

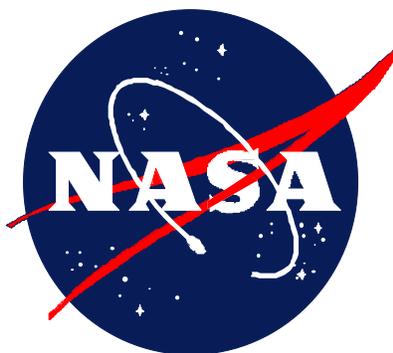
Office Work Instruction

HOWI 8310-Y005 Baseline

Effective Date: December 2, 1998

Responsible Office: YF/Program Planning and Development Division

Subject: Solicit and Select Science, Applications, and Education Investigations



OFFICE WORK INSTRUCTION

**SOLICIT AND SELECT SCIENCE,
APPLICATIONS, AND EDUCATION
INVESTIGATIONS**

(Conforming to ISO 9001 Quality System Requirements)

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PREFACE

The NASA Office Work Instruction (OWI) for Solicit and Select Science, Applications, and Education Investigations documents the tasks and activities in conformance with the International Organization for Standardization's (ISO) 9001 requirements for quality systems. The manual supplements the NASA Strategic Plan, Strategic Management Handbook, and other higher level NASA directives, which form the basis for how NASA conducts business.

This OWI is not intended to duplicate or contradict any other NASA policy, procedures or guidelines, which currently exist. As such, the OWI will reference prevailing documents where a topic is addressed and existing coverage is deemed adequate. Additional information provided within is intended to supplement existing documentation regarding Headquarters (HQ) implementation of strategic and program/project management, as well as HQ conformance with the ISO 9001 Quality Management System (QMS) requirements.

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1.0 PURPOSE

This OWI provides instructions on what must be done to solicit and select NASA Earth science, application, and education (SAE) investigations and activities. It describes the tasks that are performed for a typical solicitation. The OWI describes what is to be accomplished by the process, not how the work is to be performed. Solicitation initiators are expected to apply their experience, expertise, professional contacts, and knowledge in order to successfully process and make awards.

2.0 SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

2.1 Scope. This work instruction describes procedures for the NASA Earth Science Enterprise (ESE) solicitation and selection of SAE investigations and activities. The process begins with the conceptualization of NASA solicitations such as a NASA Research Announcement (NRA), an Announcements of Opportunity (AO), or a Cooperative Agreement Notice (CAN). The process includes evaluation of solicited and unsolicited proposals using a peer review method and concludes with a hand-off to an assigned field center which issues a grant, contract, cooperative agreement, or interagency transfer of funds award.

Solicitation initiators from the Research Division (Code YS) and the Applications, Commercialization, and Education (ACE) Division (Code YO) conduct this process regularly, with some solicitations being issued on an annual basis and others on a periodic or as needed basis. Unsolicited proposals may be submitted and evaluated at any time.

The solicitation initiator is usually a science, applications, or education program manager, but could be a division director, deputy division director, or someone such as a discipline scientist who is not a program manager. The Research Opportunity Administrator from the Business Management Division (Code YB) provides administrative support.

2.2 Applicability. This work instruction for Solicit and Select Science, Applications, and Education Investigations applies to the NASA Office of Earth Science (OES, Code Y) offices and divisions. The Associate Administrator for Earth Science is responsible for maintaining this document. The controlled version of the manual is available on the World Wide Web (WWW) via the HQ ISO 9000 Document Library for the ISO 9000 QMS at <http://hqiso9000.hq.nasa.gov>. Any printed version of this OWI is uncontrolled (reference: HCP 1400.1, Document and Data Control). Proposed revisions of this manual will be accomplished by following HOWI 1410-Y015 (Approve Quality Documents).

3.0 DEFINITIONS

In general, the definitions given in ISO 8402 apply. Appendix B of the *Earth Science Enterprise Management Handbook* provides additional ESE-specific terms and definitions.

