SSERVI CAN-2 FAQ
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RECENT QUESTIONS

Updated 10-31-16
Q: Recent experience within our proposal team has shown that having PhD students listed in a proposal cannot be explicitly considered (for example, as a strength of the proposal). How is the presence of graduate students on a proposal evaluated in the SSERVI CAN?
A: Part of SSERVI's mission statement is to train the next generation of space researchers. Next generation training is referenced in the CAN in several locations (e.g. Sec. 1.3; Sec. 5.1.1.1; Sec. 5.1.2; Sec. A.2.3), and as such, will be taken into account when determining overall strength of the proposal. Graduate students are but one way to address the subject of "training the next generation."

Updated 10-19-16
Q: Are two Deputy Directors allowed or should there just be one?
A: Yes, more than one deputy PI may be identified. Section 1.3.2 of the CAN states that a PI must "…identify a Deputy PI(s) who will assist…" and suggests that more than one deputy per team may be chosen. If more than one deputy is chosen, all deputies (and their associated PIs) will become a part of the SSERVI Executive Council as outlined in Section 1.3.1.

Q: Should any members identified in the section on "Others contributing but not requesting funding" on the initial Step-1 application be listed formally as "Collaborators"?
A: Yes any team member who is not requesting funding should be listed as a "Collaborator." The only exception to this rule is that team members remain as "collaborators" if they only receive travel dollars. (See Q.27 of the SSERVI CAN FAQ.)

Q: I have two Co-Is I would like to add as well as another collaborator. Can I go back to the Step-1 and add these?
A: You may make changes to the team up to 15 days prior to the Step-2 due date (but not to the Step-1 proposals, which are done). Please add them onto your Step-2 proposal. As stated in the CAN: "Team members may be changed up to 15 days prior to the Step-2 proposal due date. To add funded investigators between Step-1 and Step-2, proposers must inform the point(s) of contact identified in Section 7 and cc sara@nasa.gov at least 15 days in advance of the Step-2 due date." Proposers do not need to inform NASA of changes to unfunded team members.

Updated 10-18-16:
Q: Can a Step-2 Proposal have a different PI than originally submitted in the Step-1 Proposal?
A: Yes, you may change Principal Investigators on your proposal. The prohibition (in Section 4.1.2) on changing the PI between Step-1 and Step-2 has been deleted. Moreover, to give offerors time to make these changes, the timing of the requirement to inform NASA has been diminished from 30 days to 15 days in advance of the Step-2 due date. New text is in bold and deleted text has been struck through. The due date for Step-2 proposals remains unchanged: Step-2 proposals are due November 21, 2016.

Updated 10-6-16
1) Q. As the Lunar Mapping and Modeling Portal (LMMP) is managed by SSERVI, can we request a letter of support from LMMP if we plan to utilize and implement LMMP into our research plans?
A. Yes. You may contact the development team lead, Emily Law at emily.s.law@jpl.nasa.gov and discuss the involvement of LMMP in your team's research.

2) Q: As many government agencies operate on the fiscal year rather than the program year, may we request that funding of our Team be coincident with the fiscal year rather than another random start date?
A: You may request that your Team funding be coincident with the Fiscal Year.

3) Q: Do you have a list of topics covered by current SSERVI Teams?
A: There is a "brick chart" of core competencies associated with each team on the SSERVI website at https://sservi.nasa.gov/sserviteams/. Note that these categories are at a high level of granularity and each team may be approaching each topic from a different angle.

4) Q: Can a Co-I propose to do the same work on multiple proposals?
A: Yes, a Co-I can propose to do the same work on different proposals; however, if both proposals are funded, then the scope and associated budget for all but one of the selected proposals will be removed as you cannot be paid twice to do the same work.

OVERVIEW

5) Q: Why is NASA SSERVI selectively asking for only Mars regolith research instead of broader Mars investigations?
A: The Institute was created to address human spaceflight concerns, i.e. to bring science to bear on questions related to human exploration. NASA's horizon destination is Mars and the NASA Human Research Program (HRP) has made

Martian regolith studies a high priority for investigations designed to reduce risk to humans on the surface.

