



**National Science Foundation**  
**4201 Wilson Boulevard**  
**Arlington, Virginia 22230**

NSF 13-064

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the Critical Zone Observatory National Office (CZO-NO) Program for Submission in Year 2013**

Date: 03/04/13

### **SUBMISSION DEADLINES**

Proposals must be submitted via FastLane or Grants.gov by 5:00 p.m., submitter's local time, to the applicable deadline date below:

September 16, 2013

The following set of questions and answers refer to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the CZO-NO Program Solicitation (NSF 12-595). They are not intended to be a modification of the Program Solicitation ([http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=500044&org=EAR&from=home](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=500044&org=EAR&from=home)). Before preparing proposals please read the CZO-NO solicitation and refer to the general information about NSF proposal submission including the Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) submission guidelines. Proposals submitted to this solicitation are subject to the requirements contained in the new Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPG), NSF 13-1

Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation via Grants.gov should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov. The complete text of the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: (<http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/docs/grantsgovguide.pdf>).

FastLane FAQ's can be found at:

[https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/NSFHelp/flashhelp/fastlane/FastLane\\_Help/fastlane\\_help.htm#fastlane\\_faqs\\_introduction.htm](https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/NSFHelp/flashhelp/fastlane/FastLane_Help/fastlane_help.htm#fastlane_faqs_introduction.htm)

NSF Guide to Programs (for descriptions of NSF's research-supporting programs):

[http://www.nsf.gov/funding/browse\\_all\\_funding.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/browse_all_funding.jsp)

### **ELIGIBILITY**

1. Who can apply to this solicitation?
2. I and/or my institution has a CZO award. May I apply?
3. Is there a limit on the number of proposals one organization can submit?
4. How can I apply to this competition if I do not yet know whether my institution will be awarded a CZO?

### **PROPOSAL PREPARATION, BUDGET PREPARATION, AND SUBMISSION**

#### **Proposal Preparation**

5. What documentation should I submit to show any collaborative efforts?
6. I have additional information posted on my website I would like the reviewers to see. May I refer readers to my web site within the Project Description?
7. What should be included in the Data Management Plan (DMP) and where should I place this section?
8. I would like to submit some additional tabular material that would exceed the 15-page limit on the length of the project description. Can I submit this information as an appendix?

#### **Budget Preparation**

9. What is an appropriate level of funding to request?
10. What activities will the CZO-NO be responsible for funding?

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11. In addition to the two NSF merit review criteria (intellectual merit and broader impacts), what other factors will be considered in the review process?

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12. When will I be notified of the final decision on my CZO-NO proposal?

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13. Are the reporting requirements for CZO-NO awards the same as for other NSF awards?

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## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **1. Who can apply to this solicitation?**

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Universities and Colleges - Universities and two- and four-year colleges (including community colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the US, acting on behalf of their faculty members. Such organizations are also referred to as academic institutions.
- Non-profit, non-academic organizations: Independent museums, observatories, research labs, professional societies and similar organizations in the U.S. associated with educational or research activities.

### **2. I and/or my institution has a CZO award. May I apply?**

You CANNOT submit a proposal for the CZO-NO if

- æ your institution submits a proposal to establish a CZO site and the proposal is selected for an award,
- à. you are a Co-PI, subawardee, senior investigator, consultant, or collaborator of one of CZO site awards,
- & others at your institution are involved as PI or Co-PIs selected for an award to another institution.

You CAN submit a proposal for the CZO-NO if others at your institution are involved with a selected CZO site established by another institution, but only if they are at the level of subawardee, senior investigator, consultant, or collaborator.

### **3. Is there a limit on the number of proposals one organization can submit?**

Any one institution may submit only one CZO-NO proposal.

### **4. How can I apply to this competition if I do not yet know whether my institution will be awarded a CZO?**

The selected CZOs will be informed by the end of May 2013, so that those interested in competing for the CZO-NO competition would have time to submit a proposal for the deadline in mid-September.

