

Geoinformatics (GI)

PROGRAM SOLICITATION NSF 11-581



National Science Foundation

Directorate for Geosciences
Division of Earth Sciences

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

January 13, 2012

July 01, 2013

July 1, Every Other Year Thereafter

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES

A revised version of the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)*, [NSF 13-1](#), was issued on October 4, 2012 and is effective for proposals submitted, or due, on or after January 14, 2013. Please be advised that the guidelines contained in [NSF 13-1](#) apply to proposals submitted in response to this funding opportunity. Proposers who opt to submit prior to January 14, 2013, must also follow the guidelines contained in [NSF 13-1](#).

Please be aware that significant changes have been made to the PAPPG to implement revised merit review criteria based on the National Science Board (NSB) report, [National Science Foundation's Merit Review Criteria: Review and Revisions](#). While the two merit review criteria remain unchanged (Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts), guidance has been provided to clarify and improve the function of the criteria. Changes will affect the project summary and project description sections of proposals. Annual and final reports also will be affected.

A by-chapter summary of this and other significant changes is provided at the beginning of both the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) and the [Award & Administration Guide](#).

Please note that this program solicitation may contain supplemental proposal preparation guidance and/or guidance that deviates from the guidelines established in the [Grant Proposal Guide](#).

Important Information

Prior to submitting a proposal it is strongly recommended that the proponent(s) seek advice from the relevant Program Officer(s) listed in the solicitation and from the Program Officer(s) overseeing the program(s) whose communities are affected by the project. This will help to identify potential synergies with ongoing efforts as well as to insure coordination of an appropriate merit review.

This is not a new activity. Geoinformatics was previously included as a separate sub-area of support in the Division of Earth Sciences Instrumentation and Facilities Program (EAR/IF) solicitation [NSF 09-517](#). This separate solicitation gives this activity more emphasis and exposure to the relevant communities.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

General Information

Program Title:

Geoinformatics (GI)

Synopsis of Program:

The Division of Earth Sciences (EAR) will consider proposals for the development of cyberinfrastructure for the geosciences (Geoinformatics). EAR seeks the development and implementation of enabling information technology with impacts that extend beyond an individual investigator or small group of investigators and that facilitates the next generation of geosciences research. Proposals to this solicitation may seek support for community-driven development and implementation of databases; tools for data integration, interoperability, and visualization; software development and code hardening; and data-intensive/new computing methodologies that support the enhancement of geosciences research and education activities. Collaboration with computational scientists and the development of public/private partnerships are strongly encouraged.

The efforts supported by this solicitation do not overlap with, but are complementary to, EarthCube, a partnership between the Geosciences Directorate (GEO) and the Office of Cyberinfrastructure (OCI) to build an integrated

geosciences-wide cyberinfrastructure (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2011/nsf11065/nsf11065.jsp>). The goal of EarthCube is to transform the conduct of research in the geosciences by supporting community-created cyberinfrastructure that integrates knowledge management across the geosciences. The Geoinformatics solicitation will support efforts to create the underlying knowledge base and utilities that will be integrated, over time, through EarthCube. Projects submitted to the Geoinformatics solicitation should be proposed using modern software techniques and standards that facilitate eventual integration into a geoscience-wide knowledge system.

Cognizant Program Officer(s):

Please note that the following information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.

- Leonard Johnson, Division of Earth Sciences, telephone: (703) 292-8559, email: lejohnso@nsf.gov
- Eva Zanzierka, Division of Earth Sciences, telephone: (703) 292-8556, email: ezanzerk@nsf.gov
- David Lambert, Division of Earth Sciences, telephone: (703) 292-8558, email: dlambert@nsf.gov

Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):

- 47.050 --- Geosciences

Award Information

Anticipated Type of Award: Standard Grant or Continuing Grant

Estimated Number of Awards: 5 to 10 The number of awards will depend on the quality of proposals, the amount of funding available, and the need for the proposed tools, software, and/or databases for the geoscience community(ies) to be served.

Anticipated Funding Amount: \$4,800,000 Variable with the amount depending on the quality of proposals, the amount of funding available, and the need for the proposed tools, software, and/or databases for the geoscience community(ies) to be served. It is anticipated that proposals over a wide spectrum of amounts will be entertained, from low-cost, single-investigator proposals to large, multi-investigator/institutional proposals. Presently, the Division of Earth Sciences spends approximately \$5M annually on geoinformatics activities.