6) Q: Why should this research be done in an institute structure?
A: The future of science, and research in general, is interdisciplinary in nature. Studies have shown that institutes are uniquely capable of enabling interdisciplinary research. The National Research Council's (NRC) review of the NASA Astrobiology Institute (NAI) found that:

"Overall, the committee is unanimous in finding that the NAI has fulfilled its original mandate. The NAI has played a key role in supporting the development of astrobiology and has positively affected NASA's current and future missions. The committee recommends that the NAI should continue to be supported." –NRC "Assessment of the NASA Astrobiology Institute"
http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12071&page=2

7) Q: Since Mars is so far off on the horizon, is Mars research through this institute of real interest to HEOMD?
A: Mars is most certainly an interest of HEOMD. NASA's mandate is to build the next generation of space launch vehicle, send humans to explore a NEA in the mid 2020s, send humans to the Mars system in 2030s, and Mars surface in 2040s. In order to enact that plan, we must begin the scientific and exploration research now to pave the road to Mars, and this CAN continues that through solicitation of investigations into Martian regolith as it pertains to human health and performance.

8) Q: Are you only looking for proposals that are of a comparative planetology nature? Basically do proposals have to be about all target bodies? Or can they be of one thread?
A: It is the intent of this CAN to develop an Institute with an appropriate balance across all relevant target bodies. While PIs are free to propose studies of only one target body, a comparative planetology focus should allow each team to apply their scientific findings to other potential target bodies as well as integrate fully into the overall virtual institute structure. Proposals that explore similar features and processes among the target bodies to uncover similarities and difference are highly encouraged. Programmatic balance will be applied to teams selected from this CAN.

9) Q: What will be the cadence for future CANs??
A: It is our intention to have staggered CANs every ~2.5-3 years with a 5-year team award period.

10) Q: How many teams are expected to be funded?
A: We expect 3-4 teams based on available budget.

<u>Scientific/Technical Content</u>

11) Q: I noticed that instrument development was mentioned. Are projects that seek, for example, to develop an instrument for a mission considered responsive to the goals of the CAN?
A: Proposals that combine science with early TRL instrument development would be considered responsive to the CAN. Actual flight instrument development is not supported by this CAN.

12) Q: How are interdisciplinary approaches reflected in the criteria for this CAN?
A: Interdisciplinary approaches within a proposal will be evaluated primarily under the criterion Merit of the Science and Technical Research Plan. It will be up to the proposer to demonstrate to the reviewers that multiple disciplines are being applied in an integrated way to address the objectives of the research.

13) Q: Are proposals having a direct involvement in a current mission more favorable than ones with potential future missions?
A: Both types of proposals are relevant to NASA and the Institute's objectives. Neither type is inherently more favored.

14) Q: The CAN Section 8.1 seems to restrict the proposed research to data that are already in the NSSDC or the Planetary Data System at the time the proposal is submitted. This would seem to exclude any plans to analyse data from forthcoming missions. I realize that we can (and will) modify the research objectives year by year and negotiate appropriate support for the winning team, but taken literally Sec. 8.1 would seem to not allow the proposers to mention these important opportunities that are coming soon but not yet here.
A: These restrictions apply only to spacecraft data, not to analogue or laboratory data or to lunar samples. The intent is to ensure that the data will be available to carry out the proposed research, and to maintain a level playing field with equal access for all teams to data from NASA flight missions. Thus a plan for analysis of future spacecraft data (which might not materialize) should not be the basis of any component of a proposal for SSERVI. However, a broadly based team that proposes a strong research plan based on existing publicly available spacecraft data should be positioned to make appropriate use of new data as they become publicly available, and it is expected that the specific research objectives of all the teams will be adjusted year by year to take advantage of new discoveries and new data.

15) Q: If proposed science has scientific/exploration impact on objects beyond the Target Bodies (e.g. Mercury, Venus, etc), will that be scored positively under technical merit in the proposal review scoring?
A: The general answer to that is no – that is, the research must be relevant to NASA's strategic priorities as stated in the CAN. However, creative proposals and their research may result in comparative planetology results that benefit other scientific objectives that are not within the scope of this CAN. However, that will not be counted towards the technical merit scoring of the proposal.

