ISAAC NEWTON GROUP OF TELESCOPES

Roque de Los Muchachos Observatory, La Palma

Semester 2026B Call for Proposals

William Herschel Telescope
1st November, 2026 – 30th April, 2027

Isaac Newton Telescope
1st August, 2026 – 31st January, 2027

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1. Proposal submission and deadlines

ING invites proposals for observations at the WHT and INT in semester 2026B. Observing proposals to the ITP, UK, Dutch, or Spanish time-allocation ommittees (TACs) must be submitted by the following deadlines, respectively:

International Time	https://www.iac.es/system/files/documents/2026-02/CCI_ITP2026-2027_Call_For_Proposals_1.pdf 9 March 2026 (23:59 UT)
UK (ING PATT)	https://www.ing.iac.es/astronomy/observing/INGPATT.html 15 March 2026 (at 24:00 UT)
Netherlands (NL PC)	https://www.nwo.nl/en/calls/isaac-newton-group-telescopes-26b 24 March 2026 (at 14:00 CET)
Spain (ES CAT)	http://www.iac.es/OOCC/night-cat/ 3 April 2026 (at 21:59 UT)

Principal Investigators (PIs) employed or studying in a Dutch, Spanish or UK institution at the time of submission should submit their proposal(s) to the Dutch, Spanish or UK TAC respectively. PIs hosted by other countries, and Dutch, Spanish or UK PIs wishing to submit a proposal to a TAC other than that of their host country, should refer to the information provided by the relevant TAC (see above).

Spanish PIs must use the IAC TAC proposal submission service: https://proposals.iac.es/

The WEAVE Phase 1 form for the UK and NL communities is here: https://a.ing.iac.es/weave/ph1.php

The HARPS3 Phase 1 form for the UK and NL communities is here: https://a.ing.iac.es/harps3/ph1.php

2. WHT/WEAVE Observing Modes (MOS, LIFU, mIFU)

In semester 2026B we offer **all three** WEAVE observing modes: **MOS**, **LIFU** and **mini-IFUs (mIFU)**. As the mIFU mode is not yet fully commissioned, mIFU observations are offered on a **shared-risk** basis, and users should assume *design specifications* rather than as-built performance when preparing proposals.

The instrumental capabilities of WEAVE are summarised on

https://www.ing.iac.es/astronomy/instruments/weave/weaveinst.html

Prospective applicants should note that, as in recent calls, the period is shifted relative to the semester typically followed by ING. This call is for observations to be carried out during **1st November 2026 - 30th April 2027**. The 3-month shift relative to the usual semesters is imposed by the long lead time for preparation of the WEAVE observing blocks.

Approximately 30% of the available WHT night-time during this period is offered for open-time proposals, following the standard UK, Dutch and Spanish shares. Information about applying for WEAVE Open Time Programme can be found on:

https://www.ing.iac.es/astronomy/observing/WEAVE-OT.html

All observations will be queue-scheduled, executed in service mode, and carried out alongside WEAVE Survey operations. ING welcomes astronomers from the teams of successful PIs being at the telescope during WEAVE observing nights, but PIs should note there's little chance of their own observations being carried out during their visit. Such visits should be organised well in advance in consultation with ING.

WEAVE data will be processed with the standard CPS and APS pipelines and made available through the CamCEAD Operational Repository and the WEAVE archive.

Following the WEAVE Data Policy agreed between ING and the WEAVE Project, prospective PIs should note that the surveys do not have reserved targets, or reserved science topics. However, any data which preempt, or replicate, Survey data will be made available immediately to archive users in the same way as WEAVE Survey data, and will be assigned a proprietary period corresponding to Survey data.

1.1. WEAVE Open-Time Target of Opportunity observations

In semester 2026B, ING will offer **Target of Opportunity (ToO)** observations using the **WEAVE LIFU mode**. ToO proposals are intended for unpredictable astronomical events requiring rapid response outside the regular OB preparation and submission cycle.

ToO proposals will be evaluated in the same manner as regular open-time proposals, though **only Band A** programmes are likely to be attempted. ING anticipates executing at most **one ToO trigger per night**, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Following activation by the proposing team, ING will prepare the OBs; the observing strategy must follow that approved in the proposal, and triggers must remain within the allocated time.

At present, ING supports "**next-day**" triggers: triggers must be received by **12:00 UT on the preceding day**. ING will attempt shorter-notice triggers on a best-effort basis.

1.2. WEAVE Director's Discretionary Time

For unanticipated observations of exceptional and urgent scientific value, ING offers **Director's Discretionary Time (DDT)** using WEAVE in semester 2026B. PIs who wish to request DDT should contact both the ING Director and the Head of Astronomy with a brief science case that justifies the urgency and scientific impact, and specifies the requested observations.

If DDT is approved, **Phase-2 preparation** follows the same process as WEAVE ToO observations. Execution will depend on instrument availability and overall night-time constraints.

1.3. Guidelines for LIFU Proposals and Filler Observations

LIFU non-sidereal observations

Non-sidereal observations are now possible with the LIFU and can be executed as part of both regular open-time and ToO programmes. These should be especially useful for imaging spectroscopy of Solar system bodies.

LIFU proposals for poor observing conditions (filler mode)

ING encourages PIs to submit LIFU proposals designed for poor observing conditions during bright time, namely: seeing > 2 arcsec, transparency ~ 0.4 and sky brightness ≤ 17.7 mag arcsec^{-2}. Proposals submitted with OBSTEMP = XEFEG will be treated as queue fillers. If awarded time, these programmes will remain in the queue until completion or for up to 1.5 years, whichever comes first.

Seeing constraints

Given the large fibre diameters, 2.6 arcsec for LIFU, PIs should usually not specify seeing < 2 arcsec for LIFU proposals. Any requests for seeing < 2 arcsec must be clearly justified and will be scrutinised at the technical-assessment stage.

Sky-brightness constraints

Observers requring dark sky are recommended to request sky brightness V < 21.5 mag/arcsec^2 to improve the chance that proposals are completed. Darker skies are observed on La Palma, but require a rarer combination of RA, Dec and phase of the solar cycle.

3. INT/HARPS3 Status and Shared-Risk Open Time

HARPS3 is currently undergoing integration at the INT, with commissioning activities expected to begin shortly.

In anticipation of scientific operations, the ING invites the community to submit **shared-risk** open-time proposals for HARPS3 for semester 2026B. A detailed overview of specifications, operations and expected performance will follow shortly. At this stage, the **polarimetric mode** is not offered.

Shared-risk conditions are as follows:

1. **Scheduling contingent on compatibility with the Terra Hunting Experiment (THE).** HARPS3's primary operational priority is THE. Open-time proposals must be operationally compatible with THE scheduling constraints; final assessment of compatibility will occur during Phase 2.
2. **Open-time execution depends on confirmed STFC funding.** Operational funding to support management of open-time HARPS3 proposals by the Terra Hunting consortium is anticipated but not yet confirmed. While we expect this support to be in place, open-time observations cannot proceed if the necessary STFC funding is not available at the start of the semester.

We notify the community of these restrictions to ensure transparency regarding the risk associated with this call, with programmes being executed on a best-effort basis for this period.

We anticipate that a maximum of 40% of the available time for science could be devoted to open-time programmes, following the standard UK, Dutch and Spanish shares. Detailed information about the HARPS3 open-time programme can be found here:

https://www.ing.iac.es/astronomy/observing/HARPS3-OT.html

4. ING instrumentation updates

The status of the ongoing developments in instrumentation at the WHT and INT can be found on:

https://www.ing.iac.es/astronomy/instr.html

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