



2016 Heliophysics Small Explorer (SMEX) & Mission of Opportunity (MO) Solicitations

Pre-Proposal Conference

Science Evaluation Overview

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August 15, 2016



Heliophysics Science Requirements



- All investigations proposed in response to this solicitation must support the goals and objectives of the Heliophysics Explorers Program, and must be implemented by Principal Investigator (PI) led investigation teams.
- The NASA strategic objective addressed by the Heliophysics Explorer Program is to understand the Sun and its interactions with Earth and the solar system, including space weather.
- The NASA Science Mission Directorate (SMD) Heliophysics Division (HPD) is addressing this strategic objective by conducting Heliophysics investigations designed to address the following science goals:
 - Explore the physical processes in the space environment from the Sun to the Earth and throughout the solar system
 - Advance our understanding of the connections that link the Sun, the Earth, planetary space environments, and the outer reaches of our solar system
 - Develop the knowledge and capability to detect and predict extreme conditions in space to protect life and society and to safeguard human and robotic explorers beyond Earth.



Science Evaluation Overview



NASA Science Goals and Objectives

- Further information on NASA's strategic goals may be found in NASA Policy Directive (NPD) 1001.0B, *NASA 2014 Strategic Plan*.
- Further information on the goals and objectives of NASA's Heliophysics program may be found in the *2014 Science Plan for NASA's Science Mission Directorate* and *Our Dynamic Space Environment: Heliophysics Science and Technology Roadmap for 2014-2033*



Science Evaluation

SMEX AO



Science Evaluation H-SMEX AO



Requirement 4: Proposals shall describe a science investigation with goals and objectives that address the program science goals described in Section 2.

Requirement 5: Proposals shall demonstrate how the proposed investigation will fully achieve the proposed objectives.

Requirement 6: Proposals shall clearly state the relationship between the science objectives, the data to be returned, and the instrument complement to be used in obtaining the required data (see Appendix B, Section D, for additional detail).

Requirement 7: Proposals shall include a plan to calibrate (both preflight and inflight), analyze, publish, and archive the data returned, and shall demonstrate, analytically or otherwise, that sufficient resources have been allocated to carry out that plan within the proposed mission cost. The data plan shall discuss and justify any period of exclusive access to data or data latency period (see Appendix B, Section E, for additional detail).



Science Evaluation H-SMEX AO



Requirement 8: Proposals shall state the specific science objectives and their required measurements at a level of detail sufficient to allow an assessment of the capability of the proposed mission to make those specific measurements and whether the resulting data will permit achievement of these objectives (see Appendix B, Sections D and E, for additional detail).

Requirement 9: Proposals shall describe the proposed instrumentation, including a discussion of each instrument and the rationale for its selection.

Requirement 10: Proposals shall specify only one Baseline Science Mission and only one Threshold Science Mission.

Requirement 11: Proposals shall not identify any descopes or other risk mitigation actions that result in the mission being unable to achieve the Threshold Science Mission objectives.



Science Evaluation H-SMEX AO *Science Enhancement Options (SEO)*



Requirement 12: If SEO activities are proposed, the proposal shall define and describe the proposed activities.

Requirement 13: If SEO activities are proposed, they shall be clearly separable from the Baseline Science Mission and Threshold Science Mission investigations.

Requirement 14: If an extended mission SEO is proposed, it shall conform to the guidelines provided in the *SMD Mission Extension Paradigm* document found in the Program Library.



Science Evaluation Heliophysics Explorers Missions of Opportunity

Two Requirements Documents:

- 1) PEA-Q
- 2) SALMON-2 AO



MO Science Evaluation PEA-Q



Requirement Q-1: Proposals shall address appropriate science questions relevant to the NASA heliophysics science objectives and goals described in Section 2 of PEA -Q

Requirement Q-2: Each proposal shall clearly define its science question or questions, shall demonstrate how the science questions map into high-level science requirements, and shall show how the science requirements subsequently map into measurement, data, instrument, and mission requirements.

