

the proposed work is different from lines of inquiry and activities for which support has already been acquired. A letter from the director of the ongoing activity or center agreeing to the proposed project should be included as Supplementary Documentation.

Nearly all of the approximately \$9.5 million in FY 2004 and \$10.1 million in FY 2005 expected to be available in this topical area will be used to support multi-investigator research and education projects and programs of three to five years duration. Support for any award will not exceed a cumulative total of \$2 million for the duration of the award. Budgets should be developed at scales appropriate for the project to be conducted. A very limited number of small awards (not to exceed \$100,000) may be made to support developmental activities, such as workshops or symposia; proof-of-concept studies; or high-risk exploratory research. To receive a developmental award, a team must outline activities that will result in new information and insights that are disseminated to the broader community. Developmental awards will not be made to support teams whose primary output will be a new proposal for a larger project. NSF anticipates making 4 to 6 major CNH awards and 1 to 3 CNH developmental awards.

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2. Coupled Biogeochemical Cycles (CBC)

One of the central challenges of environmental research is understanding how the physical, chemical, geological, and biological processes of Earth's natural systems are functionally interrelated. The study of coupled biogeochemical cycles across wide spatial and temporal scales enables the development of quantitative knowledge and integrative models for the cycling of water, carbon and other bioactive elements. These research efforts illuminate the complex web of material and energetic pathways connecting environmental processes to the dynamics of life on Earth. Such research will also provide the basis for understanding the co-evolution of Earth and its biosphere and the limits of environmental predictability.

The CBC topical area stresses the systems approach to understanding interrelationships among earth system cycles at both the molecular and macroscopic levels. Proposals should address linkages between two or more biogeochemical cycles together with the underlying biology and ecology, the fundamental chemical reactions and physical processes that drive them. While all proposals should focus on complex interactions between organisms and elemental cycling, investigators are also encouraged to make provision for the study of associated abiotic phenomena when appropriate.

Some examples of areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Interrelationships of biolimiting elements in terrestrial, atmospheric, polar, freshwater and marine environments, and the feedback relationships between biolimiting element cycling and ecological dynamics, population genetics, ecosystem structure and productivity, and the evolution of species; studies of biological, geochemical and physical mechanisms regulating biogeochemistry may focus on the present or the geologic past.
- Intersections of the hydrological and ecological sciences, for example, climate alteration by terrestrial vegetation, ecosystem and hydrological functions of riparian zones, hydrological controls on aquatic ecosystems, and ecosystem vulnerability and resilience to extreme hydrological events.
- The effect of soil physical and chemical properties on rhizosphere functioning, alteration of the rhizosphere by changes in land use, and the responses of soil processes to global change.
- Innovative investigations into the coupling of chemical and physical processes or the kinetics and mechanisms of complex chemical reaction pathways that are critically important to achieving a quantitative, mechanistic understanding of a biogeochemical system.

Proposals may be submitted by single investigators or by teams, but must be highly interdisciplinary. Proposals may be submitted for projects up to 5-year duration. No project will be supported for more than \$2 million. Approximately \$13 million is expected to be available in this topical area to support 6-8 large awards.

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3. Genome-Enabled Environmental Sciences and Engineering (GEN-EN)

The GEN-EN topical area invites the submission of proposals which use scientific and/or engineering approaches to develop and apply genomic information and tools to further our understanding of how organisms interact with (adjust to and modify) their environment. Hypothesis-based research projects are especially welcome. Proposals may address any of a wide range of questions in the fields of ecology, evolutionary biology, physiological ecology, microbial ecology, and engineering, as long as genomic approaches are applied in a logical and necessary manner.

Individual organisms possess powerful but limited capabilities to respond to changing environmental conditions. While we have some understanding of phenotypic responses, and in some cases control mechanisms for relevant genes, few studies have addressed these problems at a genome-wide scale. Fewer still have attempted to use genomic approaches to understand an organism's impact on its environment. Additionally, while populations and species possess an even greater collective diversity of responses than do individuals, applying genomic approaches to understand processes occurring at population through ecosystem scales remains a major challenge. Genomic approaches that connect these scales of analysis offer the opportunity to gain novel insights into environmental issues and problem solving.