16) Q: There is a significant collaboration with HEOMD. Can you outline the HEOMD priorities/goals that are expected within the CAN proposals?
A: HEOMD has developed a set of goals for future exploration called Strategic Knowledge Gaps (SKGs). HEO-centric portions of proposals should address one or more of these SKGs. For more information, please visit the following URL: http://www.nasa.gov/exploration/library/skg.html

17) Q: Are mission planning and mission scenarios for exploration using human and robotic systems considered in this CAN?
A: Under Section 1.4: "Mission planning as related to the basic and/or applied research objectives of the proposal may also be appropriate as part of a larger scientific effort."

18) Q: Is the Earth-Moon L1/L2 point considered in this CAN?
A: Earth-Moon L2 is considered part of the lunar "system" for the purposes of this CAN.

19) Q: Are proposals encouraged to demonstrate relevance to NASA strategic documents?
A: No. Proposals do not have to cite NASA strategic documents. PIs must demonstrate RELEVANCE to the CAN and its objectives. However, since the CAN is consistent with NASA strategic documents, such citations might potentially be useful (e.g., SKGs) where appropriate, though not required.

20) Q: To what degree, and at what level, is technology development allowed/encouraged?
A: Technology or instrument concept development (each at TRL 4 or less) related to potential missions to a Target Body(s) are allowable tasks that may be proposed in response to the CAN.

Logistics

21) Q: What is the overall process and timeline for selection of the new teams?
A: Proposals will be due within 90 days of the release of the CAN. The panel review is expected to occur within 3 months from the proposal deadline with selection of the teams within 1.5 months after that.

22) Q: We would like clarification concerning the cost share requirement as related to non-profit organizations. Is it required to cost share and if so, is there a minimum level of cost share we would be required to provide?
A: The governing language is in the SSERVI CAN, Section 3.4. Cost sharing is " not required, but may be offered voluntarily and may be accepted."

23) Q: Can you please define Co-PI, Co-I and Collaborator. Since Co-Is are supposed to have a significant role, can a budget also be assigned to Collaborators (such as a month of summer salary support per year and travel)?

A: Every organization submitting a proposal in response to this CAN must designate a single Principal Investigator (PI) who will be responsible for the quality and direction of the entire proposed investigation and for the use of all awarded funds. Note that NASA does not accept the designation of a "Co-Principal Investigator" for this program; there must be only one PI who is solely responsible for the proposed investigation.

As stated in the Guidebook for Proposers Responding to a NASA NRA or CAN (Section 1.4.2); A Co-I is a member of the proposal's investigation team who is a critical "partner". A Co-I must have a well-defined, and generally sustained, continuing role in the proposed investigation. A Collaborator is an individual who is less critical to the proposal than a Co-I but who is committed to provide a focused but unfunded contribution for a specific task. If funding support is requested in the proposal, such a person must be identified in some other category than Collaborator – such as a Co-I.

24) Q: Can a Deputy-PI be designated?
A: NASA does not officially recognize the position of Deputy-PI for these Institute team awards. However, for those teams that are selected, team PIs should informally identify a Deputy to help them lead the team and represent the PI when they are not available.

25) Q: Is it possible to submit more than one proposal per PI?
A: There is no restriction on the number of proposals that can be submitted by a single PI. However, the various proposals would need to outline significantly different research, and the PI would need to demonstrate that s/he would not be over-committed if both or all of the proposals were selected.

26) Q: Can a Co-I be on more than one proposal?
A: Yes, provided that the research tasks proposed in each submission are different, and that the total of the Co-I's time committed is no more than 100% (should both or all of the proposals be selected).

27) Q: Can Collaborators receive travel funding?
A: Travel support, provided by the PI, for an otherwise unfunded team member does not result by itself in that person changing status from Collaborator to Co-I.

