

TELESCOPE SYSTEM INSTRUMENTATION PROGRAM

FY11 Program Announcement and Proposal Solicitation

Web Site: <http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/> Email: syspo@noao.edu



National
Optical
Astronomy
Observatory

SYNOPSIS OF FY11 PROGRAM

The Telescope System Instrumentation Program (TSIP) supports new instrumentation, instrument upgrades, and operations/facilities improvements for the telescopes operated by the non-federally funded US observatories. In return, observing time proportionate to the funding awarded is made available to the open access community through the NOAO time allocation (TAC) process.

Created in 2002 in response to the decadal survey *Astronomy and Astrophysics in the New Millennium*, TSIP originally targeted the design/development of new instrumentation, specifically for the 6.5- to 10-m-class non-federally funded telescopes. The program has since been expanded to include funding for improvements to existing instrumentation and/or operations considered to significantly enhance the scientific capability of the facility. In addition, proposals for instruments and upgrades for medium-aperture telescopes (3 m or greater) are now eligible for TSIP funding, and telescope consortia members in which NOAO has less than a 51% share are also free to propose. See the full text of this Proposal Solicitation below for more information.

CATEGORIES OF TSIP PROPOSALS

System Improvement: Proposals for the design/development of new instrumentation, as well as proposals to upgrade existing instruments or otherwise improve facility operations. If awarded, improvement proposals are required to provide community observing time equivalent in value to 50% of the TSIP funds awarded.

System Access: Proposals offering an exchange of telescope time in proportion to the value of TSIP funds awarded. *As initiated in the FY09 call*, proposers are free to propose any exchange rate (incentive factor) in terms of dollars funded per night exchanged in a competitive process (the previous incentive factor for System Access was = 1.0). See details below.

DUE DATE FOR LETTERS OF INTENT AND FULL PROPOSAL DEADLINE

Letters of Intent (required) are due by Friday, August 26, 2011.

Full proposals must be received by midnight (MST) on Friday, November 04, 2011.

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION REQUIRED

Proposals must be submitted electronically as a single PDF file to syspo@noao.edu or to a secure ftp site provided by NOAO. For System Improvement proposals, proposal narrative (excluding budget pages) is limited to 30 pages; for System Access proposals, the limit is ten pages. While past submissions have been allowed to exceed the page limits, **page limits will be strictly enforced in this round of proposals. Proposals that exceed the page limits (or otherwise fail to comply with the requirements of sections 2 and 3) will be returned as noncompliant. New for this round of proposals, NOAO contracts will review each proposal prior to forwarding to the review process. Noncompliant proposals will be returned and proposers given one week to make changes to bring proposals into compliance. If the proposal does not meet the requirements by the end of this period, NOAO will reject the proposal from further consideration in this round (see section 3).**

Letters of intent may be submitted electronically or by regular mail or fax. See section 3 for submission details.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The standard NSF proposal Cover/Certification page and NSF budget forms are required. Electronic

templates are available from the TSIP Web site at <http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/> or from NOAO (syspo@noao.edu). Other sections usually required in NSF proposals (Project Summary, Biographical Sketch, References Cited, etc.) are optional.

ELIGIBILITY

TSIP is open to nonfederal US observatories and affiliated institutions having a mechanism for providing observing time on a telescope 3 m or greater in aperture through the NOAO time allocation process.

ESTIMATED FY11 FUNDING

The funding level for TSIP in FY11 is \$2M. Accounting for unexpended funds from FY11 means the actual level of funding for this call will be approximately \$2.9M. Proposals in FY11 for medium-aperture telescopes may request up to \$725K (to be judged competitively with proposals in the larger aperture range).

**TELESCOPE SYSTEM INSTRUMENTATION PROGRAM
FY11 Program Announcement and Proposal Solicitation**

Web Site: <http://www>

[.noao.edu/system/](http://noao.edu/system/) Email: syspo@noao.edu



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1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

The highest priority “moderate initiative” for ground-based optical and infrared (O/IR) astronomy in the past decade, as defined in the National Research Council decadal survey *Astronomy and Astrophysics in the New Millennium*, was a Telescope System Instrumentation Program (TSIP). The decadal survey envisioned TSIP as a \$5M per year grants program for the non-federally funded observatories that would support the development of advanced new instrumentation, while expanding public access to the first rank of US telescopes. It was hoped that by subsidizing new instrumentation in exchange for greater public access, TSIP would promote a more integrative view of US public (open access)/nonfederal astronomy assets as a coherent and powerful “system.”

