

# Call for Proposal for SVOM General Program 2026

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## 1 General Information of SVOM General Program

SVOM features three types of observing programs: **the Core Program (CP)**, **the General Program (GP)**, and **the Target of Opportunity Program (ToO)**.

The GP observation schedule is compiled from a pool of requests submitted through an annual Call for Proposals (CfP), which takes place at the beginning of each calendar year and covers the full year. The 2026 CfP is open to SVOM co-investigators (co-Is) and affiliate scientists, with proposals reviewed and ranked by a dedicated Time Allocation Committee (TAC).

Both the GP and ToO programs have dedicated observation time allocations during the nominal and extended mission phases (see Fig. 1). In terms of observation time, the two programs occupy similar proportions (see Fig. 2).

## 2 High-level Principles of SVOM General Program

### • Perimeter of the call:

- The CfP invites two types of observation requests: GP-PPT for anticipated pre-planned target observations (i.e., targets that are known with observations scheduled in advance), and GP-ToO for non-planned target observations (i.e., known targets with unpredictable active phases for which observations cannot be scheduled).
- GP-PPT proposals may include a “Survey” sub-type, which involves specific scheduling strategies such as tiling of a sky region or periodic monitoring.
- **This CfP does not include** scientific investigations directly related to the main scientific objectives of the SVOM mission, such as the search for transients (including GRBs), the monitoring of newly detected transients —whether identified by SVOM or other facilities—, or the search and follow-up observations of electromagnetic counterparts of multi-messenger sources.
- Non-anticipated ToO proposals (i.e. related to the observations of new targets whose observations could not be anticipated at the time of this CfP) cannot be granted in the framework of this CfP but can be requested to the SVOM ToO scientists when observing opportunities arise any time during SVOM operations.

### • Instruments

Although the main instruments used in GP and ToO observations are MXT and VT, all four instruments are considered to be involved and activated by default. The specific instrument configurations are defined by the user when submitting the GP request.

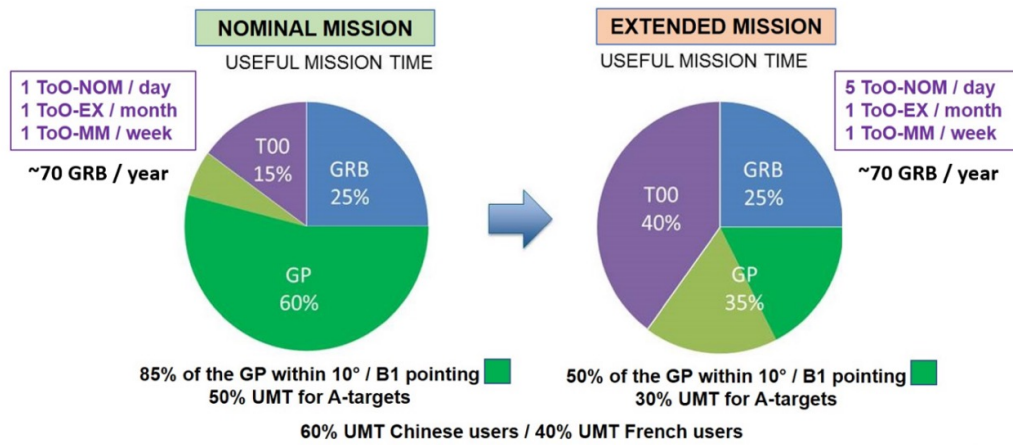


Figure 1: The scheduled observation time proportion of GP and ToO in nominal mission and extended mission phases.