Competitive GEN-EN proposals should integrate biological research with research that develops and enhances appropriate computational, modeling, statistical, simulation and/or visualization techniques. Teams should include appropriate expertise to pursue these methodological advances.

Examples of projects that would be appropriate for the GEN-EN competition:

- Application of genomic approaches to quantify and model gene expression and control mechanisms as a function of abiotic and biotic factors (i.e. temperature, pressure, desiccation, light, nutrients, hosts and symbionts, quorum sensing, cell differentiation, starvation/survival, apoptosis, or viral infection) or predicted scenarios of environmental change.
- Use of genomic information and/or tools to improve the understanding and application of biodegradation and biological treatment processes, as well as the ability to design and control them.
- Examination of variance in gene expression within and among populations and/or species that experience different ranges or extremes in environmental conditions, as a means to test hypotheses about the evolution of the capacity to acclimate to environmental change.
- Use of cultivation-independent genomic approaches to reveal the identities and activities of microorganisms, and their relationships to changing environmental conditions.
- Use of genomic tools to address basic questions about how the environment interacts with genomes to produce a range of phenotypes.

Proposals that primarily seek support for sequencing, studying systematic relationships, using standard genetic techniques for taxonomic identification (e.g., 16s RNA), or that involve only a limited number of genes should be directed to other programs. Requests for support for work on environmental problems that fall within the mission of other federal agencies (e.g., development of biomarkers for environmental stress) are also unlikely to be competitive in this program. Prospective investigators are encouraged to discuss potential projects with one of the team leaders.

Approximately \$12 million is expected to be available to support 6-8 awards from interdisciplinary teams for projects of up to 5 years duration, and total budgets up to \$2.0 million.

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4. Instrumentation Development for Environmental Activities (IDEA)

This topical area will support the development of robust instrumentation and associated software for observing, modeling and analyzing a wide range of complex environmental materials or compounds, life forms, and processes. The instrumentation should take advantage of recent advances in microelectronics, photonics, telemetry, robotics, wireless communication, and physical and chemical sensing systems to bring recent advances out of the controlled environment of the laboratory into the full spectrum of the Earth's environments. A unifying theme will be the development of *in situ* instrumentation or remote sensing technologies that minimize environmental impact and presence, while increasing real-time data-gathering opportunities and reducing or eliminating human attention. An important goal of research in this area is the development of useful instrumentation that can be widely disseminated and aid production of environmental data of high quality and

comparability. Competitive proposals for advanced instrumentation will combine intelligent, adaptive systems with associated software for data collection, complex modeling, simulation, pattern recognition, management, and analysis. This activity supports the development of new instrumentation, or significant improvements or enhancements to existing instrumentation (e.g., sensor fusion, systems integration, or improved resolution, speed, or robustness). This program is not intended to support long-term monitoring or deployment of off-the-shelf or fully developed instrumentation.

Activities in this area might include, but are not limited to:

- Development, use, and dissemination of robust diagnostic systems that can be used for observing and remote sensing of complex environmental systems and processes, including living components or geochemical cycles.
- Development, use, and dissemination of micro-mechanical and/or microelectronic systems (laboratories on a chip) that can be used *in situ* and can withstand the rigors of harsh natural environments.
- Adaptation of laboratory chemical or physical sensing techniques for use in remote *in situ* measurement.
- Development of sensors for microbial activity using recent advances in micro-fabrication that enable high-density arrays of biologically based detection elements, e.g., nucleic acid, enzymatic, or immunochemical.
- Coupling together of space-based observations of environmental phenomena with ground based *in situ* measurements of living systems and environments.
- Development of technology to enhance the acquisition, display and analysis of real-time *in situ* environmental measurements.

