

Notice of Intent to Solicit Science Definition Team for National Reconnaissance Office
Optical Hardware via Dear Colleague Letter
NNH12ZDA012D
August 20, 2012

NOTE added August 21, 2012: This community announced is being reissued to (a) clarify the nature of the parallel coronagraph study, (b) correct the export-control driven eligibility requirement from U.S. citizens to U.S. persons, (c) announce a wider survey for potential uses of the telescope assets that will be undertaken later in 2012, and (d) correct some typographical errors (including what NRO stands for).

The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) has recently transferred to NASA optical hardware the equivalent of two Hubble-class optical telescopes. The description of these telescope assets can be found at <http://science.nasa.gov/science-committee/subcommittees/nac-astrophysics-subcommittee/> (click on the presentation by Moore for the July 30-31 2012 meeting). This Notice of Intent is to alert the astrophysical community that the Astrophysics Division in the Science Mission Directorate at NASA HQ intends to release a “Dear Colleague” letter to solicit applications from interested individuals for the formation of a study group for the possible scientific use(s) of the ex-NRO telescope assets for advancing the science priorities of the 2010 Decadal Survey (*New Worlds New Horizons*; available at http://sites.nationalacademies.org/BPA/BPA_048094).

The “Dear Colleague” letter will be issued by NASA no earlier than August 31, 2012. Applications will be due approximately two weeks after the issuance of the “Dear Colleague” letter.

The Science Definition Team (SDT) will consist of 12-15 members of the astrophysics community with extensive scientific and/or technical background in the science areas outlined by the Decadal Survey. The primary tasks of the SDT will be to assess the possible use(s) of the telescope assets in the following two cases:

- i. Use of the telescope assets “as is” to advance the science priorities described in the 2010 Decadal Survey for a Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope; and
- ii. Use of the telescope assets “as is” plus a coronagraph to advance the science priorities described in the 2010 Decadal Survey for the detection and study of exoplanets.

Both studies will be conducted by the SDT selected as a response to the Dear Colleague letter. The findings of the SDT for both studies will be provided in a report to NASA no later than April 30, 2013. Please see the schedule below for the anticipated milestones.

Applicants from U.S.-based research and academic institutions, Government laboratories, and industry will be asked to submit to NASA a cover letter describing the reasons for their interest in the SDT and the capabilities and experiences that they bring to the SDT, a statement of commitment to perform the tasks assigned to the SDT within the allocated

timeframe, and a one-page resume.

Only travel expenses to participate in face-to-face SDT meetings will be covered by NASA.

Only U.S. persons (for the purpose of ITAR, i.e., U.S. citizens and permanent residents see <http://oiir.hq.nasa.gov/nasaecp/Webbfrfg/tsld018.htm>) are allowed to apply due to the export-controlled nature of the assets.

NASA reserves the right to cancel the issue of the “Dear Colleague Letter” at any time should programmatic and/or other reasons warrant it.

Tentative Schedule:

August 31, 2012 Dear Colleague letter issued by NASA
September 19, 2012 Applications material due to NASA
October 5, 2012 Selections announced
November 2012 First SDT meeting
April 30, 2013 SDT report due

In addition to the astrophysics study of a specific use of the ex-NRO telescope assets described above, the NASA Science Mission Directorate will lead a broad study to assess a range of potential uses of these telescope assets across SMD portfolio including Heliophysics, Planetary Science, and Astrophysics and will include integration with HEOMD and Space Technology as active partners. Information about the broader study, and opportunities for the community to participate, will be forthcoming later in 2012.

Questions that cannot wait for the issuance of the Dear Colleague Letter may be addressed to Dr. Rita Sambruna, Astrophysics Division, Science Mission Directorate, NASA Headquarters, at rita.m.sambruna@nasa.gov or (202) 358-2166.