

The Royal Observatory of Belgium seeks a collaborator (F/M/X) for its scientific activities related to planetology

Our reference	Activity group	Recruitment category(ies)	Applications open until
GRASS	I. Scientific research and experimental development	SW1	30/09/2026

Job description

Framing of the position

The vacant position is linked to the Operational Directorate (OD) Reference Systems and Planetology. The Planetology team studies the interior, surface and dynamics of planets and small Solar System bodies and develops instrumentation and data-analysis methods for planetary missions. The team is involved in several ESA planetary defence missions, including Hera and RAMSES. The ROB is Principal Investigator of GRASS (GRAvimeter for Small Solar System bodies) and also makes important contributions with the thermal imager, to improve the understanding of the interior, the dynamical state and the regolith/spacecraft interactions of the asteroids.

Purpose of the position

The objective of the vacant position is to contribute to ESA's planetary defence missions and, more generally, to the understanding of the physical and dynamical properties of asteroids and other small bodies of the Solar System, in the context of planetary defence and preparation of future science and in-situ exploitation missions. The successful candidate will contribute to GRASS and to the complementary instruments, as well as to laboratory tests, simulations, operations and scientific data analysis. This position requires proficiency in English, given that documentation, meetings and international contacts will be conducted primarily in English.

Outcome areas

The function supports the scientific objectives of ESA's Hera mission and of the follow-on RAMSES mission. The aim is to extract physical and dynamical properties of the asteroids relevant to planetary defence.

1. Scientific Research

The core task of this position is to develop advanced data-analysis tools and simulations that help the planetary defence missions reach their scientific goals. It also involves active participation in

instrument and spacecraft operations, and in laboratory tests of the GRASS gravimeter and of the complementary instruments (e.g. the VIS and TIR imagers and the Juventas attitude sensors). The main challenge is to take a holistic approach, using the different data sets together, to improve the understanding of the surface forces, including the binary orbital and rotational dynamics of small bodies, the interior structure, and the surface thermophysical and mechanical properties. The work focuses on the scientific return of the mission and extends to the preparation of upcoming missions such as RAMSES (Apophis), in close collaboration with an international network of researchers and mission teams.

2. Transfer of scientific knowledge

The position requires publishing and disseminating results at relevant scientific conferences and in scientific journals. The position also requires the ability to translate scientific results for the general public.

3. Management of scientific infrastructure

The data from GRASS, as well as from TIRI and Juventas, will be archived in compliance with the ESA Planetary Science Archive. The candidate will therefore contribute to the data archiving in the required format.

Employer

There is 1 position open in the **Operational Directorate Reference Systems and Planetology** , at the Royal Observatory of Belgium and Planetarium (address: Ringlaan 3, B1180 Brussels).

The activity group for the position is: I. Scientific research and experimental development

Operational Directorate Reference Systems and Planetology / Hera-Grass Team: The selected candidate will work within the Planetology group at ROB in the Hera-Grass team, composed of about 7 researchers, within the larger Operational Directorate OD1. The selected candidate will work closely with colleagues from planetary sciences and interact also with other departments.

Royal Observatory of Belgium (ROB) : The ROB (<http://www.observatory.be>) is a Belgian Federal institute located in the green outskirts of Brussels (Uccle).

Skills

Behavioural skills

- Integrate information: **Make connections between various data, devise alternatives and draw appropriate conclusions.**
- Working in a team: Create and improve team spirit by sharing your opinions and ideas and by contributing to the resolution of conflicts between colleagues.
- Achieving goals: Show commitment, willingness and ambition in order to deliver results, and take responsibility for the quality of the actions undertaken.

Technical skills

- Methodologies: familiarity with data analysis
- Good knowledge of the use and publication of scientific data
- Good knowledge of planetary defense missions or missions to asteroids
- Good knowledge of numerical modelling

Assets

- Experience with ground- or space-based scientific instruments, including one or more of the following activities: design, testing, calibration, operations or data analysis.
- Experience with data fusion and filtering techniques.
- Experience with modelling of physical properties: gravity, surface forces or thermophysical properties of asteroids.

Conditions for consideration

Your profile

- You hold a master's degree, or you are in your final year of a master's program, in space science, geoscience, physics, engineering, mathematics, computer science, or a related field.
- You have gained practical experience working with real or simulated satellite data (gravimeters/accelerometers, imagers, etc.) acquired through your studies, a thesis, an internship, a research project, or professional experience.
- You have gained experience with dynamic simulations, such as modeling the complete two-body or N-body problem, acquired through your studies, a thesis, an internship, a research project, or professional experience.

Degree must have been conferred before the start of the contract.

Candidates who are in the final year of a master's programme and have not yet been awarded their degree should provide a recent transcript and a statement of the expected graduation date; the diploma or proclamation certificate must be submitted before the start of the contract.

⚠ Applicants who have a degree or certificate from a foreign institution who apply for a scientific position for which the tasks are not related to the permanent missions of the institution are exempt from the need for an academic equivalence evaluation.

Do you wish to apply but your diploma is not written in Dutch or French?

We invite you to contact the person listed in the 'Contacts' section (selection procedure) to find out if you need to take a language test: Article 7 - Level 1/A.