4.0 REFERENCES

The following documents contain provisions that, through reference in this OWI or in policy or procedure documents, constitute the basis for the documented procedure:

NFS Part 1835	NASA FAR Supplement, Part 1835, Research and Development Contracting
NFS Part 1871	NASA FAR Supplement, Part 1871, MidRange Procurement Procedures

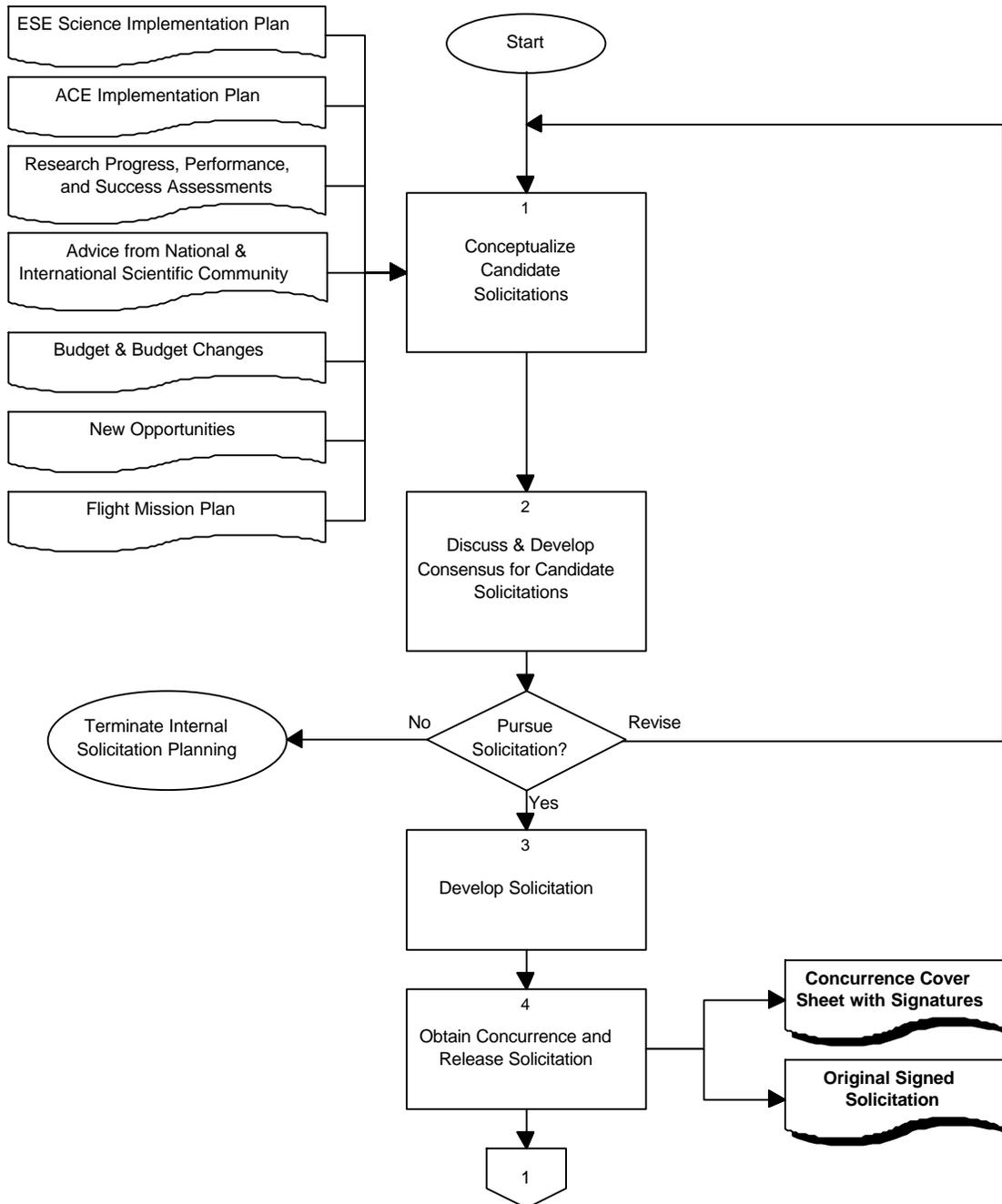
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NFS Part 1872	NASA FAR Supplement, Part 1872, Acquisition of Investigations
NPD 1000.1	NASA Strategic Plan
NPG 1000.2	NASA Strategic Management Handbook
NPG 5800.1D	Grant and Cooperative Agreement Handbook
NPD 7120.4A	Program/Project Management
NPG 7120.5A	NASA Program and Project Management Processes and Requirements
ANSI/ASQC Q9001-1994	American National Standard, Quality Systems-Model for Quality Assurance in Design, Development, Production, Installation, and Servicing
ANSI/ASQC 8402:1994	Quality Management and Quality Assurance - Vocabulary
NPD 8730.3	NASA Quality Management System Policy (ISO 9000)
NHB 1101.3	NASA Organization Handbook