Requirement Q-3: Each proposal shall clearly state the baseline and threshold requirements for the mission and the baseline and threshold mission lifetime.

Requirement Q-4: If SEO activities are proposed, the proposal shall define and describe the proposed activities

Requirement Q-8: Each proposal shall fully describe the requirements for calibration and validation of the instruments and the data returned .



MO Science Evaluation Salmon-2



Requirement 11. Proposals shall describe a science, exploration, or technology investigation with goals and objectives that address the program research objectives identified in the applicable PEA.

Requirement 12. Proposals shall demonstrate how the proposed investigation will fully achieve the proposed objectives.

Requirement 13. Proposals shall clearly state the flow-down from the science, exploration, or technology goals and objectives, to measurement objectives that constitute the baseline investigation, to the data to be returned, and the instrument or experiment complement to be used in obtaining the required data (see Appendix B, Section D, for additional detail).

Requirement 14. Proposals shall include plans to calibrate, analyze, publish, and archive the returned data, and shall demonstrate, analytically or otherwise, that sufficient resources have been allocated to carry out those plans within the proposed investigation cost. The data plans shall discuss and justify any period of exclusive access to the data (see Appendix B, Section E, for further detail).



MO Science Evaluation SALMON-2



Requirement 15. Proposals shall state the specific objectives and their required measurements at a level of detail sufficient to assess the capability of the proposed investigation to make those measurements and to determine whether the resulting data will be sufficient to achieve the stated objectives.

Requirement 16. Proposals shall describe the proposed instrumentation or experimental setup, including a discussion of the rationale for its selection.

Requirement 17. Proposals shall specify only one Baseline Investigation and only one Threshold Investigation.

Requirement 18. Proposals shall not include any descopes or other risk mitigation actions that result in the mission being unable to achieve the Threshold Investigation objectives.



Heliophysics Explorers MO



In the event of an apparent conflict between the PEA-Q and the SALMON-2 AO guidelines, the order of precedence is:

1. the PEA-Q,
2. then the SALMON-2 AO,
3. then SALMON-2 Appendix B,
4. then SALMON-2 Appendix A.