The system concept suggests a new paradigm for US astronomy, one in which complementarity and coordination of observing facilities provide the motivation for strategic scientific decisions. As proposed in the decadal survey, TSIP would have three goals:

- Guid[ing] the evolution of the telescope system so that it becomes more powerful and more diverse. [TSIP] would do this by, for example, favoring instruments with unique capabilities and those that would be particularly effective in reaching...scientific goals...
- Achieving greater public access to these [non-federally funded] facilities
- Encouraging and leveraging the contribution of institutions that contribute nonfederal funds to the US astronomy enterprise

Formally established by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 2002, TSIP is funded through the Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST). These funds pass to successful TSIP proposers through sub-awards that are pre-approved by the NSF, then issued and administered by the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA) through the National Optical Astronomy Observatory (NOAO). NOAO is responsible for oversight of TSIP projects so as to assure cost and schedule performance.

PROJECTS FUNDED BY TSIP (2002–PRESENT)

TSIP has contributed significant funding to seven major instruments, two upgrades, and several design studies as well as one system access proposal. See <http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/> for a summary. This funding (\$30.1M though FY10) has resulted in a total of 426 nights of telescope time allocated to the open-access community through the NOAO TAC (accounting for nights currently programmed for allocation though 2012B and 65 nights that are “in the bank” and will be allocated in coming semesters).

Since 2002, there have been seven calls for proposals (this call is the eighth). Including the funds for TSIP in FY11 (\$2M), this means an average of \$3.2M per year has been contributed through TSIP in the ten years the program has been running (2002–2011 inclusive). There was no call for new proposals in FY04 and FY08, but TSIP funding was applied to prior commitments.

CATEGORIES OF TSIP FUNDING

There are two main categories of TSIP funding. The first is for instrumentation development. Historically, most TSIP proposals have been of this type where the proposal is for a new instrument capability. The telescope time exchanged for the funding is typically taken with existing facility instruments, not the instrument being proposed for. The second type of proposal is for system access in which operating funds are provided directly in exchange for telescope time. Previously, TSIP system access proposals were funded at an exchange rate of 1:1, in other words, each night was provided at the proposers cost per night. In this call for proposals, the proposer may value a night at any rate deemed to be competitive for the capability being offered.

System Improvement Proposals

These are proposals for projects that will lead to enhanced scientific capability within the overall ground-based O/IR system. System Improvement proposals provide community observing time equivalent in value to 50% of the TSIP funds awarded. (A proportional reduction in public observing time is allowed in the case of nonfederal institutions in telescope consortia in which NOAO is also a partner; see Proposed Community Access Time in section 2 for details).

System Improvement proposals can request funding in one of three areas:

1. **Design and construction of new, facility-class instruments** for existing or pending telescopes: i.e., optical or infrared instrumentation of any kind (including adaptive optics systems) for any telescope now in operation or under construction. Proposals of this type may request multiple (up to five) years of funding. **TSIP funding for FY12 is currently zeroed out in the NSF request. There is no guarantee of any new funding beyond this call at the present time. Future development funding may come in the form of an NSF “Mid-scale Initiatives” program as outlined in the 2010 Decadal Survey (New Worlds, New Horizons), or in some other form, or not at all.**

Proposals for new instrumentation must include plans for two clearly distinct project phases: (1) a definition and design phase (Phase AB), and (2) a construction and commissioning phase (Phase CD). The design phase concludes with a Critical Design Review (CDR) that verifies the cost and schedule for the construction phase.

All funded projects for new instrumentation will be reviewed at the time of the CDR. If the CDR leads to significant changes in cost and schedule compared to the original proposal, the decision to renew TSIP funding through the construction phase will be contingent on an external peer review and re-evaluation.

2. **Improvements or upgrades to existing instrumentation:** e.g., new focal plane detectors, improved pipeline data reduction software, or new optical components. These proposals are limited to one year of TSIP funding.
3. **Significant upgrades to current facilities or operations.** As with proposals to upgrade instrumentation, proposals to upgrade facilities or operations are limited to one year of TSIP funding.

