JOB OPENING

The Royal Observatory of Belgium
seeks two operators (F/M/X) for the ASPIICS space telescope
aboard the PROBA-3 mission

PROBA-3 is an ESA mission in the PROBA line of small technology demonstration satellites. PROBA-3, launched on 5 December 2024, is a mission dedicated to the in-flight demonstration of precise formation flying techniques and technologies. The PROBA-3 mission, currently in the commissioning phase, will place two small satellites in a highly elliptical orbit around the Earth. The two satellites will fly in a precise formation, producing a very long baseline solar coronagraph called ASPIICS (Association of Spacecraft for Polarimetric and Imaging Investigation of the Corona of the Sun). One spacecraft carries the optical telescope, and the second spacecraft carries the external occulter of the coronagraph. The inter-satellite distance of around 144 m will allow observing the inner corona close to the solar limb with very low straylight. This will allow a significant advance in a number of unsolved problems in solar physics, like the coronal magnetic field configuration, slow solar wind formation, and CME initiation. The duration of the mission is planned to be at least two years.

The Royal Observatory of Belgium (ROB) is the Principal Investigator institute of the ASPIICS coronagraph. ROB also hosts the Science Operations Centre of ASPIICS, which is responsible for daily science operations of ASPIICS, data processing, and data distribution to the science community.

In order to ensure operations of ASPIICS, ROB is seeking to hire two operators for the ASPIICS Science Operations Centre.

The selected candidates will work in the ASPIICS team at ROB, which is a small group within the bigger solar physics department (SIDC, Solar Influences Data analysis Centre) of about 50 people. The selected candidates will also interact with the international ASPIICS Science Consortium and with related projects and researchers within ROB/SIDC.

Tasks

Each of the offered positions involves contributing to the following tasks:
- planning and commanding of ASPIICS,
- ASPIICS data processing,
- ASPIICS data distribution to the science community,
- monitoring of the ASPIICS health and functioning of the data processing pipeline,
- preparation of ASPIICS data archive,
- support of ASPIICS SOC software maintenance,
- support of ASPIICS scientists from ROB and from international ASPIICS Science Consortium,
- support of the ASPIICS data workshops,
- support of the SOC Web page,
- writing the reports.

Profile

For a suitable candidate, the following is required as a minimum:
- to hold a Master degree in exact, applied, or computer sciences,
- to show IT competences,
- to have a knowledge of web-based technologies like Javascript, HTML, and PHP,
- to be fluent in written and spoken English.

In addition, the following abilities will give an advantage to candidates:
- knowledge of Python or at least one programming language,
- experience in databases and SQL programming,
- general interest for solar physics,
- experience in operations of spacecraft or space instruments,
- availability to start working early in 2025.

We are looking for candidates who share our enthusiasm/dedication to reach the goal of successful science operations of the ASPIICS coronagraph aboard the PROBA-3 mission.

ROB offer

The ROB (http://www.observatory.be) is a Belgian federal scientific institute located in the green outskirts of Brussels in Uccle. The institute is seeking qualified candidates for two job openings in the "Solar Physics and Space Weather" Operational Directorate (https://www.sidc.be), which is a group of dedicated international scientists and engineers. The working conditions include a flexible system of working hours and teleworking, allowing for a healthy work-life balance.

The job offer is for **two full-time positions** in the SW1 category. To get an estimate of the salary, a simulator is available at https://salsim.fedweb.belgium.be/mod2-q1.php. The salaries in Belgian federal scientific institutes are regularly compensated for inflation. The positions are starting on 1 March 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter, for a **one-year contract** each, renewable based on mutual satisfaction and funding situation.

How to apply

Send your CV and accompanying motivation letter to Andrei Zhukov, the Principal Investigator of ASPIICS (Andrei.Zhukov@sidc.be), and dir-rob@oma.be. Candidates can contact Andrei.Zhukov@sidc.be for additional information. Application deadline is **19 January 2025**.