



Europlanet 2020 Research Infrastructure launches New Era of Planetary Collaboration in Europe

Bern, September 2015

ISSI is pleased to announce that it has been selected to be a part of a €9.95 million project to integrate and support planetary science activities across Europe. The Europlanet 2020 Research Infrastructure (RI) has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 654208 and will run for four years until August 2019. The project is led by the Open University, UK, and has 34 beneficiary institutions from 19 European countries. ISSI is presently the only Swiss institute participating in this project and its funding comes directly from the Swiss Government. Europlanet 2020 RI will address key scientific and technological challenges facing modern planetary science by providing open access to state-of-the-art research data, models and facilities across the European Research Area.

Prof Nigel Mason, the Project Coordinator, said, "We are delighted to announce the launch of this new Research Infrastructure. Since its foundation in 2005, Europlanet has played an immensely effective role in bringing together the European planetary science community. In this latest project, we have an ambitious programme of research, access and networking activities. In particular, our focus will be on fostering a closer integration between industry and academia in planetary science, and supporting institutions and partners from countries in early stages of developing planetary research programmes."

ISSI will be a key participant in the Europlanet Activity «Innovation through science networking». It will work together with eight other Europlanet institutes to organize over the duration of the contract three Workshops and two strategic Forums which will address some of the major scientific and technical challenges of present-day planetary sciences. This places the contribution of ISSI at the forefront of research. The themes and objectives of these meetings, to take place in the ISSI premises in Bern, will be defined by high-level scientific working groups (SWGs) of Europlanet representing the planetary science community, and validated by the Science Committee of ISSI before implementation. Each of these meetings will produce a high-visibility publication: for the Workshops, three books in the very successful Space Science Series of ISSI will be published and distributed worldwide by our partner Springer.

ISSI's Executive Director, Prof Rafael Rodrigo said, "It is gratifying to see that ISSI's unique tools, including its Workshops and Forums as well as its well-established series of books are recognised as a very positive addition to Europlanet's portfolio of activities. We look forward to playing an active part in this dynamic programme at a time when Planetary Research is vibrant within Europe."

About Europlanet

Europlanet links laboratories active in planetary research in Europe and around the world. Since 2005, Europlanet has provided Europe's planetary science community with a platform to exchange ideas and personnel, share research tools, data and facilities, define key science goals for the future, and engage stakeholders, policy makers and European citizens with planetary science.

Europlanet 2020 RI has been funded under the DG Research and Innovation Integrating Activities Call to address key scientific and technological challenges facing modern planetary science by providing access to state-of-the-art research facilities across the European Research Area and a mechanism to coordinate Europe's planetary science community. The project builds on a €2 million Framework 6 Coordination Action and €6 million Framework 7 Research Infrastructure funded by the European Commission.

The Europlanet collegial organization, linked by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), has a membership of over 70 research institutes and companies.

For more information about Europlanet 2020: www.europlanet-2020-ri.eu
Follow on Twitter via @Europlanet2020

For more information about ISSI: <http://www.issibern.ch/>
Follow on Twitter via @issibern

Science Contact

Prof Nigel Mason
The Open University
Milton Keynes, UK
+44 (0) 1908 655253
n.j.mason@open.ac.uk

Media Contact

Anita Heward
Europlanet 2020 RI Press Officer
+44 7756034243
anita.heward@europlanet-eu.org

Contact at ISSI

Michel Blanc
International Space Science Institute
+41 316314896
Blanc@issibern.ch