TSIP awards in (3) may not be used for salaries of observatory personnel; TSIP funds may only be used for capital items or external contracts relating to the significant upgrade of facilities or operations. The intent is to prevent TSIP funds from being used to replace existing operating funds or to fund upgrades that were already part of the planned operation activity.

System Access Proposals

The second type of TSIP funding is for proposals that seek to sell telescope time to the community. System Access proposals may request funding for up to five years. In FY11, proposers are free to value an observing night at any level they deem to be competitive. That is, they may propose to offer an observing night at a rate (incentive factor) different than their direct cost per night (the cost per night should be well defined as for previous calls and then the proposed incentive factor applied to this number). Indeed, proposers are free to be creative, for example, offering different lunar phase nights or nights at different times of the year at different incentive factors.

For the present call for proposals, the incentive factor(s) for system access time will be proposer driven. System access proposals will be judged competitively by the independent review panel that will seek to broadly maximize the return to the community through a combination of capabilities and total time offered.

System Access proposals should present the capabilities to be offered, including the suite of available instrumentation, the performance of the instruments, and the delivered image quality and site characteristics. No explanation of how the TSIP funds will be used is required.

Funding for System Access proposals is provided in increments, contingent on the satisfactory experience of community observers, which will be evaluated on an annual basis by NOAO and reported to NSF.

Aperture Ranges of Telescopes Eligible for TSIP Funding

Both System Improvement and System Access proposals will be accepted for telescopes with apertures ≥ 3 m. However, the total possible funding for telescopes in the range $3.0 \text{ m} \leq D < 6.5 \text{ m}$ (including both System Improvement proposals and System Access proposals) is limited to 25% of the total TSIP funding available.

Proposers seeking funds for either improvements or access on telescopes with apertures smaller than 6 m should bear in mind that one of the primary objectives of TSIP is to *significantly* increase the power of the US telescope system. Successful proposals for projects on these smaller telescopes will have demonstrated the potential to significantly enhance the scientific capabilities of the system or to provide community access to a highly desirable capability.

ESTIMATED FY11 FUNDING LEVELS

It is anticipated that up to \$2.9M will be available in FY 2011 for the TSIP program to support new programs. Note that total funds available for awards involving telescopes with aperture range $3.0 \text{ m} \leq D < 6.5 \text{ m}$ is limited to 25% of TSIP funding for new programs (~ \$725K in the present call).

DURATION OF FUNDING

1. System Improvement proposals for the design and construction of new, facility-class instruments for any telescope now in operation or under construction—including proposals for adaptive optics systems—may request up to five years (60 months) of funding. Future-year funding will be contingent on future TSIP allocations from NSF (see above; no new TSIP funding is expected in FY12 and possibly beyond).

2. System Improvement proposals to upgrade/improve existing instrumentation or to upgrade/improve facilities or operations, are limited to one year (12 months) of TSIP support.
3. System Access proposals also may propose funding for up to five years (60 months).

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

TSIP is administered by the National Optical Astronomy Observatory (NOAO) on behalf of the NSF Division of Astronomical Sciences (AST). NOAO's role is limited to soliciting and processing proposals; organizing, coordinating, and providing support for the external peer-review meetings, and—subject to NSF approval and availability of funding—making awards, negotiating and executing agreements with sub-awardees, disbursing funds, and monitoring the progress of awarded projects. To eliminate conflicts of interest, NOAO employees are not eligible for funds under TSIP and are excluded from sitting on the review committee.

TSIP awards are fixed-price grants administered as sub-awards to sponsoring institutions from the NOAO Contracts Office. Disbursement of funds is typically divided into multiple stages. New instrument sub-awards will have a minimum of two stages (AB and CD); these may be further subdivided during post-award negotiations. Payment will be made annually in advance for Phase AB. The funding profile for Phase CD will be negotiated at the time of the CDR. Other Improvement and Access proposals will be funded annually, in advance, subject to satisfactory progress reviews.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

TSIP is open to non-federally funded US observatories and affiliated institutions having a mechanism for providing observing time on a telescope through the NOAO time allocation process. This includes US institutions that operate such telescopes, as well as US institutions that can provide assured access on US or non-US O/IR telescopes. The partners and observatories of non-federally funded consortia in which NOAO holds less than a 51% interest (e.g., WIYN, SOAR) are also free to submit proposals to TSIP—with a proportional reduction in the amount of community access time required, as described below in the Proposed Community Access Time section.

