



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 21-097

Dear Colleague Letter: New Timeline for Competition of Operations and Management of an NSF-supported Geophysical Facility to Succeed the GAGE and SAGE Facilities

June 11, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

The Division of Earth Sciences (EAR) in the Directorate for Geosciences (GEO) at the National Science Foundation (NSF) currently supports two geophysical facilities, SAGE (Seismological Facility for the Advancement of Geoscience) and GAGE (Geodetic Facility for the Advancement of Geoscience). These facilities provide seismic, geodetic, and related geophysical instrumentation; data archiving, quality control, and distribution; and education and outreach activities that serve a wide range of audiences. As indicated in [NSF 20-037](#), NSF has been planning a competition for a future cooperative agreement to support a single, unified geophysical facility as the successor to SAGE and GAGE.

In April 2018, EAR commissioned the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) to undertake a decadal survey consensus study for the Earth Sciences. The final report "[A Vision for NSF Earth Sciences 2020-2030: Earth in Time](#)" articulates 12 science priority areas for the Earth Sciences. A fundamental aspect of the report is the consensus that continued support of geophysical facility capabilities is critical to meet emerging and frontier science goals.

Following the release of the NASEM decadal survey report in May 2020, GEO convened a subcommittee of the Advisory Committee for Geosciences (AC GEO) to conduct a portfolio review of the instrumentation that a modernized geophysical facility might support to enable advances on the science goals highlighted in the survey. The AC GEO accepted the report of the subcommittee entitled [Recommendations for Enabling Earth Science Through NSF's Geophysical Facility – A Portfolio Review of EAR seismology and Geodesy Instrumentation](#) in April 2021. The report outlines several recommendations to NSF, including innovating and expanding the current scope of the existing facilities, and enhancing partnerships to broaden the base of support for the facilities.

To enable NSF time to work with agency partners to thoughtfully respond to the recommendations in the portfolio review, NSF plans to delay a future competition for a consolidated facility from the dates anticipated in [NSF 20-037](#). NSF will extend the current awards for operations of SAGE and GAGE to ensure continuity of services until the new award is in place. NSF now intends to follow this general schedule:

Second quarter of calendar year 2023: Release of program solicitation.

First quarter of calendar year 2024: Anticipated due date for full proposals in response to the solicitation.

This notice does not constitute a solicitation; therefore, no award of any kind will result from this notice. NSF anticipates that any award recommendation made following the merit review of proposals submitted under the expected solicitation would require National Science Board approval. NSF further anticipates that any resulting award would commence on or before 1 October 2025.

The planned competition will be held via an open, merit-based, external peer-review process. This process will be consistent with the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG) and [NSF Major Facilities Guide](#) (MFG).

Primary Contact

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Sincerely,

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