General Programmatic Terms and Conditions for the Informal Science Education (ISE) at the National Science Foundation, (NSF 06-520) Cooperative Agreements

1.   Key Personnel. Except for the Principal Investigator(s) (PIs) or Co-PIs identified in this award, requests to make any changes to personnel, organizations, and/or partnerships specifically named in the proposal, that have been approved as part of this award, shall be submitted in writing to the cognizant NSF Program Official for approval prior to any changes taking effect. Requests for prior approval of changes to the PI(s) must be submitted through FastLane for review by the cognizant NSF Program Official and approval by an NSF Grants Officer.

2.   Program/Project Description. This award shall establish an Informal Science Education Resource Center (ISERC), a major new asset that will benefit the informal science education (ISE) field, PIs and prospective PIs, and the NSF ISE Program.

For the field, the ISERC will build capacity and support continued professionalization. It will foster a Community of Practice, that bridges the many varied forms in which informal STEM learning experiences are developed and delivered for informal audiences of all ages, as well as further knowledge transfer between educational research and practice. Activities will include a clearinghouse for ISE-funded awards to enable others to learn from and build upon this prior work, identification of practices and findings based on project evaluations, and leadership development, with emphasis on increasing diversity in the field. As a secondary emphasis, it will share relevant knowledge and practice with formal educators and university researchers.

For PIs, the ISERC will create a network through PI meetings, communications, and other methods that encourage sharing of deliverables, practices, and findings across projects. It will encourage prospective PIs, especially from underrepresented groups and regions, through orientation to the program by web conferences, workshops, and additional means.

For the ISE Program at NSF, the ISERC will assist Program Officers in reviewing the portfolio, assessing evidence of project impacts. It also will assist in identifying reviewers, gathering GPRA "Highlights" for NSF use, and communicating information externally about the ISE Program.

3.   Project Governance. The Awardee will ensure that an efficient and effective project governing structure is in place throughout the award period to support all critical or significant project activities. It will serve as the lead institution, providing the

administrative infrastructure for the ISERC and ensure efficient and effective performance of all project responsibilities by the governing components throughout the award period.

The Board. Holds legal and fiscal responsibility for the NSF award.

The Executive Director. Responsible to Board for oversight of organizational services to the ISERC and supervision of Project PI.

Among the governing components of the project are:

ISERC Steering Committee. Provides strategic direction for development and operation of the Center. The Committee regularly meets annually with the PI, co-PIs and ISERC Director, supplemented with quarterly telephone meetings. Its co-chairs may provide guidance, in consultation with the Committee, more frequently.

Project PI. Manages award in accordance with NSF policies and the Terms and Conditions of this Cooperative Agreement. The PI also makes operating decisions in consultation with the Steering Committee, co-PIs, and ISERC Director. The PI supervises the ISERC Director, serves as liaison to the Steering Committee and Forum and oversees research in collaboration with the co-PIs and Core Contributors.

ISERC Director. Responsible for the day-to-day management, staffing, and resource allocation of the ISERC, resulting in development and delivery of services to the field, PIs, and the ISE Program. Prepares programmatic progress reports and expenditure reports for NSF. Supervises ISERC Manager.

Research Partners/ Co-PIs. Perform research, writing, and professional development activities described in the individual partner plans in the proposal.

ISERC Forum. Provides a flexible connection with the ISE field. The Forum is intended to include representatives from most of the other major professional associations and organizations that serve the informal STEM learning field, broadly defined. It nominates new Steering Committee members to replace those who rotate off and participates in periodic forums (physical and virtual) on cross-cutting issues.

4. **Reporting Requirements.** The Awardee will provide *ad hoc* and regular reports as designated by the NSF cognizant Program Official with content, format, and submission time line established by the NSF cognizant Program Official. The Awardee will submit all required reports via FastLane using the appropriate reporting category; for any type of report not specifically mentioned in FastLane, the Awardee will use the "Interim Reporting" function to submit reports.

The Awardee will cooperate with and provide data to any NSF-designated program evaluator. NSF may interview and administer surveys to the Project Team, Steering Committee, Research Partners/co-PIs, ISERC Forum, or the field at-large to assess

project performance. In addition, the Awardee will provide all requested information for the ISE Online Project Monitoring System, including the baseline, annual, and final surveys.

Interim Reports. On a quarterly basis (excluding the quarter in which the Annual Report is submitted), the PI will submit a progress report that summarizes key accomplishments and identifies significant project schedule and budget variances. Furthermore, the Awardee must notify immediately the cognizant Program Official of any significant external or internal factors with potential to affect project management or outcomes negatively.

Annual Reports. They must include the status of project tasks and deliverables, discussion of progress against projected outcomes, as well as an analysis of project budget vs. actual expenses, accompanied by explanations of any significant budget variances and their potential impact on the schedule or activities, any changes that will be made as a result, and lessons learned. The Annual Report (or subsequent Interim Report) must include a copy of the Annual Assessment prepared by the evaluator.

Final Report. It must be accompanied by a summative evaluation that assesses and compares with projected outcomes the impacts on the ISE field, PIs and prospective PIs, and the ISE program.

ISE Reports. The Awardee also will provide ISE GPRA "Highlights" and prepare regular analyses of the ISE portfolio and related reports on a schedule and in formats determined by the cognizant Program Official in consultation with the PI.

5.   Awardee Support of Ongoing Management and Oversight. The Awardee will ensure full commitment and cooperation among the governing structure components, and all project staff during all ongoing NSF project management and oversight activities. The Awardee will ensure availability of all key institutional partners during any desk or on-site review as well as timely access to all project documentation.

Site Visits. NSF or its representatives may conduct site visits to the Awardee and other organizations participating or benefiting from the project. A Reverse Site Visit involving experts in informal science education will be held at NSF to review annual progress of the ISERC prior to the close of each project year.

ISE Meetings. The PI and ISERC Director will meet monthly at NSF with the cognizant NSF Program Official to review progress of the project in achieving its impacts.