

## **Announcement for NSPIRES and Newsletters**

### **Subject: Draft AOs for Small Astrophysics Explorer Missions and Astrophysics Explorer Missions of Opportunity Released for Community Comment**

Release Date: July 14, 2014  
Comments Due: August 4, 2014  
Identification Number: NNH14ZDA011J (Draft 2014 Small Astrophysics Explorer AO)  
Identification Number: NNH14ZDA012J (Draft 2014 Astrophysics Explorer Missions of Opportunity solicitation)

On July 14, 2014, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Science Mission Directorate (SMD) is releasing two draft solicitations for community review and comment: the Draft 2014 Small Astrophysics Explorer (SMEX) Announcement of Opportunity (AO) and the Draft 2014 Astrophysics Explorer Missions of Opportunity (MO) Program Element Appendix (PEA) for the Second Stand Alone Missions of Opportunity Notice (SALMON-2) AO. Upon the release date, the full text of both draft solicitations will be available at <http://nspires.nasaprs.com/>.

The Astrophysics Explorers Program conducts Principal Investigator (PI)-led space science investigations relevant to SMD's astrophysics programs. Explorer investigations must address NASA's goals to discover the origin, structure, evolution, and destiny of the Universe and search for Earth-like planets.

Participation is open to all categories of organizations or institutions, U.S. or non-U.S., including educational, industrial, and not-for-profit institutions, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), University Affiliated Research Centers (UARCs), NASA Centers, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), and other Government agencies.

The comment period for the Draft 2014 SMEX AO and the Draft 2014 Astrophysics Explorer MO PEA ends on August 4, 2014.

The issuance of the Draft 2014 Small Explorer AO does not obligate NASA to issue the 2014 Small Astrophysics Explorer AO and solicit proposals. The issuance of the Draft 2014 Astrophysics Explorer MO PEA does not obligate NASA to issue a 2014 Astrophysics Explorer MO PEA and solicit proposals. Any costs incurred by prospective investigators in preparing submissions in response to any of these draft solicitations are incurred completely at the submitter's own risk.

Comments on both drafts may be addressed in writing or by E-mail to the Astrophysics Explorer Program Scientist: Dr. Wilton T. Sanders, Astrophysics Division, Mail Suite 3U16, Science Mission Directorate, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, DC 20546-0001, E-mail: [wilton.t.sanders@nasa.gov](mailto:wilton.t.sanders@nasa.gov) (subject line to read "SMEX AO"). Responses to all inquiries will be answered by E-mail and also posted weekly at the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) location of the Astrophysics Explorer Program Acquisition website at <http://explorers.larc.nasa.gov/APSMEX/>; anonymity of persons/institutions who submit questions will be preserved.

SUBJECT: Community Announcement on Astrophysics Explorer AO

**NNH14ZDA002J**

**Community Announcement on Astrophysics Explorer AO**

**November 12, 2013**

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Science Mission Directorate (SMD) is releasing this Community Announcement concerning its intention to solicit investigations for the Astrophysics Explorer Program. The Astrophysics Explorer Program conducts Principal Investigator (PI)-led space science investigations to advance NASA's strategic goals in astrophysics, which are to discover the origin, structure, evolution, and destiny of the Universe and search for Earth-like planets. Additional information concerning these areas of investigation is provided through appropriate links found on the SMD homepage at <http://science.nasa.gov/>.

The current state of planning calls for NASA SMD to release an Announcement of Opportunity (AO) in the late summer/early fall of 2014 that will solicit proposals for Small Explorer (SMEX) missions to accomplish Astrophysics Explorer Program science objectives. NASA also plans to release simultaneously a solicitation for Astrophysics Explorer Missions of Opportunity (MO) through the NASA Announcement of Opportunity NNH12ZDA006O, Second Stand Alone Missions of Opportunity Notice (SALMON-2). A draft SMEX AO and draft SALMON-2 amendment are expected to be ready for release for comment in Spring 2014.

