



**NATIONAL AERONAUTICS
AND
SPACE ADMINISTRATION**

***GUIDEBOOK FOR PROPOSERS
RESPONDING TO A
NASA RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENT (NRA)***

Edition: July 2005*

**Including changes summarized on the enclosed "Changes from the 2004 Version of the Guidebook" Sheet*

Changes from 2004 Version of the Guidebook

The January 2004 edition of the Guidebook has been subsequently updated through incorporation of significant and administrative changes as listed below.

1. This July 2005 Guidebook incorporates the following *significant* changes:

a. Throughout the document “Program Office” is replaced by “Mission Directorate.”

b. Page vii, the web site for NASA’s Vision and Mission statements is added. “Space Flight” is deleted and replaced by “Exploration Systems” and “Former Office of Space Flight” is inserted.

c. Page viii, last paragraph as been rewritten to include references to finding research opportunities through FedGrants and Grants.Gov.

d. Section 1.1, General Background, is modified as follows: 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence “from that sponsored by other Federal Agencies” is added. 3rd paragraph, last sentence, Clarified the order of precedence for conflicts between this guidebook and other documents. Law, regulations and legal instruments will always take precedence over this guidebook. 4th paragraph, 1st sentence, “interagency agreements” and “the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL)” are deleted.

e. Section 1.2.1, Writing, Announcing, and Releasing an NRA, is changed as follows: for clarification the word “Proposal” is deleted and replaced with “Application.” 2nd paragraph, 3rd sentence, the word “precludes” is replaced by “excludes.” 2nd paragraph, 4th sentence “for each office” is deleted and “<http://research.hq.nasa.gov>” is deleted and replaced by “<http://nspires.nasaprs.com/>” 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence, <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/> is added and “by opening “research Opportunities”.....found through the menu” is deleted.

f. Section 1.2.2, Proposal Content and Submission, 2nd paragraph, 4th bullet, “his/her” is deleted and replaced by “their.”

g. Section 1.2.3, Proposal Review and Selection, 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence the word “evaluate” is deleted and replaced by “consider” and the word “against” is deleted and replaced by “in the context. 4th paragraph, 3rd sentence, “; and that” is deleted and replaced by “. Furthermore.”

h. Section 1.3.2 Evaluation for Acceptance for Review, last paragraph, after the last sentence, references are added..

i. Section 1.4.2 Proposal Personnel, 1st bullet entitled, “Principal Investigator (PI),” 1st sentence the word “must” is deleted and replaced by “shall”. And in the 2nd paragraph, last sentence, “Such personnel are to be designated” is deleted and replaced by “Such personnel must be designated.”

j. Section 1.6, Proposals Involving Non-U.S. Organizations (Ref.: Appendix B, Section (I), the title is changed to read “Other Guidelines.” The paragraph has been divided into 1.6.1 and 1.6.2 and rewritten in its entirety.

k. Section 2.1 Overview, is changed as follows: 2nd paragraph, 1st sentence, delete “Starting” and replace by “Since” and delete “will begin using” and replaced by “has started to use.” In the last sentence replace “an” by “a.” After 2nd paragraph, a new paragraph is added to provide information regarding Export Control. In the 4th Paragraph, after the 4th sentence the following is added: “Affiliation is a two-way relationship that requires the approval of the targeted organization. Organizations may take some time to respond to requests for affiliations.” After the 5th sentence, a new sentence is added “This may introduce extra time into the proposal preparation and submission cycle.” In the 6th sentence “you will find a variety of” is deleted and replaced by “may be used.” In the 7th sentence the word “fiscal” is deleted and replaced with Calendar.”

l. Section 2.2, Standard Proposal Style Formats, 1st paragraph, a first new sentence is added: “NSPIRES provides for printing of a hardcopy proposal when mandated by the solicitation that will typically satisfy many of NASA’s formatting requirements.” Last bullet, 1st sentence, “unless otherwise specified in the NRA or preformatted in NSPIRES” is deleted and replaced by “unless otherwise specified in the NRA or preformatted in NSPIRES.”

m. Section 2.3.1, Overview of Proposal, under “Constituent Parts of a Proposal,” 3rd bullet, under page limit, “3” is deleted and replaced by “2.”. And after last bullet, Reprint(s)/Preprints, the word “(optional)” is deleted and replaced by “Not allowed.” In the last sentence marked by “*” after “where” is changed to read “each “n-page” fold-out counts as n-pages and each side of a sheet containing text or an illustration counts as a page.”

n. Section 2.3.2, Proposal Cover Page and Budget Summary, this section has been rewritten to incorporate various NSPIRES instructions and to make formatting changes.

o. Section 2.3.3, adds the last sentence, “NSPIRES may provide some assistance in preparing your Table of Contents but you are responsible for its accuracy.”

p. Section 2.3.4, “intended” is replaced by “planned, and a clarification is provided for the use of 1840 hours as a basis for determining work commitments.”

q. Section 2.3.5, first sentence, “default” is deleted from “. .. default limit is 15 pages”; “formats” is replaced by “values.”

r. Section 2.3.8, Curriculum Vitae., 1st sentence, delete “three pages” and replace by “two pages.” Same change in the last sentence.

s. Section 2.3.10, Statement(s) of Commitment, one paragraph is added to cover the NSPIRES system electronic statement of commitment capability.

t. Section 2.3.11(a)(7), Carryover funds will no longer be included as part of the budget proposal. NASA reserves the right to use unexpended funds from prior grant awards, but the availability of such funds will not be an element of proposal submission.

u. Section 2.3.11(b) (iv), this paragraph is rewritten and the NASA full cost website is incorporated. ,

v. Section 2.3.12, Special Notifications and/or Certifications is divided into two paragraphs. (a) Special Notifications and/or Certifications and (b) Personnel from Non-U.S. Organizations.

w. Section 2.3.13, Reprint(s)/Preprints(s) is rewritten in its entirety.

x. Section 3.1, Notice of Intent (NOI) to Propose, the web address is corrected as well as wording and web site procedures to reflect the new NSPIRES system

y. Section 3.3, Submission of Proposals, the web address is corrected and NSPIRES information is added.

z. Section 3.4, Timeline for Review and Selection, for clarification only, second sentence “200 days from the Proposal Due Date” is changed to “200 days after the Proposal Due Date.”

aa. Section 3.5, Proposal Withdrawal by Proposer or Return by NASA, third bullet, “Fail to be submitted” is changed to “Fail to be delivered.”

bb. Appendix C, Section C.1 Overview, 4th bullet, “budgetary aspects” is deleted and replaced by “cost reasonableness” and at the end of last sentence, the phrase “nor folded into the overall evaluation determination.” is deleted. In the 6th bullet, the second sentence is added to notify proposer that they may request a debriefing from NASA identifying strengths and weaknesses. A new 7th bullet is added to address Members of Congress notifications.

cc. Section C.3, Evaluation Processes, 1st paragraph, a 3rd sentence is added to allow NASA to evaluate proposals using only mail reviews. The last sentence allows the NASA Program Officer to review, and if appropriate the chairperson of the panel. The Basis for Summary Evaluation, and Relationship of Summary Evaluation to Potential for Selection descriptions are revised. 3rd paragraph, “would effectively prevent in part or wholly the proposed objectives from being accomplished, or that otherwise” is deleted. 4th paragraph, last sentence, “between” is deleted and replaced by “among.”

dd. Section C.5.3, Disclosure of Selections and Nonselections, adds third sentence to allow the proposer the opportunity prior to public disclosure to modify the Proposal summary when the proposal is partially selected by NASA.

ee. Section E.2, Sample Nondisclosure and Conflict of Interest Agreement, first sentence, change “prime” reviewer to “mail-in” reviewer.

ff. Section E.3, Sample Proposal Evaluation form, Summary Evaluation For Intrinsic Merit., the note is reworded to “This Summary may be as long as required but it

must reflect the documented Strengths and Weaknesses” for clarification. Paragraph 3, Cost Realism and Resonableness, delete “available funds” and replace by “proposed personnel and purchases/travel/direct costs.” In the paragraph entitled “Summary Evaluation of Proposal,” 1st bullet, the text, “may be as long” as required is added and “it must” clearly identify is added. 2nd bullet, Note: the word “Only” is added to, “Only one rating box is to be checked . . .” in order to prevent more than one box being checked. 1st sub-bullet under Guidelines for Determination of Overall Evaluation, 1st sentence is changed to read: “. A competent proposal that demonstrates a credible response to the solicitation but strengths and weaknesses essentially balance each other is properly designated as “Good.” In last sub-bullet add “a” before well-defined.

gg. Section F.7, “SYS-EYFUS “ is deleted and replaced by “NASA’s current electronic proposal” system.

2. In July 2005, the following administrative changes were made:

- a. Throughout the document format changes have been made.
- b. Throughout the document “January 2004” is changed to read “July 2005”.
- c. Page ix , second sentence the word “Alternatively” is deleted.
- d. Section 1.7, Guidelines for Proposal Preparation, fourth bullet, “a submission” is changed to “an article to be submitted.”
- e. Section 2.1, Overview, 2nd paragraph, 5th sentence, “for securing” is changed to “in order to secure.”
- f. Section 2.3.2, Proposal Cover Page and Budget Summary, 3rd paragraph, beginning of second sentence, “Note that” is deleted.
- g. Section D.4 Funding Continuation (“Renewals”) of Multiple Year Awards, the last paragraph is revised in its entirety.
- g. Section E.1.1, Certification of compliance on Proposal Cover Page, last sentence, underlines “they should not be submitted with the proposal.”
- h. Section F.21, Who may be listed as participating personnel on a proposal? second sentence is reworded for clarity.

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PREFACE

INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDEBOOK

This Guidebook describes the policies and procedures of the Broad Agency Announcement known as the NASA Research Announcement (NRA) used by the program offices at the Headquarters of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) that solicit proposals for basic science and technology research. All proposers who plan to respond to an NRA released by NASA Headquarters should adhere to the guidelines contained in the main Chapters 1, 2, and 3, and Appendices unless otherwise noted in the NRA itself.

In general, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of this Guidebook supplement the material given in its Appendix B, entitled "*Instructions For Responding To NASA Research Announcements*," which reproduces NASA Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Supplement (NFS) 1852.235-72 (see Appendix A for access information). Its Appendices C and D describe how NRA proposals are reviewed, selected, and administered, and are included for completeness of information for proposers. Appendix E contains a variety of certifications and forms that relate to proposals and their evaluations, while Appendix F contains frequently asked questions and answers concerning the NRA proposal and administrative processes.

The most recent edition of this Guidebook can always be accessed on the World Wide Web (WWW) at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/procurement/nraguidebook/>. Each NRA will indicate the applicable edition.

This Guidebook may be reproduced in part or in total without restriction.

INTRODUCTION TO NASA'S SPONSORED RESEARCH PROGRAMS

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is an independent Federal Agency of the United States (U.S.) created by the *National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958*. The NASA Vision and Mission statements are given in the NASA Strategic Plan at the Web site:

http://nodis3.gsfc.nasa.gov/library/displayDir.cfm?Internal_ID=N_PD_1000_001C_&page_name=main:

- NASA Vision:
- To improve life here;
 - To extend life to there;
 - To find life beyond.
- NASA Mission:
- To understand and protect our home planet,
 - To explore the Universe and search for life,
 - To inspire the next generation of explorers,
...as only NASA can.

As of August, 2004, NASA has streamlined the agency's structure in order to implement the Vision for Space Exploration. This transformation fundamentally restructures the former Strategic Enterprises into Mission Directorates to better align with the Vision. Below are the directorates listed with their former names:

- Science Mission Directorate
 - Former Office of Earth Science
 - Former Office of Space Science

- Exploration Systems Mission Directorate,
 - Former Office of Biological and Physical Research
 - Former Office of Exploration Systems

- Office of the Chief Education Officer
 - Former Office of Education
 - Former Office of Equal Opportunity Programs, Minority University Research and Education Division
 - Former Office of Human Resources, Education Division

- Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate
 - Former Office of Aerospace Technology

- Space Operations Mission Directorate
 - Former Office of Space Flight.

These Directorates pursue NASA's goals using a wide variety of ground-, aeronautical-, and space-based programs and any of these may issue NRAs that will incorporate this Guidebook by formal reference. Examples of such programs are NASA's manned and unmanned space missions to explore and study the planet Earth, the Solar System, and the universe; NASA's life, microgravity, and applications research using the Earth-orbiting Shuttle and International Space Station; and NASA's ground- and space-based programs and facilities to develop advanced aeronautics and space systems. Awards for research through these various programs fund thousands of scientists, engineers, and educators each year at U.S. nonprofit and commercial organizations, as well as Federal research organizations including NASA's own Centers and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. In addition, NASA solicits proposals to foster aggressive programs aimed at education and public outreach, as well as to ensure maximum participation in NASA programs by minority organizations, small businesses, and small disadvantaged businesses. Further material about all of NASA's many interests and programs may be found through links starting at the NASA homepage at <http://www.nasa.gov/>.

STATEMENTS OF GENERAL POLICY

NASA's Partnership with the Research and Education Communities. Funding for NASA-related research and development projects is a privilege accorded to qualified science, engineering, and educational personnel by NASA acting on behalf of the citizens of the United States through Congressional action. NASA's proposal and selection procedures work only because the various research communities and NASA Program Offices

together maintain the highest level of integrity at all stages of the processes. As a general rule, recipients of NASA research awards largely manage their own research projects with minimal oversight by the Agency. Throughout the entire process—starting with the identification of program objectives, the preparation and peer review of submitted proposals, the conduct of the research itself, and, finally, the exposition of new knowledge through publications, public outreach, and education—NASA sees itself as a partner with the scientific, engineering, and educational communities in making its programs relevant and productive.

Inclusive Solicitation of Proposals. NASA welcomes proposals in response to its research solicitations from all qualified sources, and especially encourages proposals from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Other Minority Universities (OMUs), small disadvantaged businesses (SDBs), and women-owned small businesses (WOSB's). In accordance with Federal statutes and NASA policy, no eligible applicant shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving financial assistance from NASA on the grounds of their race, color, creed, age, sex, national origin, or disability.

NASA WORLD WIDE WEB (WWW) HOME PAGES

Links to all material posted on the World Wide Web concerning NASA and its programs may be found through the NASA homepage at <http://www.nasa.gov/>. (Note: all of the NASA postings on the Internet may be searched through the NASA search engine found at <http://www.nasa.gov/search>).

NOTIFICATION OF RELEASE OF NASA RESEARCH SOLICITATIONS

Links to all open and recently closed NASA Research Announcements (NRAs) released by NASA Headquarters may be accessed through the Web address <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/>. Alternatively, the NASA Acquisition Internet Service (NAIS) provides an inclusive, searchable database for all solicitations of every type released by the Agency by opening "Business Opportunities" from the menu at <http://procurement.nasa.gov/>. This listing will also include any NRAs that may be released by any of NASA's Field Centers. Researchers may also find research grant opportunities offered by NASA and other federal agencies on the FedGrants website, <http://www.fedgrants.gov/>, or through the Grants.Gov web site at <http://www.grants.gov/>.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE NASA RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENT (NRA)

1.1 General Background

In fulfillment of the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, as amended (accessible on the World Wide Web at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/ogc/spaceact.html>), NASA endeavors to sponsor the highest quality research and development of the newest technologies related to the space and aeronautical sciences. Therefore, NASA solicits proposals by issuing Broad Agency Announcements of several different types for the particular targeted objectives sought by each program. This Guidebook specifically discusses the policies and procedures of the Broad Agency Announcement known as the NASA Research Announcement (NRA).

A key feature that distinguishes the research sponsored by NASA from that sponsored by other Federal Agencies is that it must be relevant to NASA's programs in addition to its being of the highest intrinsic science and technical merits and affordable and realistic in cost. Therefore, proposals that respond to a specific NRA are called "solicited proposals", of which NASA receives and processes several thousand each year as submitted in response to many different research solicitations. Responsible and timely handling of these proposals is crucial for the integrity and efficiency of the review and funding processes. The standards set forth in this Guidebook not only facilitate these processes but also promote the highest level of professionalism by NASA for handling and reviewing of proposals. Therefore, potential proposers are urged to read this Guidebook carefully and to adhere to the requirements specific to each NRA of interest in order to submit a valid, responsive proposal.

In general, this Guidebook supplements the material given in its Appendix B, entitled "*Instructions for Responding to NASA Research Announcements*," which reproduces NASA Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Supplement (NFS) 1852.235-72 (see Appendix A for the World Wide Web access to the NFS). Where appropriate in this Guidebook, especially in Chapter 2 below, the cross reference to Appendix B is provided in brackets (for example, "[Ref.: Appendix B, Part (a)]"). In case of any conflict, the order of precedence to be followed is first, provisions of law, second the NFS, third, the specific requirements noted in the NRA itself, and lastly the direction provided in this Guidebook.

The funding mechanisms used by NASA for research selected through an NRA are grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and NASA's own internal processes for funding activities at its Centers and JPL. For conciseness, the term "award" will be used hereafter in this Guidebook to mean any of these funding mechanisms, and, similarly, "Award Officer" will mean either a NASA Grant Officer or a NASA Contracting Officer. In all cases, only the Award Officer has binding authority to obligate Government funds allocated to a recipient. See Appendix D for more details about both the definition and administration of research awards.