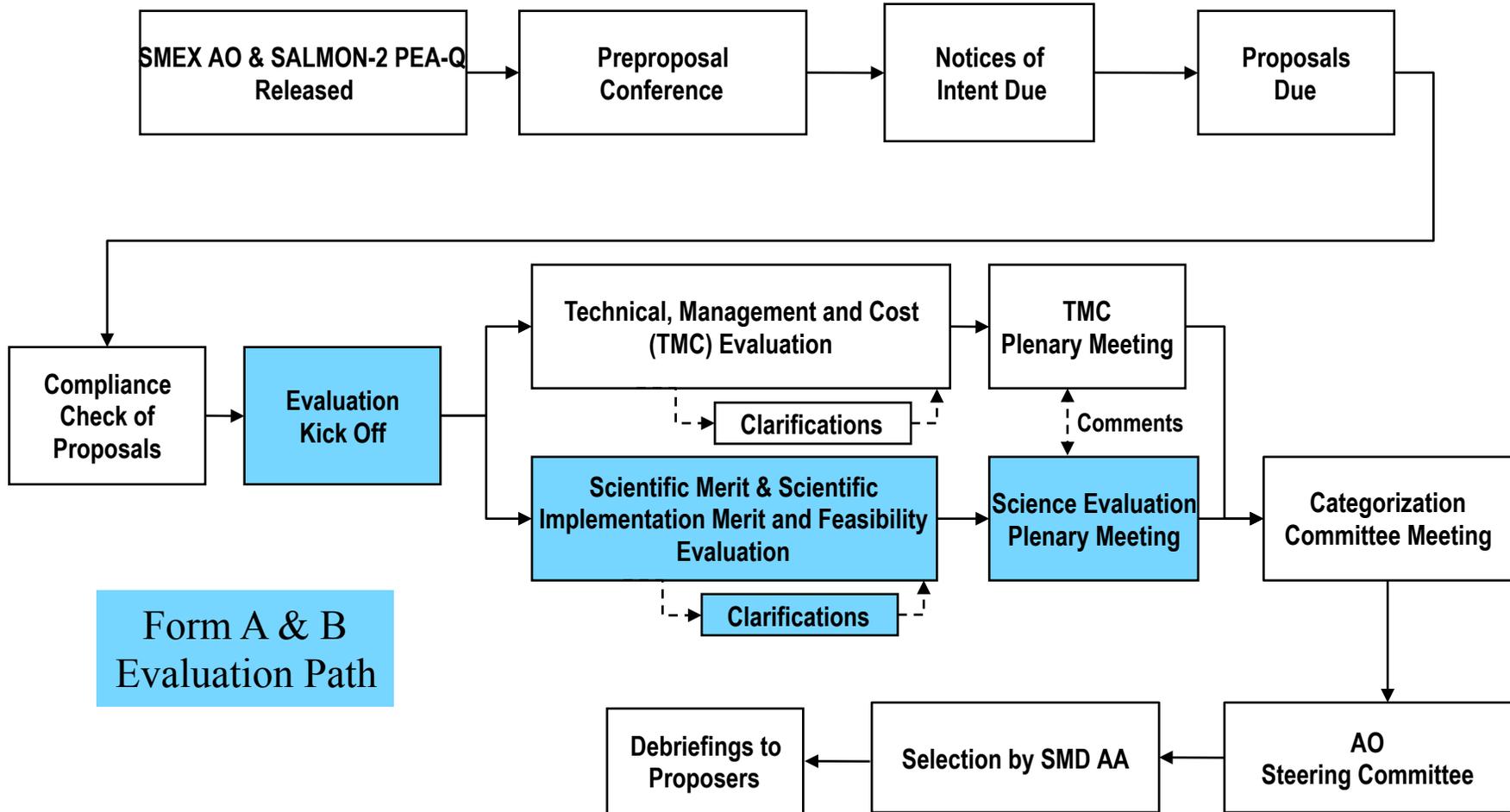
Investigation Evaluation Criteria



- 2016 Heliophysics SMEX AO and SALMON-2 AO (NNH12ZDA006O):
 - A. Scientific Merit of the Proposed Investigation (Section 7.2.2);**
 - B. Scientific Implementation Merit and Feasibility of the Proposed Investigation (Section 7.2.3);**
 - C. TMC Feasibility of the Proposed Mission Implementation, including Cost Risk (Section 7.2.4).
- Weighting: the first criterion is weighted approximately 40%; the second and third criteria are weighted approximately 30% each.
- Evaluation Forms:
 - Form A for Criterion A
 - Form B for Criterion B
 - Form C for Criterion C
- Other Selection Factors (Section 7.3):
 - Programmatic factors
 - PI-Managed Mission Cost



Proposal Evaluation Flow





Form A: Scientific Merit Evaluation Factors



- The information provided in a proposal will be used to assess the intrinsic scientific merit of the proposed investigation.
- Scientific merit will be evaluated for the Baseline Science Mission and the Threshold Science Mission.
 - Science enhancement options beyond the Baseline Science Mission will not contribute to the assessment of the scientific merit of the proposed investigation.
- Four (4) separate scientific merit factors will be evaluated



Form A: Scientific Merit Evaluation Factors



- **Factor A-1. Compelling nature and scientific priority of the proposed investigation's science goals and objectives.**
 - This factor includes the clarity of the goals and objectives; how well the goals and objectives reflect program, Agency, and National priorities; the potential scientific impact of the investigation on program, Agency, and National science objectives; and the potential for fundamental progress, as well as filling gaps in our knowledge relative to the current state of the art.
- **Factor A-2. Programmatic value of the proposed investigation.**
 - This factor includes the unique value of the investigation to make scientific progress in the context of other ongoing and planned missions; the relationship to the other elements of NASA's science programs; how well the investigation may synergistically support ongoing or planned missions by NASA and other agencies; and the necessity for a space mission to realize the goals and objectives.
- **Factor A-3. Likelihood of scientific success.**
 - This factor includes how well the anticipated measurements support the goals and objectives; the adequacy of the anticipated data to complete the investigation and meet the goals and objectives; and the appropriateness of the mission requirements for guiding development and ensuring scientific success.
- **Factor A-4. Scientific value of the Threshold Science Mission.**
 - This factor includes the scientific value of the Threshold Science Mission using the standards in the first factor of this section and whether that value is sufficient to justify the proposed cost of the mission.