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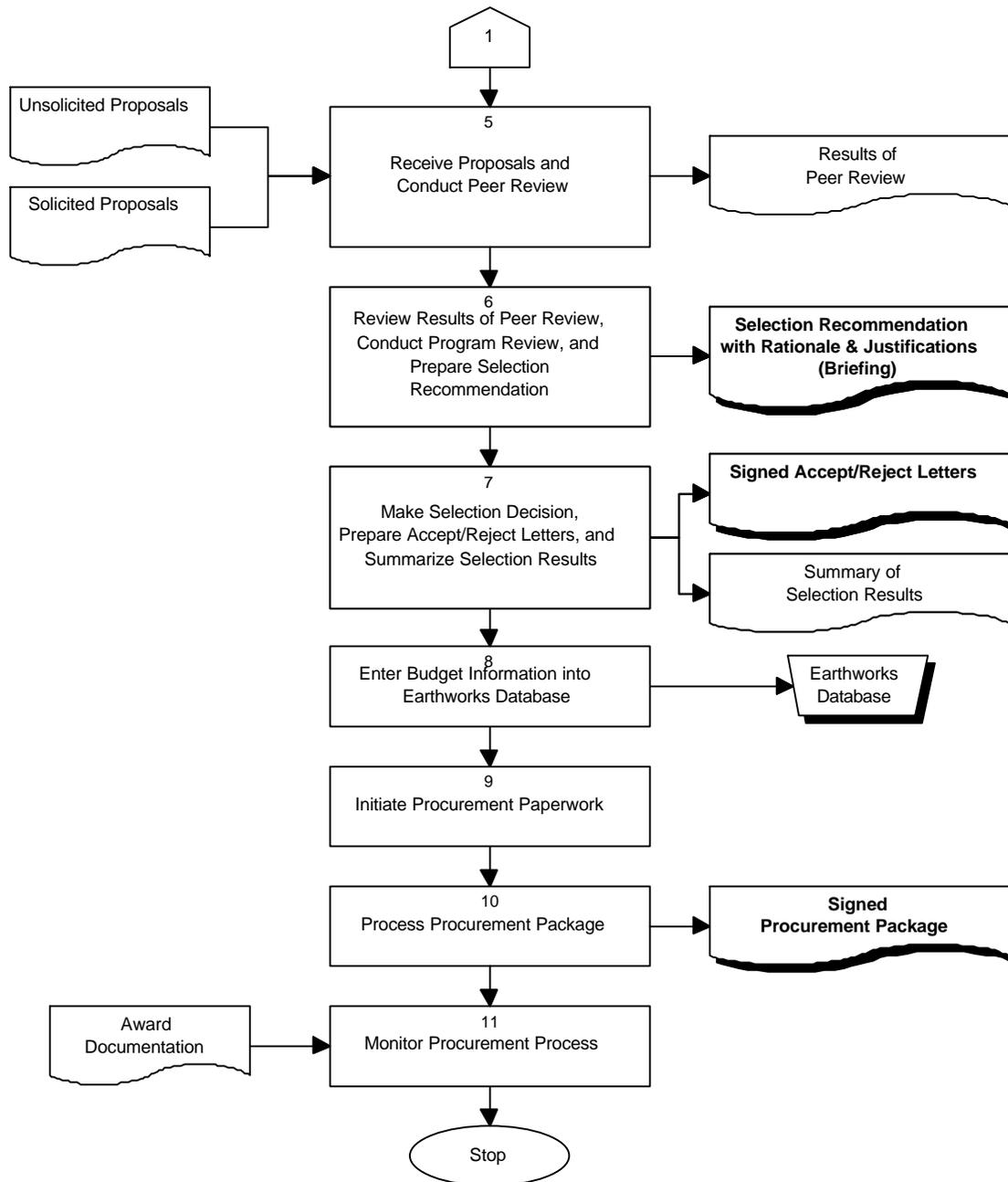
5.0 FLOWCHART

The following flowchart depicts the procedure described in Section 6. Outputs in boldface type represent the quality records listed in Section 7.



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5.0 FLOWCHART (Continued)



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6.0 PROCEDURE

The following table describes the flowchart of Section 5.