In order to encourage the interplay of skills from disciplines such as engineering, chemistry, physics, and computational science with areas such as biology, soil science, air and water resources, polar studies, and oceanography, proposals that support interdisciplinary teams or formation of such teams are solicited. Small interdisciplinary teams of typically 3-5 faculty researchers may request up to \$400,000 per year for up to five years.

Approximately \$9 million is expected to be available in this topical area to support 5-7 awards.

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5. Materials Use: Science, Engineering, & Society (MUSES)

Physical and biological environmental systems are ultimate sources of the materials required for the great variety of manufactured goods produced by modern societies. Understanding the supply, transformation, use, and reuse of the resources provided by natural systems as well as the environmental effects of introducing alternative materials or new processes are complex problems that challenge many disciplines. Both technological issues, such as process and product redesign and manufacturing, as well as behavioral and organizational factors, such as economic and other social forces that affect consumption and adoption of new technologies and materials, must be addressed. Studies in the Materials Use: Science, Engineering, & Society (MUSES) topical area are aimed at understanding these interactions in order to (a) reduce adverse human impact on the total, interactive system of resource use, and (b) maximize the efficient use of individual materials throughout their life cycles. MUSES includes fundamental research on: (a) global budgets and cycles of key materials; (b) means and methods for carefully assessing a material's impact at every stage of its entire life cycle; (c) design for sustainability addressing materials, processes, systems, and supporting social structures that optimize the use of materials throughout their total life cycle, and (d) modeling the impact of materials substitutions or modifications on a total materials use basis.

Research in this topical area must stress the fundamental understanding of comprehensive materials flows that extend from natural resource (physical and biota) materials extraction; through processing and manufacturing, assembly, and distribution and consumer use; and on through recycling, disposal, and reuse. In some cases, the synthesis and characterization of new classes of materials with desired properties may be involved. Models should include relationships among constructed, natural, and social systems and consider continuous materials use in addition to life cycle practice. Energy consumption during life cycle is relevant. Materials use at widely ranging scales is within the scope of MUSES, from niche specialty markets to major construction projects - highways, bridges, large buildings, etc. Also within the scope of MUSES is consideration of materials "escape" during transportation, transformation or storage (leaks, accidents or intentional destructive actions). Illustrative examples of advanced materials that may be considered as part of this activity include, but are not limited to: the synthesis of new materials with value-added functional performance for applications such as

biodegradable food containers, electronic materials for sensing in hazardous or extreme environments, disposable hospital products; materials modifications through processing that extend the life or ease the remanufacturability such as hybrid coatings that can be readily removed or upgraded; and materials substitutions that lead to low emission and fuel efficient engines or alternative energy sources, or alloys and composites for lightweight aircraft and automobiles.

Specific areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Spatially and temporally explicit budgets for key materials, including ways in which human activities define, perturb, dominate or limit materials flow and supply.
- Acquisition, comprehension, and integration of data sets and models from engineering, environmental, economic, and social spheres, and the development of robust ways to utilize potential data intersections and model interoperability to predict materials flows.
- Patterns and driving forces of human consumption of resources, for example, the role of incentives in encouraging less wasteful materials use or the redesign of markets to provide more accurate signals of the societal costs associated with the use of materials.
- Metrics and assessment models for forecasting the results of substituting materials made from renewable resources for those made from non-renewable resources, including trade-offs such as land use and water consumption.
- Design and synthesis of desirable materials with predictable properties while evaluating environmental friendly impacts on biocomplex systems at each stage of their development as useful materials; viz. processing and fabrication, assembly and manufacture, and eventual recycling of spent materials.
- Development of "intrinsically secure" chemistries and processes such that the vulnerability to the threat of terrorism is reduced by reductions in the quantities or toxicities of intermediates and end products.

Most of the approximately \$6 million expected to be available in this topical area in FY 2004 and \$7 million in FY 2005 will be used to support 3-5 research and education awards each year conducted by multidisciplinary teams of researchers who may request up to \$400,000 per year for three to five years duration. Up to 5 small awards (not to exceed \$100,000 and up to 2 years duration) may be funded in response to proposals for developmental activities such as proof of concept studies that can include meetings to build international and/or interdisciplinary teams or high-risk exploratory research.

