



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
4201 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230

NSF 16-144

Dear Colleague Letter: Intent to Release a Solicitation Regarding Future Continued Operations of the Arecibo Observatory

September 30, 2016

Dear Colleague,

The National Science Foundation (NSF) intends to issue a Solicitation regarding future continued operations of Arecibo Observatory. The future Solicitation will be a follow-up to an earlier request for input ([Dear Colleague Letter: Concepts for Future Operation of the Arecibo Observatory; NSF 16-005](#)). The subject Solicitation will request the submission of formal proposals involving the continued operation of Arecibo Observatory under conditions of a substantially reduced funding commitment from NSF. NSF is currently in the process of preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and has initiated a consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) to evaluate potential effects of proposed changes to operations at Arecibo Observatory. The subject Solicitation will run concurrently with preparation of the EIS and NHPA consultation with the intent of informing the decision process for the future operations of Arecibo Observatory. The purpose of this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) is to alert the community of the release of the Solicitation during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2017.

Arecibo Observatory is a scientific research and education facility located in Puerto Rico, owned by the National Science Foundation. In 2011, NSF awarded a five-year Cooperative Agreement to SRI International (SRI), who, together with Universities Space Research Association (USRA) and Universidad Metropolitana (UMET), formed the Arecibo Management Team to operate and maintain the Arecibo Observatory on behalf of NSF. This Cooperative Agreement has now been extended through March 31, 2018, and the planned Solicitation will request proposals for operations beginning after that date.

Arecibo Observatory enables research in three scientific disciplines: Space and Atmospheric Sciences, Radio Astronomy, and Solar System Radar Studies. A key component of Arecibo Observatory's research facility is a 305-meter diameter, fixed, spherical reflector, located on approximately 120 acres of U.S. Government-owned land in Barrio Esperanza, Arecibo, Puerto Rico, 10 miles inland from the city of Arecibo. Arecibo Observatory's infrastructure includes instrumentation for radio and radar astronomy, ionospheric physics, office and laboratory buildings, a heavily utilized visitor and education facility, and lodging facilities for visiting scientists. More information is available at <http://www.naic.edu>.

Sincerely,

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