<u>Actionee</u>	<u>Action</u>
Solicitation Initiator	<p>1 <u>Conceptualize Candidate Solicitations.</u> Conceptualizing candidate solicitations is driven by the science questions, themes, priorities, strategies, and requirements documented in the <i>ESE Science Implementation Plan</i>, and the applications and education needs documented in the <i>ACE Implementation Plan</i>. Additionally, when formulating candidate solicitations, the solicitation initiator considers information obtained from existing efforts in the form of progress, success, and identified new opportunities. The solicitation initiator also obtains advice from a variety of advisory committees, including the Earth System Science and Applications Advisory Committee (ESSAAC), and relevant conferences and workshops. The solicitation initiator tempers the content, approach, and importance of planned solicitations by the realities of the budget (current, advocated, and formulated versions), budget changes, and other ESE priorities.</p> <p>As part of the effort to conceptualize a solicitation, the solicitation initiator develops preliminary definitions of each candidate solicitation. The solicitation initiator also may recommend a solicitation mechanism and an award instrument. This also may be done during Activity 2, Discuss and Develop Consensus for Candidate Solicitations, or during Activity 3, Develop Solicitation. In some cases, the preferred award instrument is not determined until after the selection decision is made (see Activity 7).</p> <p>A solicitation mechanism can be a NASA Research Announcement (NRA), an Announcement of Opportunity (AO), or a Cooperative Agreement Notice (CAN). Generally, AOs result in contracts. Under certain circumstances, another award instrument may be used but this is not typical. NRAs can result in any award instrument, such as grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements. CANs result in cooperative agreements only.</p> <p>Solicitations can be for independent investigation by a Principal Investigator, investigation as part of a larger SAE team, or investigation as part of a focused field campaign. If a solicitation is for an SAE team or a field campaign focused on a particular set of questions or needs, then a plan for that activity may be prepared. This plan may be called, for example, a Science Program Plan, an Experiment Plan, a Campaign Plan, or an Expedition Plan. It is often developed through a series of workshops involving the SAE community. The solicitation initiator often, but not always, is involved in its development. The plan usually is developed prior to or during this first activity, but it may be developed during later activities.</p>
Solicitation Initiator	<p>2 <u>Discuss and Develop Consensus for Candidate Solicitations.</u> The solicitation initiator discusses the candidate solicitation(s) with his/her colleagues and the appropriate ESE division directors to determine which</p>

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solicitations to pursue. The objective is to ensure that only important, feasible, and affordable solicitations are pursued in a timely manner.

Some candidate solicitations will need to be revised or refined. These are recycled through Activity 1, Conceptualize Candidate Solicitations, and then reconsidered in their revised form.

Candidate solicitations that are judged suitable for pursuit by NASA move forward to Activity 3, Develop Solicitation.

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| Solicitation Initiator | 3 | <p><u>Develop Solicitation</u>. For candidate solicitations, the solicitation initiator begins development of a solicitation by establishing program relevant goals and objectives for the solicitation, defining the solicitation's scope, and setting sub-topic priorities. Desired results, SAE products, and deliverables (if appropriate) are identified, along with the proposal evaluation criteria. The solicitation is drafted and prepared for ESE coordination as determined appropriate by the solicitation initiator and ESE division directors.</p> |
| Solicitation Initiator
Research Opportunity Administrator
ESE Division Directors
Support Contractor
Designated Procuring Organization | 4 | <p><u>Obtain Concurrence and Release Solicitation</u>. NASA procurement policy requires completion of a formal concurrence process before a solicitation can be publicly released. The solicitation initiator, with the assistance of the Code YB Research Opportunity Administrator, is responsible for shepherding the solicitation through this process. A concurrence cover page is prepared and attached to the solicitation. This package is then distributed to the individuals and offices indicated on the cover page in the order listed. Some concurrences may be obtained in parallel using duplicate packages, but others must be obtained in series. It is usual to obtain all but the final Code Y concurrences before seeking concurrences from Codes I, H, and G. At a minimum, the concurring individuals should include the solicitation initiator and the appropriate ESE division director(s). Once concurrence has been obtained to release the solicitation, the solicitation initiator hands the solicitation off to the Research Opportunity Administrator who logs the solicitation, completes the solicitation package, assigns a solicitation number, and sends the package to the ESE AA for release approval and signature.</p> <p>Once the solicitation package is approved for release, the Research Opportunity Administrator sends an electronic copy of the solicitation package to a support contractor for conversion to various formats and generation of hard copies for internal and external distribution. Also at this time, the solicitation initiator and the Research Opportunity Administrator work together to prepare a Commerce Business Daily (CBD) synopsis for posting in the CBD and on the ESE Home Page. The CBD synopsis is sent through electronic mail to the designated procuring organization for putting into the CBD. The designated procuring organization posts the synopsis in the CBD 15 days prior to release of the solicitation.</p> <p>For Interagency transfers or Contracts where technical responsibility for the award remains at NASA HQ, the designated procuring organization is the HQ Acquisition Branch at Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) (GSFC 210.H). For Grants or Cooperative Agreements where technical</p> |