Form B:



Scientific Implementation Merit & Feasibility

- The information provided in a proposal will be used to assess merit of the plan for completing the proposed investigation, including the scientific implementation merit, feasibility, resiliency, and probability of scientific success of the proposed investigation.
- Five (5) science implementation merit and feasibility factors are evaluated for each proposal.
- One additional science implementation merit and feasibility factor will be evaluated for those proposals including Science Enhancement Options (SEO).
 - The inclusion of SEO is not required for proposals to the H-SMEX AO or the SALMON-2 PEA-Q.



Evaluation Factors B-1 to B-3: Scientific Implementation Merit & Feasibility



- **Factor B-1. Merit of the instruments and mission design for addressing the science goals and objectives.**
 - This factor includes the degree to which the proposed mission will address the goals and objectives; the appropriateness of the selected instruments and mission design for addressing the goals and objectives; the degree to which the proposed instruments and mission can provide the necessary data; and the sufficiency of the data gathered to complete the scientific investigation.
- **Factor B-2. Probability of technical success.**
 - This factor includes the maturity and technical readiness of the instruments or demonstration of a clear path to achieve necessary maturity; the adequacy of the plan to develop the instruments within the proposed cost and schedule; the robustness of those plans, including recognition of risks and mitigation plans for retiring those risks; the likelihood of success in developing any new technology that represents an untested advance in the state of the art; the ability of the development team - both institutions and individuals - to successfully implement those plans; and the likelihood of success for both the development and the operation of the instruments within the mission design.
- **Factor B-3. Merit of the data analysis, data availability, and data archiving plan.**
 - This factor includes the merit of plans for data analysis and data archiving to meet the goals and objectives of the investigation; to result in the publication of science discoveries in the professional literature; and to preserve data and analysis of value to the science community. Considerations in this factor include assessment of planning and budget adequacy and evidence of plans for well-documented, high-level data products and software usable to the entire science community; assessment of adequate resources for physical interpretation of data; reporting scientific results in the professional literature; and assessment of the proposed plan for the timely release of the data to the public domain for enlarging its science impact.



Evaluation Factors B-4 to B-6: Scientific Implementation Merit & Feasibility



- **Factor B-4. Science resiliency.**
 - This factor includes both developmental and operational resiliency. Developmental resiliency includes the approach to descoping the Baseline Science Mission to the Threshold Science Mission in the event that development problems force reductions in scope. Operational resiliency includes the ability to withstand adverse circumstances, the capability to degrade gracefully, and the potential to recover from anomalies in flight.
- **Factor B-5. Probability of science team success.**
 - This factor will be evaluated by assessing the experience, expertise, and organizational structure of the science team and the mission design in light of any proposed instruments. The role of each Co-Investigator and collaborator will be evaluated for necessary contributions to the proposed investigation; the inclusion of Co-Is and/or collaborators who do not have a well defined and appropriate role may be cause for downgrading during evaluation.
- **Factor B-6. Merit of any science enhancement options (SEOs), *if proposed.***
 - This factor includes assessing the appropriateness of activities selected to enlarge the science impact of the mission; the potential of the selected activities to enlarge the science impact of the mission; and the appropriate costing of the selected activities. The peer review panel will inform NASA whether the evaluation of the proposed SEO(s) impacted the overall rating for scientific implementation merit and feasibility. Lack of an SEO will have no impact on the overall rating for scientific implementation merit and feasibility.



