the research fellowship.

The awardees must declare their acceptance by email to astrofit@inaf.it within 2 weeks of the notification. In case of refusal or missing formal acceptance, the grant can be awarded to the following candidate in the ranking list.

The declaration of acceptance will also state that she/he is not subject to any of the exclusion conditions listed in article 4 of this Call.

INAF will appoint the researchers by an “Assegno di ricerca”. A contract will be signed between the Director of the hosting Structure and the fellow.

The awarded candidate must sign the contract on the date indicated on the aforementioned notification (or within 30 days). The candidate can propose to suspend the signature of the contract if force majeure or exceptional circumstances only, in any case the starting date has of the research project cannot overcome 4 months from the award of the fellowship. If the candidate does not sign the contract within this period, she/he will surrender his/her entitlement to the research fellowship.

Under no circumstances the signing of the contract starts a subordinate employment relationship or ensures any rights to access to permanent INAF staff positions.

Art. 10 – Starting date and fellowship obligations

Expected starting date of the research project is within 4 months from the award of the fellowship.

The holder of the fellowship:

- will prepare a development plan with the help of her/his supervisor. A copy will be sent to the Board of the Programme for any suggestions. This plan have to be considered a live document that will be verified and eventually updated during the fellowship.

The development plan will include:

- 1) the acquisition of scientific skills needed for realizing the scientific objectives of the proposed project;
- 2) the acquisition of technical and scientific skills of general use in astrophysics and in other scientific fields;
- 3) training in non-scientific areas.

The activities of point 1) will depend on the specific scientific programme of the fellow and may include the study or development of theoretical models, instrumentation, experimental set-up, data analysis, etc.

The point 2) is more general and may foresee of getting some practice in using software typically adopted in astrophysics and in scientific context, the fellows may study specific programming language, develop their ability in statistical analysis, mathematical techniques, etc.

Finally the activities in 3) may include educational skills. The fellows may collaborate with the educational activities already ongoing at the host institutes. They may learn to manage a project of small/medium size, to prepare reports, to write new proposals both national that European.

Training in non-scientific skills can be suggested by the Board of the Programme and INAF is also entitled to organize them for all the fellows;

- will be fully integrated in the activities of the host institution. She/he will have the possibility to participate to seminars and conferences organized by the host, and is expected to give one or more seminars illustrating his scientific activities. He will have the opportunity to join national/international projects in which the host is involved, participating to large projects within big collaborations that are common in astrophysics. If interested, he may also collaborate on voluntary basis, as the other researchers in the hosts, on educational and didactical activities;
- will submit two scientific reports, an intermediate report at the end of the first year of activity and a final report within 1 month after the conclusion of their fellowship. Each report will be sent together with recommendations by the local scientific supervisor to the Board of the Programme. The scientific reports must be countersigned by the Director of the structure and the local scientific supervisor. In this reports each fellow will present her/his achievements gained in the previous period, comparing them with the originally proposed project and with the career development plan built by the fellow at the beginning of his/her appointment. The reports will include specific and general scientific activities, as well non scientific training activities, and in case of needs will be used to adjust the remaining activity plan;
- will have the possibility to present her/his work to the related scientific community during the AstroFit annual meetings;
- May contact the Board for any question or problem relevant to her/his fellowships. Any communication addressed to the staff of the Programme, included the Board, must be sent to astrofit@inaf.it.
- Is required to send a written note in case of withdrawal, with at least 30 days notice, otherwise INAF is entitled to retain or request the reimbursement of the salary amount corresponding to the notice time-span she/he has failed to send.

At the end of the fellowship each fellow:

- will be invited to deliver a talk on the scientific results obtained in an official AstroFit seminar organised by INAF;
- will be asked to answer to a brief questionnaire on the implementation of the Programme, that will be used to improve it.

Art. 11 – Applicable regulation

The INAF shall abide by provisions in force promoting equal opportunities for women and men, non-discrimination and respect of privacy in processing personal data.

For what not explicitly mentioned in this announcement, INAF shall act in compliance with the regulations in force concerning Italian public selection procedures, when applicable by analogy.

Roma, 30 November 2011

The Director
Dr. Guido Di Cocco