Both group and developmental activities submitted in response to the MUSES theme must involve multidisciplinary research and education, that (a) include an economist and/or a social scientist on a team with scientists and engineers from physical, chemical, biological, and/or geological disciplines; (b) integrate economic and other social factors with material acquisition, materials design, and/or manufacturing considerations; and (c) use or develop computational models or simulations appropriate for the complexity, multi-disciplinarity, and global scale of these systems. The teams undertaking these MUSES projects must have appropriate expertise ranging from earth and materials sciences to engineering to economics to social sciences. They must also have appropriate expertise to undertake sophisticated quantitative modeling and integrated educational projects. International partnerships could be particularly valuable to research and education in this topical area.

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III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The categories of proposers identified in the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) are eligible to submit proposals under this program announcement/solicitation.

IV. AWARD INFORMATION

Anticipated funding is \$51 million for new awards based on the FY 2004 competition and \$17 million for new awards based on the FY 2005 competition. The estimated number of awards is 40 standard or continuing grants.

Estimated program budget, number of awards and average award size/duration are subject to the availability of funds. The estimated number of awards and anticipated funding amount for each topical area are provided in Section II, Program Description.

V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Full Proposal Instructions:

Proposals submitted in response to this program announcement/solicitation should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the NSF *Grant Proposal Guide* (GPG). The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF Website at: <http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpg>. Paper copies of the GPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (301) 947-2722 or by e-mail from pubs@nsf.gov.

Proposal Format

Proposals not in conformance with the proposal-preparation requirements of the NSF [Grant Proposal Guide](#) will be returned without review. Please note, however, that the page limits contained in this announcement take precedence over those given in the GPG.

Proposals submitted for this competition should clearly specify all relevant facets of the proposed project. With respect to the proposed research, the proposal should outline the theoretical foundations of the project as based in relevant literature. It should specify the research methods that will be used, the expertise that different researchers will bring to different facets of the project, and how and where results will be disseminated. With respect to education, the proposal should specify educational goals, what methods will be used to attain those goals, and the expertise of individuals who will participate in educational efforts. The proposal should also identify the proposed educational products, how those products will be disseminated, and how the educational activities will be evaluated.

This program solicitation requests material about the personnel involved in the project. Please use the following definitions to provide the corresponding information.

Principal Investigators--Individuals who would assume responsibility for an award resulting from this competition, would manage the award, and are listed on the cover sheet of the proposal.

Senior Personnel--All Principal Investigators, as well as any named other senior personnel who will receive salary support, as well as non-salaried senior investigators who will play lead roles in the conduct of the project.

Project Participants--Every person involved with the research project, including students.

Proposal Cover Sheet

Work on the Cover Sheet first. Check that the Awardee and Performing Organizations are correct. Highlight the Program Solicitation Number NSF 03-??? and click on the "Select" button. Next highlight one of the five relevant topical areas (i.e., CNH, CBC, GEN-EN, IDEA, MUSES) listed in the Program Box and click on the "Select Program" button. Your proposal will

automatically be assigned to the correct directorate and division on the Cover Sheet. Prepare remainder of the Cover Sheet.

If you think that your proposal may be relevant to more than one topical area, make the selection you think is topically most appropriate and follow the guidance (monetary and otherwise) for that topical area. **Do not submit duplicate or substantively similar proposals to more than one topical area. Submit your proposal to meet the earliest topical area deadline.** However, you may suggest possible joint review through an e-mail message sent to the program officers of relevant competitions. Be sure to include the proposal number in your e-mail message. After the proposal is received, NSF program officers from relevant topical areas will consult and determine the most appropriate course of action, which may involve joint review or transfer of the proposal from one topical area to another. In the case of a transfer from the topical area you selected, you will be informed. You may submit more than one proposal to the same or different topical areas only if they are substantively different from one another.