2 REQUIRED CONTENT OF TSIP PROPOSALS

PROPOSED COMMUNITY ACCESS TIME

All TSIP proposals must contain a description of the amount, scheduling, and nature of observing time to be made available to the community if the requested funding is awarded. System Improvement proposals that seek funding for new instrumentation will be considered based either upon current availability of observing time or upon anticipated availability of observing time at future dates. Other System Improvement proposals and all System Access proposals will be considered only for telescopes *already in operation* as of the first incremental funding date, so that observing time can be made available as soon as the proposed effort begins.

For System Improvement proposals, the value of telescope time provided must be equal to 50% of the TSIP funds awarded. An exception is made in the case of System Improvement proposals from consortia in which NOAO is a partner at 51% or less. In this case, the requisite community observing time (50% of the TSIP dollars awarded) may be reduced by NOAO's fractional ownership. For example, in a consortium that includes NOAO as a 30% partner (i.e., 30% of the science time on the telescope is available to the broad community through NOAO), the System Improvement proposer(s) would need to provide telescope time to the community equal to 35% (50% times 70%) of the TSIP funds received. Telescope partnerships in which NOAO is a partner at a fraction greater than 51% are not eligible for TSIP funding.

The community observing time resulting from successful TSIP proposals is allocated by NOAO through the same mechanisms of merit review used to evaluate observing proposals and allocate time on NOAO telescopes.

VALUATION OF PROPOSED COMMUNITY ACCESS TIME

Each TSIP proposal must contain a specific commitment of observing time to be made available to the public community on the telescope for which the instrument or improvement is being proposed. The value of community access time proposed must be defined and justified by an explicit calculation in the proposal narrative. For System Access proposals, the proposer should show the actual cost per night and their proposed incentive factor separately. The methodology and assumptions used to determine and justify the cost of the community time are at the sole discretion of the proposer.

Proposers must specify in the proposal narrative any conditions they wish to impose on the community access offered. NOAO is willing to provide interface and support services to facilitate community access; the details of such arrangements can be negotiated following the successful review of a TSIP proposal. *Note particularly that it is not necessary that access be granted as individual observing runs.* An alternate possibility is to undertake a large survey or surveys, defined, at least in part, through community input, from which the data would be made publicly available.

-- Examples of acceptable cost-per-night valuations on the telescopes of previous TSIP awardees—Keck, MMT, Magellan, LBT, and WIYN—can be found on the TSIP Web site: <http://www.noao.edu/system/tsip/more-info.php>.

Estimating Cost per Night for Telescopes < 6.5 M in Aperture

Because the existing telescopes < 6.5 m in aperture are typically older, the method of amortizing their original construction costs over 20 years following their completion may not be the most appropriate formula for estimating cost per night. We propose the following guideline for estimating the value of time on these older telescopes:

Assume that the capital value is the current estimated cost to build a telescope of similar characteristics, reduced by a factor equal to inflation over the last ten years. This resulting capital value should still be amortized over a 20-year period. An example using this calculation can be found on the TSIP Web site (<http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/>).

PROJECT MANAGEMENT, PHASING, STAFFING, COSTING

System Improvement proposals must present clear staffing and budgeting profiles and explicit schedules for development of the proposed instrument or upgrade. A management plan with well-defined milestones is essential. 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. Proposals should contain full costs for both phases; sources of uncertainty or needs for contingency should be clearly addressed.

SCIENCE JUSTIFICATION AND SYSTEM PRIORITIES

Proposals for system improvements and new instrumentation should also contain a science justification explaining how the proposed instrument or improvement fits into the overall context of scientific capability needed by the entire US astronomical community. Proposals may reference scientific priorities and needs as expressed in various community studies or workshops.*

The review committee will be charged with maximizing benefit to the US community among the possible choices presented through the proposals. System needs as well as quality and amount of access provided will all be considered in the decision process.

* E.g., "Access to Large Telescopes for Astronomical Instruction and Research:" see: <http://www.noao.edu/system/altair>.



