

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



Reply to Attn of: Science Mission Directorate/PSD

Dear Colleagues:

It is time to begin thinking ahead to the New Frontiers 5 (NF5) Announcement of Opportunity (AO). One of the challenges we all face when preparing for an AO is that the work everyone does, including at Headquarters, is largely invisible outside of one's immediate team. The Planetary Science Division (PSD) is very sensitive to the fact that the contents of the AO have significant impacts on your workload and your mission concept. For these reasons, one of the goals for the NF5 AO is increased collaboration and communication with the community. To this end, PSD asked the National Academies' Committee on Astrobiology and Planetary Science (CAPS) to weigh in on the mission theme list for NF5. CAPS recently released its report, which is available [here](#). SMD places great importance on the CAPS report and respects their role as the "keepers" of the Decadal Survey. We are currently considering their recommendations, and plan to make a decision on those recommendations no later than this fall.

As usual, the plan is to release a draft AO approximately one year before the final AO is released. Experience has shown that this is too late in the process to significantly influence either the AO or your proposals. As a result, comments on the draft AO usually result in tweaks rather than major changes. The NF5 team is seeking to engage earlier with the community so there is time to discuss the content of the AO, and just as importantly time for Headquarters to debate the implementation of your ideas. There are some major AO requirements that you simply must know as soon as possible. In some cases, adjustments to these requirements (such as extending the launch readiness date) can make a mission feasible (or not). PSD wants to finalize and share these major requirements ahead of the draft AO, but also wants to give you a chance to advocate for adjustments that may dictate the feasibility of your mission concept. All of the above requires collaboration and communication earlier than has been done in the past as well as a more structured engagement plan. This plan includes the following for the NF5 AO:

- Share major AO requirements policies (such as cost cap, launch readiness date, list of allowable mission themes, availability of radioisotope power systems, etc.) ***in draft form*** in late October 2020 and invite feedback before they are finalized. Conversations at various AG meetings will be an important aspect of this collaboration. I encourage the AGs to put the NF5 AO on their agendas and invite the NF5 team to come speak at these fora.

- Share the ***final form*** of the major requirements in March 2021, then host a virtual town hall to discuss the rationale driving them. Additional information on the content of the AO will be shared at this town hall.
- Release the complete draft AO for comment in October 2021, again attending AG meetings to encourage discussion and feedback.

PSD still plans on releasing the final NF5 AO in October 2022.

Sincerely,

Lori S. Glaze, Ph.D.
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