Project Description

All project descriptions are limited to 20 pages in length. With the exceptions noted below, proposers may organize the different components of the project description as they wish.

The following sections **MUST** be included under separate headings in the project description:

- **Results from Prior NSF Support.** This section is required only for principal investigators and co-investigators who have received NSF funding in the last five years. Refer to [GPG](#) for more information. (This section may contain, but does not require, up to five pages to describe the results).
- **Education Plan.** The research plan should include integrated educational activities as a part of the narrative. Highlight these integrated activities in this section by specifying the project's educational goals, the methods that will be used to attain those goals, how the educational activities will be evaluated, and the role of project personnel in educational efforts. If educational products are expected to result, describe those products and indicate how they will be disseminated. (This section is usually between 1 and 2 pages in length).
- **Management Plan.** The following information should be provided: (1) a description of the management structure that will enable the team to work effectively; and (2) specification of the qualifications of each of the senior personnel as well as the contribution they are expected to make to the project. This section increases in importance as the number of senior personnel or institutions involved in the project increases. (This section is usually between 1 and 2 pages in length).
- **Project Significance.** This section should clearly specify what proposers expect will be the results and contributions of the project. The section should describe both the anticipated intellectual merit of the proposed work as well as its anticipated broader impacts. Intellectual merit and broader impacts are NSF's two primary merit review criteria, and major items to be considered in each one are specified in [GPG](#). Examples illustrating activities likely to demonstrate broader impacts also are available electronically at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf022/bicexamples.pdf>. Education and international activities are among the examples. (This section is usually about 1 page in length.)

Biographical Sketches

A biographical sketch with a 2 page limit must be provided for each investigator and each person identified as senior personnel.

Current and Pending Support

Each person identified as a principal investigator or as senior personnel must submit a current and pending support form. This proposal is considered a pending support activity.

Conflicts of Interest

In addition to the formal submission of the proposal, the principal investigator must send a compilation of conflicts of interest information in a spreadsheet format (**preferably in MS-Excel format**) by e-mail directly to BE topical area to which the proposal was submitted (contact information is listed at www.geo.nsf.gov/be-04.htm). The spreadsheet must be submitted no later than one week after the proposal-submission deadline for that BE topical area.

The top of the list should include the proposal number of the proposal submitted to the BE topical area. Include the full names of all people for whom there would be a conflict of interest related to reviewing this proposal because of their association with one or more of the senior personnel on the project. Conflicts to be identified are: (1) Ph.D. thesis advisors or advisees, (2) postdoctoral advisors or advisees, (3) collaborators or co-authors for the past 48 months, and (4) any other individuals or institutions with which the investigator has financial ties (please specify type). For further clarification of conflicts of interests, please refer to the [NSF Grant Policy Manual, Section 510](#). Three columns are suggested for the spreadsheet: People for whom there is a conflict, the senior personnel whose relationship makes the person in that row conflicted, and the relationship that causes the conflict of interest.

Supplementary Documentation

Appropriate items for inclusion in the Supplementary Documentation sections are specified in [GPG](#). For example, letters of commitment from collaborating institutions, including foreign institutions, should be placed in this section, as well as documents associated with the use of human subjects, hazardous materials, vertebrate animals, or endangered species.

Proposals that include materials in this section that belong in the project description may be returned without review.

Appendices

Not permitted.

Proposals Involving Multiple Institutions

If proposed activities involve multiple organizations, a single proposal describing the entire project should be submitted by only one of the organizations. If need be, funds may be distributed among partner institutions via subawards from the submitting organization. A budget on the standard NSF budget form should be submitted for each subawardee. Letters confirming collaborations can be scanned and submitted via FastLane as Supplementary Documentation. Collaborative proposals (i.e., multiple proposals from different organizations submitted for a single project) are not permitted and shall be returned without review.

