



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

Dear Colleague:

This letter is to inform you of plans to integrate and recompute the management and operation of the three major seismic and geodetic facilities supported by the Division of Earth Sciences (EAR) in the Directorate for Geosciences (GEO) at the National Science Foundation (NSF). Those facilities are the core seismic Facility managed by the Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS), the core geodetic Facility managed by UNAVCO, and the EarthScope Facility managed jointly by IRIS and UNAVCO.

The core facilities operated by IRIS and UNAVCO share virtually identical technical and logistical support needs and business systems with the EarthScope Facility, and provide very similar support to the community. In addition, all four awards governing these facilities will expire in the next four years. NSF believes this is a good opportunity to undertake a phased integration and recompetition process involving these three facilities.

NSF considered several different options for recompetition of the management and operation of these facilities, and plans a two-step process. In 2012-13, NSF intends to integrate the management and operations of the current IRIS core seismic Facility with those of the USArray component of the EarthScope Facility under a single award. At the same time, NSF will integrate the management and operations of the current UNAVCO core geodetic Facility with those of the Plate Boundary Observatory (PBO) and San Andreas Fault Observatory at Depth (SAFOD) components of the EarthScope Facility under a second award. Near the end of the first five years of integrated operations, NSF plans to issue a new solicitation to recompute the management and operations of both of these integrated seismic and geodetic facilities.

This plan will: (1) address existing National Science Board policy requiring periodic recompetition of the management of major NSF facilities (NSB-08-16); (2) be consistent with prior National Science Board approval of IRIS and UNAVCO as managers and operators of the EarthScope Facility through FY2018 (NSB-03-62 and NSB-07-116); (3) simplify NSF oversight of these facilities; (4) streamline the management of these facilities leading to more cost-effective operation; (5) allow sufficient time for community input to facility integration before recompetition; (6) minimize disruption to EarthScope Facility operations, especially during the planned deployment of USArray to Alaska in 2014; and (7) further existing partnerships with other U.S. and international agencies in support of these solid Earth deformation facilities.

NSF welcomes community feedback on the integration of the management of these facilities and this plan overall. Please contact any of the following NSF program officers with questions or comments:

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Sincerely,

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