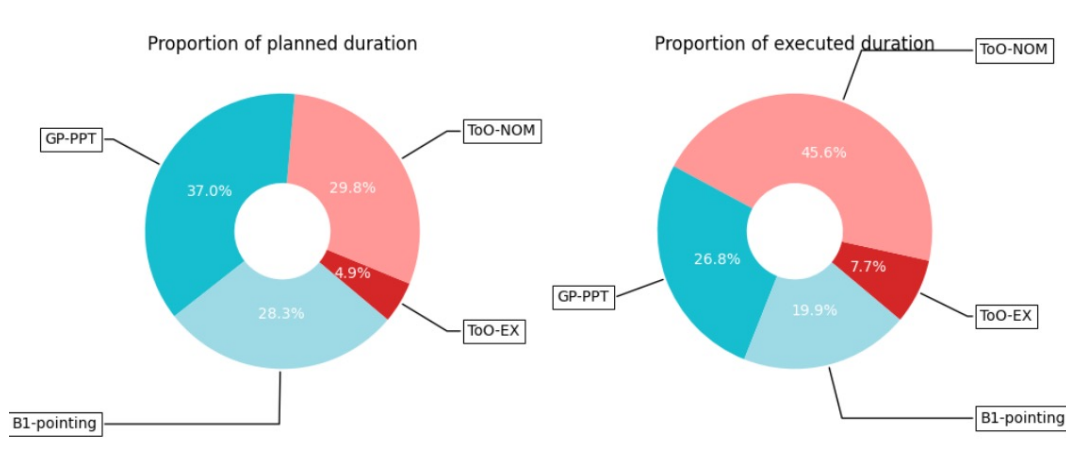


Figure 2: The performed observation time proportion of GP and ToO in the commissioning phase.

- **Observation Duration**

A GP request for a specific target may require either a single observation or multiple observations (in "Survey" mode). The duration of a single observation can range from 1 to 28 orbits.

For any given orbit on a specific date, the effective observation time available for a target is approximately 40 minutes. However, this duration is subject to various operational and observational constraints during on-board execution:

- Sun and Moon constraints, which may inhibit observations for extended periods (up to entire periods of the year);
- Earth occultation and South Atlantic Anomaly (SAA) crossings, which can block portions of the orbit;
- Instrument unavailability due to straylight;
- Slew time between successive pointings;
- Pointing stability and accuracy limitations;
- Satellite unavailability due to outages or housekeeping operations;
- Interruptions by higher-priority observations (e.g., GRB or ToO events).

As only one GP target can be observed per orbit, the minimum observation duration specified in the GP request must be **40 minutes**.

- **Priority**

GRB and ToO observations take precedence over GP observations (including GP-ToO observations). Once the telescope slews back from a GRB or ToO pointing, the GP observing plan resumes as if the interruption had not occurred.

Each GP request must be assigned a priority level. The standard levels are **A** (high priority) and **B** (low priority). In addition, three intermediate levels are available: **A+**, **B+**, and **C**, primarily used for Survey-type GP requests. The **A+** level, however, can be applied to any type of GP request, whether a standard GP-PPT or a Survey.

The underlying objective of this priority scheme is to allow users to promote a subset of GP requests for higher scheduling reliability—particularly important for time-sensitive observations. A total of 50% of the GP observation time will be allocated to **A+** and **A** level targets.

For priority A and A+ targets, if the observations are interrupted by a GRB or a ToO observation, they will be rescheduled by the Mission Center.

- **Reference Law**

The B1 pointing law is defined in advance and consists of a predetermined pointing direction for each day of a generic calendar year (see Figure 3). Its primary goal is to optimize GRB detection capabilities for the ECLAIRs instrument. The SSTOMP tool offers a dynamic visualization of the B1 law on the sky (see: <https://sstomp.cnes.fr/sstomp/complianceB1>).

While GP observations typically target objects located within 10° of the satellite's reference B1 attitude law, during the nominal mission phase, 15% of the annual GP observing time can be allocated to targets located outside of this reference pointing law.

A GP target is classified as a "*B1 source*" only on days when it is located within 10° of one of the satellite's B1 pointings. On all other days, it is treated as a "non-B1 source." Non-B1 sources can be scheduled at any time during their visibility window, but their observation time will be drawn from the 15% of the annual GP time specifically allocated to non-B1 sources.

- **Time Allocation Policy**

Based on the recommendations of the joint Chinese-French Time Allocation Committee (TAC), the General Program Manager compiles a provisional one-year GP source list (referred to as the GP-Catalog). This list aims to allocate approximately 60% of the total effective GP observing time to proposals submitted by Chinese Co-Is, and around 40% to those submitted by French Co-Is.