3 PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

LETTERS OF INTENT

Letters of Intent to propose to the TSIP are required. Letters of Intent may be submitted in electronic version, in the body of an email, or in paper copy. Letters of Intent will be acknowledged individually within one business day of receipt. If submitted electronically, send to syspo@noao.edu. If submitted by mail or fax, send to:

David Sprayberry
Telescope System Instrumentation Program
National Optical Astronomy Observatory
P.O. Box 26732
Tucson, AZ 85726-6732
Tel: (520) 318-8000
Fax: (520) 318-8170

The due date for Letters of Intent is **August 26, 2011**.

Purpose and Content of Letters of Intent

The purpose of obtaining Letters of Intent is to assemble a peer review panel without conflicts of interest and with expertise appropriate to the anticipated proposals. Letters of Intent should include:

- (a) designation of the proposal as either a System Improvement or a System Access proposal,
- (b) names, institutions, and contact information of the PI and Co-Is,
- (c) general description of the instrument or improvement if a System Improvement proposal,
- (d) anticipated funding period in months,
- (e) anticipated cumulative funding requested, and
- (f) description of telescope facilities to which community access will be available if proposal is successful.

Questions about proposals, content, administration, and awards should be sent electronically to NOAO at syspo@noao.edu. All questions will be given immediate attention; collected questions and answers (excluding confidential or proprietary content) deemed useful to other proposers will be posted on the TSIP FAQ Web page: <http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/more-info>.

FULL PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted electronically as a single PDF file containing all required sections, including the NSF budget page(s) and the Cover and Certification pages.

There are two ways to submit TSIP proposals electronically: (1) the electronic PDF file can be sent as an attachment to syspo@noao.edu, or (2) the electronic PDF file can be posted to a secure ftp site to be created by NOAO. (The latter option is needed if the proposal file is too big to be sent as an email attachment.) In either case, proposals must be received by midnight (MST) on the date due.

The NSF budget pages, of which Excel templates are available from the System Project Office and the TSIP Web site, must also be submitted in PDF format, one budget page for each year of requested funding, plus a cumulative budget page showing total funding requested (for multi-year proposals). Proposals will be acknowledged individually within one business day of receipt.

The deadline for full proposals is midnight (MST), **November 04, 2011**.

REQUIRED SECTIONS FOR FULL PROPOSALS

Cover and Certification Pages

The two-page NSF Cover/Certification sheet should be attached as a PDF to the front of each proposal. A Word version of the Cover page is on the TSIP Web site (<http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/>). Signed copies of this document must be received by mail (or by fax to 520-318-8270) within five days of proposal submission. Electronic signature is acceptable.

Proposal Narrative: System Improvement Proposals

System improvement proposals are for substantial new capabilities. Therefore the narrative should describe a single instrument proposal. Proposers wishing to submit for more than one instrument in this call should submit a separate full proposal for each instrument.

System Improvement proposals must contain five sections:

- (1) Science,
- (2) Technical,
- (3) Management,
- (4) Budget (including the NSF-style budget sheets), and
- (5) Capabilities/Community Access.

Broader impacts and intellectual merit of the proposed work can be addressed in any of the above sections as appropriate, but must be included (see section 4). *The length of the proposal narrative without the Budget section shall not exceed 30 pages.* There are no page limitations on the Budget section.

1. The **Science** section describes the scientific capability that the proposed instrument or improvement provides or enables. Proposers should explicitly state how the proposed development will improve or enhance the overall ground-based O/IR System. This section might reference the scientific motivations for particular capabilities as formulated via community meetings or workshops,* if not, the proposal should make the scientific case that the proposed capability is as desirable as those that have been prioritized through community consensus. Specific scientific goals for the instrument or improvement and/or scientific studies that could be undertaken with community time may also be described.
2. The Technical section should describe the technical approach that will be used to provide the proposed capability. The intent of this section is to convince the proposal review committee that the technical approach is viable and that the proposing team has the resources and expertise to carry it out.

* E.g., "Access to Large Telescopes for Astronomical Instruction and Research:" See: <http://www.noao.edu/system/altair>

This section should include an overview of the instrument or improvement, including optics, mechanical design, electronics, and software. It should present a discussion of the technical issues/concerns and strategies for addressing them. It should also describe the flow down from scientific goals to functional performance requirements, and should provide evidence that the proposed instrument will satisfy these requirements.