Eligibility Information

Organization Limit:

The categories of proposers eligible to submit proposals to the National Science Foundation are identified in the Grant Proposal Guide, Chapter I, Section E.

PI Limit:

None Specified

Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

None Specified

Limit on Number of Proposals per PI:

None Specified

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

- **Letters of Intent:** Not Applicable
- **Preliminary Proposal Submission:** Not Applicable
- **Full Proposals:**
 - Full Proposals submitted via FastLane: NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide, Part I: Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) Guidelines apply. The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg.
 - Full Proposals submitted via Grants.gov: NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov Guidelines apply (Note: The NSF Grants.gov Application Guide is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide)

B. Budgetary Information

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.
- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:** Not Applicable
- **Other Budgetary Limitations:** Not Applicable

C. Due Dates

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

January 13, 2012

July 01, 2013

July 1, Every Other Year Thereafter

Proposal Review Information Criteria

Merit Review Criteria: National Science Board approved criteria. Additional merit review considerations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

Award Administration Information

Award Conditions: Standard NSF award conditions apply.

Reporting Requirements: Additional reporting requirements apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary of Program Requirements

- I. [Introduction](#)
- II. [Program Description](#)
- III. [Award Information](#)
- IV. [Eligibility Information](#)
- V. [Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions](#)
 - A. [Proposal Preparation Instructions](#)
 - B. [Budgetary Information](#)
 - C. [Due Dates](#)
 - D. [FastLane/Grants.gov Requirements](#)
- VI. [NSF Proposal Processing and Review Procedures](#)
 - A. [Merit Review Principles and Criteria](#)
 - B. [Review and Selection Process](#)
- VII. [Award Administration Information](#)
 - A. [Notification of the Award](#)
 - B. [Award Conditions](#)
 - C. [Reporting Requirements](#)
- VIII. [Agency Contacts](#)
- IX. [Other Information](#)

I. INTRODUCTION

Geoinformatics has emerged through the scientific community's recognition of the growing need for an information science infrastructure and practice to facilitate our understanding of the Earth as a complex system. Technological advances have greatly facilitated the collection of data (from the field or laboratory) and the simulation of Earth systems. This has resulted in the exponential growth of geosciences data and the dramatic increase in our ability to accommodate complexity in models of Earth systems. Geoscientists have also acknowledged the need to capture and utilize increasing amounts of data, both new and legacy, so that future research can more easily build upon past accomplishments and avoid past mistakes. Other emerging challenges in geoinformatics are related to the archiving and the long-term preservation of data and derived data products obtained from geoscience computational and data management activities (e.g., metadata, model results, etc).

To advance the frontiers of Earth system science, geoscientists and others need to discover, manage, and analyze this full range of data. Easy online access to data and data products, appropriate visualization tools, and user-friendly modeling and analysis codes help scientists, educators, and resource managers use geosciences data and other information technology tools to their full potential, especially in a highly integrated fashion. Recent advances such as data-intensive computing, data discovery, computational methods, cloud and supercomputing, visualization, and database interoperability provide a practical means to address these needs and fall under the purview of Geoinformatics.

Thus, the focus of this solicitation is on the data, software tools, and computational infrastructure needed to facilitate studies of the structure, dynamics, and evolution of the Earth through time, as well as the processes that act upon and within the Earth from the surface to the core. Successful projects will respond to geosciences community cyberinfrastructure needs to advance geosciences questions. Innovative approaches to creating, sustaining, and analyzing extensive and diverse data sets as well as the development of software and computational approaches that cross spatial and temporal boundaries are strongly encouraged.

The efforts supported by this solicitation do not overlap with, but are complementary to, EarthCube, a partnership between the Geosciences Directorate (GEO) and the Office of Cyberinfrastructure (OCI) to build an integrated geosciences-wide

cyberinfrastructure (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2011/nsf11065/nsf11065.jsp>). The goal of EarthCube is to transform the conduct of research in the geosciences by supporting community-created cyberinfrastructure that integrates knowledge management across the geosciences. The Geoinformatics solicitation will support efforts to create the underlying knowledge base and utilities that will be integrated, over time, through EarthCube. Projects submitted to the Geoinformatics solicitation should be proposed using modern software techniques and standards that facilitate eventual integration into a geoscience-wide knowledge system.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Geoinformatics will focus on cyberinfrastructure building activities that will enable transformative advances in geosciences research and education supported within the Division of Earth Sciences. Projects must be rooted firmly in the geoscience community and be responsive to specific community needs. This solicitation does not support hardware development or major hardware purchases. Geoinformatics proposals will normally:

