

Responses to Questions about the 2011 TSIP Proposal Requirements

Questions 1-5 answered 19 September 2011

Question 1: “What criteria will be used for the review of the proposals by NOAO contracts prior to the actual TSIP proposal review process?”

Answer 1: The Contracts Office will review each proposal to make sure that the proposal meets the “Full Proposal Criteria” set forth in the “TSIP FY2011 Program Announcement and Proposal Solicitation.” This means that the Contracts Office will make sure that the proposal meets the content requirements of section 2 of the Call for Proposals, as well as the “required sections for full proposals” which begins on page 9 and continues to the top of page 12. We will also make sure that all proposals meet the formatting guidelines for full proposals on page 12.

Checklist

*Proposal must be single PDF that contains all required sections

*Proposal must contain a 2-page NSF cover page/certification page

*If proposal is a System Improvement Proposal, the proposal narrative must contain/address the following:

- a. Must cover single instrument
- b. Must contain 5 sections: (i) Science, (ii) Technical, (iii) Management, (iv) Budget and (v) Capabilities/Community Access (see specific requirements on pages 9-11)
- c. Must discuss “broader impacts” and intellectual merit of the proposed work
- d. Narrative cannot exceed 30 pages without budget

*If proposal is a System Access Proposal, the proposal narrative must contain/address the following:

- a. Must contain two sections: (i) Capabilities/Community Access and (ii) Budget (see specific requirements on pages 11-12)
- b. Proposal narrative without budget cannot exceed 10 pages

*Formatting Requirements

- a. Page limits must be met
- b. Margin and spacing requirements must be met
- c. Required budget forms must be provided
- d. PDF file size requirements must be observed

Question 2: “In the FY11 solicitation on page 7 it states ‘In particular, instrument proposals should be clearly divided into a concept and design phase (Phase AB), and a development and construction phase (Phase CD). Staffing and budgeting profiles for the two phases should be distinct’. Does this mean that you want separate budgets for the design phase and the construction phase? As you are aware it is the usual practice to provide a cost estimate at completion that would include all of these phases. Also, does a

project applying only for phase CD funding still need to provide historic or in progress cost figures or budgets for the phase AB activities?”

Answer 2: This question contains two elements, which will be addressed separately.

- a) “Does this mean that you want separate budgets for the design phase and the construction phase?” Yes. Section 3.4 says in relevant part, “For instrument proposals, summary budgets should be given separately for phase AB and phase CD.”
- b) “[D]oes a project applying only for phase CD funding still need to provide historic or in progress cost figures or budgets for the phase AB activities?” Yes. Section 3.4 says in relevant part, “The **Budget** section should present the total cost of the instrument or improvement and an annual payment schedule or funding profile for the TSIP funds requested.” (Emphasis in original).

Question 3: “...[Material redacted for reasons of confidentiality]...We would appreciate further detailed guidance on the nature of the information required to ‘...describe what work will be done on the instrument and by whom’ and what would constitute a ‘...more detailed budget justification.’...[Material redacted for reasons of confidentiality].”

Answer 3: The budget and accompanying narrative should provide enough information about levels of effort, work durations, and skill classes involved to enable both qualitative and quantitative understanding of the labor costs identified in the budget. Budgeted labor costs should be commensurate with the work described and the skill classes required.

Question 4: “Would it be possible to correct the flaws in the Excel spreadsheet template provided for the budget forms that we have noted in prior years?”

Answer 4: We are aware of a previously noted issue concerning the use of fonts in the Excel template that are not licensed for conversion to PDF, and we are working on a solution to that. We will notify all those who have submitted Letters of Intent when we arrive at a solution. If you are aware of any other issues, please specify the possible flaws in question. We will review them and, if we agree they represent further errors, we will either resolve them or provide an alternative solution. Thank you for your patience with this matter.

Question 5: “Can you provide a checklist, similar to that provided in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (pp. II-30 to II-32), to assist proposers in ensuring compliance with all of the solicitation’s requirements? We feel this would greatly improve the proposal process and the clarity of your proposal requirements.”

Answer 5: Please see the checklist included in Answer 1. We will create a separate PDF file for this checklist and post it on the TSIP web page next to the proposal solicitation, for the benefit of all potential proposers.