3. The **Management** section must describe the management approach to be used on the proposed project, including the following:
 - Overall project structure and organization, including an organization chart; **key personnel should provide details of their other commitments.**
 - Project risks and key challenges and strategies for addressing them, including a discussion of budget and schedule contingency.
 - Procedures and processes to be used to manage the project, including, for example:
 - Procedures to assign tasks and to control project personnel
 - Metrics to monitor and assess progress
 - Procedures and tools to plan and organize the project work
 - Plant and equipment
 - Personnel or subcontractors
 - Dependencies among aspects of development, design, or fabrication
 - Project management documentation that will be generated
 - A Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), as well as a schedule based on the WBS, showing time line of major tasks, resource loading, task durations, and task costs built up to the overall project cost, including:
 - Dates of planned meetings and reviews and other critical milestones
 - Processes and procedures for quality assessment and control
 - Proposed mechanisms to facilitate NOAO oversight activities (see Award Administration and Program Oversight section below)
4. 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. The payment schedule should be justified on the basis of the WBS and planned commitments for large capital items.

The budget should explicitly identify payroll, benefits, non-payroll, and agency-agreed overhead costs as they would be determined in a proposal to NSF. For instrument proposals, summary budgets should be given separately for phase AB and phase CD. Annual and summary budgets (for multi-year proposals) must be included in all proposals in the format required for NSF proposals. (Excel spreadsheet templates for the NSF budget forms are available on the TSIP Web site: <http://ast.nao.edu/system/tsip/>.)
5. The **Capabilities/Community Access** section must detail the manner in which telescope time is to be made available, including the total number of nights and their distribution over time, any constraints on their use, the facilities to be made available, and so forth.

This section must include an explicit calculation of the value of observing time used to determine the nights to be made available to the community if the proposal is funded. This valuation should be calculated using such items as total construction cost, together with annual costs for operations and instruments. To provide accountability to the community, the explicit calculation and explanation of the value of nights provided for successful TSIP proposals will be published later on the System Web site:

<http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/more-info>. For guidelines on how to value the cost of a night on telescopes < 6.5 m in aperture, see section 2 Required Content of TSIP Proposals above.

In addition, the Capabilities/Community Access section should include a comprehensive description of instruments available to visitors, services for visitors, data quality, data analysis capabilities, and any other factors that may affect the reviewers' assessment of the value of observing time on a particular telescope. Proposals should state a clear schedule and any contingency planning for providing the allocated community observing time.

Proposal Narrative: System Access Proposals

The System Access proposal narrative must contain two sections:

- (1) Capabilities/Community Access and
- (2) Budget (including the NSF-style budget page(s)).

The length of the proposal narrative without the budget section shall not exceed ten pages. There are no page limitations on the Budget section.

1. The **Capabilities/Community Access** section must detail the manner in which telescope time is to be made available, including the total number of nights and their distribution over time, constraints on their use, the facilities to be made available, services for visitors, and so forth. It must list the instruments to which access will be permitted, their performance characteristics, and their operating modes and associated data reduction and analysis tools available. Site characteristics, including typical clear and photometric fractions and seeing distribution, should also be noted, as well as any other factors that may affect the assessment of the value of observing time. Proposals should state a clear schedule and any contingency planning for providing the allocated community observing time. *Since these proposals compete directly with System Improvement proposals, proposers should include a discussion of the science impact of the offered capabilities. This will aid the review panel in balancing awards among System Access and System Improvement proposals.*

This section must include an explicit calculation of the value of observing time used to determine the nights to be offered to the community if the proposal is funded. This valuation should be calculated using such items as total construction cost, together with annual costs for operations and instruments. The incentive factor applied to this value that results in the total cost of the observing time to the community should be specified independently.

To provide accountability to the community, the explicit calculation and explanation of the value of nights provided for successful TSIP proposals will be published on the System Web site: <http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/more-info>. For guidelines on how to value the cost of a night on telescopes < 6.5 m aperture, see section 2 Required Content of TSIP Proposals above.

2. The **Budget** section should present the total funds requested, and an annual payment schedule or funding profile in the format used for budgets in NSF proposals. (Excel spreadsheet templates for these budgets are available from the TSIP Web site <http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/>.)