Accordingly:

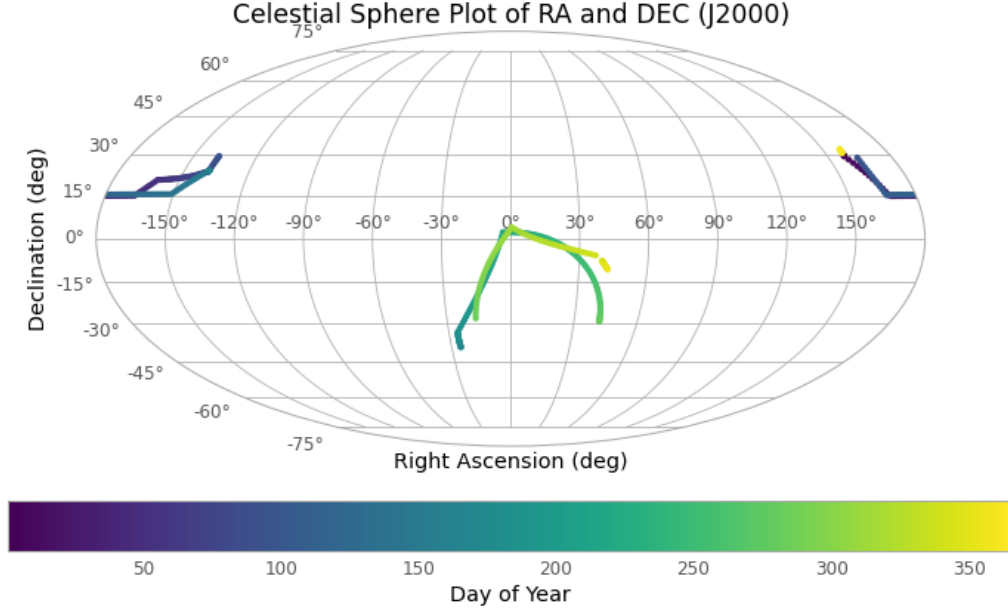


Figure 3: The B1 pointing for each day of a calendar year.

- Observation time for proposals led by Chinese Co-Is is deducted from the Chinese allocation (60%).
- Observation time for proposals led by French Co-Is is deducted from the French allocation (40%).

The scheduling of GP observations is managed by the Mission Center. During the weekly mission planning process, the actual observation time achieved for each GP target will be tracked to ensure, as much as possible, compliance with the intended 60/40 distribution between Chinese and French proposals.

It is important to note that, even if a proposal is selected, the observation of its targets is not guaranteed due to various operational constraints, such as GRB or ToO interruptions, compatibility with the B1 pointing law, and target visibility windows. In the same way, due to the operational constraints mentioned previously, the 60/40% ratio of observing time dedicated to Chinese/French groups may not be totally fulfilled.

Schedule availability:

- Long-term scheduling (providing approximate observation periods) will be released by end of 2025.
- Precise observation timelines will be published via GP tools one week prior to execution.

#### • Data Policy

- Data from the GP (either GP-PPT or GP-ToO observations) can be of three types:
  - \* **Type A:** data related to a source integrated into the SVOM observation schedule over a period not covered by a call for proposal (e.g. GP data from the first year of operation);
  - \* **Type B:** data related to a source whose observation has been granted as part of a CfP;
  - \* **Type C:** data related to a source present by chance in the field-of-view of one of the SVOM instruments during a pointing of a source whose observation has been approved within the framework of a CfP or after a slew following a SVOM trigger.
- Type A data are available to all of the SVOM co-Is and affiliate scientists as soon as they have been uploaded on the SVOM Science Databases.
- A proposer can never ask for data rights for the entire field-of-view or data rights for all sources (known/unknown) to be found in the field-of-view. As a consequence, data on serendipitous sources detected in the field-of-view of approved Type B observations (i.e. Type C data) are publicly available to the SVOM co-Is and affiliate scientists.

- For Type B observations covered by this current CfP, the requested SVOM data will be available to all of the co-Is and affiliate scientists. However, the co-I or affiliate scientist who proposed the project will have the priority to lead the analysis, interpretation, and publication of the results. The work will take place within the framework of the Observatory Science Working Groups, and all interested SVOM co-Is and affiliate scientists will have the opportunity to actively contribute.

### 3 How to Apply for GP Observing Time

All proposals for the *SVOM General Program 2026* must be submitted through the SVOM GP Tools platform, available at <https://www.svom.cn/>. A GP proposal may be submitted by a SVOM co-I or by an affiliate scientist. Proposers are required to create an account in the GP Tools system in order to submit their proposals.