- Identify the targeted user community(ies); describe how the proposed activity has grown out of, and engaged this/these user community(ies); and discuss how it addresses its/their unmet needs.
- Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of existing informatics infrastructure and developments both within the geosciences community and in the computational sciences, as well as other fields that impact the proposed work.
- Provide plans for the integration and compatibility of the proposed geoinformatics platform(s) within existing geoinformatics activities and networks, where appropriate.
- Develop metrics that can be used to monitor and evaluate quantitatively how the resulting product is likely to be used and its potential impact on the targeted community and science.
- Include a management plan that estimates potential out-year sustainability costs (operations, maintenance, and other support costs) and presents a robust sustainability plan.
- Adopt open source and platform-independent development principles whenever possible (see <http://www.opensource.org/> for open source license procedures).
- Address scalability in terms of expanding user capacity.
- Involve computational scientists and/or industry partners, as appropriate, as co-investigators, collaborators, and/or consultants.

To better understand present NSF investments in geoinformatics, it is recommended that proponents contact the Program Officer(s) listed in this solicitation. It is also strongly recommended that proponents discuss their idea(s) with Program Officers in the Division of Earth Sciences program(s) most closely affiliated with the proposed activity so synergies with already funded projects can be identified and so the merit review process can be coordinated.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Anticipated Type of Award: Continuing Grant or Standard Grant

Estimated Number of Awards: 5 to 10 The number of awards will depend on the quality of proposals, the amount of funding available, and the need for the proposed tools, software, and/or databases for the geoscience community(ies) to be served.

Anticipated Funding Amount: \$4,800,000 Variable with the amount depending on the quality of proposals, the amount of funding available, and the need for the proposed tools, software, and/or databases for the geoscience community(ies) to be served. It is anticipated that proposals over a wide spectrum of amounts will be entertained, from low-cost, single-investigator proposals to large, multi-investigator/institutional proposals. Presently, the Division of Earth Sciences spends approximately \$5M annually on geoinformatics activities.

Estimated program budget, number of awards, and average award size/duration are subject to the availability of funds. It is anticipated that proposals over a wide spectrum of amounts will be entertained from low-cost, single-investigator proposals to large, multi-investigator/institutional proposals.

IV. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Organization Limit:

The categories of proposers eligible to submit proposals to the National Science Foundation are identified in the Grant Proposal Guide, Chapter I, Section E.

PI Limit:

None Specified

Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

None Specified

Limit on Number of Proposals per PI:

None Specified

V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Full Proposal Preparation Instructions: Proposers may opt to submit proposals in response to this Program Solicitation via Grants.gov or via the NSF FastLane system.

- Full proposals submitted via FastLane: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG). The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg. Paper copies of the GPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov. Proposers are reminded to identify this program solicitation number in the program solicitation block on the NSF Cover Sheet For Proposal to the National Science Foundation. Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay processing.
- Full proposals submitted via Grants.gov: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation via Grants.gov should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov. The complete text of the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: (http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide). To obtain copies of the Application Guide and Application Forms Package, click on the Apply tab on the Grants.gov site, then click on the Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Application Instructions link and enter the funding opportunity number, (the program solicitation number without the NSF prefix) and press the Download Package button. Paper copies of the Grants.gov Application Guide also may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov.

In determining which method to utilize in the electronic preparation and submission of the proposal, please note the following:

Collaborative Proposals. All collaborative proposals submitted as separate submissions from multiple organizations must be submitted via the NSF FastLane system. Chapter II, Section D.4 of the Grant Proposal Guide provides additional information on collaborative proposals.

Important Proposal Preparation Information: FastLane will check for required sections of the proposal, in accordance with *Grant Proposal Guide* (GPG) instructions described in Chapter II.C.2. The GPG requires submission of: Project Summary; Project Description; References Cited; Biographical Sketch(es); Budget; Budget Justification; Current and Pending Support; Facilities, Equipment & Other Resources; Data Management Plan; and Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan, if applicable. If a required section is missing, **FastLane will not accept the proposal.**

Please note that the proposal preparation instructions provided in this program solicitation may deviate from the GPG instructions. If the solicitation instructions do not require a GPG-required section to be included in the proposal, insert text or upload a document in that section of the proposal that states, "Not Applicable for this Program Solicitation." Doing so will enable FastLane to accept your proposal.

