



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

NSF 14-035

Dear Colleague Letter regarding proposals for Antarctic Research

February 3, 2014

Dear Colleagues:

Despite recent challenges, we wish to reassure the research community that the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP) continue to encourage the development and submission of proposals in response to the Antarctic Sciences Solicitation ([NSF 13-527](#)).

In October 2013, NSF was required to suspend certain activities in Antarctica as a result of the partial government shutdown just as the austral summer season began. When funding under a continuing resolution was established, staff members at both NSF and the Antarctic Support Contractor (ASC) worked hard to restore as much of the planned activities as was safely possible. While all parts of the USAP were affected to some degree, the greatest effects were on projects based from McMurdo Station. Some projects were de-scoped so that fieldwork required fewer resources this season and fieldwork for other projects has been wholly deferred to future seasons. Going forward, deferred fieldwork will have to be accommodated within the framework of projects that were already planned for next season. Staff from the Antarctic Infrastructure and Logistics (AIL) and Antarctic Sciences (ANT) Sections are working closely with affected researchers and the ASC to revise existing out-year logistical plans to achieve this goal to the maximum extent practicable.

In parallel with these efforts, the USAP remains committed to implementing the Foundation's response to the Blue Ribbon Review of the USAP that was completed in 2012. This report highlighted the need for NSF to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of logistical support across the USAP.

While restoring deferred projects and making progress on Blue Ribbon Panel activities affects our capacity for fieldwork, ANT continues to encourage submission of high quality proposals for Antarctic research. Although much of the existing science support resources are committed to some degree for the next few seasons, capabilities remain for additional future fieldwork.

As noted in our proposal solicitation, ANT also strongly encourages submission of research proposals that do not require fieldwork in the Antarctic. For example, proposals for development of robust autonomous observing systems that would enable key observations while reducing the need for logistical support or traditional boots-on-the-ground fieldwork are strongly encouraged. In addition, experimental, modeling, and synthesis proposals that take advantage of the significant investment made in acquiring Antarctic samples, cultures, and data from previously supported research are also strongly encouraged. To assist researchers who wish to use these existing data sets and samples, ANT is supporting the Antarctic-Arctic Data Consortium ([A2DC.org](#)), which provides investigators with a "one stop shop" for many of these datasets.

Thank you for your patience and understanding in our efforts to support the important science that comprises the USAP. Should you have any questions regarding proposals that you are developing for

submission, please do not hesitate to contact the Program Director of the appropriate program in Antarctic Sciences or Research Support Managers in Antarctic Logistics and Infrastructure.

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