

# Policy Plan

## Stichting Space Professionals Foundation (SSPF)

2023 - 2025

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## Introduction

Stichting Space Professionals Foundation (SSPF) was founded on 11 October 2017. Its statutory objective is 'to support space studies in and outside of the Netherlands and to do anything directly or indirectly related or beneficial to space studies, all in the broadest sense of the word. The Foundation is not for profit'.

Space activities are becoming increasingly important. Science and technology development ensure further exploration of the universe, better detection of threats from space (space weather, Space Situational Awareness) and, above all, more and more applications on earth. Space activities affect our daily lives in many ways. Space applications for meteorology, communication, localisation and navigation, earth observation or climate control have become indispensable. Space creates solutions for global societal challenges in science, technology, and application areas, such as water and delta, agriculture and food, mobility, climate and environment, defence and security, and energy. Space provides innovation, knowledge, jobs, and security, which is why government, companies and knowledge institutions all invest in space. In this context, the development of commercial spaceflight in LEO (low earth orbit) for both crewed spaceflight and for doing experiments and scientific research will also play a key role.

The SSPF focuses on supporting short duration space studies. Its primary target group are the Young Professionals of the space sector in the Netherlands and its secondary target group are the advanced (PhD, masters) students of space-related education programmes at Dutch educational institutions. Dutch candidates who work or study abroad in the space sector may also be eligible. In principle, the SSPF is open to assessing the support of all those interested from both target groups, provided they meet the admission criteria of the intended education programme.

The SSPF originally has two derived objectives:

- Financing of the Space Studies Program (SSP) allocated to the Netherlands as host country by the International Space University (ISU) (SSP18) in 2018; including financing of (part of) the participation costs of interested parties from both target groups.
- Financing of (part of) the participation costs of interested parties from both target groups in an SSP or in other short-term education programmes in and outside the Netherlands from 2019 onwards.

In previous Policy Plans, our focus was on setting up, implementing, and expanding all the functions needed to achieve these two objectives.

The first objective was successfully achieved and documented in the SSPF annual reports of 2017 and 2018. SSP18 was in every aspect a successful event and was to a significant extent able to raise the necessary financial resources. Government agencies, businesses and universities contributed directly and indirectly. A group of 14 'NL-connected' participants took part in SSP18 thanks to SSPF co-financing, thereby generously exceeding the ambition of ten participants set out in the Policy Plan 2017-2019. They were worthy ambassadors and contributed greatly to the success of SSP18 in the Netherlands.

As agreed, the financial balance after completion of the activities as part of this first objective fully benefited the activities of the second objective.

## 1. Mission/vision

The SSPF will focus entirely on providing long-term and structural financial support to participants from the Netherlands in SSP and other short duration education programmes.

At the time of the existence of the Netherlands Agency for Aerospace Programmes (NIVR), there was a so-called NIVR-fund for the financial support of SSP participants, but this fund was discontinued when the NIVR was disbanded. Since then, it has been difficult and only occasionally possible for interested parties in the Netherlands to obtain financial support for participation in this education programme. The SSPF aims again to provide a structural solution for those interested in participating in SSP and other short duration space studies.

Participation in SSP is not only important for the professional and personal development of the participants, but also connects them to the global alumni network of more than 5.000 space professionals, many of whom occupy key positions in institutional and private space organisations, in over a hundred countries. Combined with the international ISU network, SSP alumni form an effective community of space professionals and leaders who initiate and facilitate international business development, collaboration, professional activities, and career opportunities.

In this way SSP contributes to the further positioning, profiling, and growth of the Dutch space sector.

The Netherlands Space Office (NSO), the space agency of the Dutch government (working as a partnership between the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)), therefore also wholeheartedly supports SSP, according to the initiative taken by NSO to organise SSP18 in the Netherlands and also to establish SSPF.

Other ministries such as Foreign Affairs and Defence are also actively engaged in space projects and applications in recent years.

### 1.2 Objective

Objective: Financing of (part of) the costs of participation in SSP or other short duration education programmes from 2019 onwards.

This remaining (second) objective was successfully achieved in 2019 to 2022 and has been documented in the various SSPF Annual Reports. In the first Policy Plan 2017-2019, the ambition was formulated to be able to delegate at least five participants, but based on the realised numbers of participants in 2018 (fourteen in the Netherlands) and 2019 (eleven in Strasbourg), the ambition for the second Policy Plan 2020-2022 was adjusted to financially support an average of ten participants in SSP each year through SSPF. This objective was realized with seven participants in 2020 (limited digital program due to COVID-19), eleven participants in 2021 (Granada and Strasbourg) and eleven participants in 2022 (Oeiras, Portugal). In addition, in this second policy plan period it proved possible to realise participation in two other study programs. First, the Southern Hemisphere Space Studies Program (SHSSP) of the International Space University could be attended by 'NL-connected' participants (one participant in Adelaide in 2020 and one participant digitally in 2021). In addition, in 2022, two 'NL-connected' participants were delegated to the new

'Space for Business' program of three universities in Switzerland, Portugal and the Netherlands.