The PI-managed mission cost cap for an Astrophysics SMEX mission is expected to be no greater than \$125M in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 dollars, not including the cost of any contributions or of the NASA provided launch services, either an Expendable Launch Vehicle (ELV) or transportation to the International Space Station (ISS). Standard launch services to the ISS or on an ELV will be provided for SMEX missions at no charge against the mission cost cap. The standard ELV launch services offered will be similar to the "ELV Launch Service Class Option B" described in the Explorer Program Library's launch services document (see <http://explorers.larc.nasa.gov/EX>). There will be a charge against the mission cost cap for mission unique and special launch services beyond the standard launch services offered. The Explorer Program Library's launch services document will be updated for the 2014 Astrophysics SMEX AO.

The PI-managed mission cost cap for an Astrophysics Explorer MO is expected to be no greater than \$65M or \$35M in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 dollars. NASA expects to solicit MO science investigations that are defined in the SALMON-2 AO as Partner MOs, New Missions using Existing Spacecraft MOs, or Small Complete Mission MOs, including investigations requiring flight on the International Space Station. Suborbital-class MOs have a \$35M PI-managed mission cost cap; this includes missions on ultra-long duration balloons, suborbital reusable launch vehicles (RLVs), and CubeSats. Other (not suborbital-class) MOs will have a \$65M PI-managed mission cost cap.

The currently approved Astrophysics Explorer Program planning budget is sufficient to select and execute one SMEX mission and one MO.

The current planning is for the selection process to be done in two stages. In Step 1, it is anticipated that two or three SMEX missions and one to three MO missions may be selected for one-year Phase A concept studies. Each SMEX concept study would be funded up to \$1M in real year dollars, and each MO concept study would be funded up to \$250K in real year dollars. For Step 2, NASA will conduct a detailed review of the Phase A concept study reports. As a result of this second evaluation, NASA expects to select one SMEX mission and one MO mission to proceed into Phase B and subsequent mission phases. NASA desires to launch the SMEX mission by the end of 2020.

Proposals in response to this AO will be due 90 days after its formal release. Participation will be open to all categories of U.S. and non-U.S. organizations, including educational institutions, industry, not-for-profit organizations, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers, NASA Centers, and other Government agencies.

The schedule for the solicitation is intended to be:

- Release of draft AO: (target) Spring 2014 (target);
- Explorer workshop: ~2 weeks after draft AO release;
- Release of final AO: (target) Late summer/early fall 2014 (target);
- Preproposal conference: ~3 weeks after final AO release;
- Proposals due: 90 days after AO release;
- Selection for competitive Phase A studies: Summer 2015 (target);
- Concept study reports due: Summer 2016 (target);
- Down-selection: Early 2017 (target).

The Astrophysics Explorer Program SMEX AO and SALMON-2 amendment may contain provisions that differ substantially from this preliminary notice, in which case the provisions in the AO and SALMON-2 amendment will take precedence. The Astrophysics Explorer AO will be based on the Standard PI-led Mission AO Template available at [http://soma.larc.nasa.gov/standardao/sao\\_templates.html](http://soma.larc.nasa.gov/standardao/sao_templates.html). Proposers should read the Draft Astrophysics SMEX AO and SALMON-2 amendment carefully when they are released.

NASA has not approved the issuance of the Astrophysics SMEX AO or SALMON-2 amendment and this notification does not obligate NASA to issue the announcements and solicit proposals. Any costs incurred by prospective investigators in preparing submissions in response to this announcement are incurred completely at the submitter's own risk.

Further information will be posted on the Explorer Program Acquisition website at <http://explorers.larc.nasa.gov/APSMEX> as that information becomes available. Questions or comments about this intention to release an Astrophysics SMEX AO may be addressed in writing or by E-mail to the Astrophysics Explorer Program Scientist: Dr. Wilton T. Sanders, Ref.: Astrophysics SMEX AO, Astrophysics Division, Mail Stop 3U23, Science Mission Directorate, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, DC 20546-0001, E-mail: [wilton.t.sanders@nasa.gov](mailto:wilton.t.sanders@nasa.gov) (subject line to read "Astrophysics SMEX AO"). Responses to all inquiries will be answered by E-mail and also posted weekly at the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) location of the Explorer Program Acquisition website; anonymity of persons/institutions who submit questions will be preserved.