B. Budgetary Information

Cost Sharing: Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited

C. Due Dates

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):
 - January 13, 2012
 - July 01, 2013
 - July 1, Every Other Year Thereafter

D. FastLane/Grants.gov Requirements

- **For Proposals Submitted Via FastLane:**

Detailed technical instructions regarding the technical aspects of preparation and submission via FastLane are available at: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/newstan.htm>. For FastLane user support, call the FastLane Help Desk at 1-800-673-6188 or e-mail fastlane@nsf.gov. The FastLane Help Desk answers general technical questions related to the use of the FastLane system. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this funding opportunity.

Submission of Electronically Signed Cover Sheets. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must electronically sign the proposal Cover Sheet to submit the required proposal certifications (see Chapter II, Section C of the Grant Proposal Guide for a listing of the certifications). The AOR must provide the required electronic certifications within five working days following the electronic submission of the proposal. Further instructions regarding this process are available on the FastLane Website at: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.jsp>.

- **For Proposals Submitted Via Grants.gov:**

Before using Grants.gov for the first time, each organization must register to create an institutional profile. Once registered, the applicant's organization can then apply for any federal grant on the Grants.gov website. Comprehensive information about using Grants.gov is available on the Grants.gov Applicant Resources webpage:

http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp. In addition, the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide provides additional technical guidance regarding preparation of proposals via Grants.gov. For Grants.gov user support, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or by email: support@grants.gov. The Grants.gov Contact Center answers general technical questions related to the use of Grants.gov. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this solicitation.

Submitting the Proposal: Once all documents have been completed, the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must submit the application to Grants.gov and verify the desired funding opportunity and agency to which the application is submitted. The AOR must then sign and submit the application to Grants.gov. The completed application will be transferred to the NSF FastLane system for further processing.

VI. NSF PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Proposals received by NSF are assigned to the appropriate NSF program for acknowledgement and, if they meet NSF requirements, for review. All proposals are carefully reviewed by a scientist, engineer, or educator serving as an NSF Program Officer, and usually by three to ten other persons outside NSF either as *ad hoc* reviewers, panelists, or both, who are experts in the particular fields represented by the proposal. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with oversight of the review process. Proposers are invited to suggest names of persons they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal and/or persons they would prefer not review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process at the Program Officer's discretion. Submission of such names, however, is optional. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts of interest with the proposal. In addition, Program Officers may obtain comments from site visits before recommending final action on proposals. Senior NSF staff further review recommendations for awards. A flowchart that depicts the entire NSF proposal and award process (and associated timeline) is included in the GPG as [Exhibit III-1](#).

A comprehensive description of the Foundation's merit review process is available on the NSF website at: <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/meritreview/>.

Proposers should also be aware of core strategies that are essential to the fulfillment of NSF's mission, as articulated in *Empowering the Nation Through Discovery and Innovation: NSF Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2011-2016*. These strategies are integrated in the program planning and implementation process, of which proposal review is one part. NSF's mission is particularly well-implemented through the integration of research and education and broadening participation in NSF programs, projects, and activities.

One of the core strategies in support of NSF's mission is to foster integration of research and education through the programs, projects and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions provide abundant opportunities where individuals may concurrently assume responsibilities as researchers, educators, and students, and where all can engage in joint efforts that infuse education with the excitement of discovery and enrich research through the variety of learning perspectives.

Another core strategy in support of NSF's mission is broadening opportunities and expanding participation of groups, institutions, and geographic regions that are underrepresented in STEM disciplines, which is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

A. Merit Review Principles and Criteria

The National Science Foundation strives to invest in a robust and diverse portfolio of projects that creates new knowledge and enables breakthroughs in understanding across all areas of science and engineering research and education. To identify which projects to support, NSF relies on a merit review process that incorporates consideration of both the technical aspects of a proposed project and its potential to contribute more broadly to advancing NSF's mission "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes." NSF makes every effort to conduct a fair, competitive, transparent merit review process for the selection of projects.

1. Merit Review Principles

These principles are to be given due diligence by PIs and organizations when preparing proposals and managing projects, by reviewers when reading and evaluating proposals, and by NSF program staff when determining whether or not to recommend proposals for funding and while overseeing awards. Given that NSF is the primary federal agency charged with nurturing and supporting excellence in basic research and education, the following three principles apply:

- All NSF projects should be of the highest quality and have the potential to advance, if not transform, the frontiers of knowledge.
- NSF projects, in the aggregate, should contribute more broadly to achieving societal goals. These "Broader Impacts" may be accomplished through the research itself, through activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. The project activities may be based on previously established and/or innovative methods and approaches, but in either case must be well justified.
- Meaningful assessment and evaluation of NSF funded projects should be based on appropriate metrics, keeping in mind the likely correlation between the effect of broader impacts and the resources provided to implement projects. If the size of the activity is limited, evaluation of that activity in isolation is not likely to be meaningful. Thus, assessing the effectiveness of these activities may best be done at a higher, more aggregated, level than the individual project.

