

EarthScope National Office (ENO) Frequently Asked Questions

1) Why create a community-based EarthScope National Office?

EarthScope was planned by the community to be coordinated by the community. Review and advisory committees have recommended stronger community-based leadership to guide EarthScope science, education, and outreach. “EarthScope: Scientific Targets for the World’s Largest Observatory Pointed at the Solid Earth” (2001), the community-written science plan for EarthScope, recommended the creation of a community-based EarthScope office, citing the ODP, MARGINS, and RIDGE initiatives/offices as examples. As the construction of the facilities has progressed, the role and responsibilities of an EarthScope office have become clearer and more focused, resulting in Program Solicitation NSF 06-600, EarthScope National Office.

2) What are the major responsibilities of the EarthScope National Office?

The EarthScope National Office (ENO) is essential to organize the EarthScope science, education, and outreach efforts through communication with the Earth science community. For example, the ENO will hold special conferences (e.g., town meetings, regional and/or topical workshops), and disseminate information about EarthScope research opportunities and activities (via web sites, email, listserv, newsletters, working group reports, and special publications). The office will facilitate and coordinate EarthScope scientific planning and Education and Outreach activities. The office will work with NSF to facilitate collaborative research and when necessary, scientific response to “events” in EarthScope topics and regions of interest.

3) What might the EarthScope National Office be like?

The office may require dedicated full-time support staff, but these should be kept to a minimum, leveraging technical capabilities extant in the EarthScope facilities. Most of the communications infrastructure for EarthScope already exists, so the primary role of the office staff will be to interact directly with an EarthScope Steering Committee (see below), NSF, and facilities staff to provide recommendations and content for communications, both web and print pieces. Currently, NSF convenes an ad hoc EarthScope Program Committee (EPC) twice a year to review the program and provide recommendations. It is anticipated that this ad hoc committee will work with the head of the EarthScope Office (the proposal PI) to develop an EarthScope Steering Committee that includes the proposal PI as a member. The PI and committee would work with the office staff, facilities, and/or NSF to convene workshops and meetings. Similarly, they would facilitate program planning and coordination, the development of educational and outreach materials, liaisons with industry, and provide an EarthScope presence at national and regional meetings. Examples of specific tasks are included in Program Solicitation NSF 06-600. Suggested tasks fall under the major headings of Communication, Coordination of EarthScope E&O, Conference/workshop/town hall support, and Provide Support for EarthScope Steering Committee.

4) What is the relationship of the EarthScope National Office to the current facilities (PBO, SAFOD, and USArray)?

The principals in the community-based office will interact directly with NSF and facilities staff to provide content and direction to the EarthScope communications and support structures developed during the construction of the facilities. The technical capabilities built by the facility office will continue to be supported by the facilities, including web services, publications, meetings and workshop support. For example, the existing webpage, www.earthscope.org, will continue to be the web “point of contact” address for EarthScope, but the information (contents) of the webpage will be among the primary responsibilities of the ENO. EarthScope facility staff housed at PBO/UNAVCO will support the ENO by maintaining and serving the webpage. Similarly, EarthScope staff at the facilities (PBO/UNAVCO and USArray/IRIS) will provide workshop, graphics, publication and other support to the ENO.

5) What about the facilities reporting and management? Who would be responsible for that?

The facilities have been very successful in setting up their Earned Value Management (EVM) and other required reporting systems. Those would remain the responsibility of the facilities. The community-based office would receive monthly updates and quarterly and annual reports about the facility via NSF. The status of the facilities and data-availability information are available in near-real-time through the website, which will continue to operate and be maintained by the facilities.

6) What is the relationship of the EarthScope National Office to the biennial EarthScope National Meeting?

The ENO PI and EarthScope Steering Committee would be the official conveners of the biennial meeting. As such, they would have many responsibilities, including recruiting the members of the national meeting planning committee, recommending foci and format for the meeting, working with the planning committee, office staff, facilities staff, etc., to insure the success of the meeting, and more. As noted above, EarthScope staff at the facilities (PBO/UNAVCO and USArray/IRIS) will provide workshop, graphics, publication and other national meeting support as requested. As the meeting planning progresses, the ENO PI and/or committee members might identify national meeting specific items (for example, participant support) and communicate these needs to NSF and/or other EarthScope partners.

7) Where will the EarthScope National Office be located?

The location will be determined through the proposal process. There are advantages to establishing an EarthScope office that moves geographically and evolves with the program (three or four locations over the lifetime of the program – i.e. western, central, and eastern contiguous US, Alaska). Such an office would provide focus and engage the community. Thus, Program Solicitation NSF 06-600 specifies a single award, with

an “estimated average of approximately \$400,000 per year for FY2007 and in subsequent years, for up to 4 years, pending annual performance and availability of funds.”

8) Who may apply?

Program Solicitation NSF 06-600 specifies that “Proposals may only be submitted by the following: Academic Institutions located in the U.S.: U.S. universities and colleges located in the U.S.”

9) Who should I contact for more information?

The NSF EarthScope Program Director: Kaye Shedlock (kshedloc@nsf.gov; 703-292-4693).