Based on these realised numbers of participants in previous years, the ambition for this third Policy Plan 2023-2025 is continued *to financially support an average of ten participants in SSP and 2-3 participants in other short duration study programs each year through SSPF*. This ambition remains dependent on the financial contribution of the NSO and co-funding by companies and universities/knowledge institutions for the cost of participation of their employees and students, respectively. As a starting point, the Board assumes that the government (ministries) through the NSO will be willing to contribute the same amount as the space companies ("matching").

As an extension of the method used in previous years, the SSPF board itself will act as selection committee to evaluate and select registered candidates for SSP or other short duration education programmes. This will be done in accordance with the type of education programme and budget that will be determined annually by the board. Applicants are encouraged to also raise funds elsewhere, as SSPF will never contribute 100% of the participation fee.

### 1.3 Strategy

Through its activities, the SSPF is becoming *the* financing platform in the Netherlands for both of its target groups to obtain (co-)financing for enrolling in a short duration space-related education programme, such as SSP. Over the years, this is reflected in a healthy budget position and stable fundraising, enabling the intended number of professionals/students to participate in SSP or other short-term education programmes. The followed study programs will be annually evaluated by the board, together with the participants.

In accordance with the functions defined in the previous policy plans, the activities remain focused on:

- fundraising,
- recruitment and selection of interested parties,
- administration and accounting, and
- accountability.

When selecting participants for SSPF co-financing, the board will ensure that the annual composition of the group in terms of diversity reflects the composition of the personnel within the Dutch space sector.

The key figures are further elaborated on in section 5.

## 2. Current situation and activities per year

The SSPF was founded in October 2017 and has since then focused on building up a well-functioning organisation, with the prospect of sufficient financial resources. Within the preconditions of the acquired budget, it has proved to be possible to select significant numbers of participants from both target groups, and (partially) financially support them enrolling in SSP or another approved education programme.

The activities are continued unchanged in this Policy Plan and will be described in more detail in the next chapter.

## 2.1 Activities in 2023, 2024 and 2025

The following activities will be carried out each year:

- fundraising
  - o securing and ensuring that the government (ministries involved through NSO) commits to 'matching' the sponsor contributions from the space companies
  - o obtaining co-financing for the participation of employees of space companies
- recruitment and selection of candidates
  - o promoting the SSPF financing opportunities to both target groups, both through mailings (e.g., through NSO) and presentations as well as various means of communication (website, social media)
  - o encouraging SSP participation in subsequent years
  - o evaluating applications for other education programmes
  - o management board acting as selection committee
- administration and accounting
  - o maintenance of financial-administrative systems
  - o carrying out the administration
- accountability
  - o carrying out activities in accordance with the Policy Plan
  - o prepare annual accounts
  - o ensuring that an independent audit of the annual accounts is carried out

## 3. Future

In 2025, at the end of the duration of this policy plan, an evaluation will be made of the extent to which SSPF has succeeded in continuing the situation it had previously started, with a significant number of participants, a healthy budget position and stable fundraising during this period.

The continuation or adjustment of the policy will be proposed in a follow-up policy plan. Until then, the board's attention will be fully focused on achieving the objectives and activities described in this Policy Plan.

## 4. Organisation

The full details of the foundation are as follows:

Stichting Space Professionals – Foundation

Certificate of incorporation: 11 October 2017  
Chamber of commerce no: 69808813  
Bank account number: NL27 ABNA 0253944910  
PBO status: Approved; TIN/ tax identification number 8580 20 531

#### 4.1 Board

Chairman:	Gerard Blaauw
Treasurer:	Pieter van Beekhuizen
Secretary:	Tanja Masson-Zwaan

The board members do not receive any remuneration for the work they perform for the SSPF. Not-excessive allowances are supported, but at the time being, they are not used.

Any costs made by the directors in the practice of their duties will be reimbursed to them by the SSPF. The board, and all directors, are independent and are appointed for a period of three years, either by deed of incorporation or resignation rota. To this end, the board has drawn up a resignation schedule in a previous policy plan.

#### 4.2 Staff

The SSPF does not have any staff.

#### 4.3. Selection Committee

The SSPF board functions as a selection committee for evaluating and selecting applications for co-financing. In 2019, [rules and protocols](#) have been drawn up for its functioning as a selection committee.

