

Appendix C: Sample Call Letter

YS

May 23, 2003

TO: Distribution

FROM: Earth Science Enterprise Suborbital Science Manager

SUBJECT: FY 2004 Suborbital Science Flight Program Development

The Suborbital Science Office of the Earth Science Enterprise (ESE) announces the annual call for requests to use the NASA/ESE suborbital observing capabilities in FY2004, to further ESE's research to understand the Earth system and apply Earth system science to improve prediction of weather, climate and natural hazards, as only NASA can.

Changes in the Suborbital Science Program

The Suborbital Science Program is undergoing significant change in content and nature, in accordance with the NASA Vision and Mission and to improve alignment with national imperatives such as the Climate Change Research Initiative and the President's Management Agenda. We are beginning a transition away from a small core of NASA assets towards a catalog approach of federal and commercial sources. This will permit NASA to concentrate more resources on introducing innovative suborbital platforms.

Because we are at the beginning of the transition period, procedures to establish, maintain and exploit the catalog of sources are not yet finalized. The current catalog is based on recent flight safety reviews with various aircraft service providers, commercial product verification and validation program tasks, and interagency agreements. We will appreciate your patience as we work through experimental procedures to update the catalog and to allocate/schedule the assets.

Included as an attachment is a policy statement on use of in-house and commercial assets specifically addressed to suborbital data collection.

Accessible Assets

Accessible suborbital capabilities – platforms, sensors and commercial products – are catalogued on the ESE Suborbital Science web page: <http://www.earth.nasa.gov/science/suborbital/>.

The NASA ER-2, P3-B, and DC-8 continue to be available but with fewer flight hours due to funding constraints. The Stennis Space Center Learjet 23 also remains available, but is now allocated through the Suborbital Science program as part of the core fleet rather than directly through the Stennis Space Center. Non-NASA platforms for which blocks of pre-negotiated flight hours are available include the commercial Twin Otter, Sky Research Cessna Caravan, and the DOE KingAir. Access to other platforms will be negotiated whenever needed and feasible.

We encourage investigators to use Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and we are currently looking into providing blocks of flight hours for one or more vehicles as a convenience to users. Because UAVs are subject to a number of regulatory and airspace restrictions, early coordination with the listed Point of Contact is essential to ensure that airworthiness and airspace considerations are addressed in a timely manner.

User Fees

All suborbital assets are subject to user fees which are assessed by the organization operating the facility. For ESE funded researchers using NASA assets, the fees will normally be withheld from the investigator's budget and sent by the funding sponsor directly to the NASA aircraft or sensor organization. For researchers using non-NASA assets, payment of the fees will vary and the Suborbital Science business managers are prepared to assist the researcher through the financial procedures.

Because NASA/ESE maintains the facilities as part of the Earth Science Research theme, investigators performing non-NASA research may be charged a full-cost recovery rate. In addition, use of NASA 'facility' sensors by investigators not sponsored by the sensor's sponsoring research program may be charged additional costs for the sensor's operation and data processing. The estimated costs for each flight request will be provided to the funding sponsors after the operators' review (approximately July 2003). Allocations will be made in September 2003.

Submitting a Request

You must submit a Flight Request to be approved, scheduled and funded for a data collection in FY04. The Flight Request is available as an on-line electronic form submission accessible from the Suborbital Science Program Home Page: <http://www.earth.nasa.gov/science/suborbital>.

All Flight Requests must include the name and contact information of a funding sponsor who will approve the user fee expense. For ESE researchers, the sponsor is the program manager who has issued your grant or contract. Pre-coordination with your sponsor is recommended.

The Suborbital Science Program will accept Flight Requests from:

- NASA researchers and program managers;
- Investigators with a current or pending grant, contract or cooperative agreement for NASA research;
- Research program managers of the other federal agencies of the Interagency Coordinating Committee for Airborne Geoscience Research and Applications;
- Investigators who require NASA's unique assets (Specific and explicit rationale for use of the NASA assets must be provided with the request, and the full cost may be charged.)

If you experience problems with the form, have questions about submitting the Flight Request or need additional information about the available assets or preliminary cost estimates, please contact Helene Hendriks at (650) 604-5099 or Helene.A.Hendriks@nasa.gov.

Questions regarding the Suborbital Science Program can be addressed to the undersigned at (202) 358-0758 or Cheryl.L.Yuhas@nasa.gov.

Completed flight requests are due COB July 18, 2003.

Cheryl Yuhas

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