1.2 Overview Description of the Processes

1.2.1 Writing, Announcing, and Releasing an NRA

Regardless of their objectives, NRAs released by NASA that specifically incorporate this Guidebook by reference will be patterned on a standard format that, at a minimum, includes:

- Overview Information
- Executive Summary
- Funding Opportunity Description
- Award Information
- Eligibility Information
- Application and Submission Information
- Application Review Information
- Award Administration Information
- NASA Contacts
- Other Information

Pursuant to Federal statute, all NRAs must be synopsisized in the Federal Business Opportunities (FBO) at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov> at least 15 calendar days prior to their release. If the NRA anticipates the award of both contracts and grants or cooperative agreements, the NRA must be synopsisized to both the FBO and Grants.gov, located at <http://www.Fedgrants.gov>, at least 15 calendar days prior to their release. If an NRA expressly excludes the award of a contract as a funding instrument, the NRA must be synopsisized to [Grants.Gov](http://www.Grants.gov) no later than three days after the release of the NRA (posting in the FBO is not legally required). As a service to the interested members of the science, technical, and educational research communities, some NASA Headquarters program offices also provide direct notification of the intended release of their program announcements through Internet-based or postal mail services that may be subscribed to by following the instructions found at the research opportunities Website (see complete listing at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/>). However, note that NASA is not responsible for inadvertently failing to provide E-mail or postal notification of a future NRA. Finally, NRAs may also be accessed through the menu listing "Business Opportunities" of NASA's Acquisition Internet Service (NAIS) at <http://prod.nais.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/nais/index.cgi>. In all cases, a notice in any of these venues will always contain at least the following fundamental information:

- Title of program for which proposals are solicited;
- Unique NRA alpha-numeric identifier;
- Date of release of NRA and World Wide Web address for access;
- Due dates for Notices of Intent to propose (optional) and for proposals;
- Executive summary of announcement objectives;
- A statement of the inclusiveness of eligibility applicants; and
- Name and address of the cognizant NASA Program Officer for further information.

Each NRA may also be found on its date of release at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/>. Generally, advance notices of future NRAs are found at the same location with a best estimate of its release date, though such advance postings are not guaranteed. Notification of NRAs may also appear in various professional publications that serve specific science disciplines, engineering fields, or educational areas, and/or in a variety of commercial publications that report news concerning NASA's programs. However, since such notifications may not appear until several weeks after the actual release dates, those interested in NASA research opportunities are urged to subscribe to the relevant NASA E-mail notification service(s), to check the relevant NASA home page(s), and/or to check the NAIS, FBO, and Grants.Gov FIND Web sites. All other sources are unofficial and not necessarily complete nor timely.

1.2.2 Proposal Content and Submission

Unless specifically amended in the signed Summary of Solicitation of the NRA itself, the proposal preparation and submission processes for all NRAs that specifically reference this Guidebook are given in the following Chapters 2 and 3 below. Note that while NASA program personnel may also be contacted to discuss general program objectives with prospective proposers, they are forbidden from providing specific advice on budgetary or technical issues beyond those published in the NRA that would give an unfair competitive advantage unless this same information is openly available to all interested proposers.

As a general rule, in order to be considered complete and, therefore, accepted for competitive review, proposals submitted in response to an NRA should provide at a minimum the following key information:

- a detailed description of the proposed research objective(s) and its(their) significance to its field of endeavor;
- the suitability of the methods proposed for carrying out the proposed investigation;
- the significance of the proposed work as it relates to the objectives specifically stated in the NRA and to NASA in general;
- the qualifications of the proposing investigator(s) and their organization(s); and
- the amount of, and justification for, the requested funding.

NASA must receive the required number of printed copies plus the signed original of the proposal at the designated mailing address by the proposal deadline that will be given in each NRA (see Section 3.2 in this Guidebook for the policy on late proposals). Alternatively, some NRAs may specify that an electronic copy of the entire proposal also be submitted, or even be submitted instead of a printed copy, either through the World Wide Web or by means of a specified electronic storage medium.

1.2.3 Proposal Review and Selection

To be competitive for selection, proposals must fully satisfy the evaluation criteria as judged through review by qualified peers of the proposer and by programmatic evaluation for cost and relevance by NASA (see further details in Appendix C of this Guidebook). NASA will begin this evaluation process as soon as possible after the deadline for proposal submission. At a minimum, the evaluation criteria against which the proposals will be judged will be those listed in Section C.2 of Appendix C, although

these may be supplemented by specific criteria given in the NRA itself. NASA always seeks the best possible evaluations by appropriately qualified peers of the proposer who are knowledgeable, though not necessarily specialists, in the objective(s) solicited by the NRA. Experience has consistently shown that the characteristics of successful proposals are that they are technically meritorious, logical, complete, convincing, easily read, and responsive to and affordable by the advertised NASA program.

Following peer evaluation, the cognizant NRA Program Officer will consider the competitively-rated proposals in the context of the programmatic objectives and financial limitations stated in the NRA. The Program Officer then presents a recommendation for selection based on the entirety of these factors to the NASA Selecting Official identified in the NRA who then selects those proposals deemed worthy as judged against the evaluation criteria, the objectives of the NRA, and the available financial resources.

Following selection, each proposer will be notified of the disposition of his/her proposal and, if desired, provided the opportunity to be debriefed. Those proposers who are selected will be advised that their organizations will be contacted by the responsible NASA Procurement Office to arrange for implementation of an appropriate award. It is important to note that until an award is made, there is no guarantee that the recommended financial resources will be available. Furthermore, awards are made to the proposing organization, and not directly to the Principal Investigator. Appendix D provides ancillary information about how NASA typically implements and manages awards for the proposals selected through its NRAs.

1.3 Unsolicited Proposals

1.3.1 Definition

Unsolicited proposals are defined as those submitted to NASA on the initiative of the applicant rather than in response to an NRA (see Appendix A for reference to further information). However, since funding resources are rarely available beyond those of NASA's formally defined programs, anyone considering the submission of an unsolicited proposal is strongly advised to consult with appropriate NASA program personnel before preparing and submitting such a proposal. In accordance with the NASA FAR Supplement Part 1815.6, the information NASA personnel may provide in discussing the development of an unsolicited proposal is limited to the general need for the type of effort contemplated for the proposal and, as appropriate, the names of other Agency personnel for the limited purpose of obtaining an understanding of the Agency mission and responsibilities relative to the type of effort contemplated. NASA personnel may not encourage or otherwise "solicit" that a proposal be submitted (see third item listed in next paragraph below). The decision to submit an unsolicited proposal must be entirely that of the proposer alone.

1.3.2 Evaluation for Acceptance for Review

An unsolicited proposal received by NASA is first evaluated to ascertain if it is relevant to NASA's interests. If it is not relevant, it will be handled as technical correspondence and returned without review. If it is relevant, it will be assigned to the most appropriate NASA Mission Directorate under cover of a copy of a letter informing the proposer of that assignment. For an unsolicited proposal that falls within the domain of a current NASA program or interest, the proposal will be further assessed to determine if it:

- proposes a specific, unique, or innovative project with sufficient technical and cost information to permit its meaningful evaluation;
- is signed by an official authorized to commit the submitting organization to carrying out the proposed effort if it is selected;
- does not offer to perform standard services, nor has been prepared under or as a result of Government (NASA) supervision or request;
- does not request a level of funding beyond that which could be accommodated by uncommitted resources should the proposal be found to be of sufficient merit; and
- is not appropriate for submission to a formal NASA solicitation that is either already open or planned for release in the near future through which the proposal could be competed with other similar proposals (Note: regarding this point, an unsolicited proposal identified as being within the scope of an open program announcement, or one that is soon to be released, may be evaluated as a response to that announcement providing that this action does not place the proposal as submitted at a competitive disadvantage based on the requirements for that program; if this action would result in a competitive disadvantage, the applicant will be given the opportunity to amend the proposal to ensure compliance with applicable proposal preparation instructions, e.g., to meet the standards and provisions of this Guidebook and the appropriate solicitation).

If an unsolicited proposal fails to meet any of these guidelines, NASA reserves the right to handle it as technical correspondence and return it without review. If an unsolicited proposal is determined to be valid, NASA will conduct an appropriate review (at a minimum, by NASA personnel only; at a maximum, by external mail and/or panel review), after which it will be submitted to an appropriate NASA Selection Official for selection or rejection. (See also NPR5800.1, Grant and Cooperative Handbook, Section A, Part 1260.17, and NASA FAR Supplement, Part 1815.6, Unsolicited Proposals).

1.4 Categories of Proposal Organizations and Personnel

1.4.1 Proposing Organizations

NASA accepts proposals in response to its NRAs submitted by all types of U.S. and non-U.S. organizations acting on behalf of the proposer(s). As an aid to NASA to determine the appropriate type of award to be used should a proposal be selected, designation of one of the following organizational categories is requested on the Proposal Cover Page (see Section 2.3.2 below in this Guidebook):

- Educational Organization – A university or two- and four-year college (including U.S. community colleges) accredited to confer degrees beyond that of the K-12 grade levels (such organizations are usually considered nonprofit).
- Nonprofit, Nonacademic Organization – A private or Government supported research laboratory, university consortium, museum, observatory, professional society, educational organization, or similar organization that directly supports advanced research activities but whose principal charter is not for the training of students for academic degrees.

- Commercial Organization – An organization of any size that operates for profit or fee and that has appropriate capabilities, facilities, and interests to conduct the proposed effort.
- NASA Center – Any NASA Field Center and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.
- Other Federal Agency – Any non-NASA, U.S. Federal Executive agency or Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) sponsored by a Federal agency.
- Unaffiliated Individual – Any person residing in the U.S., regardless of being a U.S. citizen or resident alien, who has the capabilities and access to facilities for carrying out the proposed project and who, if selected, agrees to financial arrangements that NASA determines as sufficient to ensure the responsible management of appropriated Federal funds.
- Non-U.S. Organizations – Organizations outside the U.S. that propose on the basis of a policy of no-exchange-of-funds; consult Section (I) of Appendix B in this Guidebook for specific details (Note: some NRAs may be issued jointly with a non-U.S. organization, e.g., those concerning guest observing programs for jointly sponsored space science programs, that will contain additional special guidelines for non-U.S. participants). Also see Sections 2.3.11(b)(vii) in this Guidebook for special instructions for proposals from non-U.S. organizations that involve U.S. personnel for whom NASA support is requested.

1.4.2 Proposal Personnel

Every proposal submitted to an NRA must identify every person and their organization of employment who is expected to play a significant role in the execution of the proposed effort if it is selected by NASA (see Sections 2.3.4 and 2.3.5 in this Guidebook) using one of the following six categories of personnel (Note: other than the Principal Investigator, some NRAs may specifically disallow some or all of these categories):

- Principal Investigator (PI) – Every proposal shall identify a single PI who is solely responsible for the quality and direction of the proposed research and for the proper use of awarded funds regardless of whether or not he/she receives support through the award. The proposing organization has the authority to designate the PI and to designate any replacements of him/her, if that becomes necessary, although NASA approval is required for replacement after proposal selection. Note that NASA does not accept the designation of anyone as a "Co-Principal Investigator" with the possible exception of when a proposal includes participation from a non-U.S. organization; see further discussion below under Co-Investigators.

NASA strongly encourages Principal Investigators to specify only the most critically important personnel to aid in the execution of their proposals. Such personnel must be designated as being in one of the following categories:

- Co-Investigator (Co-I) – A Co-I is a member of the proposal's investigation team who may hold either a full-time or limited-term appointment and who is a critical "partner" for the conduct of the investigation through the contribution of unique expertise and/or

capabilities. A Co-I must have a well-defined, and generally sustained, continuing role in the proposed investigation, serve under the direction of the PI, and may or may not receive funding through the award. Only an individual who has formally agreed to the role may participate as a Co-I even if his/her participation is at no cost (i.e., contributed) to the proposal. Each Co-I must demonstrate his/her commitment to participate in the proposed investigation by way of a brief, signed statement from him/her even if they are from the proposing organization (see Section 2.3.10 in this Guidebook). The Scientific/Technical/Management section of a proposal (see Section 2.3.5) may also designate that a Co-I carry additional responsibilities as appropriate for the following unique circumstances:

- One Co-I may also be designated as the "Science PI" for those cases where the proposing organization does not permit that individual to formally serve as a PI as defined above (e.g., nontenured faculty or postdoctoral personnel). In such a case, that Co-I/Science PI will be understood by NASA to be in charge of the scientific direction of the proposed work, although the formally designated PI will still be held responsible for the overall direction of the effort and use of funds.
 - A Co-I at an organization other than that of the PI institution who is making a major contribution to the proposal (e.g., providing a significant piece of hardware) and who serves as the point of contact at that Co-I's organization, may also be designated as the "Institutional PI" for that Co-I's organization (Note: if specifically stated in the NRA, NASA may elect to provide an award directly to that Co-I organization with the Co-I/Organizational PI serving as a "PI" for that award at his/her organization).
 - A Co-I from a non-U.S. organization may also be designated as a "Co-Principal Investigator" (Co-PI) should such a designation be required to fulfill administrative requirements of that Co-I's organization and/or to enable the procurement of funding by that Co-I from his/her sponsoring funding authority (see also Appendix B, Section (I)).
- Postdoctoral Associate – A Postdoctoral Associate holds a Ph.D. or equivalent degree, is usually employed full time at the proposing PI organization, is identified as a major participant (but not explicitly as a Co-I) for the execution of the proposed research, and is appropriately remunerated for that effort through the proposal's budget. Such a Postdoctoral Associate should be identified by name, if known, by the time the proposal is submitted or may be identified only by designated function in those cases where recruitment depends on the successful selection of the proposal.
 - Other Professional – This category is appropriate for personnel who support a proposal in a critical manner, e.g., a key Project Engineer and/or Manager, but who is not identified as a Co-I or Postdoctoral Associate.
 - Graduate and/or Undergraduate Students– A proposal may incorporate students working for graduate or postgraduate degrees who will be paid through the proposal's budget to help carry out the proposed research under direction of the PI or one of the designated Co-I's. Such students should be identified by name if known when the proposal is submitted but may be designated only by function in those cases where their recruitment depends on the successful selection of the proposal. Note, however, that direct support for Undergraduate Students is nominally allowed only if specifically stated in the NRA.

- Consultant – A Consultant is an individual who is critical to the completion of the proposed effort and is to be paid a fee for his/her services, which may include travel in order to consult with the PI, but who is not considered a sustaining “partner” in the proposed activities as is a Co-I (Note: the requirements for the proposal budget includes the identification, justification, and costs of all Consultants (see Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.11 below)).

- Collaborator – A Collaborator is an individual who is less critical to the proposal than a Co-I but who is committed to provide a focused but unfunded contribution for a specific task (Note: if funding support is requested in the proposal, such a person must be identified in one of the other categories above). For a proposal that might be available for submission via Grants.gov, collaborators should be listed on the Project Role “Other” line of the Senior/Key Person portion of the R&R 424 form.

1.5 Successor Proposals

[Ref.: Appendix B, Section (d)]

Holders of existing research awards frequently submit follow-on or “successor proposals” to successive NRAs that are issued for continued pursuit of the same NASA program objectives in order to extend an ongoing research activity to its next logical step. However, in order to ensure equitable treatment of all submitted proposals, NASA does not extend any special consideration to such successor proposals in terms of preferential handling, review, or priority for selection. Therefore, all proposals in response to an NRA are considered new regardless of their previous history of NASA funding and will be reviewed on an equal basis with all other proposals submitted to the NRA.

Such successor proposals are welcomed and encouraged, and may reference the relevant achievements made during the course of the previous award(s) in their Scientific/Technical/Management Section (see Section 2.3.5 below in this Guidebook). In addition, the Proposal Cover Page (see Section 2.3.2) provides a space for entering the NASA identifier number of any existing award that is a logical predecessor to the successor proposal that is being submitted. If a successor proposal is selected, it is NASA’s preference to fund it through a new award, although NASA reserves the right to fund the proposal by issuing an amendment to the existing award. In either case, the starting date of a successor award will follow the expiration date of the preceding award, i.e., a successor award to the same PI at the same organization may not overlap an existing award.

1.6 Other Guidelines

1.6.1. Proposals Involving Non-U.S. Organizations [Ref.: Appendix B, Section (l)]

NASA welcomes proposals that involve non-U.S. organizations including proposals that request funds from NASA for support of qualified participants. Such proposals may be from U.S. organizations with participants employed by non-U.S. organizations or from non-U.S. organizations with participants employed by U.S. organizations. In all cases such proposals must be compliant with the policies stated in Section (l) of Appendix B in this Guidebook.

For such proposals, it is critical for the sponsoring non-U.S. organization or agency to certify that support for their own proposing personnel will be forthcoming should the proposal be selected by NASA. Such personnel may fill any of the roles defined in Section 1.4.2 above except that of being a paid Consultant. Further details concerning budgets of such proposals are given in Section 2.3.11(vii) of this Guidebook. In addition, proposals that contain the participation of non-U.S. personnel should be aware of an important provision as follows:

Export Control Guidelines Applicable to Foreign Proposals and Proposals Including Foreign Participation

Foreign proposals and proposals including foreign participation must include a section discussing compliance with U.S. export laws and regulations, e.g., 22 CFR Parts 120-130 and 15 CFR Parts 730-774, as applicable to the circumstances surrounding the particular foreign participation. The discussion must describe in detail the proposed foreign participation and is to include, but not be limited to, whether or not the foreign participation may require the prospective proposer to obtain the prior approval of the Department of State or the Department of Commerce via a technical assistance agreement or an export license, or whether a license exemption/exception may apply. If prior approvals via licenses are necessary, discuss whether the license has been applied for or if not, the projected timing of the application and any implications for the schedule. Information regarding U.S. export regulations is available at the U.S. Department of State Web site <http://www.pmdtc.org> and through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security Web site at <http://www.bis.doc.gov>. Proposers are advised that under U.S. law and regulations, spacecraft and their specifically designed, modified, or configured systems, components, and parts are generally considered "Defense Articles" on the United States Munitions List and subject to the provisions of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), 22 CFR Parts 120-130.