Science Evaluation Products: Findings



- **Major Strength:** A facet of the implementation response that is judged to be of superior merit and can substantially contribute to the ability of the project to meet its scientific objectives.
- **Major Weakness:** A deficiency or set of deficiencies taken together that are judged to substantially weaken the project's ability to meet its scientific objectives.
- **Minor Strength:** A strength that is worthy of note and can be brought to the attention of Proposers during debriefings, but is *not* a discriminator in the assessment of merit.
- **Minor Weakness:** A weakness that is sufficiently worrisome to note and can be brought to the attention of Proposers during debriefings, but is *not* a discriminator in the assessment of merit.



Form A and B Grade Definitions



- **Excellent:** A comprehensive, thorough, and compelling proposal of exceptional merit that fully responds to the objectives of the AO as documented by numerous and/or significant strengths and having no major weaknesses.
- **Very Good:** A fully competent proposal of very high merit that fully responds to the objectives of the AO, whose strengths fully outbalance any weaknesses.
- **Good:** A competent proposal that represents a credible response to the AO, having neither significant strengths nor weaknesses and/or whose strengths and weaknesses essentially balance.
- **Fair:** A proposal that provides a nominal response to the AO but whose weaknesses outweigh any perceived strengths.
- **Poor:** A seriously flawed proposal having one or more major weaknesses (e.g., an inadequate or flawed plan of research or lack of focus on the objectives of the AO).



Evaluation Clarifications



- NASA will request clarification of Potential Major Weaknesses (PMWs) identified by the evaluation panels in:
 1. the TMC Feasibility of the Proposed Mission/Investigation Implementation and
 2. the **Scientific Implementation Merit and Investigation**.
- NASA will request such clarification uniformly, from all proposers.
- All requests for clarification from NASA, and the proposer's response, will be in writing.
- The ability of proposers to provide clarification to NASA is extremely limited, as NASA does not intend to enter into discussions with proposers.
- PIs whose proposals have no potential major weaknesses will receive an email informing them.
- The form of the clarifications is strictly limited to five types of responses:
 1. Identification of the locations in the proposal (page(s), section(s), line(s)) where the potential major weakness is addressed
 2. Noting that the potential major weakness is not addressed in the proposal.
 3. Stating that the potential major weakness is invalidated by information that is common knowledge and is therefore not included in the proposal.
 4. Stating that the analysis leading to the potential major weakness is incorrect and identifying a place in the proposal where data supporting a correct analysis may be found.
 5. Stating that a typographical error appears in the proposal and that the correct data is available elsewhere inside or outside of the proposal.

The PI will be given at least 24 hours to respond to the request for clarification. Any response that goes beyond a clarification will be deleted and will not be shown to the evaluation panel.



References



SMEX and MO Reference Material



2016 Heliophysics SMEX and MO Acquisition Page

The 2016 Heliophysics Explorer SMEX and MO acquisition home page is available at <http://explorers.larc.nasa.gov/HPSMEX/>

The contents of the web site include the following:

- Links to SMEX and MO pages
- 2016 Heliophysics SMEX and MO major milestones
- Community announcements
- FBO
- Teaming interest
- Preproposal conference



SMEX Reference Material



2016 Heliophysics SMEX Acquisition Home Page

The 2016 Heliophysics SMEX Acquisition Home Page available at <http://explorers.larc.nasa.gov/HPSMEX/SMEX/index.html>, will provide updates and any addenda during the solicitation process. The contents of the SMEX acquisition page include the following:

- Links to the NSPIRES for access to the solicitation
- Program library
- Evaluation plan
- Q&A

2016 Heliophysics SMEX Program Library

The Library provides additional regulations, policies, and background information. The Library is accessible at <http://explorers.larc.nasa.gov/HPSMEX/SMEX/programlibrary.html>



MO Reference Material



2016 Heliophysics Explorer MO Acquisition Home Page

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- Use Table B3b template in the program library to develop cost funding profile.



Questions?



**All further questions pertaining to the SMEX AO or PEA-Q
MUST
be addressed to:**

**Dr. Daniel Moses
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Washington, DC 20546
hq-explorers@nasa.gov
(subject line to read “SMEX AO” or “PEA-Q”, as applicable)
202.358.0558**