



National Science Foundation
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Environment, Society and the Economy: ESE Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

The Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) and the Directorate for Geosciences (GEO) seek to increase collaboration between the geosciences and the social, behavioral and economic sciences by augmenting funding for interdisciplinary research related to the Environment, Society and the Economy (ESE).

The following document answers frequently asked questions from the Dear Colleague Letter on Environment, Society and the Economy -- see NSF 09-031

<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2009/nsf09031/nsf09031.jsp>.

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1. Do I submit my proposal to ESE directly?

No. ESE is not a program. Rather, it is an opportunity for core programs in the Social, Behavioral, and Economics Sciences (SBE) and the Geosciences (GEO) to support interdisciplinary research that advances knowledge in programs within both SBE and GEO. Proposals will be reviewed by the relevant core programs in both directorates. Funds have been made available by Directorates to support this kind of research.

2. How are ESE proposals reviewed? Is the process different than for other proposals?

At least one GEO and one SBE program will review each proposal. The key to funding as an ESE award is that the proposed project has intellectual merit and broader impacts for both disciplines. If successfully reviewed by both programs, the program officers will recommend the proposal for funding.

3. How do I determine which programs in GEO and SBE most closely relate to my project?

Once you have developed your concept of a project that would bridge the two directorates, visit <http://www.nsf.gov> to identify one program within GEO that looks

most appropriate for your geoscience component, and one within SBE that looks appropriate for your social-science component. You will need to have a concept that will advance knowledge in both directorates, but you should also identify a lead program where the most significant contribution to knowledge is likely to be made.

4. Can the proposed work include the biological sciences, or any other divisions outside SBE and GEO?

Yes. These additional programs could be within SBE, GEO, or even other directorates provided both SBE and GEO programs are involved. You may also suggest other programs for co-review if you are making contributions to the literatures supported by other programs.

5. If my proposal is appropriate for CNH, or a special competition that involves both GEO and SBE, can it also be considered for ESE support?

No. The proposal must be submitted to standing programs. ESE aims to support research projects that can be jointly reviewed and jointly supported by the standing programs in both GEO and SBE. While many proposals that focus on the full range of interactions and feedbacks within and among relevant geoscience, social- and behavioral-science, and bioscience systems might be appropriate for CNH (Dynamics of Coupled Natural and Human Systems), you will need to determine whether your project should be considered in the interdisciplinary framework within which CNH proposals are reviewed, or whether you'd like your proposal jointly evaluated by the relevant GEO and SBE core programs. The same holds for special competitions such as DMUU (Decision Making Under Uncertainty) and other special competitions.

6. What scope and funding level is appropriate for individual ESE proposals?

Funding levels should be consistent with the scope of the proposed work. A "recommended amount" is not given in the Dear Colleague Letter because typical award sizes generally vary by program. There is a cost associated with working interdisciplinarily, and that should also be considered in the budget.

7. Are there deadlines or target dates for submission of proposals?

Yes. Visit the relevant program pages at <http://www.nsf.gov> to identify the relevant dates for your lead program and your secondary program. If they are within one or two months of each other, you should use the one specified by your lead program. As a courtesy, e-mail your lead program officer to alert him or her to the second deadline. If your lead program does not have a deadline or target date, you should guide yourself by the secondary program's deadline.

8. How will the relevant programs identify my proposal as one to be considered for ESE funding?

Preface your title with the acronym: "ESE: [Your full title]"

9. What should I do if I still have questions?

If you are uncertain if your proposal is appropriate for a specific program, develop a brief (2-page maximum) overview of your project idea, along with some relevant references, and e-mail it to the most relevant program officer. If you have other questions about ESE, e-mail Robert O'Connor at roconnor@nsf.gov or Susan Weiler at cweiler@nsf.gov.