Owing to these legal provisions and requirements, proposals involving non-U.S. participants should be aware that such participation can add to management complexity and risk, and, therefore, proposers should limit such cooperative arrangements to those offering significant benefits while maintaining the clearest and simplest possible technical and management interfaces.

1.6.2 Export Control

NASA is also advising proposers that, under U.S. law and regulations, spacecraft and their specifically designed, modified, or configured systems, components, and parts are generally considered "Defense Articles" on the United States Munitions List and subject to the provisions of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), 22 CFR Parts 120-130. Information regarding U.S. export regulations is available at <http://www.pmdtc.org> and at <http://www.bis.doc.gov>. While explicit inclusion of such material in a proposal is not prohibited it may, in some circumstances, complicate NASA's ability to evaluate the proposal since occasionally NASA may use the services of foreign nationals who are not lawful permanent residents of the U.S. to review proposals submitted in response to this NRA. Therefore, proposers to this NRA are

strongly encouraged not to include material subject to the provisions of ITAR in their proposals, although the effort being proposed may itself be subject to ITAR (see Web sites noted above). If it is essential to include any export controlled information subject to ITAR in a proposal, a notice to that effect must be prominently displayed on the first page of the proposal that shall state:

The information (data) contained in [insert page numbers or other identification] of this proposal is (are) subject to U.S. export laws and regulations. It is furnished to the Government with the understanding that it will not be exported without the prior approval of the proposer under the terms of an applicable export license or technical assistance agreement.

Note that it is the responsibility of the proposer to determine whether any proposal information is subject to the provisions of ITAR.

1.7 Guidelines for Proposal Preparation

NASA's extensive experience in the review of proposals submitted in response to a wide variety of program announcements has shown that the following guidelines are valuable in helping to ensure the submission of a valid, competitive proposal:

- Follow the instructions in the specific NRA of interest with care in order to respond to the opportunity as published, since NASA is legally obligated to review and select proposals in accordance with their published provisions.
- Clearly state the objectives of the proposal and its implementation plan so that both NASA and the peer reviewers can easily understand what is proposed to be done and how it will be accomplished.
- Strive to ensure that the proposal clearly addresses the advertised objectives as stated in the NRA, since NASA is a program-oriented Agency that is obligated to sponsor only that research that supports its goals and objectives as stated in its strategic plans and research solicitations.
- If proposing innovative work in a new or emerging field, strive to achieve a balance between the provision of tutorial material and the description of the new activities being proposed.
- Provide appropriate recognition of preceding accomplishments, demonstrate knowledge of the literature by citing key recent, significant publications in the field, and show how the proposed activity will extend and build on what has already been accomplished (whether by the proposer or by others).
- Proof read the proposal carefully before submission, and, if at all possible, ask a colleague to critically review it for completeness and comprehensibility; strive for a quality and clarity of text comparable to that for an article to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.
- Keep the proposal as short as possible consistent with completeness and understandability; use legible printer fonts and illustrations and a clear, simple organization.
- Propose fresh, new ideas rather than slight modifications of proposals that may have been rejected in previous competitions (Note: simply revising a proposal to meet deficiencies identified in a previous review(s) does not necessarily guarantee a higher rating, since reviewers are rarely the same, NASA objectives evolve, and fields of research mature, all over a period as short as one year).

- Include all requested proposal information in its specified order and in compliance with stated page limits.
- Strive for realism as well as adequacy of the requested budget, and provide all the details necessary to justify and facilitate understanding of the proposed costs (Note: a relatively low cost does not necessarily provide a competitive advantage to a proposal unless all other factors are equal; likewise, a proposal judged to be of especially high science/technical merit is not necessarily rejected because it requests a budget beyond the norm advertised for the program).

2. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND ORGANIZATION

2.1 Overview

It is expected that this Guidebook will be updated as required. Therefore, each NRA will explicitly identify the edition date of this Guidebook that should be followed to ensure the submission of a valid proposal, and material contained in the Guidebook will not be repeated in the individual NRAs. Any deviations from the Guidebook will be clearly identified in the NRA but will only be introduced if needed for the unique needs of the program being solicited.

Since January of 2005, NASA has started to use its updated proposal and evaluation automated management system known as NSPIRES. NSPIRES is designed to be capable of receiving full electronic proposals directly (or through Grants.gov for those NRA solicitations that will not be exclusively awarding contracts. It is expected, however, that a phased implementation of NSPIRES capabilities will occur. Please examine each solicitation (or element thereof for any omnibus solicitation) to verify the extent to which NSPIRES capabilities will be employed. NSPIRES will provide extensive assistance for offerors, including on-line assistance and a help desk.

Guidance to the information requested on the required Proposal Cover Page, which includes a Budget Summary and is needed for NRAs that reference this Guidebook, is given below. The address on the World Wide Web for the direct electronic access to and submission of this Proposal Cover Page is <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/external/>. Note that access into this Web site requires that the user initially register with their name and organizational address, after which they are given an identification ID and password that allows immediate future log-in access. Once access is gained into the data system, access for application to a given NRA is provided through a menu entitled "*Solicitations*" then accessing the link "*Open Solicitations*" If you intend to submit a proposal, users should use the NSPIRES registration module to affiliate with an organization. Affiliation is a two-way relationship that requires the approval of the targeted organization. Organizations may take some time to respond to requests for affiliations. NASA now requires that an organization, rather than a Principal Investigator submit proposals. This may introduce extra time into the proposal preparation and submission cycle. When preparing a proposal in NSPIRES, online help, as well as a Help Desk that can be reached by telephone may be used to address questions or issues in proposal preparation. For proposals prepared in Calendar Year 2005, we expect most NASA solicitations using NSPIRES will still require a paper copy to be printed and submitted. You should review the solicitation document submission instructions (and individual element instructions for an omnibus solicitation) to ensure you comply with the precise submission requirements for that solicitation. Be certain to verify you are using the correct mailing address for any hard copies of a proposal being submitted.

It is NASA policy that proposals should not contain security classified material (see also Appendix B, Part (c)(9) in this Guidebook). However, should the project proposed require access to classified information, or should the result of the project generate such material, the proposer shall comply with all Government security regulations.

2.2 Standard Proposal Style Formats

NSPIRES provides for printing of a hardcopy proposal when mandated by the solicitation that will typically satisfy many of NASA's formatting requirements. Unless otherwise specified in the NRA of interest, the standard formats for a proposal submitted in response to all NRAs issued by NASA are as follows:

- Single-spaced, typewritten, English-language text, formatted using one or two columns, and using an easily read font having no more than ~15 characters per inch (typically 12-point font);
- White 8.5 x 11 inch paper with at least 1 inch (2.5 cm) margins on all sides (Note: non-U.S. proposals may be submitted on A4 paper with 2.5 cm margins at the top and sides, and 4 cm at the bottom).
- Bound only with metal staples to facilitate recycling (i.e., no loose leaf binders or cardboard, plastic, or permanent covers);
- An easily disassembled, one-sided original copy (to enable NASA to make additional copies, if needed);
- Double-sided printing for proposal copies (preferred but not required);
- Use of fold out pages, colored illustrations, and/or photographs only as needed for the display of unique and critically important proposal data (Note: if such formats are used, all copies of the proposal must also include the same materials);
- No material submitted on any type of electronic media other than through NSPIRES, nor by reference to sites on the World Wide Web for information or material needed to either complete or to understand the proposal;
- Use of only metric and standard discipline-unique units unless referring to existing hardware fabricated in English units or where the fabrication of proposed hardware using metric units would be cost prohibitive (Note: if English units are used, approximate metric units shall also be used as reference); and
- Adherence to the page limits given in this Guidebook, unless otherwise specified in the NRA or preformatted in NSPIRES, for all sections of the proposal (see Section 2.3 below).

2.3 Proposal Contents

2.3.1 Overview of Proposal

Unless otherwise specified in the NRA, a proposal should be assembled with the items given in the following table and as guided in the NSPIRES system, using the page limits provided herein. Proposals that omit required materials or that exceed the page limits may be returned without review. In some cases an NRA may specify exceptions to these page limits, especially to that allowed for the *Scientific/Technical/Management Section*. This table is followed by a discussion of each individual subsection of a

proposal that is also cross-referenced to the corresponding subpart in the standard NASA guidance for proposals contained in Appendix B of this Guidebook.

CONSTITUENT PARTS OF A PROPOSAL (in order of assembly)	PAGE LIMIT
• <i>NSPIRES Proposal Cover Page</i>	As printed from NASA proposal Internet site.
• <i>Table of Contents</i>	1
• <i>Curriculum Vitae for: the Principal Investigator for each Co-Investigator</i>	2 1
<i>Current and Pending Support</i>	As needed
• <i>Co-I and/or Collaborator Commitments</i>	As needed.
• <i>Budget Justification</i> (incl. Proposing Organization Budget)	As needed.
• <i>Facilities and Equipment</i> (if applicable to proposal)	2
• <i>Summary of Personnel and Work Efforts</i>	1
• <i>Scientific/Technical/Management Section</i>	15*
• <i>References and Citations</i>	As needed.
• <i>Special Notifications and/or Certifications</i>	As needed.
<i>Reprint(s)/Preprint(s)</i>	Not allowed

* includes all illustrations, tables, and figures, where each "n-page" fold-out counts as n-pages and each side of a sheet containing text or an illustration counts as a page.

2.3.2 Proposal Cover Page and Budget Summary

[Ref.: Appendix B, Part (c)(1) & (c)(3)]

All proposals will be prepared using the NSPIRES *Proposal Cover Page* that is available electronically through the World Wide Web at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/>. Once access is gained into the data system, access for application to a given NRA is provided through a menu entitled "Solicitations" then accessing the link "Open Solicitations". Any proposer who experiences difficulty in using the specified Web site or who cannot access the Web may request assistance by E-mail to nspires-help@nasaprs.com or by calling the help desk, Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST at (202) 479-9376.

After this item is prepared and submitted electronically, it is then available for printing in hard copy in order to obtain the authorizing original signatures of the Authorized

Organizational Representative. As directed in the solicitation, the signed copy must be submitted with the original copy of the proposal on or before the proposal due date unless electronic submission is specified in the solicitation. In addition, reproductions of the signed *Proposal Cover Page* are used to preface the required printed copies of the proposal. (Note that NSPIRES automatically assigns a unique proposal identifier code to each entry. This NSPIRES number is used by NASA throughout the proposal review and selection process to uniquely identify the proposal and its associated electronic data. *(If no NSPIRES number appears on the Proposal Cover Page, then it has not been submitted finally and correctly through the NSPIRES system.)*)

At a minimum, the following information will be requested to complete the *Proposal Cover Page* although additional programmatic information may also be requested on the form depending on the unique needs of the NRA. All of this information is needed in order for NASA to complete a financial award with the proposing organization should the proposal be selected for funding; therefore, it is extremely important that it be provided accurately and completely (*Note: additional information unique to the needs of the solicited program may also be specified*).

Section I

- PI Information. Provide the name and full mailing address of the Principal Investigator, including his/her specific Division or Mail Stop as appropriate, and E-mail address, telephone number, and facsimile (Fax) number (Note: once the PI enters his/her name, this information will be provided automatically from the data base using the information previously submitted when registering as a user in this system).
- Proposal Title. Provide a Full Title of the proposed investigation, which should not exceed 254 characters in length, and is intelligible to a scientifically literate reader and suitable for use in the public press.
- Proposed Start/End Dates. Provide the desired approximate starting and ending dates of the period of performance of the proposal (Note: as indicated in Section 3.4 in this Guidebook, the Start Date should be at least 200 days after the Proposal Due Date unless otherwise specified in the NRA, and the maximum period of performance for research allowed by most NRAs is three years unless otherwise indicated).
- Budget Totals. Show total budget requested and amount requested for each budget year if a multi-year proposal.

Section II

- Application Information Provide required information on NASA Announcement Number and Title, as well as the additional specific reference information requested on the NSPIRES form.
- Predecessor Information. Provide the alpha-numeric Award Number and Title of any existing NASA research award for which the newly proposed work is submitted as a successor proposal (see Section 1.5 of this Guidebook).

Section III

Submitting Organization Provide the DUNS number, CAGE code, EIN or TIN, and submitting organization name and address. Information on DUNS, CAGE and EIN/TIN numbers is provided below:

- Dun & Bradstreet (D&B), Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS). Every organization (or Unaffiliated Individual; see Section 1.4.1 in this Guidebook) that submits a proposal to a U.S. agency must obtain a permanently assigned DUNS number from D&B. NASA requires that this DUNS number be submitted with the proposal cover page. Potential applicants may call D&B at 1-866-705-5711 to register and obtain a DUNS number. The process to request a DUNS number takes about 10 minutes and is free of charge. Potential applicants may also register for their DUNS number at Dun & Bradstreet's web site: <https://www.dnb.com/product/eupdate/requestOptions.html>. Click on the link that reads, "DUNS Number only" at the right hand, bottom corner of the screen to access the free registration page. Please note that registration via the web site may take up to fourteen business days to complete.
- Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code. Every organization (or Unaffiliated Individual; see Section 1.4.1 in this Guidebook) that submits a proposal to a U.S. agency must register with the Department of Defense Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database for a permanently assigned CAGE number. Information for registering in the CCR and online documents can be found at <http://www.ccr.gov>.
- Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN). Every U.S. organization (or Unaffiliated Individual; see Section 1.4.1 in this Guidebook) that submits a proposal to a U.S. agency must provide their permanently-assigned EIN or TIN in compliance with 31 U.S. Code 7702(c)(1). Information to obtain a EIN or TIN can be found at <http://www.irs.gov>.
- Organization Type: Specify the type of organization submitting the proposal using one of the categories defined in Section 1.4.1 of this Guidebook.

Section IV

- Provide the e-mail address for the person that will serve as the principal point of contact for answering questions about the proposal.

Section V

This section provides the certifications and assurances required for every proposal submitted under the NRA. This section must include the name, e-mail address and phone number of the authorized organizational representative (AOR) that has authority to bind the organization to the terms of the proposal. Signature of the AOR also certifies the organization has read and is in compliance with all Federally required Assurances and Certifications (Note: for reference only, all currently required Certifications are printed in full in Section E.1, Appendix E, of this Guidebook; however, the NRA may specify additional applicable certifications that must also be submitted).

Section VI

- **Team Members.** A table is provided by NSPIRES for listing all supporting Proposal Personnel by the Role they are expected to play in the proposal based on the categories given in Section 1.4.2 in this Guidebook, including their Names, Organizations, E-mail Addresses, and Telephone numbers (Note: these individuals must each register him/herself in the NSPIRES system in order to be listed in this section; the proposing PI may not register someone as a Team Member). Participation by U.S. Government agencies or their personnel must be noted in the spaces provided, as well as the amount of funding designated for that government agency in the proposal. Specify via a Yes/No designation whether the proposal involves participation by any personnel employed by any agency of the U.S. Government, including any of NASA's Centers and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. If the answer is "Yes," provide the participant's Government agency affiliation, and total dollar amount requested (if any) for their participation in the proposal. Note that all costs for this participation must also be shown in the Budget Summary (see below), as well as be supported by appropriate details in the proposal's Budget Justification (see Section 2.3.11 in this Guidebook).

Section VII

- **Proposal Summary.** Using ~2500 characters, including spaces, or less (about half a page using the standard style formats for proposal text given in Section 2.2 of this Guidebook) provide the following key information:
 - A description of the key, central objectives of the proposal in terms understandable to a nonspecialist;
 - A concise statement of the methods/techniques proposed to accomplish the stated research objectives; and
 - A statement of the perceived significance of the proposed work to the objectives of the NRA and to NASA interests and programs in general. (Note: NASA intends to publish the proposal's full title, the PI's name and organization, and the Proposal Summary of every selected investigation in a publicly accessible data base; therefore, the Proposal Summary should not include proprietary information that would preclude its unrestricted release (see also Appendix B, Parts (a)(2) and (c)(2) of this Guidebook.)

Section VIII

- **Proprietary/privileged information.** State whether your application includes information that should be considered proprietary or privileged. Briefly indicate where such information is included in your proposal.
- **International Collaboration:** Specify via a Yes/No designation whether the proposal involves participation by any personnel employed by a non-U.S. organization. Provide a brief explanation of the nature of, and need for, the international collaboration. (Note: if such personnel are involved, signed letters of support from their sponsoring organizations or agencies are required; see Sections 1.6 and 2.3.11(vii) in this Guidebook).
- **NASA Civil Servant Project Personnel.** Answer with a yes or no the question of whether NASA Civil Servant personnel will work on the proposed project. Provide the

number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) NASA personnel to be used on the project for each fiscal year of the proposal. NASA requires this information to comply with an Office of Management and Budget request for data on NASA civil service personnel subject to open competitions such as an NRA.

- **Environmental Impact.** Answer the question about actual or potential environmental impact and the question regarding environmental assessment or environmental impact statement with a yes or no. Provide sufficient information in the space provided for an explanation of environmental impact so that NASA may determine what actions, if any, the agency will be required to perform per NEPA requirements.
- Answer the historic site/object impact question with a yes or no answer, and then provide a sufficiently detailed explanation of any impact to assist NASA in fulfilling its duties under federal historic preservation laws.

