

JOB OFFERS

COLLABORATOR DIGIT PROJECT ROYAL OBSERVATORY OF BELGIUM

CONTEXT:

The Royal Observatory of Belgium (ROB) is a Federal Scientific Institution (FSI) with about a hundred and seventy employees, located in the municipality of Ukkel/Uccle (Brussels), where research is carried out in four departments: reference systems and planetology, seismology and gravimetry, astronomy and astrophysics, and the Sun and space weather.

In 2004 the federal council of ministers decided to finance a programme to digitise the scientific and cultural heritage of all FSIs. This ambitious digitisation programme is being financed by the Belgian Science Policy office (BELSPO), and the current phase, DIGIT-04, runs from 2019 to 2024.

Over the past years a small team of persons within the ROB have digitised a small number of collections, also in collaboration with other FSIs.

The largest collection managed by the ROB consists of several ten thousand photographic plates taken with several telescopes since the beginning of the 20th century, including those taken with the “Carte du Ciel”, the first large international collaboration in astronomy that aimed at mapping the entire sky. Also plates taken with ESO telescopes are managed by the ROB.

In order to digitise the photographic plates, the development of a plate measuring machine at ROB, called DAMIAN (Digital Access to Metric Images Archives Network), is in an advanced state. It is the intention to scan and manage this plate material. This implies adding relevant metadata, and making this material ready for scientific exploitation and publicly available.

In the department astronomy and astrophysics there is a vacancy in the digitisation project.

TASKS:

- Make DAMIAN operational.
- Organise the scanning of the astronomical photographic plates.
- Digitise other collections from the ROB, according to needs and priorities.
- Develop software or be involved in software development to operate DAMIAN and to make the material ready for scientific exploitation.
- In time, coordinate the digitisation project at the level of the ROB, represent the ROB to the outside world and act as an intermediary to BELSPO.

WE ASK:

- Engineer degree with a focus on optics and system engineering. Interest or experience in astronomy would be an asset. Alternatively, a master or doctoral degree in astronomy with a keen interest or some experience in optics and system engineering.
- Willingness to acquire in-depth knowledge in the operation of DAMIAN (xy table, lens, objective, camera). Knowledge of Visual Studio, C++ or similar languages would be an asset.
- Good knowledge of the English language. Knowledge of Dutch and/or French would be an asset, or the willingness to learn one of these languages.
- Teamplayer, but also able to work independently and showing initiative.

WE OFFER:

- A full-time contract as assistant (scale SW1) for a period of 12 months that can be extended.
- Salary according to scales set by the federal government.
- Free public transport from home to work, and/or bike compensation.
- Flexible working hours with a 38-hour working week.

More information on working for the federal government (in Dutch and French) can be found on the site of FedWeb (<https://fedweb.belgium.be/>).

CANDIDACIES:

Send your CV and cover letter by e-mail to Thierry Pauwels (thierry.pauwels @ oma.be) using DIGIT as subject at the latest by 30 October 2020. In your letter you must give the name and contact details of at least one person whom we can contact regarding your professional experience.

Candidates may be invited for an interview. The address of the ROB is Avenue Circulaire/Ringlaan 3, B-1180 Brussels. Interviews may also be held by videoconference. Starting date is to be determined in consultation.

For additional information about this project and position you can contact Thierry Pauwels (thierry.pauwels @ oma.be).

Website: www.astro.oma.be