

Project Manager - Next Stage to Space II

Job Title: Project Manager – Next Stage to Space II

Supervisors: Intza Balenciaga (technical supervisor) and Thorsten Rudolph (personnel supervisor)

Location: Claude-Dornier-Straße 1, 82234 Weßling, Germany

About AZO

Since 2004, AZO has been a leading international consultancy driving innovation in Europe's space sector from Oberpfaffenhofen (Weßling, Germany). We bring together startups, industry leaders, institutions, and investors to foster collaboration, entrepreneurship, and growth across the global space ecosystem.

With more than 20 years of experience, we have coordinated flagship European initiatives such as ESA BIC Bavaria, Copernicus and Galileo Masters, CASSINI Matchmaking, and the EU Global Action on Space. To date, we have supported over 250 startups and helped hundreds scale internationally.

Our mission is to strengthen Europe's and German's competitiveness by building a sustainable and responsible space industry — transforming bold ideas into impactful solutions and preparing the workforce of tomorrow for success.

About the Role – Project Manager, *Next Stage to Space II*

We are seeking a highly motivated Project Manager with strong expertise in project and open call management, a solid understanding of space transportation, and a passion for space entrepreneurship. The selected candidate is expected to start **on 1 January 2026. This is a fixed-term contract for two years, with the possibility of extension based on performance and project needs (NSTS aims to become a recurring initiative, fostering a sustainable ecosystem of space transportation innovators in Germany and Europe).**

As Project Manager, you will lead Next Stage to Space II, the continuation of an ESA initiative supported by AZO and Larger System Integrators (LSIs). Building on the achievements of [Phase I](#) (2023–2024), you will:

- Launch the next Open Call for breakthrough ideas in space transportation
- Expand and manage pilot projects with promising startups and innovators
- Scale cutting-edge space technologies into real-world applications
- Connect startups, innovators, and major space players to foster collaboration
- Drive innovation and strengthen German's space transportation ecosystem

This is a unique opportunity to play a key role in shaping the future of German space transportation, bridging the gap between groundbreaking innovation and market-ready solutions!

Your Profile

- 5+ years of project management experience, successfully leading national and international projects as well as managing cross-functional teams (experience in the space sector preferred)
- University degree combining a strong technical foundation with well-developed soft skills and procedural expertise in areas such as engineering and finance; a Master's in either field will be considered an asset
- Proven track record in communication, outreach, stakeholder engagement, and budget management
- Hands-on experience managing Open Calls, space technology solutions, and related contracts
- Skilled in negotiation, social interaction, and relationship-building at all organisational levels
- Experienced collaborating with ESA, LSIs, startups, SMEs, and research institutions
- In-depth knowledge of the European and German space transportation ecosystem and EU space programmes (e.g., Copernicus, Galileo)

Project Manager - Next Stage to Space II

- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills with a strong client- and team-oriented mindset
- Analytical, structured, and solution-focused approach to problem-solving
- Highly organised, adaptable, and proactive, with willingness to travel as required
- Proficient in MS Office, Teams, and online project management collaboration tools (database experience desirable)
- Fluent in English (written and spoken); German is an asset, and additional EU languages are a plus
- Independent, precise, and reliable work style

Your Job

- Launch and manage an Open Call in line with ESA's proposal for breakthrough ideas in space transportation
- Coordinate projects and stakeholders, including ESA, LSIs and participating startups/SMEs
- Coordinate the evaluation of technology proposals to ensure alignment with the Future Launchers Preparatory Programme (FLPP) objectives
- Oversee and ensure achievement of timelines, project goals, pilot demonstrations, and delivery milestones — quality, costs, milestones, progress, invoices, contracts, mid-term and final reporting with recommendations — within deadlines
- Develop and maintain a database for space entrepreneurs and innovative SMEs
- Monitor Open Call activities, including funding, individual coaching, and progress reporting
- Plan and implement individual project objectives in collaboration with ESA
- Coordinate and deliver an Industry Day, bringing together prominent space transportation companies from our network
- Contribute to the 2026 Space Transportation Conference, uniting Open Call winners with LSIs
- Boost project visibility and engagement by driving Open Call outreach, managing web and social media promotion, recruiting for Industry Day, and showcasing programme results to both the space community and the wider public
- Prepare and present results to diverse audiences and maintain comprehensive project documentation (plans, reports, presentations, etc.)
- Business Development with NSTS II and beyond

Rewards and Recognition

- Hybrid Working: Flexible arrangements to work from home in Germany
- Continuous Learning: Strong focus on professional development and career growth
- Career Mobility: Opportunities for advancement at global, national, and regional levels
- Competitive Salary: Fair compensation reflecting commitment and performance
- Work-Life Balance: Support for family compatibility and overall well-being
- Equal Opportunities: Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, prioritising underrepresented candidates when equally qualified

If you are excited about shaping the future of German's space transportation ecosystem and believe you are the right fit for this role, we look forward to your application. Please send a **one-page CV and a one-page cover letter** to Ms. Intza Balenciaga at intza.balenciaga@azo-space.com, outlining **how your skills and experience align with the position**. Applications are requested **by 5 December (EOB)**. Thank you!