

Ocean Acidification (OA)

PROGRAM SOLICITATION

NSF 13-586

REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):

NSF 12-600



National Science Foundation

Directorate for Geosciences
Division of Ocean Sciences
Division of Polar Programs

Directorate for Biological Sciences
Division of Environmental Biology
Division of Integrative Organismal Systems

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

December 03, 2013

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.

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](#).

The Ocean Acidification program is in its fifth and anticipated last year of competition. We expect this to be the last solicitation specifically targeting Ocean Acidification.

This Ocean Acidification solicitation has no maximum budget restrictions for submitted proposals.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

General Information

Program Title:

Ocean Acidification (OA)

Synopsis of Program:

The new National Ocean Policy calls for actions to improve understanding of and capacity to respond to ocean acidification, recognizing the potential adverse impacts of an acidifying sea upon marine ecosystems. The effects of ocean acidification could significantly affect strategies for developing practices towards the sustainability of ocean resources. Basic research concerning the nature, extent and impact of ocean acidification on oceanic environments in the past, present and future is required. Research challenges include:

- Understanding the geochemistry and biogeochemistry of ocean acidification;
- Understanding how ocean acidification interacts with biological, chemical and physical processes at the organismal level, and how such interactions impact the structure and function of ecosystems, e.g. through life histories, adaptive evolution, food webs, biogeochemical cycling, and interactions with other changes in the ocean (e.g., temperature, stratification, circulation patterns); and
- Understanding how the earth system history informs our understanding of the effects of ocean acidification on the present day and future ocean.

The Ocean Acidification program is in its fifth and anticipated last year of competition. We expect this to be the last solicitation specifically targeting Ocean Acidification.

This document has been archived.

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.

- David L. Garrison, Program Director, Biological Oceanography, telephone: (703) 292-7588, email: dgarriso@nsf.gov
- Candace O. Major, Program Director, Marine Geology & Geophysics, telephone: (703) 292-7597, email: cmajor@nsf.gov
- Donald Rice, Program Director, Chemical Oceanography, telephone: (703) 292-7708, email: drice@nsf.gov
- Irwin Forseth, Program Director, Organism-Environment Interactions, telephone: (703) 292-7862, email: iforseth@nsf.gov
- Lori Stevens, Program Director, Evolutionary Processes, telephone: (703) 292-2994, email: losteven@nsf.gov
- Charles Amsler, Program Manager, Antarctic Organisms and Ecosystems, telephone: (703) 292-2461, email: camsler@nsf.gov
- Henrietta Edmonds, Program Director, Arctic Natural Sciences, telephone: (703) 292-8029, email: hedmonds@nsf.gov
- Anna Manyak, Science Assistant, Chemical Oceanography, telephone: (703) 292-8474, email: amanyak@nsf.gov

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

- 47.050 --- Geosciences
- 47.074 --- Biological Sciences

Award Information

Anticipated Type of Award: Standard Grant

Estimated Number of Awards: 10 to 15 pending availability of funds.

Anticipated Funding Amount: \$11,250,000

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: 1

An individual may appear as Principal Investigator (P.I.), co-P.I., other senior personnel or investigator on only one proposal that responds to this program solicitation. This limitation includes proposals submitted by a lead organization, any sub-award submitted as part of a proposal, or any collaborative proposal. Proposals that do not meet this requirement will be returned without review.

These restrictions apply only to this solicitation and are not meant to inhibit submissions of proposals by investigators to other NSF activities or programs.

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):
December 03, 2013

Proposal Review Information Criteria

Merit Review Criteria: National Science Board approved criteria apply.

Award Administration Information

Award Conditions: Standard NSF award conditions apply.

Reporting Requirements: Standard NSF reporting requirements apply.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ocean acidification research requires the development of interdisciplinary partnerships and capacity building within the scientific community. Investigators are encouraged to submit proposals that create new partnerships across traditional disciplines (including molecular and cellular biology, physiology, marine chemistry and physical oceanography, ecological sciences, paleoecology, and earth system history) and use diverse approaches (observational systems, experimental studies, theory and modeling) to examine cutting edge research questions related to ocean acidification.