Section IX

- **Budget Summary:** Fill in the tables as presented, which requires the total amounts for each of the following items for each year of the proposed period of performance, as well as for the total proposed effort, as supported by the Budget Details portion of the proposal (see Section 2.3.11 below in this Guidebook for further instructions about each item):

Categories of Entries for Budget Summary

DIRECT LABOR – KEY PERSONNEL
DIRECT LABOR – OTHER PERSONNEL
DIRECT COSTS – EQUIPMENT
DIRECT COSTS – TRAVEL
DIRECT COSTS – PARTICIPANT/TRAINEE SUPPORT COSTS

OTHER DIRECT COSTS

- Materials and Supplies
- Publication costs
- Consultant services
- ADP/computer services
- Subawards/consortium/contractual costs
- Equipment or facility rental/user fees
- Alterations and renovations

– Other INDIRECT COSTS

FEE

TOTAL COST (BUDGET TOTAL)

Special conditions and instructions concerning the *Proposal Cover Page*:

(i) Electronic submission of only the *Proposal Cover Page* does not satisfy the deadline for proposal submission. If the solicitation expressly states that only authenticated electronic proposals (electronically authorized by the AOR) are to be

submitted, and all required attachments are also supplied electronically with a complete cover page by the submission due date, then the proposal will be considered complete. When hard copy submission is required, however, the required number of copies of the proposal (as specified in the NRA) including a printed copy of the *Proposal Cover Page* (with the NSPIRES assigned proposal number, see Section 2.3.2 above), one with original signature, must be received at the indicated address by close of business (4:30 p.m. Eastern Time) on the proposal due date (Note: see Section (g) of Appendix B, as well as Section 3.2, both in this Guidebook, for NASA policy on late proposals).

(ii) Physical changes (such as whiteout or strikethrough) of any kind to the printed version of a *Proposal Cover Page* that has been electronically submitted are not permitted. Any needed changes may only be made by editing the electronic version following the instructions on its Web site, after which the revised *Proposal Cover Page* is then printed for purposes of securing the necessary signatures (Note: for this reason, it is recommended that this item be produced from the specified Web site well in advance of the proposal due date).

2.3.3 Table of Contents

The one-page *Table of Contents* should provide a guide to the organization and contents of the proposal. This item may also incorporate customized formats of the proposer's own choosing, e.g., identification of the submitting organization through use of letterhead stationary, project logos, etc. NSPIRES may provide some assistance in preparing your Table of Contents but you are responsible for its accuracy.

2.3.4 Summary of Proposal Personnel and Work Efforts

The item must provide a summary list, using a tabular format of the proposer's own choosing, of the names and planned work commitments (in units of a percentage of a nominal full time work year of the PI and of every Co-I in the proposed investigation for whom salary support is requested for each year of the proposed period of performance. For the purpose of identifying work commitment only, a work year will be based on 1840 hours of productive effort – this work commitment information should NOT change your use of your institution's standard financial practices for budget submittal purposes.

2.3.5 Scientific/Technical/Management Section

[Ref.: Appendix B, Parts (c)(4), (c)(5), and in-part (c)(6)]

As the main body of the proposal, this section must cover the following topics in the order given, all within the specified page limit (unless otherwise specified, the limit is 15 pages using the default values given in Section 2.3.1 above):

- The objectives and expected significance of the proposed research, especially as related to the objectives given in the NRA;
- The technical approach and methodology to be employed in conducting the proposed research, including a description of any hardware proposed to be built in order to carry out the research, as well as any special facilities of the proposing organization(s) and/or capabilities of the proposer(s) that would be used for carrying out the work (Note: see also Section 2.3.7, *Facilities and Equipment*, below concerning the description of critical existing equipment needed for carrying out the proposed research, and the Instructions for the *Budget Summary* in Section 2.3.11 for further discussion of costing

details needed for proposals involving significant hardware, software, and/or ground systems development, and, as may be allowed by an NRA, proposals for flight instruments);

- The perceived impact of the proposed work to the state of knowledge in the field and, if the proposal is offered as a direct successor to an existing NASA award, how the proposed work is expected to build on and otherwise extend previous accomplishments supported by NASA;
- The relevance of the proposed work to past, present, and/or future NASA programs and interests or to the specific objectives given in the NRA;
- A general plan of work, including anticipated key milestones for accomplishments, the management structure for the proposal personnel, any substantial collaboration(s) and/or use of consultant(s) that is(are) proposed to complete the investigation; and a description of the expected contribution to the proposed effort by the PI and each person as identified in one of the additional categories in Section 1.4.2, regardless of whether or not they derive support from the proposed budget.

The *Scientific/Technical/Management Section* may contain illustrations and figures that amplify and demonstrate key points of the proposal (including milestone schedules, as appropriate). However, they must be of an easily-viewed size, and have self-contained captions that do not contain critical information not provided elsewhere in the proposal.

2.3.6 References and Citations

All references and citations given in the *Scientific/Technical/Management Section* must be provided using easily understood, standard abbreviations for journals and complete names for books. It is highly preferred but not required that these references include the full title of the cited paper or report.

2.3.7 Facilities and Equipment

[Ref.: Appendix B, Part (c)(7)]

This section should describe any facilities (including any owned by the U.S. Government) and/or test or experiment equipment valued over \$5,000 that are critical for carrying out the proposed project, whether it is already available or would need to be purchased. Before requesting an item of capital equipment, the proposer should determine if sharing or loan of equipment already within the organization is a feasible alternative and, if not, why such arrangements cannot be made. The need for general purpose items that typically can be used for research and nonresearch purposes should be explained. Proposed costs for purchased facilities, tooling, or equipment must be entered in the proposal *Budget Summary* and described in the *Budget Details* (see Section 2.3.11 below in this Guidebook).

2.3.8 Curriculum Vitae

[Ref.: Appendix B: Part (c)(6)]

The Principal Investigator must include a *curriculum vitae* (not to exceed two pages) that includes his/her professional experiences and positions and a bibliography of recent publications, especially those relevant to the proposed investigation. A one-page vitae for each Co-Investigator must also be included (Note: any Co-I also serving in one of the three special Co-I categories defined in Section 1.4.2 may use the same two page limit as for the PI).

2.3.9 Current and Pending Support

[Ref.: Appendix B, Part (c)(10)]

Information must be provided for all ongoing and pending projects and proposals that involve the proposing PI. This information is also preferred but not required for any Co-Is who are proposed to perform a significant share (>10 percent) of the proposed work. This information must be provided for each such individual for each of the following two categories of awards that may exist at the time of the proposal submission deadline, namely,

- A. Current Awards (for any of the period that overlaps with the submitted proposal), and
- B. Pending Awards (including the proposal being submitted to NASA).

For each of these two categories, and using a format of the proposer's own choosing, provide the following information:

- Title of award or project title;
- Program name (if appropriate) and sponsoring agency or organization, including a point of contact with his/her telephone number and E-mail address;
- Performance period and total budget; and
- Commitment by PI (or Co-I) in terms of a fraction of a full time Work Year.

For pending research proposals involving substantially the same kind of research as that being proposed to NASA in this proposal, the proposing PI must notify the NASA Program Officer identified for the NRA immediately of any successful proposals that are awarded anytime after the Proposal Due Date and until the time that NASA's selections are announced.

2.3.10 Statement(s) of Commitment

Every Co-Investigator and Collaborator (see definitions in Section 1.4.2 of this Guidebook) identified as a participant in the proposal's *Scientific/Technical/Management Section* must submit a brief, signed statement of commitment that acknowledges his/her intended participation in the proposed effort. In the case of more than one Co-I or Collaborator, a single statement signed by all participants may be submitted. In any case, each statement must be addressed to the PI, may be a facsimile of an original statement or the copy of an E-mail (the latter must have sufficient information to unambiguously identify the sender), and is required even if the Co-I or Collaborator is from the PI organization. An example of such a statement follows:

"I (we) acknowledge that I(we) am(are) identified by name as Co-Investigator(s) [and/or Collaborator(s)] to the investigation, entitled <name of proposal>, that is submitted by <name of Principal Investigator> to the NASA Research Announcement <alpha-numeric identifier>, and that I(we) intend to carry out all responsibilities identified for me(us) in this proposal. I(we) understand that the extent and justification of my(our) participation as stated in this proposal will be considered during peer review in determining in part the merits of this proposal."

The NSPIRES proposal management system also allows for participants named on the Proposal Cover Page to acknowledge a statement of commitment electronically through the NSPIRES system.

2.3.11 Budget Details

[Ref.: Appendix B, Part (c)(8)]

2.3.11(a) Instructions for *Budget Summary*

The *Proposal Cover Page* that is submitted electronically through the World Wide Web (see Section 2.3.2 above in this Guidebook) contains a *Budget Summary* that must be provided for each year of the proposed effort and supported by appropriate narrative material in compliance with the following instructions.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BUDGET SUMMARY

1. **DIRECT LABOR** (salaries, wages, and fringe benefits): Attachments should list the number and titles of personnel, amounts of time to be devoted to the grant, and rates of pay.
2. **OTHER DIRECT COSTS:**
 - a. **Subcontracts:** Attachments should describe the work to be subcontracted, estimated amount, recipient (if known), and the reason for subcontracting.
 - b. **Consultants:** Identify consultants to be used, why they are necessary, the time they will spend on the project, and rates of pay (not to exceed the equivalent of the daily rate for Level IV of the Executive Schedule, exclusive of expenses and indirect costs). The Executive Schedule is located at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/05tables/indexSES.asp>Note: If OMB updates the executive rate schedule, the limit shall be that of the most current schedule..
 - c. **Equipment:** List separately. Explain the need for items costing more than \$5,000. Describe basis for estimated cost. General purpose equipment is not allowable as a direct cost unless specifically approved by the NASA Grant Officer. Any general purpose equipment purchase requested to be made as a direct charge under this award must include the equipment description, how it will be used in the conduct of the basic research proposed and include a written certification that the equipment will be used exclusively for research, activities.
 - d. **Supplies:** Provide general categories of needed supplies, the method of acquisition, and the estimated cost.
 - e. **Travel:** Describe the purpose of the proposed travel in relation to the grant and provide the basis of estimate, including information on destination and number of travelers where known.
 - f. **Other:** Enter the total of direct costs not covered by 2a through 2e. Attach an itemized list explaining the need for each item and the basis for the estimate.
3. **FACILITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE (F&A) COSTS:** Identify F&A cost rate(s) and base(s) as approved by the cognizant Federal agency, including the effective period of the rate. Provide the name, address, and telephone number of the Federal agency official having cognizance. If unapproved rates are used, explain why, and include the computational basis for the indirect expense pool and corresponding allocation base for each rate.

4. OTHER APPLICABLE COSTS: Enter total explaining the need for each item.
5. SUBTOTAL-ESTIMATED COSTS: Enter the sum of items 1 through 4.
6. LESS PROPOSED COST SHARING (IF any): Enter any amount proposed. If cost sharing is based on specific cost items, identify each item and amount in an attachment.
7. TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS: Enter the total after subtracting items 6 and 7 from item 5.

2.3.11(b) Special Budget Considerations

In complying with the requirements of the Budget Summary and for providing adequate additional information to understand its entries, the following additional important NASA procurement policies apply:

(i) Purchase of Personal Computers and/or Software. Note the discussion of item "2.c. Equipment" on the Instructions above regarding the proposed purchase of personal computers and/or commercial software. Such items are usually considered by NASA to be general purpose equipment that must be purchased from general organizational overhead budgets and not directly from the proposal budget unless it can be demonstrated that such items are to be used uniquely and only for the proposed research. If a proposal is selected for award, failure to adequately address the provisions of the instructions for item 2.c will require that NASA contact the proposing organization for the required information. Such activity may delay the award until the purchase is justified as a direct charge for general purpose equipment to be used exclusively for research activities.

(ii) Joint Proposals Involving a Mix of U.S. Government and Non-Government Organizations.

(a) If a PI from any type of private or public organization proposes to team with a Co-I from and/or use a facility at a U.S. Government organization (including NASA Centers and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory), then any required budget for that Government Co-I and/or facility should be included in the proposal's *Budget Details* and should be listed as "Other Applicable Costs" in the required *Budget Summary*. If the proposal is selected, NASA will execute an inter- or intra-Agency transfer of funds, as appropriate, to cover the applicable costs at that Government organization.

(b) If a PI from a U.S. Government organization (including NASA Centers and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory) proposes to team with a Co-I from a non-Government organization, then the proposing Government organization must cover those Co-I costs through an appropriate award for which that Government PI organization is responsible. Such non-Government Co-I costs should be entered as a "Subcontract" on the Budget Summary.

(iii) Responsibility of the Proposing Organization to Place Subawards for Co-I's at Other Organizations. Other than the special cases discussed in item (ii) above, and unless specifically noted otherwise in the NRA, the proposing PI organization must subcontract the funding of all proposed Co-I's who reside at other non-Government organizations, even though this may result in a higher proposal cost because of subcontracting fees.

(iv) Full-Cost Accounting at NASA Centers. NASA is now operating using full cost budgeting, accounting, and management practices. Therefore, all research proposals originating from a NASA Center or the Jet Propulsion Laboratory must be submitted with fully loaded costs including procurement, civil service labor, travel, service pools, center G&A, and corporate G&A. In compliance with the full cost policies, proposals that are submitted by non-NASA organizations but that involve a NASA organization must ensure that any NASA costs are fully documented in compliance with full cost accounting. The web address for NASA's Full Cost Initiative is: <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/fullcost>.

(v) Unallowable Costs. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-21 and A-122, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31, identify certain costs that may not be included in a proposed budget. The use of appropriated funds for such purposes are unallowable and may lead to cancellation of the award and possible criminal charges. Grant recipients should be aware of cost principles applicable to their organization as set forth in the above regulations.

(vi) Prohibition of the Use of NASA Funds for Non-U.S. Research. NASA's policy welcomes the opportunity to conduct research with non-U.S. organizations on a cooperative, no-exchange-of-funds basis. Although Co-Is or collaborators employed by non-U.S. organizations may be identified as part of a proposal submitted by a U.S. organization, NASA funding may not normally be used to support research efforts by non-U.S. organizations at any level; however, the direct purchase of supplies and/or services that do not constitute research from non-U.S. sources by U.S. award recipients is permitted. See also Section (I) of Appendix B.

(vii) Proposals from non-U.S. PI organizations that propose the funding of U.S. Co-Is. A proposal submitted by a non-U.S. organization that involves U.S. Co-Is for whom NASA funding is requested must provide the budgets for those U.S. Co-Is in compliance with all applicable provisions in this Section 2.3.11. In addition, compliance is required by the proposing non-U.S. organization with the provisions of Section (I) of Appendix B.

2.3.12 Special Notifications and/or Certifications

[Ref.: Appendix B, Part (c)(11)]

2.3.12(a) Special Notifications and/or Certifications

Some NRAs may require proposals to include special notifications or certifications regarding the impact of research including, e.g., environmental, human, or animal care provisions, conflicts of interest, or other topics as may be required by statute, Executive Order, or Government policies. Compliance with such requirements is important to ensure submission of a complete proposal, and such items must be included in this section of the proposal.

2.3.12(b) Personnel from Non-U.S. Organizations

If any of the proposal's personnel are from a non-U.S. organization, appropriately signed letter(s) of certification must be included that verifies that their support will be provided by a responsible organization(s) or government agency(ies) should the proposal be selected by NASA.

2.3.13 Reprint(s)/Preprint(s)

Reprints and/or preprints are not permitted to be appended to a proposal unless they are accommodated within the proposal page limit. All information and material necessary for an informed peer review of the proposal must be included within the proposal in a manner that is compliant with the proposal page limit and permitted appendices.

3. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

3.1 Notice of Intent (NOI) to Propose

To plan for and expedite the review process, and thus minimize the time required for announcement of selections, all NRAs released by NASA Headquarters that reference this Guidebook will request that an optional Notice of Intent (NOI) to propose be submitted by typically no later than about 60 days prior to the Proposal Due Date. Although the information in a NOI is not binding on the submitter, it should be as accurate and complete as possible by its due date. An NOI is submitted by logging into NSPIRES at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com> and then clicking on the “Proposals” link. Offeror’s must be registered with NSPIRES to create and submit an NOI. Space is provided for the applicant to provide, at a minimum, the following information, although the additional special requests may also be indicated:

- A Short Title of the anticipated proposal (50 characters or less);
- A Full Title of the anticipated proposal (which should not exceed 254 characters and is of a nature that is understandable by a scientifically trained person);
- A brief description of the primary research area(s) and objective(s) of the anticipated investigation (Note: the information in this item does not constrain in any way the Proposal Summary that must be submitted with the final proposal); and
- The names of any Co-Investigators and/or Collaborators as may be known by the time the NOI is submitted (Note: in order to enter such names, such team members must have previously accessed and registered in this NASA data system themselves; a PI cannot do this for them). After completing the indicated fields the NOI, is then electronically submitted (Note: a copy may be printed for reference).

Although it is most helpful to NASA if the NOI is submitted by the specified due date, a late NOI is still of value since the receipt of even a few unanticipated proposals can significantly delay and/or complicate the review process. A late NOI that contains (i) the name and identifier for the NRA of interest, (ii) the name and address of the applicant, and (iii) the key information listed above for an NOI may be submitted by E-mail directly to: <http://nspires.nasaprs.com>.

3.2 On-Time and Late Proposals

Each NRA will prominently list the deadline for proposal submission in the NRAs prefatory Summary of Solicitation. The required number of copies of the proposal (the default is 15 copies unless otherwise specified in the NRA), plus the signed original, must be received by the close of business (4:30 p.m. Eastern Time) on the Proposal Due Date as specified in the NRA’s Summary of Solicitation. Note that a postmark or other evidence of submission for delivery in advance of or on the Due Date does not satisfy the requirement for on-time delivery of a proposal. In addition, delivery by any method to any address other than the one specified in the NRA may result in the proposal being declared late (see further below). NASA does not accept proposals sent by collect postage, nor is NASA responsible for delayed delivery by commercial services or the United States Postal Service.

Proposers should be aware that neither NASA personnel nor the employees of support contractor that receives and handles proposals for NASA are empowered to authorize the submission of a late proposal and, therefore, such permission should not be requested. The decision to submit a late proposal is solely that of the proposer, and it is then NASA's decision whether to accept it or not. Late proposals may be considered for review and possible selection only if they appear to offer a distinct benefit to NASA (see Appendix B, Part (g), in this Guidebook). In this regard it is important to note that since almost every NRA receives many more high quality proposals than can be supported with the available funds, a determination by NASA that a late proposal is of distinct benefit over its competitors is likely to be rare.