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responsibility for the award remains at NASA HQ, the designated procuring organization is the GSFC Grants Administration Office (GSFC 201.1).

Once the CBD synopsis is released, a support contractor posts the synopsis on the ESE Home Page to alert potential proposers of the pending release. The contractor also provides electronic notification to potential proposers. The solicitation initiator determines the distribution list by selecting categories of interest for the mailing from the ESE mailing list maintained by the support contractor.

On the release date, a support contractor posts the solicitation in full on the ESE Home Page.

Solicitation Initiator
Support Contractor
Peer Reviewers

- 5 Receive Proposals and Conduct Peer Review. Prospective researchers (proposers) generate responses to a solicitation, and submit these solicited proposals to NASA for evaluation. At the discretion of the solicitation initiator, the solicitation may also request that letters of intent be submitted in advance of proposal submission. Proposals also may be submitted in the absence of a solicitation wholly on the initiative of the prospective researcher. If such unsolicited proposals are responsive in format, content, and relevance to the NASA ESE program, they must be evaluated. ESE uses a peer review process, sometimes also called merit review, to evaluate both solicited and unsolicited proposals. If an unsolicited proposal is related to a solicitation that is about to be released, then the unsolicited proposal may be held and included in the evaluation of responses to the solicitation.

Proposals are received and logged in by the ESE support contractor. The solicitation initiator screens the proposals for compliance with the solicitation requirements, and rejects any non-responsive proposals. The solicitation initiator, with the concurrence of the appropriate division director(s), determines the type of peer review process to be used, selecting from among a variety of approaches including, but not limited to, mail review, panel review, full use of external peer reviewers, internal peer review (i.e., involving only NASA civil servants), and single or multi-step processes. This decision will be based on the urgency of the schedule for a selection, the complexity of the proposals to be evaluated, the number of responses, what type of process was advertised in the solicitation, and a variety of other considerations. It is most usual to evaluate proposals using a mail peer review method, a panel peer review method, or both, and to involve external reviewers from all types of institutions. If both mail and panel reviews are to be used, the panel review almost always follows and receives input from the mail review. The NASA ESE draws its peer reviewers from the entire scientific, technical, and educational community, including experts from public and private academic institutions, industry, government (including NASA Centers, other government laboratories, and Federally Funded Research and Development Centers), and foreign countries.

The following paragraphs describe typical mail and panel peer review processes. Variations on these processes or somewhat different peer

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review processes may be employed from time to time, as appropriate.

- Mail Peer Review allows for the selection of reviewers with very specialized expertise that can delve deeply into the technical and scientific merits of the solicitation topic and technical approach. Mail reviewers individually evaluate each proposal according to its own merits and using the evaluation criteria provided by NASA. They receive copies of the proposal through the mail and return their evaluations by mail (sometimes FAX and e-mail).

The reviewers are identified, contacted, and asked to conduct a peer review of the proposal(s) by mail. The solicitation initiator selects the reviewers based on his or her experience, knowledge of the SAE community, and recommendations obtained from other SAE program managers. Mail reviewers are selected based on their scientific and technical expertise and professional credentials. They are screened for any perceived or real conflicts of interest.

The solicitation initiator sets a due date for the mail reviews and directs the support contractor to distribute the proposals and evaluation criteria to the mail reviewers. The mail peer reviewers return their reviews to the support contractor.

- Panel Peer Review brings together scientific and technical experts that cover an appropriate breadth of professional knowledge and expertise, and offer balanced perspectives on the topics to be evaluated. It allows for a thorough discussion of the merits of each proposal and the opportunity to reconcile differing evaluations on the part of individual panelists. If a mail review has preceded the panel review, the results of the mail review may be made available, and the panel may be asked to reconcile differences among the mail reviews as well as to put the work proposed into a larger programmatic context.