28) Q: After the CAN award expires, what are the expectations of a PI with regard participating within the Institute?
A: There are no required responsibilities of an Institute PI following the expiration of the team's award. The community, however, would benefit through continued interactions and the Institute will make a serious effort to maintain connections with its prior teams – through such activities as Focus Groups, student programs, sponsored workshops and courses, remote seminar series, and the Forum. The goal of these efforts is to keep the team actively involved in the activities of the Institute, the planetary program, and the broader community.

29) Q: Would you say that there is a minimum or maximum number of Co-I's? Are some teams too small or too big to be attractive to the Institute?
A: The right size for your team is the number of members required to carry out the work – no more and no less.

30) Q: It is not clear whether a proposal should include the costs associated with use of facilities in the budget for the SSERVI CAN, to whit, the AVGR (Ames vertical gun range) and an SEM at USGS. My understanding is that such costs are not usually included in a Cooperative Agreement.
A: This is a question for you to work out with the facilities you intend to use. We at SSERVI do not know or influence the rates changed for use of the AVGR or SEM at USGS. If they charge you for their use, then you should include these charges in your budget. If they waive such charges for work done under a NASA Cooperative agreement, then don't include them. If you are selected, of course, we will support any initiative from you to ask them to waive charges, but their charging policies are not within our control.

31) Q: Can you comment on the funding rate?
A: The selection rate for this CAN will be ~20% depending on final numbers of submitted proposals.

32) Q: Institute PIs usually meet multiple times a year. Are travel budgets for these meetings included in the proposal? How many days in length are each of the PI meetings (for budgeting purposes)?
A: Travel budgets for in-person Institute PI meetings (typically three per year) are to be included as part of the proposal budget. The meetings are usually 1-2 days in length, plus travel on each end. These meetings are typically, but not always, held in conjunction with other major national meetings (e.g. the Forum, LPSC, AGU, etc)

33) Q: CAN Section 4.4 (6) states: "Any costs for the purchase and/or usage of specific hardware or software, or any costs associated with the use of high performance networks essential for the proposed research, must be included in the budget. NASA will cover all costs associated with the purchase and installation of a room-based videoconferencing system for a designated conference room at the Lead Institution." Does this last sentence mean that NASA will cover the room-based videoconferencing system outside of the proposal budget? Or, must it be included in the budget?
A: These costs should be budgeted in the team proposal. In the end, there is only one total SSERVI budget, so costs for IT or communications-related items comes out of the same budget as the rest of the team costs. Fortunately, the price of video conferencing equipment continues to drop, and many organizations already have such setups, so we hope that these IT and teleconferencing costs will not be very great.

International Partnerships

34) Q: Can we fund foreign collaborators travel to the US?
A: Foreign collaborations are strongly encouraged through this CAN. These collaborations strengthen the Institute scientifically and may provide linkages with other NASA priority activities such as the International Space Exploration Coordination Group. As always, NASA is involved in research with foreign institutions on a no-exchange of funds basis; funding team members at foreign institutions, even for travel to attend meetings in the United States, is not allowed. However, individuals who are affiliated with a US institution (in addition to their home foreign institution) may be funded investigators. Moreover, where appropriate, NASA funds may be used to procure goods and services from foreign entitles, as opposed to research. Further information is available at the NASA Service and Advice for Research and Analysis (SARA) website: http://science.nasa.gov/researchers/sara/faqs/#14 and Section 2.3.10. c (vi) on page 2-16 of the 2011 or 2012 Guidebook for Proposers. Finally, the People's Republic of China is a special case,
see http://science.nasa.gov/researchers/sara/faqs/prc-faq-roses-2012/

35) Q: Are there established lunar international activities that are available for leverage and partnerships?
A: We encourage teams to collaborate with current and future international partners. The Institute international nodes and areas of research/expertise are listed on the website. For full descriptions of these partnerships, please visit: http://lunarscience.nasa.gov/international/

Other Institute Objectives:

36) Q: Regarding the training of the next generation, is NASA looking for a specific skill set beyond a STEM skill set?
A: Beyond a student's particular area of specialization, it is very important that young planetary scientists be exposed to an interdisciplinary environment and that they develop the skills to be able to communicate with researchers across the full scope of planetary science.