3.3 Submission of Proposals

In order to prepare a fully compliant proposal, it is necessary to electronically complete, submit, and then print a Proposal Cover Page from the World Wide Web site <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/>. Submission of the Proposal Cover Page is not complete until the NSPIRES system assigns a unique proposal number to the proposal; this unique proposal number will appear on the Proposal Cover Page. Access to the Web page for a given NRA is identical to that for submission of an NOI (see Section 3.1 above). A help desk is available by E-mail at nspires-help@nasaprs.com, or by calling Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST at (202) 479-9376, for applicants who may have difficulty with accessing or submitting to this site.

The address for the delivery of proposals, including a telephone number point-of-contact for commercial delivery, is given in the Summary of Solicitation of each NRA. A receipt that verifies that a proposal has been received will be sent within two weeks of the proposal deadline. Any submitters not receiving such notification in that timeframe should immediately contact the help desk by E-mail at nspires-help@nasaprs.com, or by calling, Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST at (202) 479-9376, as well as the NASA Program Officer identified in the NRA.

Note: The submission address specified in an NRA may be at one of the NASA field Centers, a commercial support contractor, or a nonprofit organization (whether funded primarily by NASA or otherwise). Regardless of their nature, all receiving organizations are bound by the conditions of their employment policies, service contracts, or agreements with NASA to maintain strict confidentiality of the materials they handle. Furthermore, they are bound to ensure that their employees who handle proposals, or who in any way have access to information about or within proposals, do not have conflicts of interest with any of the proposers and are not in any way involved in proposing to the NRA themselves (see also Appendix C for a further discussion of conflict of interest issues).

3.4 Timeline for Review and Selection

NASA currently is committed to meeting a standard of no more than 150 days from the Due Date for proposals to the announcement of selections, and another 46 days after that announcement for the implementation of the award itself. Therefore, a request for the commencement of funding sooner than about 200 days after the Proposal Due Date is unlikely to be accommodated, and a proposal submitted in response to an NRA that is time-sensitive (e.g., to take advantage of a unique natural phenomena or programmatic

event) may be returned if, in the opinion of the cognizant Program Officer, there is insufficient time for its review and processing. Alternatively, time-sensitive proposals may be submitted as unsolicited proposals when the NRA selection cycle does not accommodate its unique circumstances. In such a case, however, the proposer is urged to read and carefully follow the guidance for unsolicited proposals given in Section 1.3 of this Guidebook.

3.5 Proposal Withdrawal by Proposer or Return by NASA [Ref.: Appendix B, Part (h)]

A proposal may be withdrawn by a written request signed by the proposer at any time for any reason, including the circumstance in which another organization has agreed to fund the proposal. Conversely, NASA reserves the right to return a proposal without review should the proposal:

- Be clearly non-responsive to the objectives and/or provisions of the NRA;
- Not meet the requirements for proposal format, content, and organization as specified in this Guidebook and/or the NRA itself;
- Fail to be delivered to the specified delivery address by the Proposal Due Date; and/or
- Be submitted with insufficient lead time to review, select, fund, and carry out a time-sensitive proposed effort (see Section 3.4 above).

APPENDIX A

GUIDE TO KEY DOCUMENTS ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

- All parts of the NASA Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Supplement (NFS) may be found through the index found at the World Wide Web (WWW) site <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/procurement/regs/nfstoc.htm>. Key parts of particular relevance to this Guidebook are:

- "Unsolicited proposals" NFS 1815.6
- "Broad Agency Announcements" NFS 1835.016
- "NASA Research Announcements" NFS 1835.016-71
- "Instructions for Responding to NASA Research Announcements" NFS 1852.235-72 (reproduced as Appendix B in this Guidebook)

- The following items may be found through active links from the NASA homepage at <http://www.nasa.gov/>:

- The NASA Strategic Plan: http://www.nasa.gov/pdf/1968main_strategi.pdf
- Links to all NASA Headquarters Mission Directorates: <http://www.nasa.gov/centers/hq/organization>
- Links to all NASA Field Centers and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory: <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/hq/centers.html>
- The master list of all current Broad Agency Announcements: <http://prod.nais.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/nais/index.cgi>
- The "Tasks Books" for each HQ Program Office that lists all currently supported research awards, including the Principal Investigator (PI) name, PI organization, and title and summary of the investigation (Note: not all of the HQ program offices will have Task Books in place): http://peer1.nasaprs.com/peer_review/index.cfm

- The following document may be found at <http://ec.msfc.nasa.gov/hq/library/unSol-Prop.html>: "Guidance for the Preparation and Submission of Unsolicited Proposals"

- The following document may be found at <http://ec.msfc.nasa.gov/hq/grcover.htm>: "Grant And Cooperative Agreement Handbook," NPG 5800.1

- The following items may be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html>

- "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions" OMB Circular A-21
- "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher" OMB Circular A-110

Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations"

- "Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations" OMB Circular A-122
- "Audits of States, Local Government And Non-Profit Organizations" OMB Circular A-133

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO NASA RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

NASA Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Supplement (NFS) Part 1852.235-72
(October 2002)

(a) **General.**

(1) Proposals received in response to a NASA Research Announcement (NRA) will be used only for evaluation purposes. NASA does not allow a proposal, the contents of which are not available without restriction from another source, or any unique ideas submitted in response to an NRA to be used as the basis of a solicitation or in negotiation with other organizations, nor is a pre-award synopsis published for individual proposals.

(2) A solicited proposal that results in a NASA award becomes part of the record of that transaction and may be available to the public on specific request; however, information or material that NASA and the awardee mutually agree to be of a privileged nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act.

(3) NRAs contain programmatic information and certain requirements which apply only to proposals prepared in response to that particular announcement. These instructions contain the general proposal preparation information which applies to responses to all NRAs.

(4) A contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or other agreement may be used to accomplish an effort funded in response to an NRA. NASA will determine the appropriate award instrument. Contracts resulting from NRAs are subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the NASA FAR Supplement. Any resultant grants or cooperative agreements will be awarded and administered in accordance with the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Handbook (NPG 5800.1).

(5) NASA does not have mandatory forms or formats for responses to NRAs; however, it is requested that proposals conform to the guidelines in these instructions. NASA may accept proposals without discussion; hence, proposals should initially be as complete as possible and be submitted on the proposers' most favorable terms.

(6) To be considered for award, a submission must, at a minimum, present a specific project within the areas delineated by the NRA; contain sufficient technical and cost information to permit a meaningful evaluation; be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the submitting organization; not merely offer to perform standard services or to just provide computer facilities or services; and not significantly duplicate a more specific current or pending NASA solicitation.

(b) **NRA-Specific Items.** Several proposal submission items appear in the NRA itself the unique NRA identifier; when to submit proposals; where to send proposals; number of copies required; and sources for more information. Items included in these instructions may be supplemented by the NRA.

(c) The following information is needed to permit consideration in an objective manner. NRAs will generally specify topics for which additional information or greater detail is desirable. Each proposal copy shall contain all submitted material, including a copy of the transmittal letter if it contains substantive information.

(1) Transmittal Letter or Prefatory Material.

- (i) The legal name and address of the organization and specific division or campus identification if part of a larger organization;
- (ii) A brief, scientifically valid project title intelligible to a scientifically literate reader and suitable for use in the public press;
- (iii) Type of organization: e.g., profit, nonprofit, educational, small business, minority, women owned, etc.;
- (iv) Name and telephone number of the principal investigator and business personnel who may be contacted during evaluation or negotiation;
- (v) Identification of other organizations that are currently evaluating a proposal for the same efforts;
- (vi) Identification of the NRA, by number and title, to which the proposal is responding;
- (vii) Dollar amount requested, desired starting date, and duration of project;
- (viii) Date of submission; and
- (ix) Signature of a responsible official or authorized representative of the organization, or any other person authorized to legally bind the organization (unless the signature appears on the proposal itself).

(2) Restriction on Use and Disclosure of Proposal Information. Information contained in proposals is used for evaluation purposes only. Offerors or quoters should, in order to maximize protection of trade secrets or other information that is confidential or privileged, place the following notice on the title page of the proposal and specify the information subject to the notice by inserting an appropriate identification in the notice. In any event, information contained in proposals will be protected to the extent permitted by law, but NASA assumes no liability for use and disclosure of information not made subject to the notice.

Notice

Restriction on Use and Disclosure of Proposal Information

The information (data) contained in [insert page numbers or other identification] of this proposal constitutes a trade secret and/or information that is commercial or financial and confidential or privileged. It is furnished to the Government in confidence with the understanding that it will not, without permission of the offeror, be used or disclosed other than for evaluation purposes; provided, however, that in the event a contract (or other agreement) is awarded on the basis of this proposal the Government shall have the right to use and disclose this information (data) to the extent provided in the contract (or other agreement). This restriction does not limit the Government's right to use or disclose this information (data) if obtained from another source without restriction.

(3) Abstract. Include a concise (200-300 word if not otherwise specified in the NRA) abstract describing the objective and the method of approach.

(4) Project Description.

(i) The main body of the proposal shall be a detailed statement of the work to be undertaken and should include objectives and expected significance; relation to the present state of knowledge; and relation to previous work done on the project and to related work in progress elsewhere. The statement should outline the plan of work, including the broad design of experiments to be undertaken and a description of experimental methods and procedures. The project description should address the evaluation factors in these instructions and any specific factors in the NRA. Any substantial collaboration with individuals not referred to in the budget or use of consultants should be described. Subcontracting significant portions of a research project is discouraged.

(ii) When it is expected that the effort will require more than one year, the proposal should cover the complete project to the extent that it can be reasonably anticipated. Principal emphasis should be on the first year of work, and the description should distinguish clearly between the first year's work and work planned for subsequent years.

(5) Management Approach. For large or complex efforts involving interactions among numerous individuals or other organizations, plans for distribution of responsibilities and arrangements for ensuring a coordinated effort should be described.

(6) Personnel. The principal investigator is responsible for supervision of the work and participates in the conduct of the research regardless of whether or not compensated under the award. A short biographical sketch of the principal investigator, a list of principal publications and any exceptional qualifications should be included. Omit social security number and other personal items which do not merit consideration in evaluation of the proposal. Give similar biographical information on other senior professional personnel who will be directly associated with the project. Give the names and titles of any other scientists and technical personnel associated substantially with the project in an advisory capacity. Universities should list the approximate number of students or other assistants, together with information as to their level of academic attainment. Any special industry-university cooperative arrangements should be described.

(7) Facilities and Equipment.

(i) Describe available facilities and major items of equipment especially adapted or suited to the proposed project, and any additional major equipment that will be required. Identify any Government-owned facilities, industrial plant equipment, or special tooling that are proposed for use. Include evidence of its availability and the cognizant Government points of contact.

(ii) Before requesting a major item of capital equipment, the proposer should determine if sharing or loan of equipment already within the organization is a feasible alternative. Where such arrangements cannot be made, the proposal should so state. The need for items that typically can be used for research and non-research purposes should be explained.

(8) Proposed Costs (U. S. Proposals Only).

(i) Proposals should contain cost and technical parts in one volume: do not use separate "confidential" salary pages. As applicable, include separate cost estimates for salaries and wages; fringe benefits; equipment; expendable materials and supplies; services; domestic and foreign travel; ADP expenses; publication or page charges;

consultants; subcontracts; other miscellaneous identifiable direct costs; and indirect costs. List salaries and wages in appropriate organizational categories (e.g., principal investigator, other scientific and engineering professionals, graduate students, research assistants, and technicians and other nonprofessional personnel). Estimate all staffing data in terms of staff-months or fractions of full-time.

(ii) Explanatory notes should accompany the cost proposal to provide identification and estimated cost of major capital equipment items to be acquired; purpose and estimated number and lengths of trips planned; basis for indirect cost computation (including date of most recent negotiation and cognizant agency); and clarification of other items in the cost proposal that are not self-evident. List estimated expenses as yearly requirements by major work phases.

(iii) Allowable costs are governed by [FAR Part 31](#) and the [NASA FAR Supplement Part 1831](#) (and OMB Circulars A21 for educational institutions and A-122 for nonprofit organizations).

(iv) Use of NASA funds--NASA funding may not be used for foreign research efforts at any level, whether as a collaborator or a subcontract. The direct purchase of supplies and/or services, which do not constitute research, from non-U.S. sources by U.S. award recipients is permitted. Additionally, in accordance with the National Space Transportation Policy, use of a non-U.S. manufactured launch vehicle is permitted only on a no-exchange-of-funds basis.

(9) **Security.** Proposals should not contain security classified material. If the research requires access to or may generate security classified information, the submitter will be required to comply with Government security regulations.

(10) **Current Support.** For other current projects being conducted by the principal investigator, provide title of project, sponsoring agency, and ending date.

(11) **Special Matters.**

(i) Include any required statements of environmental impact of the research, human subject or animal care provisions, conflict of interest, or on such other topics as may be required by the nature of the effort and current statutes, executive orders, or other current Government-wide guidelines.

(ii) Identify and discuss risk factors and issues throughout the proposal where they are relevant, and your approach to managing these risks.

(iii) Proposers should include a brief description of the organization, its facilities, and previous work experience in the field of the proposal. Identify the cognizant Government audit agency, inspection agency, and administrative contracting officer, when applicable.

(d) **Renewal Proposals.**

(1) Renewal proposals for existing awards will be considered in the same manner as proposals for new endeavors. A renewal proposal should not repeat all of the information that was in the original proposal. The renewal proposal should refer to its predecessor, update the parts that are no longer current, and indicate what elements of the research are expected to be covered during the period for which support is desired. A description of any significant findings since the most recent progress report should be included. The renewal proposal should treat, in reasonable detail, the plans for the next period, contain a cost estimate, and otherwise adhere to these instructions.

(2) NASA may renew an effort either through amendment of an existing contract or by a new award.

(e) **Length.** Unless otherwise specified in the NRA, effort should be made to keep proposals as brief as possible, concentrating on substantive material. Few proposals need exceed 15-20 pages. Necessary detailed information, such as reprints, should be included as attachments. A complete set of attachments is necessary for each copy of the proposal. As proposals are not returned, avoid use of "one of a kind" attachments.

(f) **Joint Proposals.**

(1) Where multiple organizations are involved, the proposal may be submitted by only one of them. It should clearly describe the role to be played by the other organizations and indicate the legal and managerial arrangements contemplated. In other instances, simultaneous submission of related proposals from each organization might be appropriate, in which case parallel awards would be made.

(2) Where a project of a cooperative nature with NASA is contemplated, describe the contributions expected from any participating NASA investigator and agency facilities or equipment which may be required. The proposal must be confined only to that which the proposing organization can commit itself. "Joint" proposals which specify the internal arrangements NASA will actually make are not acceptable as a means of establishing an agency commitment.

(g) **Late Proposals.** Proposals or proposal modifications received after the latest date specified for receipt may be considered if a significant reduction in cost to the Government is probable or if there are significant technical advantages, as compared with proposals previously received.

(h) **Withdrawal.** Proposals may be withdrawn by the proposer at any time before award. Offerors are requested to notify NASA if the proposal is funded by another organization or of other changed circumstances which dictate termination of evaluation.

(i) **Evaluation Factors.**

(1) Unless otherwise specified in the NRA, the principal elements (of approximately equal weight) considered in evaluating a proposal are its relevance to NASA's objectives, intrinsic merit, and cost.

(2) Evaluation of a proposal's relevance to NASA's objectives includes the consideration of the potential contribution of the effort to NASA's mission.

(3) Evaluation of its intrinsic merit includes the consideration of the following factors of equal importance:

(i) Overall scientific or technical merit of the proposal or unique and innovative methods, approaches, or concepts demonstrated by the proposal.

(ii) Offeror's capabilities, related experience, facilities, techniques, or unique combinations of these which are integral factors for achieving the proposal objectives.

(iii) The qualifications, capabilities, and experience of the proposed principal investigator, team leader, or key personnel critical in achieving the proposal objectives.

(iv) Overall standing among similar proposals and/or evaluation against the state-of-the-art.

(4) Evaluation of the cost of a proposed effort may include the realism and reasonableness of the proposed cost and available funds.

(j) **Evaluation Techniques.** Selection decisions will be made following peer and/or scientific review of the proposals. Several evaluation techniques are regularly used within NASA. In all cases proposals are subject to scientific review by discipline specialists in the area of the proposal. Some proposals are reviewed entirely in-house, others are evaluated by a combination of in-house and selected external reviewers, while yet others are subject to the full external peer review technique (with due regard for conflict-of-interest and protection of proposal information), such as by mail or through assembled panels. The final decisions are made by a NASA selecting official. A proposal which is scientifically and programmatically meritorious, but not selected for award during its initial review, may be included in subsequent reviews unless the proposer requests otherwise.

(k) **Selection for Award.**

(1) When a proposal is not selected for award, the proposer will be notified. NASA will explain generally why the proposal was not selected. Proposers desiring additional information may contact the selecting official who will arrange a debriefing.

(2) When a proposal is selected for award, negotiation and award will be handled by the procurement office in the funding installation. The proposal is used as the basis for negotiation. The contracting officer may request certain business data and may forward a model award instrument and other information pertinent to negotiation.

(l) **Additional Guidelines Applicable to Foreign Proposals and Proposals Including Foreign Participation.**

(1) NASA welcomes proposals from outside the U.S. However, foreign entities are generally not eligible for funding from NASA. Therefore, unless otherwise noted in the NRA, proposals from foreign entities should not include a cost plan unless the proposal involves collaboration with a U.S. institution, in which case a cost plan for only the participation of the U.S. entity must be included. Proposals from foreign entities and proposals from U.S. entities that include foreign participation must be endorsed by the respective government agency or funding/sponsoring in the country from which the foreign entity is proposing. Such endorsement should indicate that the proposal merits careful consideration by NASA, and if the proposal is selected, sufficient funds will be made available to undertake the activity as proposed.