The solicitation initiator selects the panel reviewers based on his or her experience, knowledge of the SAE community, and recommendations obtained from other SAE program managers. Panel reviewers are selected based on their scientific and technical expertise and professional credentials. They are screened for any perceived or real conflicts of interest.

The support contractor distributes the proposals, the evaluation criteria, and the results of the mail review (if one was conducted) to the panel members. The solicitation initiator often will assign a lead reviewer for each proposal from amongst the panelists to summarize the proposed research, the results of the mail review (if there was one), and his or her own evaluation as a means of initiating the panel discussion of a proposal. The peer review panel meets as a group, usually in Washington, DC, and discusses the scope, strengths, and weaknesses of the various proposals. The proposals are rated in accordance with the evaluation criteria and the panel gives an overall rating based on a vote or consensus in most cases. The solicitation initiator, often with help from the panelists and/or a recording

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secretary provided by the support contractor, documents the results of the peer review panel evaluation.

- Solicitation Initiator 6 Review Results of Peer Review, Conduct Program Review, and Prepare Selection Recommendation. The solicitation initiator reviews the peer review panel's findings for consistency and completeness of documentation. He or she conducts an internal programmatic review to identify any logistical, implementation, cost, management concerns, and/or partnering arrangements, and to assess balance amongst the competitive proposals relative to the science themes, applications and education needs, and ESE strategies formulated during ESE strategic planning processes and specific to the solicitation. Based on this review and available resources, the solicitation initiator prepares a recommendation, with supporting justifications, as to which proposals should be selected for award. This recommendation may include options. The recommendation and supporting justification are usually packaged for a presentation to the NASA selecting official for his or her selection decision.
- Solicitation Initiator 7 Make Selection Decision, Prepare Accept/Reject Letters, and Summarize Selection Results. The solicitation initiator presents his or her recommendation, possibly with options or issues to be resolved, to the NASA selecting official. The NASA selecting official is identified by title in the solicitation and is usually the Research or ACE Division Director as appropriate. Occasionally the selecting official is the ESE Associate Administrator, an SAE program manager, or another Code Y official. The solicitation initiator usually presents his or her recommendation as to award instrument, implementing Field Center, and any other special factors with regard to the awards process at this time.
- Selecting Official
- The selecting official reviews the recommendation, considers the options, helps resolve issues, and ultimately approves, in part or in full, the selection recommendation.
- If the selecting official rejects the solicitation initiator's recommendation, the recommendation and justification are refined. When the recommendations are accepted, the solicitation initiator prepares accept and reject letters that officially notify successful and unsuccessful proposers and announce the selecting official's decisions. The selecting official signs these letters.
- The solicitation initiator summarizes the selection results, typically in the form of a list of accepted and rejected proposals and a re-packaging of the selection recommendation presentation, including the summary of results from the peer review and a summary of the program balance review. This information is used in subsequent activities to prepare the Technical Evaluation and Selection Statement or Justification for Acceptance of an Unsolicited Proposal required as part of the Procurement Request package to make an award. It is also used as a source of information to answer any questions concerning the rejected proposals or the reasons for the overall selection.
- Solicitation Initiator 8 Enter Budget Information into Earthworks Database. Based on the final

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selection decision and documented in the accept/reject letters, the solicitation initiator enters the appropriate budget information into the ESE Earthworks database. Often, recommended budgets will differ from those requested in the proposal, and the solicitation initiator will have to negotiate budget changes with the successful proposer. This usually happens immediately after the selection has been announced, but could occur earlier, during preparation and finalization of the selection recommendation in Activities 6 and 7. Once the budget data are entered into the database, the funding becomes available to apply to the actual awards to be made by the designated procuring organization.

Solicitation Initiator 9

Initiate Procurement Paperwork. The solicitation initiator initiates the procurement process. The particular initiation tasks depend upon the type of award instrument, and upon the organization that will hold technical responsibility for the award.

If the award is to be a Grant or Cooperative Agreement, and the technical responsibility for the award is to remain at NASA HQ, then the solicitation initiator prepares the Technical Evaluation and Selection Statement or Justification for Acceptance of an Unsolicited Proposal; provides the information needed to complete the Procurement Request form (GSFC 18-27); packages these with the original proposal and a copy of the award letter; and forwards the package to the Code YB Program Analyst.