With respect to the third principle, even if assessment of Broader Impacts outcomes for particular projects is done at an aggregated level, PIs are expected to be accountable for carrying out the activities described in the funded project. Thus, individual projects should include clearly stated goals, specific descriptions of the activities that the PI intends to do, and a plan in place to document the outputs of those activities.

These three merit review principles provide the basis for the merit review criteria, as well as a context within which the users of the criteria can better understand their intent.

2. Merit Review Criteria

All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two National Science Board approved merit review criteria. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

The two merit review criteria are listed below. **Both** criteria are to be given **full consideration** during the review and decision-making processes; each criterion is necessary but neither, by itself, is sufficient. Therefore, proposers must fully address both criteria. (GPG Chapter II.C.2.d.i. contains additional information for use by proposers in development of the Project Description section of the proposal.) Reviewers are strongly encouraged to review the criteria, including GPG Chapter II.C.2.d.i., prior to the review of a proposal.

When evaluating NSF proposals, reviewers will be asked to consider what the proposers want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful. These issues apply both to the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions. To that end, reviewers will be asked to evaluate all proposals against two criteria:

- **Intellectual Merit:** The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge; and
- **Broader Impacts:** The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

The following elements should be considered in the review for both criteria:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to
 - a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and
 - b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the United States; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education.

Proposers are reminded that reviewers will also be asked to review the Data Management Plan and the Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan, as appropriate.

Additional Solicitation Specific Review Criteria

- **Science Justification:** Does the proposed infrastructure respond to a well defined cyberinfrastructure need in the geosciences community? Does the proposal adequately demonstrate the advances in research and education that will result through the new infrastructure?
- **Design:** Is the design and structure of the proposed CI appropriate to achieve its stated goals? Will it be capable of achieving results at a level of scale, interoperability, and sustainability that transcend current capabilities? Will it effectively leverage previous and ongoing investments in the area?
- **Project Management:** Is the leadership, management, and organization appropriate for the scale of the activity? Does the proposal adequately describe the policies, criteria, and procedures for selection of the proposed technologies, software development practices, and strategies for managing the full software development cycle?
- **Assessment:** Does the project adequately identify metrics for success and a credible plan for measuring progress and impacts on the targeted geosciences community(ies)? Is the target audience well identified and engaged in the entire life cycle of the project?

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation will be reviewed by Ad hoc Review and/or Panel Review, or Internal NSF Review.

Standard NSF review criteria, along with the additional criteria listed in the solicitation, will be used to evaluate the proposals. The merit review will be carried out in accordance with NSF policy by ad-hoc mail review and/or a combination of ad-hoc mail and panel review. Panels, if deemed appropriate, will be held to assess the proposals submitted in a holistic manner. Proposals will be ranked based on competitiveness.

Reviewers will be asked to formulate a recommendation to either support or decline each proposal. The Program Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation.

After scientific, technical and programmatic review and consideration of appropriate factors, the NSF Program Officer recommends to the cognizant Division Director whether the proposal should be declined or recommended for award. NSF is striving to be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. The time interval begins on the deadline or target date, or receipt date, whichever is later. The interval ends when the Division Director accepts the Program Officer's recommendation.

A summary rating and accompanying narrative will be completed and submitted by each reviewer. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers, are sent to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Officer. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

In all cases, after programmatic approval has been obtained, the proposals recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Division of Grants and Agreements for review of business, financial, and policy implications and the processing and issuance of a grant or other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants and Agreements Officer may make commitments, obligations or awards on behalf of NSF or authorize the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of NSF should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with a NSF Program Officer. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or

personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants and Agreements Officer does so at their own risk.

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Notification of the Award

Notification of the award is made to *the submitting organization* by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Principal Investigator. (See Section VI.B. for additional information on the review process.)

B. Award Conditions

An NSF award consists of: (1) the award letter, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the proposal referenced in the award letter; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (GC-1); * or Research Terms and Conditions * and (5) any announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter. Cooperative agreements also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Financial and Administrative Terms and Conditions (CA-FATC) and the applicable Programmatic Terms and Conditions. NSF awards are electronically signed by an NSF Grants and Agreements Officer and transmitted electronically to the organization via e-mail.