If necessary, you can register by clicking on the link: www.travaillerpour.be/fr/tests-et-certificats/linguistique/inscription.

In this case, obtaining the language certificate is a prerequisite for selection. For this purpose, the selection committee is responsible for verifying the diploma. Therefore, please register for the language test as soon as possible.

Experience required

For this position, no minimum length of scientific experience is required. Recruitment takes place in class SW1.

Job offer

Contract and category

Applicant recruited as category SW1

You will be hired under a one-year fixed-term contract on the SW1 salary scale (SW10 if you do not have at least two years of recognised scientific experience, SW11 otherwise). The contract might be renewed in case of mutual satisfaction and budget availability.

Minimum pay: 47 364,25 euros (gross annual salary, at the current index, legal benefits not factored in).

For more details, see Article 4, page 18496 of the pdf at:

<https://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/eli/arrete/2008/02/25/2008021028/moniteur>

Benefits

We offer you an interesting job with a social impact, which comes with a number of benefits:

- A good work-life balance
 - flexible working hours of 38 per week
 - option of taking compensatory leave for overtime worked
 - offices closed between Christmas and New Year's Day
 - 26 days of paid leave (for a year of full time employment)
 - easy commuting using public transport
- numerous opportunities for self-growth
 - numerous opportunities for training and apprenticeship (during working hours)
- Financial benefits
 - possibility of receiving a bilingualism bonus
 - hospitalisation insurance at reduced rate
 - supplementary pension (occupational pension)
 - free use of public transport for commuting between your home and the place of work
 - meal vouchers
 - possibility of receiving a bicycle allowance for travel via bicycle
 - Benefits and offers via the Benefits@Work card
 - a range of fringe benefits (subject to conditions)

Conditions for employment

If you are selected through this procedure, you must – in order to be hired – fulfil the following requirements on the date of selection:

- Enjoy full civil and political rights
- Have fulfilled military service requirements
- Behave in a manner fitting of the requirements of the position
- Hold the necessary degree(s)
- Have the necessary skills and fulfil the requirements listed in the job profile

Procedure

Step 1 – Verification of the participation conditions

You will be considered in the selection procedure if you fulfil all of the required conditions. Verification will be carried out by the selection board on the basis of the application documents you have submitted. The board will decide whether the qualifications, awards and experiences you have submitted meet the requirements of the position. If they do, you will be invited to continue to the next step of the procedure.

Depending on the number of applications received, the selection board reserves the right to limit the number of applicants eligible for the next step by selecting those applicants it deems most suitable for the position.

Step 2 – Interview

The interview will take place at the **Royal Observatory of Belgium**. Further details will be sent to you by one of our employees via email.

The selection board assesses whether the qualifications, awards and experience you included in your application documents meet the requirements for the position.

If you fail to attend

If you fail to attend the additional evaluation and/or interview, you will be automatically excluded from the remainder of the selection procedure unless you provide evidence, within three days, that your absence was justified for one of the following reasons:

- illness
- emergency relating to a member of your household (= anyone who lives with the applicant) or family (= spouse or legal cohabitant of the applicant, parents or grandparents of the applicant)
- mandatory presence at your workplace
- disruption or delay to public transport of at least 30 minutes
- force majeure

If applicable, you may request, within 10 days of the interview date, to be interviewed by the board. A new date will then be offered to you.

Notification

If you are not selected in a step, the procedure will end and you will not be invited to any subsequent evaluations in the same selection procedure.

For each step, you will receive a notification of the result.

Equal opportunities and reasonable accommodations

The Federal Administration has an active diversity policy.

Do you live with a disability, with learning difficulties or an illness? If so, you can request accommodations for the selection procedure. Please contact the individual listed under the “Contact persons” section.

Facilities provided for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding

Are you pregnant or breastfeeding your child? If so, you can request access to the relevant facilities. Please contact the individual listed under the “Contact persons” section.

Final result

What happens if you are selected?

Following the selection procedure, an unranked group of applicants will be placed on a short-list. These applicants will be those deemed most suitable to fill the open position in accordance with the conditions for consideration.

The Director General of the Institute will select one or more applicants from this short-list.

How long will this list remain valid?

The short-list of selected applicants will be valid for 1 year.

Apply

Do you want to apply? Send your application documents by email to ozgur.karatekin@oma.be and dir-rob@oma.be, including the selection reference in the subject line.

Your application documents must include:

- an updated CV
- a cover letter
- a copy (or copies) of the degree certificates with all associated annexes; if any of these documents are not written in French, Dutch, German or English, a translation must also be provided
- any other document proving relevant experience, such as:
 - academic activities carried out with attestations as supporting documents (attestations issued by employers, authorities that provided grants, etc.)
 - a list of any scientific papers published

The closing date for sending your application is 30/09/2026 (inclusive).

Applications that do not follow the indicated procedure will not be considered.

Contact persons

Concerning the position:

For more information about the position, please contact:

Dr KARATEKIN, Özgür, Principal Investigator of the GRASS project, 02/3736732,
ozgur.karatekin@oma.be

Concerning the selection procedure:

For more information about the selection procedure, please contact:

Dr Van der Linden Ronald, Director General, 02 373 0211, dir-rob@oma.be

If you want to request a reasonable accommodation for the selection procedure or access to facilities for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, please also contact this person.