(2) All foreign proposals must be typewritten in English and comply with all other submission requirements stated in the NRA. All foreign proposals will undergo the same evaluation and selection process as those originating in the U.S. All proposals must be received before the established closing date. Those received after the closing date will be treated in accordance with paragraph (g) of this provision. Sponsoring foreign government agencies or funding institutions may, in exceptional situations, forward a proposal without endorsement if endorsement is not possible before the announced closing date. In such cases, the NASA sponsoring office should be advised when a decision on endorsement can be expected.

(3) Successful and unsuccessful foreign entities will be contacted directly by the NASA sponsoring office. Copies of these letters will be sent to the foreign sponsor. Should a foreign proposal or a U.S. proposal with foreign participation be selected,

NASA's Office of External Relations will arrange with the foreign sponsor for the proposed participation on a no-exchange-of-funds basis, in which NASA and the non-U.S. sponsoring agency or funding institution will each bear the cost of discharging their respective responsibilities.

(4) Depending on the nature and extent of the proposed cooperation, these arrangements may entail:

- (i) An exchange of letters between NASA and the foreign sponsor; or
- (ii) A formal Agency-to-Agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

(m) **Cancellation of NRA.** NASA reserves the right to make no awards under this NRA and to cancel this NRA. NASA assumes no liability for canceling the NRA or for anyone's failure to receive actual notice of cancellation.

(End of provision)

APPENDIX C

PROPOSAL PROCESSING, REVIEW, AND SELECTION

C.1 Overview

NASA takes seriously its responsibility for ensuring that proposals are treated with the utmost confidentiality and are evaluated fairly and objectively without conflict of interest on the part of the reviewers. Therefore, regardless of the mailing address to which an NRA may direct proposals to be sent, it is NASA policy that NASA Civil Service personnel will be in charge of and direct all aspects of the review and selection processes, including the identification and invitation of peer review personnel, in-person monitoring of the deliberations of any peer review panel, and the adjudication of conflicts of interest that may be declared by panel personnel. Also, all non-Government reviewers are prohibited from making unauthorized disclosure of proposal information and evaluation materials and/or information (see the sample Nondisclosure Agreement in Section E.2, Appendix E), whereas Government employees who may be involved in the peer review process are bound by the proscriptions of Civil Service employment not to divulge confidential aspects of their duties.

Although proposers are provided with explanations for the final decisions regarding their proposals, it is NASA policy not to release the identities of the reviewers themselves nor the details of panel deliberations that culminate in the final assessments of the proposals. NASA depends upon the scientific community involved as peer reviewers to acknowledge conflicts of interest when they exist, to maintain confidentiality of the proceedings and results both during and after a review process, and to provide the fairest and most competent peer review possible.

An overview of the process from proposal submission through selection is as follows:

- At the time of the electronic submission of its *Proposal Cover Page* by the proposer, each proposal is given a unique identification code that is maintained throughout the entire process, and a log of all proposals received is provided to the cognizant NASA Program Officer within three working days if number of proposals received is less than 250; within five working days if number of proposals received is more than 250.
- The Program Officer selects panel and/or mail reviewers based on their known expertise relevant to the content of each proposal and avoidance of conflicts of interest, and requests their reviews based on the evaluation criteria established in the NRA (see also next section below).
- Whether by mail or as a member of a panel, NASA instructs all reviewers to base their comments on the specified evaluation criteria, to maintain confidentiality of their activities and of all proposal and review materials provided to them, to avoid any activities that may knowingly lead to conflicts of interest, and to report any conflicts as may become known to them during the course of the review activities. To this end, all reviewers not employed by the U.S. Government must submit a signed *Nondisclosure Agreement* before they are allowed to review any proposals (see Section E.2 in Appendix E in this Guidebook).

- The scientific and technical merits of each proposal are determined by the peer reviewers while meeting as a panel monitored by the cognizant NASA Program Officer or another NASA Headquarters employee (including those who may be serving under auspices of an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) appointment). The peer reviewers may also be asked to comment on the perceived programmatic relevancy and cost reasonableness of the proposals.

- A recommendation for selection or nonselection of each proposal is developed by the cognizant Program Officer and presented to the Selecting Official (as identified in the NRA) based on the quality of its science/technical peer review, any program-unique criteria (e.g., program balance) stated in the NRA, its relevance to the research objectives stated in the NRA and to NASA's strategic goals in general, its comparison to competing proposals of equal merits and objectives, and the available budget resources. Selections are then made by the NASA Selecting Official.

- After selection, each proposer is notified by letter or electronic mail of the disposition of his/her proposal. Sometimes this communication may also transmit an anonymous copy of the proposal's peer review. In any case, the proposer may request a debriefing from NASA, identifying strengths and weaknesses. NASA will decide whether this debriefing will be accomplished by sending the peer reviews by mail to the proposer or by oral communication.

- NASA also notifies Members of Congress of awards to any of their constituents. Following notification of proposers and of Congress, a list of selected proposals is posted at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/>. In addition to the proposal title, PI, and proposing organization, the abstract may also be posted. (Ref. NASA FAR Supplement 1805.3--)

- Official notification of selection for the solicitation is then forwarded by the Program Officer to a NASA Award Office that will contact the proposing organization to negotiate funding through an appropriate award instrument (see further in Appendix D in this Guidebook).

C.2 Evaluation Criteria

[Ref.: Appendix B, Part (i)]

The evaluation criteria in Appendix B, Part (i), of this Guidebook, as amended below by the words in italics, will apply to all NRAs released by NASA, unless otherwise stated in the individual NRA:

"(i). Evaluation Factors.

"(1) Unless otherwise specified in the NRA, the principal elements (of approximately equal weight) considered in evaluating a proposal are its intrinsic merit, its relevance to NASA's objectives, and its cost. *The failure of a proposal to be rated highly in any one of these elements is sufficient cause for the proposal to not be selected.*

"(2) Evaluation of a proposal's relevance to NASA's objectives includes the consideration of the potential contribution of the effort to NASA's mission as *expressed in its most recent NASA strategy documents and the specific objectives and goals given in the solicitation to which the proposal is submitted.*

"(3) Evaluation of intrinsic merit includes consideration of the following factors:

- (i) Overall scientific or technical merit of the proposal and/or unique and innovative methods, approaches, concepts, or advanced technologies demonstrated by the proposal;
- (ii) Offeror's capabilities, related experience, facilities, techniques, or unique combination of these which are integral factors for achieving the proposal's objectives;
- (iii) The qualifications, capabilities, and experience of the proposed principal investigator, team leader, or key personnel critical in achieving the proposal objectives; and
- (iv) Overall standing among similar proposals and/or evaluation against the state-of-the-art.

"(4) Evaluation of the cost of a proposed effort shall include the realism and reasonableness of the proposed cost, and *the comparison of that proposed cost to available funds. Low cost, while desirable, does not offset the importance of realism and reasonableness of the proposed budget.*"

Note that the NRA itself provides the focused, program-specific objectives that will define precisely what is meant by the term "relevance" in items (1) and (2) above. The evaluation forms that are provided to both mail and panel reviewers, will generally list (perhaps in abbreviated form) all criteria for which their opinion is requested. Reviewers are instructed to judge each proposal against the stated evaluation criteria and not to compare proposals to which they have access, even if they propose similar objectives. Only the NASA Program Officer may make binding comparisons of proposals during the process of developing the recommendation for selection.

C.3 Evaluation Processes

[Ref.: Appendix B, Part (j)]

As a matter of both policy and practice, proposals submitted to NASA are almost always reviewed by panels composed of the proposer's professional peers who have been screened for conflicts of interest. In addition, panel reviews may be augmented by one or more reviews solicited by mail by the Program Officer that are made available to the panel reviewers once they convene. In some circumstances, NASA may elect to evaluate proposals using only mail reviews. As a general rule, and as based on its deliberations, a peer panel is authorized to wholly or partially accept or reject any such mail reviews. Typically each member of the panel is provided with only a few of the proposals for which he/she is specifically tasked to read and report in detail during the plenary meeting of the group. There are almost always at least two such readers of each proposal. In all cases, however, copies of every proposal are available for inspection by the members of the panel while it is in session. The final consensus evaluation determined by the panel is reviewed and approved for completeness and clarity by the attending NASA Program Officer and, if appropriate, the chairperson of the panel.

The number and significance of strengths and weaknesses for a proposal determines its final summary evaluation based on the following adjectival scale (see also Prototype Proposal Evaluation Form in Section E.3 in Appendix E of this Guidebook):

Summary Evaluation	Basis for Summary Evaluation	Relationship of Summary Evaluation to Potential for Selection
<u>Excellent</u>	A thorough, and compelling proposal of exceptional merit that fully responds to the objectives of the NRA as documented by numerous or significant strengths and with no major weaknesses.	Top priority for selection in the absence of any issues of funding availability or programmatic priorities.
<u>Very Good</u>	A competent proposal of high merit that fully responds to the objectives of the NRA, whose strengths fully out-balance any weaknesses and none of whose weaknesses are considered major.	Second priority for selection in the absence of any issues of funding availability or programmatic priorities.
<u>Good</u>	A competent proposal that represents a credible response to the NRA, whose strengths and weaknesses essentially balance each other.	May be selected as funds permit based on programmatic priorities.
<u>Fair</u>	A proposal that provides a nominal response to the NRA but whose weaknesses outweigh any strengths.	Not selectable regardless of the availability of funds or programmatic priorities.
<u>Poor</u>	A seriously flawed proposal having one or more major weaknesses that constitute fatal flaws.	Not selectable regardless of the availability of funds or programmatic priorities.

Review panels are instructed not to compare proposals to each other but to base all evaluation comments against the criteria and objectives as stated in the NRA. To help ensure uniformity of the reviews, NASA asks its reviewers to document their findings using clear, cogent language that is understandable to the nonspecialist by means of perceived major and minor strengths and weaknesses (see Section E.3 in Appendix E below), where it is understood that a minor weakness is correctable if addressed early in the period of performance but that a major weakness is considered a serious if not fatal flaw or deficiency that may render the proposal unsuitable for consideration for funding (e.g., the proposal fails to address the NRAs objectives, does not show promise of making a significant advance in its field, or is unjustifiably too costly compared to the available resources).

For NASA's purposes of easily ranking the proposals in the order of their summary assessments, these adjectival ratings are commonly converted into a numerical scale from 5 for Excellent to 1 for Poor. Peer panels frequently choose to designate a score between two of these ratings; for example, a rating midway between Excellent and Very Good is designated as "E/VG ~ 4.5." However, panels are discouraged from attempting to assign ratings to any finer levels of discrimination since such precision generally cannot be substantiated or defended. Likewise, NASA Program Officers and Selecting Officials typically consider proposals ranked within one-tenth of a point to be essentially

co-equal and, therefore, invoke other factors to discriminate among them, e.g., relevance to NASA's objectives and interests, the balance of the research objectives addressed by other tasks within the program, and costs.

Note that on occasion a proposal may include some aspect(s) that is(are) considered undesirable or unnecessary (e.g., the development of hardware, the pursuit of a certain research objectives, plans for excessive travel, or the support of certain personnel). In such a case, and at the option of the cognizant NASA Program Officer, a proposal may be evaluated more than once: first as originally proposed, and then again as "descoped" of one or more of its original provisions. In such a case, the rating of the descoped proposal may justify its consideration for funding consistent with the policy for Partial Selections discussed in Section C.5.2 below.

C.4 Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality

[Ref.: Appendix B, Parts (a)(1), (a)(2), and (c)(2)]

The issues of conflict of interest and confidentiality are of critical importance to the peer review process. All reviewers of NASA proposals are directed to avoid not only actual but also any apparent conflicts of interest and to maintain confidentiality about all activities involved in the review process. In a worst case, a selection process could be nullified by the *post facto* disclosure of a conflict of interest or breach in confidentiality. Reviewers are personally responsible for identifying and calling to the attention of the cognizant NASA Program Officer any conflicts of interest situations, as well as maintaining confidentiality regarding each proposal that they handle or to which they may be exposed during the course of the review process. Regardless of whether the review process is by mail or by a convened panel, the presiding NASA Program Officer addresses and adjudicates conflicts of interest based on the following general guidelines:

- Every reviewer agrees to avoid conflicts of interest and to maintain the confidentiality of his/her participation in and the results of the review process by signing a Nondisclosure Agreement in advance of being sent any proposals (a generic version of this Agreement is given in Section E.2, Appendix E; note that reviewers who are U.S. Government employees do not have to sign such a form since their conduct is covered by the Ethics in Government Act). By signing a Nondisclosure Agreement, a reviewer agrees to abide by its guidelines for conflict of interest and confidentiality. Should an unanticipated conflict arise or otherwise become known during the course of examining the proposal under review, the reviewer is obligated to inform the cognizant NASA Program Officer and cease participation pending a NASA decision on the issue.

- NASA makes every effort to never allow a reviewer to see a proposal with which a conflict of interest is known to exist. Should that circumstance inadvertently happen, the reviewer is instructed to immediately return the proposal and is disqualified from participation in any way in its review. Occasionally, NASA must ask personnel to participate on a panel that will consider one or more proposals for which a reviewer does have acknowledged conflicts of interest. In cases like this, the reviewer is excused from the panel during all deliberations of those proposals, and in some cases may also be excused from the deliberation of any other proposals that are judged to be in direct programmatic competition with the conflicted proposals.

- Disclosure by a reviewer of either the proposals themselves and their evaluation materials and discussions is never condoned by NASA under any circumstances at any time, even after the selections are announced. Since the review process is not complete until the selections are announced, a breach of confidentiality of the review process could result in the entire selection process for an NRA being declared invalid. Just as serious, but on a more personal basis, unauthorized disclosure of privileged review information may lead to the proposer and/or his/her proposing colleagues to make critical career decisions based on erroneous, preselection hearsay information.

C.5 Selection Procedures

C.5.1 Overview

[Ref.: Appendix B, Parts (j) & (k)]

After all reviews and evaluations are completed, the Program Officer for the NRA develops a recommendation for selection based on the results of each proposal's intrinsic merit, its overall relevance to the program objectives as stated in the NRA (including programmatic factors such as balance between objectives or disciplines), and the realism and reasonableness of the proposed costs as compared to the available budget. The Program Officer then presents and defends this recommendation before the NASA Selecting Official identified in the NRA, who then selects the proposals to be funded. The general relationship of the Summary Evaluation rating to the potential for selection is given in the table in Section C.3 above. In this regard, note that owing to the shortage of budget resources and/or issues of programmatic balance, proposals of nominally high intrinsic merits may have to be declined.

As soon as possible after the selection is concluded, the Selecting Official or Program Officer informs each proposer of the selection or declination of his/her proposal by postal letter or electronic mail and offers a debriefing. However, such correspondence does not constitute an award to the selected proposer nor a commitment to transmit funds (see Appendix D in this Guidebook for further information about NASA's procedures for management of selected proposals).

C.5.2 Partial Selections

[Ref.: Appendix B, Part (k)]

Part (k) of Appendix B of this Guidebook, is augmented by inclusion of Paragraph (3) as follows:

"(3) NASA may elect to offer selection of only a portion of a proposed investigation, usually at a level of support reduced from that requested in the original proposal. In such a case, the proposer will be given the opportunity to accept or decline selection based on the reduced effort and/or budget. If the proposer accepts such an offer, a revised budget and statement of work may be required before funding action on the proposal can be initiated. If the proposer declines the offer of a partial selection, the offer of selection may be withdrawn in its entirety by NASA."

See also the concluding material in Section C.3 above.

Should NASA offer to select such a descoped proposal, it is generally done so for a lesser amount of support than that requested in the original proposal budget. Should

this reduction be greater than 20 percent of that originally proposed, a revised budget and statement of work will have to be submitted by the proposer.

C.5.3 Disclosure of Selections and Nonselections

For selected proposals, NASA considers the Proposal Title, the Principal Investigator's name and organization, and the Proposal Summary to be in the public domain and will post that information on an appropriate publicly accessible location. Therefore, prospective proposers should refer to Section 2.3.1 in this Guidebook as well as Appendix B, Part (a)(2) for guidance on the preparation of their Proposal Summaries in anticipation of public disclosure. If a proposal is partially selected by NASA, the proposer will be given the opportunity prior to public disclosure to modify the Proposal Summary so that it correctly describes the funded research. Selected proposers are free, but not required by NASA, to release any additional information about their proposals that they may choose. However, NASA considers other portions of proposals to be proprietary and, therefore, does not release these sections of successful proposals to the public without prior consultation with the proposer.

It is NASA policy not to release any information about any of the nonselected proposals.

C.6 Debriefing of Proposers

A proposer has the right to be informed of the major factor(s) that led to the acceptance or rejection of his/her proposal. At the discretion of the NASA Program Officer, such debriefings may be entirely oral (usually by telephone) or entirely in writing, or a combination of the two. A proposer may request an in-person debriefing at NASA Headquarters, but NASA funds cannot be used to defray travel costs. Again it is emphasized that nonselected proposers should be aware that proposals of nominally high intrinsic and programmatic merits may be declined for reasons entirely unrelated to any scientific or technical weaknesses *per se* (see Section C.5.1 in this Appendix).

The nonselection of a proposal does not restrict the submission of a similar or even the same effort by the proposer(s) in response to appropriate future NASA solicitations or to other appropriate funding agencies or organizations. However, if a proposal to NASA is contemplated, proposers are strongly urged to carefully consider the entirety of comments offered during their debriefing, as well as the proposal guidelines given in Section 1.7 of this Guidebook, before making the decision to resubmit the same, or nearly the same, proposal. Merely correcting any perceived deficiencies in a proposal as noted by a review process for one NRA in no way guarantees a higher rating in another solicitation.