A number of scientific workshops* have been held in the U.S. and abroad to evaluate what is currently known about ocean acidification, to consider its potential impacts on ocean ecosystems and the earth system, and to chart a research course for the future to address the myriad of unknowns. The workshop discussions and reports were used in developing and updating this solicitation. There is broad consensus that there is an urgent need for (1) ocean surveys, monitoring and time-series studies to establish the present day picture and future course of ocean acidification, and its ecological and environmental consequences and (2) basic research to discover and understand how the chemistry and physics of the ocean interplay with changes in acidity, how marine biota and communities function in an acidifying ocean, how historical excursions of seawater acidity have played out in the geologic past, and what all this might reveal for the future.

*Scientific workshops include:

- [The Ocean Carbon Biogeochemistry Workshop Report: Present and Future Impacts of Ocean Acidification on Marine Ecosystems and Biogeochemical Cycles](#) (October 2007)
- [Oceans in a High CO2 world: Research Priorities for Ocean Acidification, Report from the Second Symposium](#) (October 2008)
- [Ocean Acidification - Recommended Strategy for a U.S. National Research Program](#) (March 2009)
- [The National Academy of Sciences Ocean Acidification Study](#) (2010)
- [US Ocean Carbon and Biogeochemistry Project Office Workshop](#) (March 2011).

- [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) Workshop on Impacts of Ocean Acidification on Marine Biology and Ecosystems \(IPCC 2011\)](#).

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The OA program supports research focused on the chemistry of ocean acidification and its interplay with fundamental biogeochemical and physiological processes of organisms; the implications of these effects for ecosystem structure and function; and how the earth system history informs our understanding of the effects of ocean acidification on the present day and future ocean. The program also seeks to fund projects that investigate factors that make groups of organisms likely to evolve adaptations or perish, while identifying unifying principles moving from a single species focus to understanding how ocean acidification affects entire ecosystems. Ocean acidification effects will be variable in space and time, with some environments (e.g. high latitude seas, coral reefs) and organisms (e.g. calcifiers) arguably at greater risk. Accordingly, research projects are encouraged that identify vulnerable organisms or ecosystems, as indicated by current trends or the earth's geologic record. Synthesis and modeling projects, that might inform earth system models at regional, decadal, or larger spatial and temporal scales, also are appropriate for consideration. This solicitation is part of the National Science Foundation's cross-directorate research and education activities related to the broad theme [Science, Engineering and Education for Sustainability \(SEES\)](#).

Target Research Areas:

Proposals must clearly demonstrate links between the research outcome and the emphasis areas described within this solicitation. Proposals are encouraged that develop and integrate interdisciplinary perspectives (including molecular and cellular biology, physiology, marine chemistry and physical oceanography, ecological sciences, paleoecology, and earth system history) and use diverse approaches (observational systems, experimental studies, theory and modeling) to investigate one or more of the following basic research areas:

