

THE JOURNEY OF A NASA Research & Analysis Proposal

Formulating, writing, and submitting a proposal

The process for writing, submitting, and reviewing a **Research and Analysis (R&A)** proposal typically follows **clear guidelines/standards** laid out by the institution calling for proposals—especially on the federal level. NASA is no exception.



1 NASA releases an Announcement of Opportunity (AO), or a call for proposals.



2 The lead of the proposal formulates the research topic.

- i** Research topics should be:
- Suitable
 - Relevant
 - Significant
 - Achievable



3 The lead of the proposal identifies the Co-Investigators (Co-Is) and other team members.



4 The research team submits a Notice of Intent (NOI)

- i** **Notice of Intent:** A relatively brief summary of the project that NASA will review before encouraging (or discouraging) the researcher(s) to continue with the proposal.



The research team writes the complete proposal.

i An R&A proposal typically contains the following components:

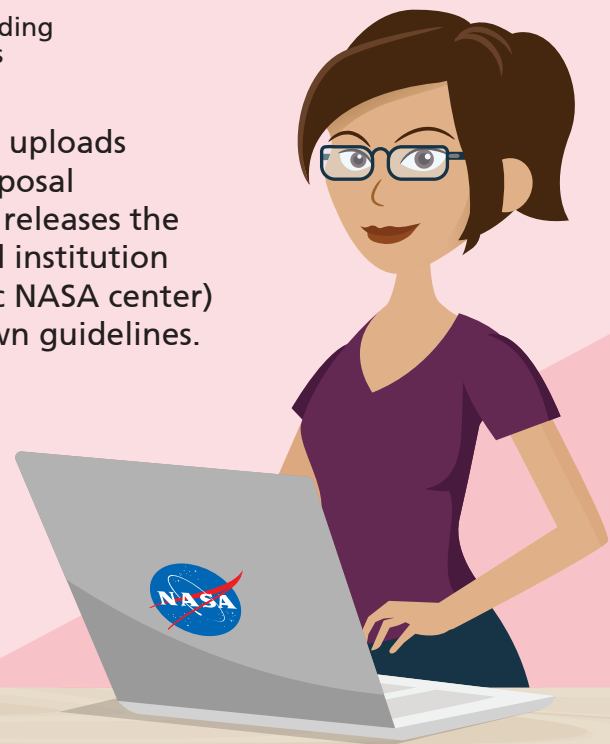
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| a. Table of Contents | g. Co-I's Current & Pending funded research projects |
| b. Scientific/Technical/Management Section | i. Facilities and Equipment list |
| c. References | j. Budget Justification and Table of Work Efforts |
| d. Data Management Plan | k. Detailed Budget – including Direct and Indirect costs |
| e. PI's Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Co-I's CVs | |
| f. PI's list of Current & Pending funded research projects | |



The Principal Investigator (PI) uploads required elements to the proposal submission website and then releases the proposal to the proposal lead institution (such a university or a specific NASA center) for review according to its own guidelines.



The proposal lead institution (not the PI) approves the proposal and officially submits it to NASA.



Reviewing/evaluating a proposal

Within 3-6 months after submission, proposals go through **formal** and **systematic evaluation** from carefully selected **Review Panels**. Reviewers are qualified individuals and scientists and are assigned so that there are no conflicts of interest.



1 A panel is divided by field (e.g., Geology, Geophysics, Remote Sensing, etc.) into groups of ~6-8 reviewers.



2 Each proposal is reviewed by 2-3 panelists and, ideally, by 2-3 External Reviewers as well.

- i** External reviewers are community members not on the panel.



3 Each proposal is assigned a Chief Reviewer and two Associate Reviewers.

- i** Ideally, they have submitted a review prior to arriving at the panel.



4 One by one, each proposal is discussed: the Chief, Associate, and External Reviewers give their assessments.



5 A proposal is scored according to three different metrics: its intrinsic merit, cost realism/reasonableness, and relevance to the NASA Program.

- i** Proposals with the highest scores are ranked first and the ones with the lowest scores are ranked last.



6 The Chief Reviewer writes the Consensus Review, which will be sent to the PI.



7 NASA notifies the PI of one of three outcomes for the proposal (selected, selectable, or not selected), ideally within 120 days after submission.

i Possible outcomes for an R&A proposal:

1. **Selected:** Proposal will be funded immediately (fully or partially).
2. **Selectable:** Proposal MAY BE funded before end of the Federal Fiscal Year if more funds become available.
3. **Not Selected:** Proposal will not be funded this year.



8 A notification letter is sent along with the Chief Reviewer's Consensus Review.

Common Questions

How long does it take?

It often takes anywhere from **nine months** to **one year** after submission for a proposed research project to receive funding.



What if the proposal is not successful?

It is **not unusual** for a proposal to be rejected the first time. But this does not mean the researcher should give up. The Review Panel provides comments on all failed proposals, so **revision** and **resubmission** to subsequent opportunities is always an option.