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## **PROPOSAL PREPARATION, BUDGET PREPARATION, AND SUBMISSION**

### **Proposal Preparation**

#### **5. What documentation should I submit to show any collaborative efforts?**

Describe the collaborative efforts within the project description. In addition, submit brief letters describing the nature of the collaboration. Letters of collaboration are vital when partnering with existing programs or when collaborating with others. The letters should briefly describe how the collaborator would contribute to the

project. The specific details of the proposed collaborations should be described in the proposal's Project Description. The collaborative letters cannot be used to circumvent the 15-page limit for the Project Description. **Letters of support or recommendation for the PI are not permitted** and you will have to remove any letters that NSF determines are not appropriate prior to review. It is up to the PI to explain what is requested and approach the collaborator in a timely fashion to get these letters before the deadline for submission. Scan the signed and dated letter(s) into the Supplementary Documents section. Do not submit any other documentation for the collaborators such as biographical sketches, appendices, or other NSF forms. You will not be allowed to submit these letters after the submission deadline, so plan in advance.

**6. I have additional information posted on my website I would like the reviewers to see. May I refer readers to my web site within the Project Description?**

PIs are advised that the project description must be self-contained and are cautioned that a web site that provides information related to the proposal should not be used because 1) the information could circumvent page limitations, 2) the reviewers are under no obligation to view the sites, and 3) the sites could be altered or abolished between the time of submission and the time of review.

**7. What should be included in the Data Management Plan (DMP) and where should I place this section?**

Information about the contents and submission of data management plans can be found in Chapter II.C.2.j of the Grant Proposal Guide. All proposals submitted to NSF must describe plans for data management and sharing of the products of research, or assert the absence of the need for such plans. FastLane will not permit submission of a proposal that is missing a Data Management Plan. Proposals must include the plan as a supplementary document of no more than two pages.

**8. I would like to submit some additional tabular material that would exceed the 15-page limit on the length of the project description. Can I submit this information as an appendix?**

No. The Project Description cannot exceed 15 pages (including Results from Prior NSF Support, which is limited to five pages). All visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the 15-page limitation. Appendices are not permitted for CZO-NO proposals.

## **Budget Preparation**

**9. What is an appropriate level of funding to request?**

Proposals should request up to \$350,000 per year for a maximum of 4 years.

**10. What activities will the CZO-NO be responsible for funding?**

The CZO-NO should fund activities essential to achieve its goals and functions described in the CZO-NO Program Solicitation. NSF anticipates that successful operations and management of the CZO-NO will require the following personnel:

- æ Part-time senior level CZO-NO Director
- à Full-time post-doc level or equivalent manager to assist PI with Scientific issues
- & Part-time E&O Coordinator
- å Full-time support staff
- ^ Appropriate staff, students and post-docs to assist.

Additionally, the CZO-NO will pay for travel expenses of office staff to attend meetings and outreach activities. The CZO-NO will also be responsible for purchasing materials and supplies needed to run the Office.

## **CZO PROPOSAL REVIEW**

**11. In addition to the two NSF merit review criteria (intellectual merit and broader impacts), what other factors will be considered in the review process?**

In addition to addressing the standard NSF review criteria of Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts identified in the new PAPG, [NSF 13-1](#), proposals submitted in response to this solicitation will be evaluated against the

following criteria:

- Does the proposal PI, team, and institution, have demonstrated expertise in management of large, diverse projects and networks of scientists?
- Does the PI have a knowledge and familiarity of the CZO program and CZ science?
- Does the PI demonstrate leadership experience?
- How well would the proposed plan foster continued development of the broad CZ community?
- How well would the proposed plan create and foster synergy among the various CZO sites and activities?
- Does the PI and team demonstrate experience of communicating with broad audiences?
- How well would the proposed plan foster innovative use of traditional and new media?
- Is there sufficient institutional support and capacity for the proposed effort?
- Is there a clear management plan for the proposed effort?

## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF CZO AWARDS**

### **12. When will I be notified of the final decision on my CZO-NO proposal?**

Proposers will be notified by early January 2014. Proponents can check the status of their CZO-NO proposal by accessing the FastLane website. If applicants have not received notification of a decision on their proposal by June and their proposal status is shown as "pending" in FastLane, they can contact the program officer managing the proposal to inquire about the status of the application.

## **POST-AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **13. Are the reporting requirements for CZO-NO awards the same as for other NSF awards?**

In addition to meeting all of the requirements for annual and final reports that apply to other NSF awards, the CZO-NO must comply with additional reporting requirements that will be specified in the Terms and Conditions of the cooperative agreement.