

Questions Submitted Concerning the  
**Draft 2004 MIDEX AO**

Planned Policy Changes released for community comment -- 22 December 2003  
Draft AO released for community comment -- Delayed

Questions last updated 20 January 2004

**Q1 Regarding the proposed change to foreign participation in Explorers. While I understand there have been some bad experiences on strategic missions, are there any examples of a proposed international contribution to an Explorer mission that has not be delivered?**

There are no examples in the Explorer program, but there are examples in other NASA space science programs. The policy for foreign participation in PI-proposed investigations is uniform across NASA space science programs. The language in the New Frontiers AO, which has been released, is similar to the language in the Draft MIDEX AO.

**Q2 Are there any changes for the missions of opportunity(MO) in the 2004 MIDEX AO?**

There are no substantive changes to the MO portion of the AO other than the change in requirements for Letters of Endorsement. However the AO incorporates a large number of additional changes including both policy changes and changes to proposal submission requirements. All proposers are urged to read this AO carefully since all proposals must comply with its requirements, constraints, and guidelines.

**Q3 Which Taurus is the baseline for launch services provided at no charge against the NASA OSS Cost cap?**

The baseline Taurus is the Taurus 2210. The capabilities of the Taurus 2210 that are offered for this AO will be given in a "ELV Launch Services Information Summary" document that will be placed in the Explorer Program Library prior to the release of the 2004 MIDEX AO. The "ELV Launch Services Information Summary" documents provided for recent Explorer program AOs (e.g. MIDEX 2001, SMEX 2003) provide useful information on the capability of the Taurus 2210.

**Q4 After MIDEX mission selection does NASA handle all interface work with the launch services provider or must the PI plan to do this work within the cost cap?**

As part of basic launch services, NASA will provide the same interface service with the launch service provider that it has for recent Explorer projects. The basic launch services that are offered for this AO will be given in a "ELV Launch Services Information Summary" document that will be placed in the Explorer Program Library prior to the release of the 2004 MIDEX AO. The "ELV Launch Services Information Summary" documents provided for recent Explorer program AOs (e.g. MIDEX 2001, SMEX 2003) provide useful information on NASA's basic launch services.

**Q5 The recent policy changes were quite interesting and, in my opinion, for the better. Should we expect these policy changes to be adopted by other Code S competed missions?**

The policies regarding international partners are standard across all of Code S; in fact, the current New Frontiers AO already incorporates many of these policy changes. No decision has been made on whether the policy regarding launch vehicle costs being outside the cost cap will be adopted in future AOs.

**Q6 With New Frontiers identifying a Phase A duration of 7-months, I'm curious about what led to the decision of 11 months for the upcoming MIDEX opportunity?**

This is six months longer than the Phase A for the recent SMEX and MIDEX competitions. While a 5-month Phase A allowed time to write a detailed concept study report, it did not allow much time for risk mitigating trade studies and technical downselect decisions. The expectation is that additional trade studies and risk reduction will take place during the lengthened 11-month Phase A. The goal is lower risk and less uncertainty at the time of the downselection.

**Q7 Is the \$1M for the Phase A concept study included in the mission cost cap?**

Yes. The cost cap includes all phases of the mission, from the Phase A concept study to Phase A mission operations and data analysis.

**Q8 Since the weight of the technical, management, and cost feasibility will be increased, will the page limit for the technical, management, and cost section of the proposal be raised?**

No. It is our experience that the page limits from previous AOs are adequate for describing the technical, management, and cost proposal at the pre-Phase A level.

**Q9 Will the President's strategy for NASA affect the release of the next MIDEX AO or selection of the missions from a schedule or cost perspective?**

On February 3, the President will release his FY05 budget proposal. That budget will spell out his plan for implementing the Exploration Initiative and the resources available for existing programs, including the Explorer program. Until that time, we cannot discuss whether or not there will be an impact.