- *Ocean acidification interconnected to oceanic biology, chemistry, physics, and geology.* For example, how will ocean acidification affect processes such as chemical speciation, equilibria, reaction rates, mineral authigenesis and dissolution, or particle dynamics? What are the impacts on the physical chemistry of seawater? How will regional differences in marine chemistry and physics affect acidification, and what are the downstream implications for organisms and ecosystems? How do organisms adapt across a temperature and/or acidity gradient? Can we identify new proxies for ocean acidification that can be used to interpret the geologic record?
- *Predicting the consequences of ocean acidification on ecosystem health and function.* To what extent will ocean acidification affect cell and organisms' performance? What are the capabilities of marine organisms to acclimatize to near-term effects of ocean acidification? Do populations of marine species have the evolutionary genetic capacity to adapt to these environmental changes in the long-term? What unifying factors underlie the ability to adapt? Are there significant feedbacks to the ocean's geochemical environment? What are the combined effects of ocean acidification with changes in temperature, stratification and circulation patterns on ecosystem structure and function? Areas of interest include, but are not limited to, mechanisms of biomineralization and photosynthesis, electrochemical gradients, cell signaling, developmental events, neural and behavioral functions, and properties of extracellular surfaces and substrates. For example: To what extent do impacts on organismal performance lead to critical alterations in abundance, distribution, reproductive output, and evolutionary dynamics? Which organisms will adapt and which will go extinct, and how will this affect ecosystems? Are there complex interactions, cascades, or bottlenecks that will emerge as the oceans acidify, warm and stratify, and what are their downstream ecosystem implications? Investigators are invited to propose single system studies, or comparative analyses, to examine the broader ecological implications of ocean acidification.
- *Interpreting the geologic record to reveal the history of climate change and the assemblages of organisms that have risen, persisted, or declined, as the earth system has evolved.* To what extent can the geologic record inform our understanding of the response of modern biotic assemblages to ocean acidification? What can the geologic record tell us about the adaptive responses of organisms at timescales longer than can be simulated in laboratory experiments or even longer term environmental monitoring? Are there robust geochemical and biological signatures in the geologic record that can identify historical excursions of pH and alkalinity, and separate those from other paleoenvironmental variables? Conversely, can our understanding of extant organisms and ecosystems, and their responses to the changing marine environment, be used to expand our understanding of paleoenvironments and paleoecology? Proposals that address these questions are encouraged, as are parallel studies comparing the paleo-ocean and modern environments.

Now in its fifth year, the Ocean Acidification program is particularly interested in supporting projects that involve synthesis, either within or across disciplines. We expect this to be the last solicitation specifically targeting Ocean Acidification.

Submission Guidance

Proposals addressing the topic of ocean acidification must be submitted to this solicitation. Ocean acidification proposals submitted directly to participating programs may be redirected to this solicitation if they are compliant.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Anticipated Type of Award: Standard Grant

Estimated Number of Awards: 10 to 15 pending availability of funds.

Anticipated Funding Amount: \$11,250,000

Proposals may be of any size and duration as appropriate for the proposed project.

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:1

An individual may appear as Principal Investigator (P.I.), co-P.I., other senior personnel or investigator on only one proposal that responds to this program solicitation. This limitation includes proposals submitted by a lead organization, any sub-award submitted as part of a proposal, or any collaborative proposal. Proposals that do not meet this requirement will be returned without review.

These restrictions apply only to this solicitation and are not meant to inhibit submissions of proposals by investigators to other NSF activities or programs.

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 full 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.

Proposal Cover Sheet

When preparing the cover page in FastLane, highlight the program solicitation number for Ocean Acidification on the pull down list and click on the "Select" button. Your proposal will automatically be assigned to the correct managing division on the Cover Sheet. (Grants.gov users: The program solicitation number will be pre-populated by Grants.gov on the NSF Grant Application Cover Page.)

The proposal title should begin with "Ocean Acidification:".

Observational Networks, Long Term Sites, and Research Centers

Where appropriate, investigators are encouraged to work in association with existing projects, observational networks, long-term ecological research (LTER) sites or research centers, or testing and evaluation facilities, whether supported by NSF or other agencies, such as USEPA, USGS, USDA or NOAA. Collaborations with international researchers are also encouraged; however, international partners are expected to seek support from their respective funding organizations.

Principal Investigators are advised to obtain letters of commitment that affirm such collaborative activities. The project description should make clear how the proposed work differs from and augments activities already supported.

Inclusion of Data Management Plan Required. Data Management Plans must describe how metadata and data collected as part of the project will be disseminated to the broader community, as well as plans for longer term archiving of these data. Principal Investigators that propose to collaborate with data centers or networks are advised to obtain letters of commitment that affirm the collaboration. Where possible, all PIs are strongly encouraged to use existing data centers and data portals to archive and disseminate their data. All data collected by projects funded through this solicitation must be freely and openly available to any interested investigator as soon as practical, but no later than 12 months following collection. See the [NSF Grant Proposal Guide](#) for page limitations and additional guidance.

