NASA ROSES Funding for Citizen Science
July 2019

NASA's Science Mission Directorate (SMD) has a new policy that welcomes investigators to incorporate citizen science into their research. Proposals submitted to any NASA Research Opportunities in Earth and Space Science (ROSES) 2019 call, unless otherwise noted in the program element, may be entirely or partially citizen science-based. *Some additional funding is available in ROSES 2019 for proposals incorporating citizen science.* Proposers are encouraged to read Science Policy Document SPD-33, which provides additional information about standards for evaluating citizen science projects.

Here are the answers to some frequently asked question about this process. Note that the implementation may vary across SMD divisions. You can contact SMD citizen science officer Marc Kuchner (Marc.Kuchner@nasa.gov) or your division citizen science leads for more information:

Astrophysics: Marc Kuchner (Marc.Kuchner@nasa.gov)
Earth Science: Allison Leidner (Allison.K.Leidner@nasa.gov)
Heliophysics: Liz MacDonald (Elizabeth.A.MacDonald@nasa.gov)
Planetary Science: Becky McCauley Rench (Rebecca.L.McCauleyRench@nasa.gov)

To submit a ROSES proposal, go to https://nspires.nasaprs.com

For more information on ongoing SMD citizen science projects and for a link to Science Policy Document SPD-33, see https://science.nasa.gov/citizenscience.

F.A.Q.

1) What Is a citizen science project?

The definition most relevant for ROSES proposals is that "Citizen Science Projects" are *science projects that rely on volunteers.* This definition is provided in SMD policy SPD-33 (https://smd-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/science-red/s3fs-public/atoms/files/SPD%2033%20Citizen%20Science.pdf). Citizen science projects shall be held to the same rigorous standards as any SMD science program.

2) How can citizen scientists contribute to a science project?

Citizen scientists can contribute by enabling the formulation of research questions, creating and refining project design, conducting scientific experiments, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting the results of data, developing technologies and applications, making discoveries and solving problems. The Federal Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science Toolkit (https://www.citizenscience.gov/toolkit/case-study/#)

contains a wealth of examples. Note that many citizen scientists are both passionate about science and highly skilled or educated.

3) When is the ROSES citizen science proposal deadline?

There is no single deadline; there are many deadlines! Investigators are welcome to propose citizen science projects to any existing ROSES 2019 call. The deadlines are given in Tables 2 and 3 of ROSES. Question about which call(s) might be most appropriate can be directed to the program officers (see https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/sara/program-officers-list) and to the division citizen science representatives, listed above.

4) Is there funding available for citizen science projects through SMD?

Yes. There is funding available for citizen science projects through SMD. To indicate that an investigation could be eligible for citizen science funding, proposers to ROSES elements should go to the "Program Specific Data" page for your 2019 ROSES proposal in NSPIRES, and click the "yes" button next the question "Does this proposal contain a citizen science component?".

5) Is citizen science outreach?

No. Projects that have outreach as their primary goal are not generally considered "citizen science" by SMD.

6) May I start my own citizen science community/platform? Or am I required to work with a particular existing community/platform (e.g. Zooniverse)?
The top online citizen science communities/platforms, like Zooniverse, iNaturalist, GLOBE, the Center for Game Science, eBird, etc., together engage several million volunteers, already primed to participate in citizen science projects. Many other relevant communities of amateurs exist, such as the IBM World Community Grid, the American Association of Variable Star Observers, etc. You are not required to work with any existing citizen science community or platform. But proposers who plan to develop a new platform or community should explain why they need to do so given the platforms/communities that already exist (or, if they have chosen to work with an existing platform/community, why they have made this choice).

7) May I add a citizen science component onto an existing project or a project that's mainly professional scientists?

Yes. You may combine citizen science with any existing project. Citizen science methods should be chosen whenever they are the best tool to accomplish a scientific goal.

8) May I apply for funding to support a project that has already been active since before the new Citizen Science Policy (SPD-33)?

Yes. But awardees should first contact a) the technical officer on the award and b) the SMD citizen science officer (Marc.Kuchner@nasa.gov) before putting in such a request. Note that SPD-33 is applicable to all SMD-funded citizen science projects "initiated after the approval date of this document." SMD will consider any existing project that receives SMD funding starting in ROSES 2019 as a project "initiated after the approval date" for this purpose.

9) Is it best to keep the citizen science component of my ROSES proposal separate from the rest of the proposal, e.g. so it can be descoped?

Check with the program officer for the ROSES call. The answer may vary from program to program.