Proposals Involving Collaborators at Foreign Institutions

Proposers are reminded they must provide biographical sketches of all senior project personnel, including those at foreign institutions. In addition, as supplementary documentation, proposals involving foreign collaborators must provide letters of commitment from the foreign counterpart institutions. Please note that although eligibility for this competition is restricted to U.S. organizations, as described in the [GPG](#), collaborations with foreign institutions may be considered.

Pre-Submission Checklist

BE Proposals must be in compliance with GPG and special requirements in the announcement in order to be considered for review. Proposals not in compliance with these requirements will be returned without review. Please refer to the following checklist to address some of the items for which proposals often are non-compliant:

- Font and margin requirements
- Paginated pages
- Project summary that includes a brief description of broader impacts
- Project description that is 20 pages or less and includes separate sections for Results from prior Support, Education

- Plan, Management Plan, and Project Significance.
- Biographical Sketches for all senior personnel
- Conflict of Interest spreadsheet submitted to appropriate program leader by e-mail.

Proposers are reminded to identify the program announcement/solicitation number (03-597) in the program announcement/solicitation block on the proposal Cover Sheet. Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay processing.

B. Budgetary Information

Cost Sharing:

Cost sharing is not required in proposals submitted under this Program Solicitation.

Other Budgetary Limitations:

Specific topical areas have award size limitations. Details are in Section II, Program Description.

Budgets should include travel funds for Principal Investigators to attend a workshop or meeting of those supported in this program every 2 or 3 years.

Research Platform Support. Specific amounts for [research cruises](#), [polar logistics](#), [arctic logistics](#), or [use of aircraft or other atmospheric sciences field facilities](#) should not be included in the budget request. However, the PI should submit the UNOLS request, OPP logistics form, or ATM facilities form with the proposal.

C. Due Dates

Proposals must be submitted by the following date(s):

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

December 03, 2003

Deadline Dates for CNH and IDEA

December 17, 2003

Deadline Date for GEN-EN

January 22, 2004

Deadline Date for CBC

February 11, 2004

Deadline Date for MUSES

November 17, 2004

Deadline Date for CNH

February 08, 2005

Deadline Date for MUSES

D. FastLane Requirements

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

Submission of Electronically Signed Cover Sheets. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must electronically sign the proposal Cover Sheet to submit the required proposal certifications (see Chapter II, Section C of the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) for a listing of the certifications). The AOR must provide the required electronic certifications within five working days following the electronic submission of the proposal. Proposers are no longer required to provide a paper copy of the signed Proposal Cover Sheet to NSF. Further instructions regarding this process are available on the FastLane Website at: <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>

VI. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

A. NSF Proposal Review Process

Reviews of proposals submitted to NSF are solicited from peers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research or education project. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with the oversight of the review process. NSF invites the proposer to suggest, at the time of submission, the names of appropriate or inappropriate reviewers. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts with the proposer. Special efforts are made to recruit reviewers from non-academic institutions, minority-serving institutions, or adjacent disciplines to that principally addressed in the proposal.

The National Science Board approved revised criteria for evaluating proposals at its meeting on March 28, 1997 ([NSB 97-72](#)). All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two merit review criteria. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

On July 8, 2002, the NSF Director issued [Important Notice 127](#), Implementation of new Grant Proposal Guide Requirements Related to the Broader Impacts Criterion. This Important Notice reinforces the importance of addressing both criteria in the preparation and review of all proposals submitted to NSF. NSF continues to strengthen its internal processes to ensure that both of the merit review criteria are addressed when making funding decisions.

In an effort to increase compliance with these requirements, the January 2002 issuance of the GPG incorporated revised proposal preparation guidelines relating to the development of the Project Summary and Project Description. Chapter II of the GPG specifies that Principal Investigators (PIs) must address both merit review criteria in separate statements within the one-page Project Summary. This chapter also reiterates that broader impacts resulting from the proposed project must be addressed in the Project Description and described as an integral part of the narrative.

Effective October 1, 2002, NSF will return without review proposals that do not separately address both merit review criteria within the Project Summary. It is believed that these changes to NSF proposal preparation and processing guidelines will more clearly articulate the importance of broader impacts to NSF-funded projects.