While comprehensive instructions for using the GP Tools can be found at the following URL: <https://www.svom.cn/suss/#/svomPage>, proposers should take note of the following key points:

- **Proposal Type:**

Two types of proposals are open for submission in 2026: **GP-PPT** and **GP-ToO (ToO-NOM-AT)**.

For **GP-PPT** proposals, a complete set of parameters must be provided at the time of submission to enable the generation of the long-term observation plan.

In contrast, for **GP-ToO** proposals, the full set of parameters is only required at the time of target activation, offering greater flexibility in responding to transient or unforeseen astronomical events. a

Detailed information on observation configuration can be found in the "Observation Configuration" section 3.

- **Class of Source:**

The proposal must fall into one of the following categories:

- AGNs,
- TDEs / Clusters / Standard galaxies,
- FRBs / Magnetars / AXPs / SGRs,
- XRB-BHs,
- LMXB-NSs,
- HMXB-NSs,
- ULXs,
- CVs / Novae,
- Other Galactic sources,
- Miscellaneous.

Proposals are categorized according to the class of sources they target. Each class is overseen by a dedicated **Obs-SWG Source Working Group (SRC-WG)**, as outlined in the SVOM Obs-SWG organizational note. A single proposal may include one or multiple sources; however, all sources must belong to the same category to ensure consistency and proper evaluation by the **Time Allocation Committee (TAC)**.

To strengthen the chances of approval, proposals that involve collaboration between different working groups or institutions—particularly those fostering cooperation between Chinese and French partners—are strongly encouraged. Proposers should clearly indicate such cross-group or international collaboration within their submissions. If more than one team applies for the same sources with different scientific objectives, the TAC will encourage these teams to collaborate on the analysis in the context of the Obs-SWG working groups (even if one of the proposals is better ranked than the others).

- **Objective and Observation Strategy:**

Each GP proposal must clearly state its scientific objectives and the intended observation strategy.

For proposals involving periodic monitoring, the observation strategy must be explicitly detailed. This includes specifying:

- the duration of each individual observation;

Source	SOURCE_NAME	SOURCE_TYPE	OBS_TYPE	SURVEY	RIGHT_ASCENSION	DECLINATION	ERROR (recommended)	USER_GROUP	
3 instrument configuration	MXT_CONF	ECL_CONF	GRM_CONF						
VT configuration	EXPOSURE_TIME	WINDOW_SIZE	INTERVAL_BETWEEN_IMG	READ_SPEED	READ_CHANNEL	CLEANING			
Platform configuration	STABILITY	MOON_CHECK							
Observation	REQUESTED_OBS_DURATION_IN_MINUTES	TIME_CONSTRAINTS_START_DATE	TIME_CONSTRAINTS_END_DATE	MIN_CONT_OBS_DURATION_IN_MINUTES	COMPLETENESS	ATTRIBUTE	PRIORITY_LEVEL	TOTAL_REQUESTED_OBS_DURATION_IN_MINUTES	
Supporting parameters	Bmag	Vmag	Rmag	gmag	rmag	Gmag	Observing Strategy	Available day count in B1	Available Days in B1

Figure 4: The configuration table list the mandatory and optional (colored in green) parameters required in a GP proposal.

	EXPOSURE TIME	WINDOW	INTERVAL	READ SPEED	CHANNEL	CLEANING	CONDITION
1	<15 s.	500	2	200KHz	both	clearning	bright source with variation in day scale
2	<50 s.	500	2	200KHz	both	clearning	faint source with variation in day scale
3	<15 s.	500	1	200KHz	both	clearning	bright source with variation in short time scale
4	<50 s.	500	0	200KHz	both	clearning	faint source with variation in short time scale
5	100 s.	2048	2	200KHz	both	clearning	tiling or extended source

Figure 5: The VT configurations for different conditions.

- the interval between successive observations;
- the total duration of the monitoring campaign.

For GP-ToO proposals, the observation strategy must explicitly provide triggering criteria and triggering probability.

Providing this level of detail is essential to assess the feasibility and scientific value of the proposed observations.

#### • Observation Configuration:

The GP Tools platform allows proposers to add GP sources either individually or by importing them in bulk from a JSON file.

For each GP source, a set of mandatory parameters (as illustrated in Fig. 4) must be provided. Additionally, certain optional parameters, highlighted in green, are available. These optional parameters assist in evaluating the VT exposure time and the processing of the VT images, thereby optimizing the observation planning process.

