

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



Reply to
Attn of: SMD/Planetary Science Division

19 September 2011

Philippe Escoubet
Acting Solar System Missions Coordinator
European Space Agency
Postbus 299
2200 AG Noordwijk
The Netherlands


Dear Dr. Escoubet:

The NASA Planetary Science Division is excited to support the ESA Concept Definition Phase study of the MarcoPolo-R mission with the appropriate U.S. expertise. We propose to sponsor a team of representatives from The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, to include Andy Cheng and Cheryl Reed, as well as a NASA Headquarters representative, which will provide further interface with a U.S. team for science, systems engineering, and program planning support as proposed in the original submission of this mission into the *Cosmic Vision* Medium-3 competition. We intend the U.S. team to initially be involved in the two-year MarcoPolo-R Concept Definition Phase study by participation in the MarcoPolo-R Concurrent Design Facility (CDF) kickoff meeting to be held October 4th, 2011, and then to support additional concept definition activities for MarcoPolo-R, including science team meetings, additional concept study work, and analysis and documentation of the results.

The initial objective of this NASA sponsored participation is to obtain better understanding of the elements of the MarcoPolo-R mission, and intended approaches to various components of the mission, such as asteroid characterization, sampling techniques, and Earth return, to then in turn support further discussions with ESA of potential U.S. responsibilities for a collaborative mission. Based on this initial work, NASA will subsequently determine its specific level of involvement, to include future acquisition strategies as appropriate and as budget allows.

We look forward to successful participation in the Concept Definition Phase study.

Sincerely,


James Green
Director, Planetary Science Division

cc:

ESA/Science Planning and Community Coordination Office/Fabio Favata

ESA/Marco Polo-R Study Lead/Antonella Barucci

ESA/International Relations/Micheline Tabache

NASA/SMD/Lindley Johnson

NASA/OIIR/Sheree Marambio