### 5. Finances and multiannual budget 2023-2025

#### 5.1 Principles and key numbers

Based on the basic principles as formulated by the SSPF Board, the following key numbers are important:

a) Number of participants

The board's objective is to support an average of 10 'NL-connected' participants for each of the next three SSP programmes (SSP23, SSP24 and SSP25) and 2-3 participants in other short duration study programs, such as SHSSP, "Space for Business" or other programs to be selected by the board.

b) Participation costs

The board assumes that for the years mentioned above, the registration costs will be € 20.000 per SSP participant. Should ISU increase the participation costs for SSP, the financial section in the Policy Plan will be adjusted accordingly. The board also assumes that costs for participation in the Space for Business program and for participation in the SHSSP will remain the same, but will be adjusted for expected inflation over the policy plan period.

c) ESA co-financing

The financial policy plan assumes an unchanged co-financing of € 12.000 or € 10.000 per participant whose nationality is of one of the ESA member countries.

d) Mix of 'NL-connected' participants

Given the two target groups (Young Professionals in employment and PhD/Master students), the SSPF board has taken as a guiding principle that 50% of the participants are already in employment and that the remaining 50% are still in the process of completing their studies.

e) Contribution of companies

For participants who are already employed by a company or organisation, the company or organisation will be asked to co-finance 50% of the remaining amount after deduction of ESA co-financing.

f) Agreement ISU/ SSPF

The Board assumes that the quantity discount as agreed with ISU will be continued and improved where possible. If this is not possible, the Board will be forced to draw up a new financial policy plan.

g) Contribution NSO

In accordance with the NSO's previously formulated principle, the SSPF Board assumes that the NSO's contribution during the period of the policy plan will be equal to the contributions of companies (see point e).

Based on the assumptions in this Policy Plan 2023-2025, the foundation's financial reserves will be determined by the external financing of activities. The SSPF board will enter discussions with the NSO to receive a one-time or staggered financial contribution of K€ 105, following the agreed contribution in the previous policy plan period, in order to ensure the continuity of the foundation.

Table 1 shows that based on ten SSP participants per year, the foundation's financial reserves will decrease by K€ 23. Including the assumption for the delta costs for the other programs (Space for Business and SHSSP), the reserves will decrease by K€ 34 per year.

**Without the financial support from NSO (K€ 35 per year), the reserves will decrease by K€ 69 and the survival of the foundation will be at risk as early as 2024.**

h) Contribution of student participants

As a starting point, the board will ask each student participant for a personal contribution of € 2000 as a condition for co-financing. In exceptional cases this may be deviated from.

i) Maximum co-financing per participant

The maximum SSPF co-financing per participant is set at € 6.000. This limit is particularly relevant for participants who are not subject to ESA co-financing. Wherever possible, these



participants will need to seek external financial support (e.g. from their own government/ministries/funds, ISU, personal loans) to enable participation.

j) Special conditions for non-Dutch nationals.

Scholarships for non-Dutch nationals will be considered as non-reimbursable for participants who continue to live and work/study in the Netherlands for at least three (3) years after the end of the program. Those staying less than three (3) years agree to reimburse SSPF according to the following schedule, with the 1st of the month following the official end date of the programme serving as the reference date:

- participants who stay less than 1 year: 100% reimbursement
- participants who stay less than 2 years:  $\frac{2}{3}$  reimbursement
- participants who stay less than 3 years:  $\frac{1}{3}$  fee reimbursement

## 5.2 Financial elaboration

The above points are included in the financial table 1 below.

Table 1 (next page) shows the projections for 2023. As no changes are currently expected for 2024 and 2025, this table can also be considered representative for all years of the Policy Plan.

If major changes do occur, the board will be forced to adjust the basic principles. During each year of the current policy plan, the Board will match the financial section against any new situations that may arise.

Table 1 also considers the annual costs of the foundation (insurance, bank costs, accountant costs, IAF membership, IAC participation, alumni meetings, etc.). These costs are estimated at K€ 10 per year.

The financial reserves of SSPF will thus decrease by K€ 23 annually or K€ 69 during the policy period 2023 - 2025. Considering possible costs for participation in other programs (Space for Business, SHSSP), the reserves will further decrease by K€ 11 per year or K€ 102 at the end of the policy plan 2023- 2025.

Based on the positive balance at the end of 2022 of over K€ 130, this can be provided for.

*Table 1: Annual participant costs; based on the ISU SSP programme. Costs/revenues of other education programme are not known/not included for the time being.*

		Total costs
Participants (note 1)	10	
Costs	€ 20.000	€ 200.000
Expected ESA co-financing (note 2)	5* € 12.000 3* € 10.000	(€ 90.000)
Contribution companies, universities, participants		(€ 50.000)
ISU quantity discount (note 3)		(€ 12.000)
Foundation costs		€ 10.000
Contribution NSO (note 4)		(€ 35.000)
<b>Deficit</b>		<b>€ 23.000</b>
<b>Estimated SSPF contribution for Space for Business and SHSSP per year.</b>		<b>€ 11.000</b>
<b>Reduction in SSPF reserves by year</b>		<b>€ 34.000</b>
<b>Reduction in SSPF reserves at the end of 2025.</b>		<b>€ 102.000</b>

Note 1: Assumption of 10 annual participants of which 8 from ESA member countries

Note 2: Assumption of 5 ESA co-funding of K€ 12 and 3 of K€ 10

Note 3: Assumption of 6% staggered discount based on 10 'NL connected' participants

Note 4: Assumption of K€ 105 contribution NSO during 2023 - 2025