##### – "SURVEY":

For a periodical monitoring, the "SURVEY" mode should be set to "true".

##### – "VT\_CONF":

The configuration of the VT is notably more intricate compared to that of other instruments. To address this complexity, we have developed several VT configuration combinations, as illustrated in Figure 5. Proposers are advised to carefully select the most suitable configuration based on the specific conditions and requirements of their application.

- **"PF\_CONF"**:

The "PF\_CONF" parameter defines the satellite configuration settings, encompassing both platform stability and lunar constraints. For the GP mode, the platform stability is preset to "NORMAL" as the default value. Additionally, the "MOON\_CHECK" parameter is configured with a default value of "VT," ensuring that the VT telescope maintains a safe distance from the moon influence to avoid potential interference.

- **Observation Duration:**

The configuration includes two key parameters related to the observation duration:

"REQUESTED\_OBS\_DURATION\_IN\_MINUTES" and "MIN\_CONT\_OBS\_DURATION\_IN\_MINUTES". The former specifies the total observation duration allocated for a single GP target, while the latter defines the minimum continuous observation duration required for an individual observation. Notably, in the "SURVEY" mode, the "MIN\_CONT\_OBS\_DURATION\_IN\_MINUTES" is mandatory and must be explicitly defined.

- **COMPLETENESS:**

The "COMPLETENESS" parameter defines the minimum acceptable completion rate for effective observation duration expected by the proposer, expressed as a fraction (0 to 1) of the total requested duration. For priority A and A+ targets, the MC will reschedule observations interrupted by a GRB or a ToO observation. The MC uses this parameter to decide whether to reschedule. If the "COMPLETENESS" criterion is not met, the observation is rescheduled; otherwise, no further observations are scheduled for the target.

- **ATTRIBUTE:**

The "ATTRIBUTE" parameter offers two distinct options: Targets assigned the "B1" attribute are exclusively scheduled during periods when they align with the B1 reference pointing criteria. Conversely, targets designated as "NON-B1" can be scheduled at any point within their respective visibility time windows, without such constraints.

- **Supporting Tools:**

We provide several supporting tools to assist proposers in setting the correct configurations:

- **Target Visibility Calculator** checks the visible time window of a source in a specified period.

Two tools could be used for the checking: SSTOMP Tools ( <https://sstomp.cnes.fr/sstomp/complianceB1>) and visibility calculator ( <http://fds.smoc.ac.cn:8081/zgjs/#/visibility>).

- **B1 Reference Pointing Calculator** checks the days when the given source is compatible with the B1 reference pointing in a year.

Two tools could be used for the checking: SUSS tools ( <https://svom-gwacn.cn/gp/tools/CheckB1.action>) and SSTOMP Tools ( <https://sstomp.cnes.fr/sstomp/complianceB1>).

- **VT Exposure Tool** allows user to calculate the VT exposure time or signal-to-noise ratio based on the optical brightness of the given source.

The tool is accessible at: <https://svom-gwacn.cn/gp/tools/CalcExptimeVT.action>.

- **Target List Formate Converter** enables user to convert the target list in EXCEL table to JSON file, which is compatible with GP tools for bulk importing.

The tool is accessible at: <https://svom-gwacn.cn/gp/tools/GPTargetTrans.action>.

## 4 Advices for Writing Proposals

By considering the following settings and criteria, applicants can ensure that the observation duration meets the user's initial requirements and increase the likelihood of the requested observations being performed.

- **"TIME\_CONSTRAINTS"**: The priority will be defined as A+ , if the "TIME\_CONSTRAINTS" are set. However, the observation will only be scheduled during the time constraint period.

- **The "MIN\_CONT\_OBS\_DURATION\_IN\_MINUTES" is set longer than 1 orbit.** It is noteworthy that this setting is exclusively applied in the "SURVEY" operational mode. When the duration of a single observation surpasses one orbital period, it significantly increases the complexity of scheduling, making it more challenging to meet the specified requirements.
- **"ATTRIBUTE" is set to "NON-B1".** This means that the target can be scheduled at any time within its visibility window. However, as only 15% of the GP observing time is allocated outside the B1 pointing law, proposals under this category will face significantly higher competition.