FORMATTING GUIDELINES FOR FULL PROPOSALS

- **Page Limits:** Excluding the Budget section, *the proposal narrative shall not exceed 30 pages (Improvement proposals) or ten pages (Access proposals)*. There is no limit on the number of pages for the Budget section.
- **Margins and Spacing:** Proposals should be single- or double-spaced and formatted with margins of at least 1.0 inch at the top, bottom, right, and left sides of the page. Type size should not be smaller than 10 point, and tables and charts (especially Gantt charts) should be clear and easily legible in PDF form. Proposers are urged to proofread the PDF versions of their proposals before submission to check the legibility of tables, charts, and budget pages.
- **Budget Forms:** The standard NSF budget page is required. Each proposal must include a single budget page in this format for each year of support requested, as well as a cumulative budget page (for multi-year proposals only) showing the total funding requested over the full term of proposed TSIP support. Definitions of the line item categories found in the NSF budget form can be found in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide, Chapter II.C.2 g: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf10_1/gpprint.pdf.

The budget forms must be submitted as single-page PDF documents attached to the main proposal narrative file. Budgets should not be submitted as separate Excel files or workbooks.

- **Size of PDF Files:** Proposers are urged to compress/distill images, pictures, and other graphics such that the size of the PDF file can be successfully mailed electronically to the syspo@noao.edu address. All submissions will be acknowledged by the System Project Office within one business day of receipt; if your submission is not acknowledged, the file likely was too big to be transmitted successfully. For files too big to be [mailed](#) electronically, a secure ftp site to which the file can be uploaded will be created.

REVIEW OF FULL PROPOSALS BY NOAO CONTRACTS OFFICE

- **Review; acceptance of Full Proposals that meet Criteria.** All proposals submitted by qualified TSIP applicants (“Submittees”) will be reviewed by the NOAO Contracts Office (“Contracts Office”) to confirm the proposals meet the Full Proposal Criteria delineated in the “TSIP FY 2011 Program Announcement and Proposal Solicitation” (i.e. this document). Submittees whose proposals meet Full Proposal Criteria will receive by November 11th written confirmation that their proposal has been accepted for review by the TSIP Panel.
- **Deficiency Letter; Opportunity to correct Proposal.** If a proposal does not meet the Full Proposal Criteria, the Contracts Office will send the Submittee on or before November 11th a deficiency letter which itemizes the deficiencies that need to be corrected. Corrected proposals shall be due on or before November 18, 2011. Submittees that fail to resubmit a corrected proposal to the Contracts Office on or before November 18, 2011, will not be permitted to participate in the TSIP FY 2011 Program.

- **Acceptance/Denial of corrected Proposals.** Corrected proposals submitted will be reviewed by the Contracts Office to insure they meet the Full Proposal Criteria. Corrected proposals that meet Full Proposal Criteria will be forwarded to the TSIP Panel for review. If a corrected proposal does not meet the Full Proposal Criteria, the Subcommittee will be apprised in writing that the proposal was denied acceptance.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Scientific, technical, and programmatic questions should be documented and sent to NOAO at syspo@noao.edu. All questions will be answered promptly and those judged of interest to other proposers (excluding proprietary or confidential information) will be published on the TSIP FAQ page: <http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/more-info>.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Science/Technical	Robert Blum, email: rblum@noao.edu , David Sprayberry, email: dspray@noao.edu
Technical Manager	Mark Trueblood, email: mtrueblood@noao.edu
Contracts	Gina Logan, email: logan@noao.edu
System Information	http://ast.noao.edu/system/ email: syspo@noao.edu
TSIP Web Site	http://ast.noao.edu/system/tsip/

4 PROPOSAL REVIEW

NSF MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviews and rankings of all TSIP proposals are carried out by a peer review panel that is organized by NOAO and pre-approved by NSF. NOAO staff are specifically excluded from TSIP reviews. The review panel typically meets within two months of the proposal deadline date. Reviewer comments are documented and communicated to proposers following the review meeting.

The merit review criteria for TSIP proposals are those established by the National Science Board for all NSF proposals. (Additional review criteria apply specifically to the TSIP program: see below.) The NSF review criteria, intellectual merit and broader impacts, are described as follows:

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 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? **Past Review Panels have noted that past proposers have not always explicitly described the broader impacts of their proposed program in their proposals. The Review Panel will use broader impacts, as described here, in their review criteria and ranking.***

ADDITIONAL REVIEW CRITERIA SPECIFIC TO TSIP PROPOSALS

- Overall cost-effectiveness of the proposed effort
- Overall value of the proposed amount of time to the US astronomical community
- Degree to which the proposed effort will improve, enhance, or strengthen the overall capabilities of the ground-based O/IR system. The context for judging such improvement rests on community strategic planning activities and also includes consideration of both long-term and short-term returns and of priorities not necessarily addressed in previous TSIP cycles. An example of such a strategic community priority is the **development of data reduction pipelines and data archives**—either as upgrades to existing instruments or as elements of new ones.