If the award is to be an Interagency Transfer or a Contract, and the technical responsibility for the award is to remain at NASA HQ, then the solicitation initiator prepares the Technical Evaluation, Selection Statement or Justification for Acceptance of an Unsolicited Proposal, and other required justifications (for example, Justification for Other Agency Performing Activity or Statement of Work); provides the information needed to complete the Procurement Request form (NHQ 163); packages these with the original proposal and a copy of the award letter; and forwards this package to the Code YB Program Analyst.

If the award is to be a Grant, Cooperative Agreement, Interagency Transfer, or Contract, and the technical responsibility for the award is to be delegated to a NASA Center, then the solicitation initiator contacts the NASA Center and arranges for appropriate support and identification of a responsible individual. This step may have been taken during Activity 1, Conceptualize Candidate Solicitations, or at any time thereafter up to this stage. The procurement actions desired are communicated to the responsible individual at the Center by means of the list of accepted proposals with agreed-upon budget profiles for each proposal. The original proposals and copies of the award letters are forwarded to the Center. The solicitation initiator either prepares the Technical Evaluation and Selection Statement or Justification for Acceptance of an Unsolicited Proposal and forwards them to the Center for inclusion in the Procurement package, or forwards the Summary of Selection Results to the Center to enable the preparation of these procurement documents at the Center.

Resources to support the approved investigations are provided to the appropriate field center by the Business Management Division (Code YB)

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via a NASA funding document, Form 506 White. The assigned field center uses this information to initiate a procurement request and make an award.

Solicitation Initiator 10 Process Procurement Package. If the technical responsibility for the award is to remain at NASA HQ, then the solicitation initiator reviews the draft procurement request and makes any corrections, if necessary. The Code YB Program Analyst, or sometimes the solicitation initiator, obtains the required signatures on the forms. Procurement requests for Interagency Transfers and Contracts are signed by the Code YB Program Analyst, and a designated approving official at NASA HQ. Procurement requests for Grants and Cooperative Agreements only require signatures from NASA HQ officials on the Technical Evaluation/Selection Statement or Technical Evaluation/Justification for Acceptance of an Unsolicited Proposal. For solicitations, this is usually the selecting official. For unsolicited proposals, the Technical Evaluation/Justification for Selection of an Unsolicited Proposal is usually signed by an SAE program manager or discipline scientist.

Once signed and reviewed by the Code YB Program Analyst, the procurement request is forwarded to the Goddard Space Flight Center (GFSC) for procurement. For Grants and Cooperative Agreements, this is the Grants Administration Office (GFSC Code 201.1). For Interagency Transfers and Contracts, this is the HQ Acquisition Branch (GFSC Code 210.H).

Solicitation Initiator 11 Monitor Procurement Process. If the technical oversight responsibility for the award is to remain at NASA HQ, then the solicitation initiator monitors the procurement process to ensure the award is completed. The process ends with receipt of the award documentation from the procurement office.

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7.0 QUALITY RECORDS

RECORD IDENTIFICATION	OWNER	LOCATION	MEDIA ELECTRONIC / HARDCOPY	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Concurrence Cover Sheet with Signatures	Research Opportunity Administrator	Business Management Division	Hardcopy	Retain for 2 years after final payment.	Retire to Federal Records Center. Destroy 6 years after final payment.
Original Signed Solicitation	Research Opportunity Administrator	Business Management Division	Hardcopy	Retain for 2 years after final payment.	Retire to Federal Records Center. Destroy 6 years after final payment.
Selection Recommendation with Rationale & Justifications (Briefing)	Solicitation Initiator	Research Division or ACE Division as appropriate	Hardcopy	Retain for 2 years after final payment.	Retire to Federal Records Center. Destroy 6 years after final payment.
Signed Accept/Reject Letters	Solicitation Initiator	Research Division or ACE Division as appropriate	Hardcopy	Retain for 2 years after final payment.	Retire to Federal Records Center. Destroy 6 years after final payment.
Earthworks Database	Solicitation Initiator	Support contractor	Electronic	Retain for 5 years.	Destroy when 5 years old.
Signed Procurement Package	Solicitation Initiator	Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) Procurement Office	Hardcopy	Retain for 2 years after final payment.	Retire to Federal Records Center. Destroy 6 years after final payment.