Budget Preparation Instructions: Research Platforms and Facilities Requests

Budgets should be prepared in compliance with guidelines in the [GPG](#) or [NSF Grants.gov Application Guide](#). Budgets should include all costs charged to the project for platforms and facilities supporting the proposed research except those facilities separately supported by NSF (e.g. UNOLS research vessels, research aircraft, or field equipment). For research involving UNOLS vessels, a UNOLS ship request should be appended to proposals. Likewise, research involving polar regions should follow established guidelines for requesting logistical support, as discussed in the relevant proposal solicitations (for Antarctic Sciences, see [NSF 13-527](#); for Arctic Sciences, see [NSF 10-597](#)). Principal investigators are responsible for filing the appropriate requests for major research platforms; a copy of the request must be attached as supplementary document to the proposal.

Investigators should anticipate and budget for funds to attend an annual PI meeting for ocean acidification researchers. Inclusion of junior scientists and postdoctoral researchers in these meetings is encouraged. The venue for these meeting is likely to shift from the west coast to the east coast on alternate years.

Conflicts of Interest Table Required

Proposals must include, in the single copy documents section, a table containing a single alphabetized list of the full names (lastname, firstname) and institutional affiliations of all people with conflicts of interest for all senior personnel (PI and co-PIs) and any named personnel whose salary is requested in the project budget. Conflicts to be identified are (1) Ph.D. thesis advisors or advisees, (2) collaborators or co-authors, including postdoctoral researchers, for the past 48 months, and (3) any other individuals with whom, or institutions with which, the senior personnel (PI, co-PIs, and any named personnel) have financial ties, including advisory committees (please specify type). For each entry on the list, please specify the type of conflict.

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):
December 03, 2013

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://nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/.

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.

B. Review and Selection Process

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

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.

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:

- David L. Garrison, Program Director, Biological Oceanography, telephone: (703) 292-7588, email: dgarriso@nsf.gov
- Candace O. Major, Program Director, Marine Geology & Geophysics, telephone: (703) 292-7597, email: cmajor@nsf.gov
- Donald Rice, Program Director, Chemical Oceanography, telephone: (703) 292-7708, email: drice@nsf.gov
- Irwin Forseth, Program Director, Organism-Environment Interactions, telephone: (703) 292-7862, email: iforseth@nsf.gov
- Lori Stevens, Program Director, Evolutionary Processes, telephone: (703) 292-2994, email: losteven@nsf.gov
- Charles Amsler, Program Manager, Antarctic Organisms and Ecosystems, telephone: (703) 292-2461, email: camsler@nsf.gov
- Henrietta Edmonds, Program Director, Arctic Natural Sciences, telephone: (703) 292-8029, email: hedmonds@nsf.gov
- Anna Manyak, Science Assistant, Chemical Oceanography, telephone: (703) 292-8474, email: amanyak@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, "My NSF" is an information-delivery system 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 [Grants Conferences](#). Subscribers are informed through e-mail or the user's Web browser each time new publications are issued that match their identified interests. "My NSF" also is available on NSF's website at <http://www.nsf.gov/mynsf/>.

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>.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent Federal agency created by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 USC 1861-75). The Act states the purpose of the NSF is "to promote the progress of science; [and] to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering."

NSF funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. It does this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 2,000 colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, businesses, informal science organizations and other research organizations throughout the US. The Foundation accounts for about one-fourth of Federal support to academic institutions for basic research.

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.

The National Science Foundation has Telephonic Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing impairments to communicate with the Foundation about NSF programs, employment or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-5090 and (800) 281-8749, FIRS at (800) 877-8339.

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

The National Science Foundation promotes and advances scientific progress in the United States by competitively awarding grants and cooperative agreements for research and education in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

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:
 - Send an e-mail to: nspubs@nsf.gov
 - or telephone: (703) 292-7827
- To Locate NSF Employees: (703) 292-5111

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
Office of the General Counsel
National Science Foundation
Arlington, VA 22230

