



NORTH AMERICAN ARC
ALMA Regional Center

North American
ALMA Science
Center



Development Upgrades of the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA)

Conditions Governing the Call for Study Proposals

The purpose of this document is to provide Proposers with information on:

- communication between the Proposers and NRAO in relation to the Call;
- information about the Study preparation, submission and evaluation processes;
- the timeline associated with this Call; and
- Study topics of particular interest.

SECTION 1.0 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

1.1 CALL FOR FY2016 STUDY PROPOSALS

The release date for the FY2016 Call for Study Proposals is March 16, 2015. The period of performance for funded Studies will run from the award date (August 30, 2015) to no later than September 30, 2016 (approximately one year). Total available funds are \$1M US (subject to the FY2015 Federal Budget and allocation of funds); an individual Study award will not exceed \$200K US. Study topics of particular interest are set forth in Appendix A; however, Proposals are not limited to these topics.

Applicants may contribute funds from independent sources, combine them with solicited Study funds, and thereby pursue more aggressive goals.

The Principal Investigator need not be an astronomer.

1.2 AMENDMENTS TO THE CALL FOR STUDY PROPOSALS

NRAO reserves the right to issue amendments to the present Call for Study Proposals at any time prior to the closing date for the submission of Proposals (June 12, 2015).

1.3 QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE CALL FOR STUDY PROPOSALS

An [informational meeting](#) will be held in Charlottesville, Virginia on March 25, 2015. Interested parties may attend via telecon, videocon, or in person, and are requested to communicate their intention to participate (preferably by close of business on May 15, 2015) to the North American ALMA Science Center at <mailto:almainfo@nrao.edu>.

Please submit questions concerning the present Call for Study Proposals, including any request for documentation referred to in this document, to the [ALMA Helpdesk](#) [use Knowledgebase: *Development Program*].

Questions shall, where possible, make reference to the specific section(s) of the solicitation document (“*Call for Study Proposals*”, and/or “*Conditions Governing the Call for Study Proposals*”) requiring clarification. When answering, NRAO will forward replies, together with the questions received, to all Proposers who have submitted a Notice of Intent. Replies will also be posted to the “*Frequently Asked Questions*” page on the NRAO website: [<https://science.nrao.edu/facilities/alma/alma-development-2015/frequently-asked-questions-faq>].

I.4 NOTICE OF INTENT

Prospective Proposers are requested to submit a *Notice of Intent* no later than May 15, 2015. Please communicate your intent, and intended proposal category, online, at https://science.nrao.edu/php/alma/alma-development-2015/alma_dev_noi.php

Submitting a Notice of Intent will ensure that Proposers are included in the mailing list for replies to Proposers’ questions and other correspondence related to the Call for Study Proposals. A Proposer’s Notice of Intent is non-binding.

I.5 CLOSING DATE

The closing date is June 12, 2015. Proposals received after the closing date may be rejected, at NRAO’s sole discretion.

I.6 REQUEST TO POSTPONE THE CLOSING DATE

Requests to postpone the closing date will not be considered.

I.7 VALIDITY OF PROPOSALS

A Proposal submitted in response to this Call for Study Proposals shall bind the Proposer to the contractual terms, conditions and total cost presented therein, until September 27, 2015; i.e., no amendments to the Proposal within this period of time will be accepted without the express consent of the NRAO.

I.8 CLARIFICATION OF PROPOSALS

NRAO reserves the right to ask Proposers for clarifications of their Proposal(s) during the evaluation period. Proposer responses, addressed to Michael Shannon, Development Program Manager (<mailto:mshannon@nrao.edu>), must be received within three days of dispatch of the request, if no other period is stated.

I.9 AMENDMENT, WITHDRAWAL OR RESUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Requests for amendment, withdrawal or resubmission of the Proposal will be permitted if

they reach NRAO before the closing date.

I.10 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Confidentiality of NRAO's Information - Release and safeguarding of ALMA documentation and drawings

Confidentiality of Proposer's Information - Proposers may wish, in connection with work contemplated under the Proposal, to disclose confidential information to NRAO personnel. To protect the confidentiality of such information, a Proposer may ask NRAO employee(s), who has/have the right to refuse to accept such information, to sign a confidentiality agreement with the Proposer. Such a request shall not extend to other NRAO personnel. The NRAO will not be responsible for any failure of individual performance under such confidentiality agreements.