APPENDIX D

PROPOSAL AWARDS AND CONTINUED SUPPORT

D.1 New Awards

D.1.1 Awards to NASA Centers

A selected proposal submitted from a NASA Center, as well as from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, is funded directly by NASA Headquarters through the Agency's funding mechanism called a Research and Technology Operating Plan (RTOP).

D.1.2 Awards to Non-NASA Organizations

A NASA award is signed only by a NASA Grant or Contracting Officer (called an "Award Officer" for the purposes of this Guidebook) and is addressed to the proposing organization. Only an appointed NASA Award Officer can make commitments, obligations, or awards on behalf of the Agency and authorize the expenditure of funds. As a professional courtesy, this award will be preceded by notification by electronic mail or postal mail from the NASA Program Officer to the Principal Investigator. It is important to note that no commitment on the part of NASA or the Government is legally binding, even if in writing by way of a letter of selection, from anyone other than a certified NASA Award Officer.

NASA chooses the funding vehicle best suited for the project and the proposing organization, which can be a grant, a contract, an interagency agreement, or a cooperative agreement as defined further below. It is for the purpose of aiding NASA in choosing the appropriate post-selection award and reporting requirements that the Proposal Cover Page format (see Section 2.3.2 in this Guidebook) asks the proposer to designate his/her type of organization according to the definitions given in Section 1.4.1 of this Guidebook (see also Appendix B, Part (c)(1)(iii) of this Guidebook, as well as the *NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Handbook* referenced in Appendix A). Regardless of the type of award, selected investigators are urged to work with their own organization's grants/contracts office (sometimes called the Office of Sponsored Research) to understand which funding vehicle is being used as the source of support for their award, since the reporting requirements and deadlines vary with the type of funding mechanism.

- Grant – A funding instrument used by the Government to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute. The objective of a grant is the general enhancement of the field of scientific and technical programs of interest to NASA. The recipient of the grant is an organization, not the Principal Investigator (PI), although the PI is responsible for conduct of the project. No substantial technical involvement is expected between NASA and the recipient, nor does the Government direct the research by the PI. A grant is usually funded on a yearly basis, and the products expected from a grantee are Annual Progress Reports and a Final Progress Report. Grants with nonprofit organizations are managed by a NASA Grant Officer following the policies set forth in the *Grant And Cooperative Agreement Handbook* (see Appendix A for access information).

- Contract – A mutually binding legal commitment between the Government and a contractor whose principal purpose is the acquisition by purchase, lease, or barter of property or services from the contractor for the direct benefit to or use by the Government. The Principal Investigator is responsible for scientific conduct of the project. In general, contracts are negotiated and have deliverable products, i.e., the Government "purchases" a product that, in the case of an NRA, is a study in a specified area of basic research. Normally, for proposals selected through an NRA, no fee or profit is paid under cost contracts with educational organizations or nonprofit organizations, as well as cost-sharing contracts with any type of entity. Non cost-sharing contracts with commercial organizations are fee bearing. Contracts typically carry a variety of reporting requirements that will be specified in their terms. Contracts with either nonprofit or for profit organizations are managed by a NASA Contracting Officer following the policies in the FAR and NFS (see Appendix A for access information).

- Interagency Agreement – A transaction by which one U.S. Government agency (the requesting agency) obtains needed supplies or services from another U.S. Government agency (the servicing agency). Such agreements are negotiated by direct contact between NASA administrative personnel and those of the other agency and may involve either the direct or reimbursable transfer of funds from the requesting agency to the servicing agency. Interagency agreements for the transfer of Federal funds are arranged by NASA management following currently applicable policies and procedures.

- Cooperative Agreement – An agreement similar to a grant with the exception that NASA and the recipient are each expected to have substantial technical interaction for the performance of the project. A cooperative agreement is usually funded on a yearly basis. The only products expected to NASA are Annual Progress Reports and a Final Progress Report. Cooperative agreements with nonprofit organizations are managed by a NASA Grant Officer, while cooperative agreements with for profit entities may be managed by a Contracting Officer or a Grant Officer. In any case, cooperative agreements are managed pursuant to the policies set forth in the *Grant And Cooperative Agreement Handbook* (see Appendix A for access information).

For all of these types of awards, NASA agrees to provide a specific level of support for a specified period of time. Owing to the intrinsic yearly nature of the Federal budget process, funding is usually only provided in increments of one year at a time, although there can be exceptions to this rule. If the award funding is to be provided on an annual basis, the recipient receives an award supplement for the successive period provided that funds are available and that the results reported through their Yearly Progress Reports indicate that further support is warranted (Note: funding supplements are sometimes called "renewals"; see also Section D.4 below in this Appendix). NASA occasionally sponsors programs that fund selected tasks for up to five years, although in such cases the selected tasks are subject to full peer evaluation after the first three years in order to qualify for continued funding.

The award period begins on the effective date specified in the award document and ends on the indicated expiration date. For a grant or cooperative agreement, expenses incurred within the 90-day period preceding the effective date of the award may be authorized by the recipient organization, but such expenses are made at the recipient's risk. Expenses after the scheduled expiration date of the award may be made only to honor documented commitments made on or before the expiration date.

D.2 Requests for Augmentation Funding

Occasionally a selected investigation may have a valid need for additional funding due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., the failure of a critical piece of equipment, or unanticipated increase in costs of an approved item or labor rates). In such cases, the proposer may request an augmentation to the award by submitting a letter proposal to the cognizant Program Officer, with a copy to the Award Officer, that describes why the increase is needed, the impact to the selected investigation if the augmentation is not approved, and a budget for the augmentation signed by an authorized representative of the proposing organization. The Program Officer will review such requests as soon as possible and make a recommendation to the NASA Procurement Officer for funding or not. If the decision is favorable, the recipient must have written approval from a NASA Award Officer for an increase to his/her approved budget before incurring expenses beyond the authorized award. In any case, such requests for additional funding should be made only for the most extreme and demanding of circumstances since NASA funding reserves are always extremely limited. Note that a request for an augmentation for an award during a no cost extension (see section D.3 below) is not allowed.

The procedures described above apply only to grants and cooperative agreements with nonprofit organizations. Cost growth on a cooperative agreement with a for profit organization is the responsibility of the recipient. Finally, any increase in scope on a contract is a subject to negotiation and prior approval of the Contracting Officer.

D.3 No Cost Extensions

A no cost extension of an award can be requested when a Principal Investigator for a selected investigation realizes that he/she cannot complete the objectives of the proposed project before the specified expiration date of the award. In such cases, the following policies apply:

- In most cases of a grant or a cooperative agreement with a nonprofit entity, the recipient organization may unilaterally initiate a one-time no cost extension of the award's expiration date for up to 12 months by notifying the NASA Procurement Officer in writing of the revised date and the justification for the extension before the end of the period of performance. A copy of this request should also be sent to the Program Officer. NASA has the right to deny the extension if it is determined that it is merely for the purpose of using unobligated funds, if the extension may require additional funds, or if the extension involves any change in the approved objectives or scope of the project. See Provisions 1260.23, and 1274.909 of the *Grants and Cooperative Agreements Handbook* (see Appendix A for Web site) for further details.

- In the case of a cooperative agreement with a commercial firm, the parties may extend the expiration date if additional time is required to complete the milestones at no increase in Government resources. Requests for approval for no-cost extensions must be forwarded to the NASA Agreement Officer no later than ten days prior to the expiration of the award to be considered.

- In the case of a contract, NASA authorizes a no cost extension based on a written request by the recipient organization to their NASA Award Officer in sufficient time to receive approval. Investigators may not make new commitments or incur new expenditures after the established expiration date until an extension is formally granted.

D.4 Funding Continuation ("Renewals") of Multiple Year Awards

It is NASA's usual policy to award multiple year awards. If the decision to provide multiple year funding to a research proposal is made through a grant or cooperative agreement, the special condition at 1260.52 of the *Grants and Cooperative Agreement Handbook*, entitled "Multiple Year Grant or Cooperative Agreement," will be included in the award. Periods approved under the Multiple Year Grant or Cooperative Agreement special condition at 1260.52 and funded at the levels specified in the special condition are not considered to be new awards. Therefore, new proposals, new proposal-related certifications (such as given in Appendix E of this Guidebook), new technical evaluations, and new budget proposals are not required as long as this information for the multiple year period was reviewed and approved as part of the original proposal. An Annual Progress Report is due 60 days prior to the anniversary date of every grant and cooperative agreement except for the final year when a final report, called a Summary of Research, is due within 90 days of the expiration date of the award; see Provisions 1260.22 and 1260.151(d) in the *Grants and Cooperative Agreement Handbook*.

The funding levels for multiple year awards is fixed at the time that the award is made by a NASA Procurement Officer. However, a revised budget for the next year of a multiple year award will be required (i) if the anticipated expenditures are greater than that stated in the award, (ii) if the research has appreciably changed in scope, or (iii) if changes have been made to the planned purchases of equipment. Requests for augmentations for work that is beyond the scope of the originally approved proposal may require technical evaluations by NASA.

Nevertheless, NASA reserves the right, with consent from the recipient, to terminate any multiple year grant and or cooperative agreement whenever one of the three conditions cited in Paragraph 1260.52 occurs.

D.5 Completing an Award

At the completion of a grant or cooperative agreement, certain reports are required by NASA and will be specified in the award document. Exhibits G and H to the *Grants and Cooperative Agreement Handbook* list the required reports. For a research grant, one of the most common award types, the following final reports are generally required:

- Final Federal Cash Transaction Report (SF 272)
- Summary of Research
- Subject Inventions Final Report
- Final Inventory Report of Federally-Owned Property

APPENDIX E

CERTIFICATIONS, SAMPLE AGREEMENTS, AND FORMS

E.1 Certifications and Assurances

E.1.1 Certification of Compliance on *Proposal Cover Page*

There are currently two formal Certifications and one formal Assurance required as part of a proposal submitted in response to a NASA research solicitation. The Certifications and Assurance are stated in Sections E.1.2 through E.1.4 below and apply to all organizations except U.S. Federal Institutions. In order to reduce paper work required by the submitting organizations, the “Certification of Compliance...”, reproduced directly below, is now included at the top of the printout of the *Proposal Cover Page*. This certification affirms that these requirements are met by the proposing organization once the printed version of the *Cover Page* is signed by the Authorizing Official of the proposing organization (or by the individual proposer if there is no proposing organization) and submitted with the proposal. Therefore, the Certifications and Assurance reproduced in sections E.1.2 through E.1.4 are included only for reference and information; they should not be submitted with the proposal.

Certification of Compliance with Applicable Executive Orders and U.S. Code

By submitting the proposal identified in the Cover Sheet/Proposal Summary in response to this Research Announcement, the Authorizing Official of the proposing organization (or the individual proposer if there is no proposing organization) as identified below:

- certifies that the statements made in this proposal are true and complete to the best of his/her knowledge;
- agrees to accept the obligations to comply with NASA award terms and conditions if an award is made as a result of this proposal; and
- confirms compliance with all provisions, rules, and stipulations set forth in the two Certifications and one Assurance contained in this NRA (namely, (i) the Assurance of Compliance with the NASA Regulations Pursuant to Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs, and (ii) Certifications, Disclosures, and Assurances Regarding Lobbying and Debarment & Suspension.

Willful provision of false information in this proposal and/or its supporting documents, or in reports required under an ensuing award, is a criminal offense (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001).

In addition, proposers should be aware that NRAs released by some NASA program offices will require additional, specialized certifications (e.g., concerning the impact of proposed research that includes environmental, human, or animal care provisions, or other topics required by statute, Executive Order, or Government policies) that will need to be individually reproduced from the NRA, signed, and submitted with a proposal. If such cases, the certifications will be provided in the individual NRAs.

E.1.2 Assurance of Compliance with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Regulations Pursuant to Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs

"The Organization, corporation, firm, or other organization on whose behalf this assurance is signed, hereinafter called "Applicant"

"HEREBY AGREES THAT it will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20U.S.C. 1680 et seq.), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 16101 et seq.) and all requirements imposed by or pursuant to the Regulation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (14 CFR Part 1250)(hereinafter called "NASA") issued pursuant to these laws, to the end that in accordance with these laws and regulations, no person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicapped condition, or age be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the Applicant receives federal financial assistance from NASA; and HEREBY GIVES ASSURANCE THAT it will immediately take any measure necessary to effectuate this agreement.

"If any real property or structure thereon is provided or improved with the aid of federal financial assistance extended to the Applicant by NASA, this assurance shall obligate the Applicant, or in the case of any transfer of which federal financial assistance is extended or for another purpose involving the provision of similar services or benefits. If any personal property is so provided, this assurance shall obligate the Applicant for the period during which it retains ownership or possession of the property. In all other cases, this assurance shall obligate the Applicant for the period during which the federal financial assistance is extended to it by NASA.

"THIS ASSURANCE is given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all federal grants, loans, contract, property, discounts or other federal financial assistance extended after the date hereof to the Applicant by NASA, including installation payments after such date on account of applications for federal financial assistance which were approved before such date. The Applicant recognizes and agrees that such federal financial assistance will be extended in reliance on the representations and agreements made in this assurance, and that the United States shall have the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance. This assurance is binding on the Applicant, its successors, transferees, and assignees, and the person or persons whose signatures appear below are authorized to sign on behalf of the Applicant."

E.1.3 Certification Regarding Lobbying

"No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

"If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

"The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

"This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000, and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure."

E.1.4 Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters

“This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 14 CFR, Part 1265, Participant’s responsibilities, published as Part VII of the May 26, 1988, *Federal Register* (pages 19160-19211).

“(1) The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:

- Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency;
- Have not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
- Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and
- Have not within three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or local) terminated for cause or default.

“(2) Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.”

E.2 Sample Nondisclosure and Conflict of Interest Agreement

As discussed in section C.1 of this Guidebook, every person (other than a Civil Servant) who is asked to serve as reviewer of proposals submitted to NASA must sign a statement concerning the nondisclosure of the proposal materials to which they may have access either as a mail-in reviewer or as a member of a review panel that will consider the proposal, as well as their obligation to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have with either the proposing personnel or organizations. Once signed, these agreements are kept on permanent file by NASA, and no proposal materials are sent to a reviewer without confirming that his/her agreement is on file. An example of such an agreement is reproduced as follows:

PROPOSAL PEER REVIEW NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENT,
AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST AVOIDANCE

In the performance of peer review of proposals submitted to NASA, the undersigned may have access to or be furnished with information that contains unpublished research results, unpublished research ideas, and/or proprietary plans, information, and budgetary data. All NASA supervisory and management personnel and reviewers, and all non-NASA participants, are bound by Federal regulations to maintain the confidentiality of such information and to avoid conflicts of interest in the review process. (Note that Federal law prohibits Federal employees from making unauthorized disclosure of confidential information (18 U.S.C. 1905)). Therefore, with respect to any proposals that may be furnished to or discussed in the presence of the undersigned, or that the undersigned may have access to or learns about, the undersigned agrees:

- 1) to use such data and information only for the purpose of carrying out the requested proposal review;
- 2) to refrain from disclosing or discussing such data and information with submitters of proposals, other reviewers, non-NASA support personnel, or NASA personnel outside the meetings of any designated peer review sessions;
- 3) to refrain from copying in part or all of any proposals that may be provided;
- 4) to return to NASA all proposals that may be provided along with all review sheets and other forms that have been generated in the course of the review process, or to make other disposition of such materials as directed by NASA;
- 5) to exercise due care to avoid any real or apparent conflict of interest in carrying out any reviews (in particular, a reviewer is not permitted to take part in the review of a proposal that originates from his/her home organization; or if any of the proposal's personnel are closely related to the reviewer, e.g., household family members, partners, or professional associates; or if the reviewer has a financial interest in the proposing organization, e.g., ownership of stock or securities, employment, or arrangements for employment). In addition, proposal reviewers agree to avoid the real or apparent conflict of interest created by participating in the peer review for a particular solicitation for which they or professional associates (e.g. from their home organization) have submitted substantially similar investigations; and
- 6) to advise NASA of the disclosure of any information obtained from NASA that is disclosed, used, or handled in a manner inconsistent with this agreement.

Printed Name, Signature, and Date: _____

E.3 Sample Proposal Evaluation Form

The following Sample Proposal Evaluation Form reflects the principles discussed in Appendix C of this *Guidebook* for the evaluation of proposals submitted to an NRA, where it is understood that the blocks for strengths, weaknesses, and narrative text are of unrestricted size. The actual form is typically customized to reflect the objectives and needs of the particular NRA for which a proposal was submitted.

PROTOTYPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION FORM

[Note: This Evaluation Form is only representative of what might be provided to the reviewers based on the unique specifications for the solicited proposals; in particular, Criteria 2 and 3 may be evaluated in separate venues from that used for Criteria 1.]

Proposal No.:	
PI/Organization:	
Proposal Title:	

1. Intrinsic Merit of Proposed Research *[Note: Individual, weights may be specified for the four main characteristics below; comments are to be expressed in terms of Strengths and Weaknesses that may be differentiated as Major and Minor as appropriate.]*

- Overall Scientific and Technical Merit.
 - o Intent and relevance:
 - Scientific importance of the proposed investigation to the field.
 - Clarity and completeness of proposed investigation.
 - o Proposed methodology and approach:
 - Technical feasibility and merit of proposed research plan.
 - Clarity and completeness of proposed research plan.
 - o Expectation of closure of effort based on proposed activities.
- Capabilities, relevant experience, and facilities of proposing organization.
- Qualifications, capabilities, and relevant experience of proposing personnel.
- Overall standing of proposal among similar proposals and against state-of-the-art.