*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Website at http://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award_conditions.jsp?org=NSF. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov.

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the *NSF Award & Administration Guide* (AAG) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=aag.

C. Reporting Requirements

For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the Principal Investigator must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer at least 90 days prior to the end of the current budget period. (Some programs or awards require submission of more frequent project reports). Within 90 days following expiration of a grant, the PI also is required to submit a final project report, and a project outcomes report for the general public.

Failure to provide the required annual or final project reports, or the project outcomes report, will delay NSF review and processing of any future funding increments as well as any pending proposals for all identified PIs and co-PIs on a given award. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

PIs are required to use NSF's electronic project-reporting system, available through Research.gov, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. Such reports provide information on accomplishments, project participants (individual and organizational), publications, and other specific products and impacts of the project. Submission of the report via Research.gov constitutes certification by the PI that the contents of the report are accurate and complete. The project outcomes report also must be prepared and submitted using Research.gov. This report serves as a brief summary, prepared specifically for the public, of the nature and outcomes of the project. This report will be posted on the NSF website exactly as it is submitted by the PI.

More comprehensive information on NSF Reporting Requirements and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the *NSF Award & Administration Guide* (AAG) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=aag.

Annual and final reports will be required to contain information on the metrics discussed in the proposal that are designed to assess project success in reaching and serving the targeted geoscience community(ies).

VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Please note that the program contact information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- Leonard Johnson, Division of Earth Sciences, telephone: (703) 292-8559, email: lejohnso@nsf.gov
- Eva Zanzierka, Division of Earth Sciences, telephone: (703) 292-8556, email: ezanzerk@nsf.gov
- David Lambert, Division of Earth Sciences, telephone: (703) 292-8558, email: dlambert@nsf.gov

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact:

- FastLane Help Desk, telephone: 1-800-673-6188; e-mail: fastlane@nsf.gov.

For questions relating to Grants.gov contact:

- Grants.gov Contact Center: If the Authorized Organizational Representatives (AOR) has not received a confirmation message from Grants.gov within 48 hours of submission of application, please contact via telephone: 1-800-518-4726; e-mail: support@grants.gov.

IX. OTHER INFORMATION

The NSF Website provides the most comprehensive source of information on NSF Directorates (including contact information), programs and funding opportunities. Use of this Website by potential proposers is strongly encouraged. In addition, National Science Foundation Update is a free e-mail subscription service designed to keep potential proposers and other interested parties apprised of new NSF funding opportunities and publications, important changes in proposal and award policies and procedures, and upcoming NSF Regional Grants Conferences. Subscribers are informed through e-mail when new publications are issued that match their identified interests. Users can subscribe to this service by clicking the "Get NSF Updates by Email" link on the [NSF web site](#).

Grants.gov provides an additional electronic capability to search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities. NSF funding opportunities may be accessed via this new mechanism. Further information on Grants.gov may be obtained at <http://www.grants.gov>.

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NSF receives approximately 55,000 proposals each year for research, education and training projects, of which approximately 11,000 are funded. In addition, the Foundation receives several thousand applications for graduate and postdoctoral fellowships. The agency operates no laboratories itself but does support National Research Centers, user facilities, certain oceanographic vessels and Arctic and Antarctic research stations. The Foundation also supports cooperative research between universities and industry, US participation in international scientific and engineering efforts, and educational activities at every academic level.

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities to work on NSF-supported projects. See Grant Proposal Guide Chapter II, Section D.2 for instructions regarding preparation of these types of proposals.

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The National Science Foundation Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111.

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To get the latest information about program deadlines, to download copies of NSF publications, and to access abstracts of awards, visit the NSF Website at <http://www.nsf.gov>


- **Location:** 4201 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22230
- **For General Information** (NSF Information Center): (703) 292-5111
- **TDD (for the hearing-impaired):** (703) 292-5090
- **To Order Publications or Forms:**
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 - or telephone: (703) 292-7827
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PRIVACY ACT AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENTS

The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; and project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the proposal review process; to proposer institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies or other entities needing information regarding applicants or nominees as part of a joint application review process, or in order to coordinate programs or policy; and to another Federal agency, court, or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See Systems of Records, [NSF-50](#), "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004), and [NSF-51](#), "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0058. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate and any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to:

Suzanne H. Plimpton
Reports Clearance Officer
Division of Administrative Services
National Science Foundation
Arlington, VA 22230

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