- Overall quality of the management and technical plans for accomplishing the effort
- Broader impacts of the proposed effort on, for example, the improvement of infrastructure for education through involvement of students in the proposed efforts, or the improvement of research infrastructure through the training of instrumentalists

Based on the review panel rankings and available funding, NOAO will request NSF approval of sub-awards to fund successful proposals.

5 AWARD ADMINISTRATION AND PROJECT OVERSIGHT

NOAO TSIP PROGRAM

Contracts

Following NSF approval of the recommendations made by the peer-review panel, the NOAO Contracts Office negotiates sub-award contracts with the selected proposers. TSIP contracts typically include the following elements:

- Description of instrumental capability or improvement to be provided
- Timeline, including milestones and payments
- Telescope time to be provided, together with contingencies and limitations
- Management plan
- Reporting and review schedule

Project Oversight

NOAO's role is to provide ongoing oversight of the progress of awarded projects. Listed below are some examples of project oversight activities in which NOAO is typically involved. NOAO makes every effort to accommodate its oversight activities to the awardee's established project management schedules, reviews, and reporting mechanisms.

- **Approval of Management Plan**

The Technical Project Manager of the NOAO System Project Office will review and approve the management plan for the work. This is to ensure that sufficient project management is being provided by the proposing institution, that sufficient resources are identified to carry out the work, and that the budget and schedule are credible. An acceptable management plan is required before a sub-award can be recommended to NSF for approval.
- **Regular Periodic Reports**

During the design and/or construction of instruments, the instrument PI or Project Manager will be required to submit monthly reports to keep the TSIP Program Office informed of progress and problems. These reports will summarize work completed, equipment or parts purchased, issues identified, and progress relative to the accepted management plan. All reports and review results are subject to be made available publicly on the NOAO System Web site.
- **Regular Reviews for Instrument Projects**

It is expected that instrument development projects will have formal management and will include regular reviews. These reviews will be attended by the NOAO TSIP Program Office Technical Project Manager and any associated technical personnel who might provide needed expertise. The review documentation and response to the review may also be made available publicly.

- **Annual Status Reports**

At each annual TSIP proposal review meeting, the panel reviews the status of ongoing TSIP projects. Project annual status reports should describe work completed over the past 12 months, work planned for the next year, progress relative to the original proposal, and problems encountered.

- **Formal Decision on Continuation of Funding Following CDR**

Following the Critical Design Review at the end of Phase AB, a formal decision on continuation of TSIP funding through Phase CD is required. If the project is maintaining the cost and schedule in the original proposal within contingency, continuation will be automatic, subject to availability of NSF funds for TSIP. If there are projected cost overruns or schedule slips, NOAO will convene a panel to evaluate the project in context of other existing or proposed TSIP projects and determine if the project should be continued with a revised cost and schedule. A revised sub-award would require NSF approval. Alternately, NOAO may recommend the project submit a new TSIP proposal for additional funding.

- **Review of Progress on Non-Instrument System Improvement Proposals**

It is expected that infrastructure improvement projects will also have regular reviews similar in nature to quarterly or other reviews for instrument projects. Review materials and reports may be available publicly. The generic criteria to be used in evaluation are successful completion of the work according to the original plan and the improvement in performance of the facility described in the technical proposal. If improvements are not being made as proposed, NOAO will convene a review panel to evaluate the project in context of other existing or proposed TSIP projects and determine whether the project should be continued. A revised sub-award would require NSF approval.

- **Review of Progress on System Access Proposals**

It is expected that observatories that are providing observing time to the community in return for funding received through a TSIP System Access proposal will make available to NOAO all feedback from community observers concerning the success of their observing runs or the problems encountered. In the case of multi-year awards, an annual report will be required, summarizing community use of the facility. This report may be reviewed by the TSIP review panel for continuation into the next year.