Summary Evaluation For Intrinsic Merit *[Note: This Summary may be as long as required but it must reflect the documented Strengths and Weaknesses.]*

2. Relevance to NASA's Objectives *[Note: Even if evaluation of this factor is reserved for separate determination by NASA, comments from Science/Technical reviewer's are sometimes solicited and always welcome.]*

Relevance to the specific objectives in the solicitation and to the themes and goals of the sponsoring NASA Program Office's current Strategic Plan.

3. Cost Realism and Reasonableness *[Note: Even if evaluation of this factor is reserved for separate determination by NASA, comments from Science/Technical reviewer's are sometimes solicited and always welcome.]*

Realism of cost in terms of proposed scope/tasks and reasonableness of cost in context of proposed personnel and purchases/travel/direct costs.

SUMMARY EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL

- **Narrative Text** *[Note: Length of narrative text may be as long as required, but it must reflect documented strengths and weaknesses; if assessing a descoped proposal, it must clearly identify and justify the recommended deletions from original proposal.]*
- **Overall Summary Evaluation** *[Note: Only one rating box is to be checked consistent with narrative Summary Evaluation.]*

Excellent	E/VG	Very Good	VG/G	Good	G/F	Fair	F/P	Poor

Guidelines for Determination of Overall Evaluation

- A competent proposal that demonstrates a credible response to the solicitation but strengths and weaknesses essentially balance each other is properly designated as "Good."
- In the absence of significant Weaknesses, a finding of Strengths of increasing significance and number generally warrants a progressively better rating, and vice versa for findings of Weaknesses. However, even a single Major Weakness that identifies a fatal or "uncorrectable" flaw or shortcoming is sufficient to offset any number of Strengths and may justify a rating of less than Good.
- If a significant Weakness may be nullified by the unambiguous deletion ("descoping") of a well-identified element or provision of the proposal, the proposal may be rated a second time under the express condition of that descoping.

APPENDIX F

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

F.1 Who answers questions about an award?

Questions on technical matters prior to an award should be addressed to the NASA Program Officer listed in the original NRA. Questions on technical matters after an award are addressed to the Technical Monitor identified on the cover page of the award document. Questions about administrative and budgetary matters are addressed to the NASA Award (i.e., Grants or Contracting) Officer. The PI's organizational research/grants office will know this point of contact from the official award document. It is important for the PI to know the various points of contact, including his/her organization's research/grants office, the NASA Award Officer, the NASA Technical Monitor, and/or the NASA Program Officer. Note that the NASA Technical Monitor and Program Officer may be the same person.

F.2 Is all the information in this Guidebook needed to submit a proposal?

Starting with the formal publication of this Guidebook, most NRAs released by NASA Headquarters will only contain information specific to the technical description of that one advertised program. The NRA will then refer prospective proposers to this Guidebook for all common or "default" requirements, policies, procedures, and formats to be used for the preparation of proposals unless specifically exempted otherwise in the NRA. It is the intention of NASA to restrict exceptions to these standards to items that are unique to a given NRA.

F.3 Who is responsible for what?

The Principal Investigator is expected to provide scientific and technical leadership for the proposed research and the timely publication of results. The PI's organization has responsibility for general supervision of all award activities, especially for all fiduciary matters, and also for notifying NASA of any significant problems relating to financial or administrative matters, including issues of scientific misconduct and when the PI must be changed for some reason (see also F.9 below). NASA is responsible for the appropriate and timely review, selection, and funding of proposals submitted in response to the NRA and for monitoring the selected proposals during their periods of performance.

F.4 Who determines the type of award to be made?

For non-NASA recipients, NASA determines the appropriate funding instrument (a grant, a contract, or a cooperative agreement; an interagency agreement; or an intra-NASA funding instrument) for each award based on the nature of the program for which the competition was held and the type of proposing organization. Occasionally an NRA will specify that only one type of award will be made based on its unique circumstances or requirements.

F.5 Who monitors an award?

An award is monitored by the NASA Technical Monitor or the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative, who serves as an official resource to the NASA Grants or Contracting Officer, respectively. This person is knowledgeable about the technical aspects of the award and provides scientific and technical advice, including reviews of progress reports, to the Award Officer. The Award Officer has responsibility to ensure that the award is properly administered, including technical, cost, and schedule aspects.

F.6 Is it "my" award?

Although the PI usually originates and writes the proposal and has technical/scientific leadership of the work, NASA's funding awards are legally issued to the proposing organization at which the PI is employed and not to the PI personally. Although a PI may use the term "my grant" (or contract or cooperative agreement), the distinction between the PI and the legal grant recipient is real, and the PI should understand the various responsibilities for the administration of the award due to this distinction.

F.7 Must every proposal include certain documents?

Awards for financial assistance are subject to certain U.S. statutory and other general requirements, such as compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and other laws and regulations, e.g., prohibition of discrimination; prohibition of misconduct in science and engineering; requirements for a drug-free workplace; restrictions on lobbying; requirements for patents and copyrights; and the use of U.S.-flag carriers for international travel, whenever possible. For all NRAs submitted through the NASA's electronic proposal system, the signature on the Proposal Cover Page by the Authorizing Official of the proposing organization certifies that the organization is cognizant of and in compliance with all applicable certifications (for information purposes these certifications are given in Section E.1 of Appendix E of this Guidebook).

F.8 Once an award has been implemented, for what must prior approval be requested?

Prior approval requirements are set forth in the FAR, the NFS, and the *NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Handbook*. Several of the most common situations requiring prior written authorization from NASA are:

- transfer of the project to another organization at which the PI takes employment (see also F.9 below);
- a substantive change in objectives or scope of the project;
- a change in the designation of the PI, e.g., because of his/her change in employment status, retirement, or death;
- a substantial change in the PI's commitment of effort;
- new or revised allocations for purchase of major equipment;
- the intent to award a subcontract in excess of \$100,000 or to purchase equipment in excess of \$5000 that was not part of the original budget; and/or
- actions involving a change of obligations (legally called a "novation").

The recipient organization requests approval for such actions from the NASA Award Officer, who often will ask for a recommendation from the cognizant Technical Monitor. However, only the NASA Award Officer can officially approve or deny such requests.

F.9 What happens if the PI changes organizations?

When a PI leaves his/her organization during the course of an award to that organization, that organization has the option of nominating an appropriately qualified replacement PI or recommending termination of the award. In the former case, NASA has the right of approval of the recommended replacement PI. If the replacement is approved, the award continues at the original organization through its nominal period of performance. However, if NASA judges that participation of the original PI is critical to the project owing to his/her unique knowledge and capabilities, then NASA will seek the agreement of both the PI's original and new organizations for the termination of the original award at the PI's original organization followed by implementation of a new award at the PI's new organization to complete the project.

F.10 Who owns any equipment purchased through the award?

Title to most equipment purchased or fabricated for the purpose of conducting research by an academic organization or other nonprofit organization using NASA funds normally vests with the recipient organization of the award. In some instances, NASA may elect to take title but, if so, the recipient will be notified of that intention when the purchase is approved by NASA. Title to equipment acquired by a commercial organization using Federal funds provided through any type of award vests with the Government.

F.11 Can an award be suspended or terminated?

The award document will contain procedures that define conditions for suspension or termination of awards. For example, lack of adequate progress in meeting the objectives of the award or failure to submit required reports set forth in the award document on a timely basis may be grounds for termination of an award. Awards may also be terminated by mutual agreement between the recipient organization and NASA. In the event of a termination, the recipient is not entitled to expend any more funds except to the extent required to meet commitments that, in the judgment of NASA, had become firm before the effective date of the termination. A suspension of advance payments may also occur when a recipient demonstrates an unwillingness or inability to comply with financial reporting requirements. Where this occurs, the recipient would be required to finance its operations with its own funds, and NASA would reimburse the recipient's costs. Advance payments would be reinstated upon corrective action by the recipient organization. An award may also be terminated in cases of professional misconduct on the part of the PI.

F.12 Are there required reports?

The two types of technical reports generally required for grants are as follows. Starting sometime in 2006, both of them are expected to be submitted through a specified World Wide Web site using a unique identification number given to the successful proposal:

- ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT -- For multiple year awards, NASA requires that a brief progress report be submitted to the Program Officer 60 days before

the anniversary date of the award, in order to allow for the timely recommendation for a continuation of funding.

- SUMMARY OF RESEARCH -- NASA requires a final summary of research report to be submitted to the NASA Awards Officer and the Program Officer for every award at the completion of the period of performance. This report should include substantive results from the work, as well as references to all published materials from the work, and is due within 90 days after the end of the award.

Other reports, in addition to technical reports, are required that include financial, property, invention or other specialized reports applicable for certain types of grants (such as education grants). The award document will include a complete list of required reports and schedules for their submission. Especially significant is the Federal Cash Transaction Report (SF 272) that is due at the end of each Federal fiscal quarter from the organization holding the award.

If the resulting award is a contract, reporting requirements will be detailed in the award.

F.13 What is NASA's policy about releasing data and results derived through its sponsored research awards?

As a Federal Agency, NASA requires prompt public disclosure of the results of its sponsored research and, therefore, expects significant findings from supported research to be promptly submitted for peer reviewed publication with authorship(s) that accurately reflects the contributions of those involved. Likewise, as a general policy and unless otherwise specified, NASA no longer recognizes a "proprietary" period for exclusive use of any new scientific data that may be acquired through the execution of the award; instead, all data collected through any of its funded programs are to be placed in the public domain at the earliest possible time following their validation and calibration. However, small amounts of data (for example, as might be taken during the course of a suborbital (rocket or balloon), Space Shuttle, or Space Station investigation) are usually left in the care of the Principal Investigator. In any case, NASA may require that any data obtained through an award be deposited in an appropriate public data archive as soon as possible after calibration and reduction. If so, NASA will negotiate with the organization for appropriate transfer of the data and, as necessary, may provide funds to convert the data into an easily used format using standard units.

F.14 How is NASA to be acknowledged in publications?

All publications of any material based on or developed under NASA sponsored projects should conclude with the following acknowledgement:

"This material is based upon work supported by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration under Grant/Contract/Agreement No. <xxxxxx> issued through the Office of <XYZ> <or ABC Program, as appropriate>."

Except for articles or papers published in peer-reviewed scientific, technical, or professional journals, the exposition of results from NASA supported research should also include the following disclaimer:

"Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this article *<or report, material, etc.>* are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration."

Finally, as a courtesy, any releases of NASA photographic or illustrative data products should list NASA first on the credit line followed by the name of the PI institution, for example,

"Photograph *<or illustration, figure, etc.>* courtesy of NASA *<or NASA Center managing the mission or program>* and the *<Principal Investigator institution>*."

F.15 Can audits occur, and are they important?

Yes, Government auditors frequently check contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements for evidence of fraud, waste, and/or mismanagement by the recipient organization. Therefore, it is important to keep clear and accurate records to avoid misunderstandings.

F.16 What are the uses of a No Cost Extension?

A no cost extension to an award allows the completion of the objectives for which the proposal was selected that have not been accomplished in the originally specified period of performance owing to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., the inability to hire a critically important graduate student or postdoctoral employee in time; the breakdown of a unique and critical piece of equipment; or the inability to coordinate important activities with Co-Is through circumstances beyond the control of the PI). A no cost extension may not be implemented merely to use funds that are unspent because of the untimely planning of activities within the original period of performance. For a one-time extension of a grant or a cooperative agreement with a noncommercial firm, the recipient must notify NASA in writing with the supporting reasons and revised expiration date (not to exceed twelve months) before the expiration date specified in the award. For cooperative agreements with commercial firms, the parties may extend the expiration date if additional time is required to complete the milestones at no increase in Government resources. Requests for approval for no cost extensions must be forwarded to the NASA Agreement Officer no later than ten days prior to the expiration of the award to be considered. For a contract, an appropriate request must be submitted for NASA's approval by the recipient organization. See further details on No Cost Extensions in Section D.3 of Appendix D of this Guidebook and Provisions 1260.23, and 1274.909 of the *Grants and Cooperative Agreements Handbook* (see Appendix A for Web site).

F.17 Why are all these requirements and details about research awards necessary?

Funding for research using U.S. Federal monetary resources is a privilege accorded to U.S. organizations by NASA acting on behalf of the U.S. Congress and the public at large. The recipient is legally obligated to use the funds appropriately and conscientiously to justify their continued appropriation through the Federal budget. This obligation necessarily entails attention to the details of how the award is competed and selected, and then how the selected activities are carried out, in order to provide public accountability of the Nation's financial resources throughout the process.

F.18 Why aren't all proposals that are highly rated by peer review selected for funding?

Although a proposal in response to an NRA may nominally be judged by peer review to be of intrinsically high merit, it still may not be selected owing to the programmatic issues of relevance to NASA's stated interests and/or to budget limitations (see also Section C.2 of Appendix C of this Guidebook). Regarding this latter factor, most of NASA's NRAs are oversubscribed by factors ranging typically from two to five or even higher. The entirety of the factors leading to a decision of selection or nonselection will be conveyed to the proposers during the course of a debriefing after selections are announced (see Section C.6 of Appendix C).

F.19 Are proposals from NASA Centers subject to peer review, and are their budgets based on Full Cost Accounting?

All proposals submitted in response to an NRA are subjected to exactly the same peer review process regardless of the submitting organization, including NASA Centers. NASA is now operating using full cost budgeting, accounting, and management practices. As such, all research proposals should be submitted with fully loaded costs including procurement, civil service labor, travel, service pools, center G&A, and corporate G&A. NASA researchers answering NRAs should comply with the full cost policies. Non-NASA researchers answering NRAs should work with the NASA sponsoring organization to ensure all direct and institutional (NASA facilities and civil service labor) are adequately accounted for. The web address for NASA's Full Cost Initiative is: <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/fullcost>.

F.20 Why is an award sometimes slow in being implemented after selection?

NASA is committed to implement awards within 46 days after the selections are announced to the proposers. However, sometimes additional materials are needed from the proposer (e.g., revised budgets and/or budget details) before NASA may legally obligate Federal money. Contracts and cooperative agreements with for profit entities generally take longer owing to greater complexity. Finally, NASA's ability to distribute funds is dependent on the timely approval of its budget through the Federal budget process, which occasionally may be delayed; such a delay can significantly affect the implementation of awards, especially those whose nominal start dates would fall in the first quarter of the Fiscal Year (October through December).

F.21 Who may be listed as participating personnel on a proposal?

Every person who has agreed in writing (see Section 2.3.10) to perform a significant role in a proposed effort, even if at no cost, is entitled to be listed as a Co-I (see also Section 1.4.2). However, since one of the nominal requirements for the Science/Technical/Management Section of a proposal is the justification of each key member of a proposal's team (see Section 2.3.5), proposers are reminded that the stated contributions and qualifications of proposal personnel will be evaluated as part of the peer review process. Inclusion of unjustified personnel can lead to a downgrading of a proposal's rating.

F.22 How does the NASA Research Announcement (NRA) differ from other types of NASA research solicitations?

NASA commonly issues three types of solicitations for scientific and technical research that are broadly defined as follows:

- NASA Research Announcement (NRA) – A NRA is used to solicit and competitively select relatively nonspecific research, technology, and/or education projects and investigations to be funded through NASA’s ongoing Research and Analysis budgets. Awards made through NRAs are typically for three years and for relatively limited amounts of money (\$50 to 200 K), although some awards can be as much as \$1 M (e.g., construction and flight of a suborbital experiment payload). NRA awards are most commonly in the form of grants but at NASA’s discretion, and depending on the nature of the proposing organization, may be a contract or a cooperative agreement.
- Announcement of Opportunity (AO) – An AO is used to competitively select relatively well-defined science investigations for a specific research opportunity funded by a specific element in NASA’s budget, most commonly a NASA space mission (or program of missions such as the Explorer missions) that may, but does not always, involve the provision and operation of experiment hardware. Science investigations carried out through an AO almost always involve a considerable degree of oversight by NASA to ensure adherence to cost and schedule requirements and are almost always funded through a contract since well-defined “deliverables” are involved. Contracts awarded through an AO can be for hundreds of millions of dollars and may have periods of performance lasting ten years or more for space flight missions.
- Cooperative Agreement Notice (CAN) – A CAN is used to solicit unique research programs and/or related activities that involves a relatively high degree of interaction and cooperation between NASA and the selected recipient(s) to achieve NASA’s desired objectives (e.g., to develop and operate a research institute, an extensive educational/public outreach activity, or a specified technology capability). Funding through a CAN is always done through a cooperative agreement award and can be for amounts up to several millions of dollars and for time periods as long as five years.

Most NRAs issued by NASA Headquarters will rely upon this Guidebook to specify the organization and submission of proposals. However, because of their highly unique characteristics, AOs and CANs will usually include their own specific instructions concerning the format and content of proposals, although frequently the instructions for a proposal’s Proposal Cover Page may be identical to that given in this Guidebook owing to the use of the common proposal data base system by Headquarters that is accessed at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/>.

F.23 What is NASA’s policy for submitting late proposals?

Proposals or proposal modifications received after the latest date specified for receipt may be considered if a significant reduction in cost to the Government is probable or if there are significant technical advantages, as compared with proposals previously received.

F.24 Why doesn't NASA release the names of its reviewers?

NASA solicits the most knowledgeable, non-conflicted peers available to review the proposals it receives. It is NASA's opinion, which is generally substantiated by the opinions of the reviewers it has used, that preserving the anonymity of the participants in the review process promotes more candid comments than if this practice was not used. During the conduct of a panel a NASA Program Officer is present to ensure that the discussions and written text on the review forms remain focused on the technical qualities of the proposals being discussed. The only review comments that are actually preserved for the record are those on the Summary Evaluation form, which reflects the considered opinion of the entire panel and not those of any one reviewer.