The two National Science Board approved merit review criteria are listed below (see the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) Chapter III.A for further information). The criteria include considerations that help define them. These considerations are suggestions and not all will apply to any given proposal. While proposers must address both merit review criteria, reviewers will be asked to address only those considerations that are relevant to the proposal being considered and for which he/she is qualified to make judgments.

What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?

How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of the prior work.) To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative and original concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

NSF staff will give careful consideration to the following in making funding decisions:

Integration of Research and Education

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

Integrating Diversity into NSF Programs, Projects, and Activities

Broadening opportunities and enabling the participation of all citizens -- women and men, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities -- is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

Additional Review Criteria: Successful proposals in all topical areas of the competition must be highly interdisciplinary, address the inherent complexity and highly coupled nature of environmental systems, and involve systems that include non-human biota or humans. The three integrative elements--quantitative approaches, education, and global perspectives--are also important. Research projects must include quantitative approaches or advanced conceptual models to study the systems chosen for investigation and specific plans for education. Proposals that promote the development of long-term international partnerships will be given special consideration.

In addition to NSF's standard review criteria, planning or exploratory activities will be evaluated on their interdisciplinarity and their potential to advance the study of biocomplexity in the environment.

In the evaluation of proposals submitted by teams of investigators, considerations in addition to standard NSF review criteria are:

- Strength of the collaborations planned and degree of interdisciplinarity
- Effectiveness of the group organization and management plan
- Value to education in these topical areas
- Strength of the dissemination plans
- Extent, effectiveness, and long-term potential of collaborations with industries, national laboratories, and comparable research centers abroad, when appropriate.

Descriptions of educational activities should specify goals, methods to attain those goals, and the expertise of individuals to accomplish them. Thus, they will be evaluated based on:

- Potential interest to and appropriateness for the audience targeted
- Quality of planning and appropriateness of personnel
- Feasibility and potential for resulting in a disseminable product
- Integration and complementarity to the research efforts
- Focus on integrated learning and discovery and the preparation of U.S. students for a broad set of careers in environmental fields.

B. Review Protocol and Associated Customer Service Standard

All proposals are carefully reviewed by at least three other persons outside NSF who are experts in the particular field represented by the proposal. This will be the case for proposals for all research projects requesting over \$100,000 submitted in response to this announcement. More specifically, proposals in this category will be reviewed externally by mail review and/or panel review. Development or planning activities, exploratory, conference, or incubation proposals for \$100,000 or less may be reviewed by a scientist, engineer, or educator serving as a NSF Program Officer and/or outside experts. .

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

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

NSF is striving to be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. The time interval begins on the date of receipt. The interval ends when the Division Director accepts the Program Officer's recommendation.

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

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Notification of the Award

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

B. Award Conditions

An NSF award consists of: (1) the award letter, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the

proposal referenced in the award letter; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (NSF-GC-1); * or Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Terms and Conditions * and (5) any announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter. Cooperative agreement awards also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions (CA-1). Electronic mail notification is the preferred way to transmit NSF awards to organizations that have electronic mail capabilities and have requested such notification from the Division of Grants and Agreements.

*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Website at http://www.nsf.gov/home/grants/grants_gac.htm. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (301) 947-2722 or by e-mail from pubs@nsf.gov.

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions is contained in the NSF *Grant Policy Manual* (GPM) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at <http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpm>. The GPM is also for sale through the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office (GPO), Washington, DC 20402. The telephone number at GPO for subscription information is (202) 512-1800. The GPM may be ordered through the GPO Website at <http://www.gpo.gov>.

Special Award Conditions:

Additional award conditions may be included addressing the pilot testing and evaluation of materials on pre-college students and the distribution or commercial publication of materials developed, a license for government use, and program income.

Meetings or workshops for Principal Investigators may be called by NSF approximately every two years. Investigators will be expected to make every reasonable effort to attend and to use grant funds to support their travel expenses.

