



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

**NSF 23-138**

## Dear Colleague Letter: Request for Expression of Interest to Provide a Coordinating Office for Scientific Ocean Drilling Activities

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August 18, 2023

Dear Colleague:

### SYNOPSIS OF PROGRAM

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Expressions of Interest are requested from [eligible U.S. organizations](#) to provide a Coordinating Office for Scientific Ocean Drilling (SODCO). This Coordinating Office would assist Principal Investigators (PI's) in the selection of suitable, academically or commercially available drilling and coring platforms to collect sub-seafloor samples, make sub-seafloor measurements, and install long-term borehole observatories. It is anticipated that the SODCO will be supported by the NSF Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) through a cooperative agreement of up to five years duration with the possibility of renewal for up to an additional 5 years.

Scientific Ocean Drilling provides essential infrastructure to conduct multi-disciplinary sub-seafloor research into the Earth system, including earth and climate history, extent of life, geological hazards, and sub-seafloor carbon sequestration. The range of science that could be facilitated by sub-seafloor sampling and observation was defined within the recently completed [Exploring Earth by Scientific Ocean Drilling 2050 Science Framework](#). The 2050 Science Framework is based on workshop-derived input from the [U.S. Science Community](#) and international workshops held in Europe, Japan, China, Australia, South Korea, and India.

### ACTIVITIES INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING SCIENTIFIC OCEAN DRILLING

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NSF's Division of Ocean Sciences (OCE) within the Directorate of Geosciences (GEO) intends to continue supporting Scientific Ocean Drilling after completion of the International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP) on September 30, 2024 through the submission of proposals to the Ocean Drilling Program. The SODCO will support or advise on an array of

activities including providing contractual support for securing an appropriate platform for specific missions. In addition the SODCO will also help support instrumentation needs, helping to craft data and sample curation needs, and potentially staffing. NSF will consider a wide array of possible strategies to implement such a Coordinating Office, but the essential capabilities of the SODCO that should be addressed in the Expression of Interest are:

1. The SODCO may work with the commercial drilling community or other drilling organizations to determine the type and availability of drilling services that may be available for NSF-funded scientific projects that require ocean drilling. The SODCO, if requested by the PI of the scientific project, would assist with the development of requests for bids to provide the drilling services.
2. The SODCO is expected to encourage innovation in scientific ocean drilling technologies and methods in response to community needs and will help guide the development of new drilling designs as requested by the research community.
3. The SODCO is expected to manage drilling activities for the US scientific community, as needed. We encourage collaborations with international partners as much as is practical and with scientists funded by other sources. The SODCO will be expected to assist in the planning and execution of all aspects of the drilling activities that OCE supports.
4. The successful recipient will also be expected to provide guidance to PIs to meet core curation responsibilities as defined for legacy Deep Sea Drilling Project (DSDP), ODP, and IODP cores.

Expressions of Interest for provision of a SODCO should not exceed three pages in length for the narrative and should include contact name(s), email(s), phone number(s), and organizational affiliation(s), with an additional two pages to outline the potential budget, including indirect costs, and budget justification. These must be provided by the deadline of 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time November 1, 2023, to the cognizant NSF Program Officer listed below.

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Sincerely,

Alexandra R. Isern  
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