Intellectual Property (IP) Rights - Proposers' IP rights pertaining to technical data, copyrightable material, patents, and utilization of subject inventions are subject to the terms of the NRAO's standard *Subrecipient Agreement* and any negotiated amendments thereto.

SECTION 2.0 PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS

The Study Proposal shall be composed of two parts: a *Study Proposal Form* and a *Study Plan*. Templates for both documents are available at <https://science.nrao.edu/facilities/alma/alma-development-2015/call-for-proposals-study> (refer to the "Proposal Documents" table). **Proposals that do not make use of, or conform to the format and conventions of these templates, will not be considered.**

Even if financial support is not requested for the Study, financial data (contributions in kind) must be included in order to assess all Proposals fairly in the context of the ALMA Development Plan.

SECTION 3.0 SUBMITTAL OF PROPOSALS

Assemble the documents in the following order:

- a. the Proposal Form (with signatures), followed by
- b. the Study Plan.

Submit the complete package, in ".pdf" format, online, at: https://science.nrao.edu/php/alma/alma-development-2015/alma_dev_prop.php.

SECTION 4.0 EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

4.1 EVALUATION PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Evaluation will be conducted by a committee of non-NRAO reviewers with the technical input of disinterested persons familiar with ALMA technical matters. The membership of the Review Committee will be determined by NRAO management, with the consent of the National Science Foundation. Members of these groups who are involved in competing proposals will be recused from judging their own, or closely-related, proposals.

Selection of Proposals will be made using an evaluation matrix (or “scorecard”) based on the following criteria:

- a. alignment with NA ALMA Partnership strategic goals;
- b. strength of the Scientific Case for the proposed ALMA upgrade concept;
- c. quality of the upgrade conceptual design;
- d. readiness for production in the context of the ALMA Development Plan (the aim is to support a range of upgrades including both those which can be implemented rapidly and those requiring longer-term research and development);
- e. strength of the consortium organization (if applicable);
- f. qualifications of the key personnel of the Study;
- g. technical expertise, past experience (also in series production, if relevant) and technical facilities in the Institutes taking part in the Study;
- h. assessment of the level of risk inherent in the design;
- i. strength of the Scientific Team supporting the Study;
- j. level of support guaranteed by collaborating institutions (if applicable); and
- k. budgeted cost of the Study.

4.2 NO INFORMATION ABOUT EVALUATION (“BLACK OUT”) DURING EVALUATION PERIOD

NRAO staff will not respond to questions about proposals or proposal status during the evaluation and selection period. NRAO reserves the right to eliminate from the evaluation any Proposer contravening this provision.

4.3 RESULTS AND NOTIFICATION OF AWARD AGREEMENT

Proposers will be informed in writing of the result of the Call for Study Proposals no later than August 30, 2015. Decisions will be made in consultation with, and the consent of, the National Science Foundation. Rejection decisions cannot be appealed, and NRAO will not enter into correspondence on the reasons for the decision.

SECTION 5.0 SUMMARY SCHEDULE

The timeline of events for the FY2014 Development Study cycle is presented in **Table 1.0** (below).

Table 1.0; *FY2014 Development Study Cycle Timeline.*

Milestone	Date	Reference
Release of Call for Study Proposals	2015 March 16	Section 1.1
Informational meeting	2015 March 25	Section 1.3
Notice of Intent	2015 May 15	Section 1.4
Closing date	2015 June 12	Section 1.5
Notification of awards	2015 August 30	Section 4.3
Validity date of Proposals	2015 September 27	Section 1.7
Study completion date	2016 September 30	Section 1.1

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APPENDIX A

STUDY TOPICS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE NA ALMA PARTNERSHIP

1. Improvements to the ALMA Archive: enabling gains in usability and impact for the observatory.
2. Larger bandwidths and better receiver sensitivity: enabling gains in speed.
3. Longer baselines: enabling qualitatively new science.
4. Increasing wide field mapping speed: enabling efficient mapping.