C. Reporting Requirements

For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the PI must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer at least 90 days before the end of the current budget period.

Within 90 days after the expiration of an award, the PI also is required to submit a final project report. Failure to provide final technical reports delays NSF review and processing of pending proposals for the PI and all Co-PIs. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

PIs are required to use NSF's electronic project reporting system, available through FastLane, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. This system permits electronic submission and updating of project reports, including information on project participants (individual and organizational), activities and findings, publications, and other specific products and contributions. PIs will not be required to re-enter information previously provided, either with a proposal or in earlier updates using the electronic system.

VIII. CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- For contacts in *Dynamics of Coupled Natural and Human Systems*, see www.geo.nsf.gov/be-04.htm#cnh.
- For contacts in *Coupled Biogeochemical Cycles*, see www.geo.nsf.gov/be-04.htm#cbc.
- For contacts in *Genome-Enabled Environmental Science & Engineering*, see www.geo.nsf.gov/be-04.htm#genen.
- For contacts in *Instrumentation Development for Environmental Activities*, see www.geo.nsf.gov/be-04.htm#idea.
- For contacts in *Materials Use: Science, Engineering, & Society*, see www.geo.nsf.gov/be-04.htm#muses.
- For contacts about the integrative element on *Education*, see www.geo.nsf.gov/be-04.htm#edu.

- For contacts about the integrative element on *Global Perspective*, see www.geo.nsf.gov/be-04.htm#gp.
- For contacts about the integrative element on *Quantitative Approaches*, see www.geo.nsf.gov/be-04.htm#qa.

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact:

- Florence Rabanal, Electronic Business Coordinator, Directorate for Mathematical & Physical Sciences, 1005 N, telephone: (703) 292-8808, fax: (703) 292-9151, email: frabanal@nsf.gov
- Philip Johnson, Computer Specialist, Directorate for Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences, Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, 995 N, telephone: (703) 292-8740, fax: (703) 292-9068, email: pxjohnso@nsf.gov
- Brian E. Dawson, Computer Specialist, Directorate for Geosciences, 705 N, telephone: (703) 292-4727, fax: (703) 292-9042, email: bdawson@nsf.gov

IX. OTHER PROGRAMS OF INTEREST

The NSF *Guide to Programs* is a compilation of funding for research and education in science, mathematics, and engineering. The NSF *Guide to Programs* is available electronically at <http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gp>. General descriptions of NSF programs, research areas, and eligibility information for proposal submission are provided in each chapter.

Many NSF programs offer announcements or solicitations concerning specific proposal requirements. To obtain additional information about these requirements, contact the appropriate NSF program offices. Any changes in NSF's fiscal year programs occurring after press time for the *Guide to Programs* will be announced in the NSF *E-Bulletin*, which is updated daily on the NSF Website at <http://www.nsf.gov/home/ebulletin>, and in individual program announcements/solicitations. Subscribers can also sign up for NSF's *Custom News Service* (<http://www.nsf.gov/home/cns/start.htm>) to be notified of new funding opportunities that become available.

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Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED) provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities (investigators and other staff, including student research assistants) to work on NSF-supported projects. See the GPG Chapter II, Section D.2 for instructions regarding preparation of these types of proposals.

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

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

- **Location:** 4201 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22230

- **For General Information** (NSF Information Center): (703) 292-5111

- **TDD (for the hearing-impaired):** (703) 292-5090

- **To Order Publications or Forms:**

Send an e-mail to: pubs@nsf.gov

or telephone: (301) 947-2722

- **To Locate NSF Employees:** (703) 292-5111

PRIVACY ACT AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENTS

The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the proposal review process; to applicant institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies needing information as part of the review process or in order to coordinate programs; and to another Federal agency, court or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See Systems of Records, NSF-50, "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," 63 Federal Register 267 (January 5, 1998), and NSF-51, "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records," 63 Federal Register 268 (January 5, 1998). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to an information collection unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0058. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding this burden estimate and any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Suzanne Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, Division of Administrative Services, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA 22230.

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