



Call for Proposals from the VALUABLES Consortium: Grants for Assessing the Benefits of Satellites (GABS)

Pre-Proposals due Thursday, December 5, 2019
(Invited) Final Proposals due Friday, February 28, 2020

Since 1952, Resources for the Future (RFF) has been a leader in economic analysis and policy innovation for managing environmental and natural resources. RFF is developing studies about the societal value of Earth observations as part of our **Consortium for the Valuation of Applications Benefits Linked to Earth Science (VALUABLES)**, made possible through a partnership with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). VALUABLES is focused on advancing innovative uses of existing techniques and developing new techniques for valuing the information provided by Earth observing satellites.

Through this call, we are seeking proposals for research that will quantify the benefits of satellite data when they are used to make decisions that lead to improvements in socioeconomically-meaningful outcomes for people and/or the environment.

Research Themes, Deliverables, and Outcomes: We are seeking proposals for case studies that will support and enhance the activities of the VALUABLES Consortium.

Proposals must address a decision context in which satellite data (not limited to NASA data) play a role, including applications relating to human health, air quality, water resources, ecosystem services, natural disasters, food security and agriculture, wildland fires, energy, urban development, and transportation and infrastructure. Applicants should examine the impact assessments already completed or in progress on the **VALUABLES website**. Preference will be given to proposals that focus on decision contexts not already addressed by these existing assessments.

Proposals must focus on evaluating the socioeconomic impacts of applications of Earth observations and quantify, in monetary terms, their value. In so doing, the proposal should clearly describe how information from satellites makes improvements to decision-making and the economic value of that improvement. These improvements can be in marketable outcomes or may be non-market benefits.

Estimating the societal benefits of satellite information requires defining a counterfactual case. This can be defined in two general ways: If satellite data are currently being used to make the decisions in question, the counterfactual case is how the decisions would be made if satellite data were not available (i.e., using the next best alternative data source, model, rule of thumb, etc.). If satellite data are not yet used for the chosen application, the hypothetical case where satellite data is used is the counterfactual. Our preference is for assessments of the former counterfactual case.

Outreach and Dissemination: Proposals for these competitive awards are expected to clearly identify expected contributions to scholarship. In addition, research teams will be expected to work with VALUABLES staff to integrate their research results into the consortium's capacity-building and communications products, which may include fact sheets, blog posts, presentation at a workshop, and a webinar. Funds for communications and outreach will be made available under separate contract.

Eligibility: Proposal teams must be located in the U.S. There are no other limitations on eligibility. We will entertain pre-proposals from academicians, local, state or federal government researchers, non-profits, for-profit businesses, and others. Each team must be interdisciplinary and contain a social scientist, preferably one with experience in analyses of the value of information. Upon request, RFF will provide help in finding a suitable economist.

Funding: A total of \$300,000 is available to support the grants. We expect to make no more than three awards, each in the range of \$100,000. In-kind donations and/or co-funding from other research grants or sources of funds will be viewed favorably by the reviewers.

Duration: The grant performance period is up to 12 months. The start date is flexible, but applicants are encouraged to target April 2020. Interim written and oral reports to RFF will be required at intervals during project execution.

Application: The pre-proposal process is as follows.

To submit a pre-proposal, applicants must complete an **online form** and submit a brief pre-proposal limited to **three pages, single-spaced, with no smaller than 11-point font and one-inch margins**. (This limit does not apply to items 6., 7., and 8. below, and references). The pre-proposal, to be uploaded as one PDF document where indicated in the online form, should include:

1. the title of the project
2. name, title, and professional address (including telephone number and email address) of each investigator; please also note the Principal Investigator as the main point of contact. Also note who the social scientist(s) are on the team and what roles the main researchers will play.
3. a concise description of the proposed research. We expect to see clear and concise descriptions of: (a) the satellite information that generates the societal benefit to be quantified; (b) how the satellite information has improved or is expected to improve decision-making; (c) the socioeconomically-meaningful outcomes for people and/or the environment that will change as a result of the improved decision-making; and (d) the empirical strategy to be used to place a value on these societal benefits.
4. a concise description of the innovation the research offers
5. the proposed dates for starting and completing the project
6. an estimated budget including salaries, benefits, other direct costs, IDC/overhead and any matching funds (not required)
7. a short budget justification, stating how the funds will be used (e.g., personnel time, travel, IDC rate, etc.); See the **GABS FAQs** for details about overhead rates, and
8. a brief statement of prior experience of the project leader(s). Upload CVs for project leaders separately on the online form.

We strongly encourage prospective applicants to join the **October 16 webinar** (3:00-4:30pm ET) that VALUABLES will hold to present the funding opportunity and answer applicant questions. Register to attend the webinar here: valuables2019-gabs.splashthat.com. Applicants will have the option to join the webinar and submit questions anonymously if they wish. The webinar will be the only two-way interaction that the

Consortium will have with prospective bidders (excluding requests for help with identifying a social scientist for the project team as noted above) until the announcement of the applicants who are invited to submit full proposals. Applicants can also attend the webcast of VALUABLES' 2019 annual workshop, which will include an informational session about GABS, on October 30. Visit valubles2019-webcast.splashthat.com to register for the workshop webinar.

Final proposals will be invited upon the recommendations of consortium staff. Final proposals should include all the information contained in the pre-proposal, more in-depth discussion of the proposed research and its anticipated intellectual and policy contribution, and a detailed budget. Please limit the proposed research discussion to five pages. Final proposals will be reviewed by a panel of experts from the academic and policy communities.

For Winners: The lead researchers on a given winning proposal will attend a kick-off meeting with VALUABLES staff in person or via conference call. At this meeting, issues with the proposal and possible revisions will be discussed and mutually agreed to prior to submittal of the formal work plan several weeks later. This approach gives all parties a chance to fine-tune the proposal to meet the needs of VALUABLES and address the winning team's concerns.

Deadlines:

- Thursday, December 5, 2019: Pre-proposals due (by 5pm Eastern time)
- Friday, January 24, 2020: Invitation to selected applicants to submit final proposal
- Friday, February 28, 2020: Final proposals due (by 5pm Eastern time)
- Late March/early April 2020: Award(s) announced