

ERA Forum April 2019 Webinar – Questions & Answers

This document contains the questions and answers about Separately Submitted Collaborative Proposals from Multiple Organizations on Research.gov discussed during the ERA Forum Webinar on April 10, 2019.

For further questions and ongoing feedback about Research.gov proposal preparation and submission, click the Feedback button at the bottom of the [Research.gov](https://www.research.gov) homepage, email rgov@nsf.gov or call 1-800-381-1532. For questions regarding NSF proposal and award policies and procedures, please see the [Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG) (NSF 19-1) or email policy@nsf.gov.

General

	Question	Answer
1.	In a separately submitted collaborative proposal, can both the lead and non-lead organizations have subawards as part of the same proposal?	Yes, both the lead and non-lead organizations have the option for subawards in a separately submitted collaborative proposal.
2.	When is proposal submission required for each separately submitted proposal? If the lead organization is on the East Coast and a non-lead organization is on the West Coast, what would be the submission deadline?	Proposals must be received by 5 p.m. submitter's local time on the established deadline date. In this example, the lead organization on the East Coast must submit by 5 p.m. Eastern Time, and the non-lead organization on the West Coast must submit by 5 p.m. Pacific Time.
3.	Can proposal linking occur if the non-lead organization uses FastLane, but the lead organization does not?	Proposals prepared in Fastlane cannot link to proposals prepared in Research.gov and vice versa. In addition, a proposal file update (PFU) must be prepared and submitted in the system where the proposal was initiated.

	Question	Answer
4.	Can I submit collaborative proposals in Research.gov?	Beginning in summer 2019, collaborative research proposals from one organization (i.e., proposals with subawards) will be able to be prepared and submitted in Research.gov. Proposers will still be able to use FastLane and Grants.gov to prepare and submit collaborative proposals with subawards, but we encourage proposers to use the new Research.gov capability. The Research.gov Proposal Preparation and Submission Site is being developed incrementally, and feedback from the research community is a vital part of the development process. Using the new Research.gov site for proposal preparation and submission and providing your feedback will only help to improve the site.
5.	If you choose no subawards on a separately submitted collaborative proposal but later need to add a subaward, would you have to start a new proposal?	For the initial release of the capability to support separately submitted collaborative proposals from multiple organizations, if the collaboration type needs to be changed after proposal creation, you would have to start a new proposal with the updated collaboration type. A future release will include the ability to change the collaboration type of an in-progress proposal. For the initial release, if “subawards” was selected, at least one subaward must be present in the proposal in order to submit. Similarly, for the initial release, if non-collaborative is selected, a subaward cannot be added later in the process.
6.	Can the lead organization be notified when all non-lead organizations have submitted their proposals?	This automated email messaging feature is possible for a future release. In the initial release, the lead organization will have a "Manage Collaborative Proposals" page that displays the submission status of each non-lead organization proposal.

	Question	Answer
7.	<p>Is there a timeline for when submission via Research.gov will be required? When will we be able to submit collaborative proposals which only have subawards in Research.gov? When will the collaborative capability be released in Research.gov?</p>	<p>To minimize impacts, NSF will provide ample warning of FastLane's retirement to the research community. The functionality to support full research collaborative proposals with subawards is planned for a Summer 2019 release.</p> <p>The Research.gov functionality for separately submitted collaborative proposals from multiple organizations has not yet been scheduled for release.</p> <p>This ERA Forum is part of the socialization process to solicit feedback and identify design considerations. Use of Research.gov is currently optional. FastLane will remain available until all necessary functionality has been released in Research.gov. NSF strongly encourages the use of Research.gov where possible and wants feedback on your experience, so NSF can continue to prioritize features and offer a better user experience.</p>

Business Rules

	Question	Answer
8.	<p>The list for lead/non-lead requirements does not state which can upload Other Supplementary Documents and/or Single Copy documents. Will Other Supplementary Documents and/or Single Copy Documents be available for both lead and non-lead organizations to upload?</p> <p><i>For the requirements list, please reference ERA Forum Webinar presentation (slide #14). Presentation can be viewed on the ERA Forum website (https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/era_forum.jsp)</i></p>	<p>Supplementary Documents and Single Copy Documents will be available for both lead and non-lead organizations to upload.</p>

	Question	Answer
9.	If the proposal title is pre-populated for the non-lead organization proposal, how will the non-lead Primarily Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs) add the Research in Undergraduate Institution (RUI) acronym to their project title per the RUI guidelines in Program Solicitation NSF 14-579?	Currently, per solicitation NSF 14-579, RUI proposals must be submitted in FastLane. Future enhancements will include the ability submit RUI proposals via Research.gov. Once available in Research.gov the non-lead organization should coordinate with the lead organization to ensure that "RUI" appears in the title per the solicitation.
10.	For separately submitted collaborative proposals, what is the limit for Principal Investigators (PI) and co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs)? Please clarify whether the limit is PI-plus-four for the collaborative proposal, or PI-plus-four co-PIs for the lead proposal and PI-plus-four co-PIs for the non-lead proposal.	The lead proposal can have a PI-plus-four co-PIs, and non-lead proposals can have a PI-plus-four co-PIs.
11.	Does Research.gov employ solicitation-specific logic? For example, if a program solicitation does not allow separately submitted collaborative proposals from multiple organizations, will the option to link be available?	Currently, separately submitted collaborative proposals from multiple organizations and other unsupported proposal types are not yet available in Research.gov. Solicitation-specific logic will be built into future Research.gov releases.
12.	Since only the lead organization can enter the proposal title, does the non-lead organization leave that section blank? Can an incomplete Cover Sheet be saved in Research.gov?	The proposal title cannot be blank. At a minimum, the system will pre-populate "Collaborative Research" in the title field. The lead organization's title will be applied upon linking. An incomplete Cover Sheet can be saved but cannot be submitted.
13.	If the non-lead organization submits a PFU or revised budget, will the linking between the lead organization proposal and non-lead organization proposal be unlinked as it is now? Currently, it requires the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) from the non-lead organization to have Research.gov restore the link after the updated/revised submission.	Collaborative proposals will not have to be unlinked for the lead, non-lead, or both lead and non-lead organizations to complete a PFU or revised budget. However, a change in one proposal could necessitate an update in a linked proposal and both changed proposals would have to be submitted.
14.	Is there a limitation on the number of non-lead organizations that can participate in a collaborative proposal?	No, there is no limit on the number of non-lead organizations that can participate in a collaborative proposal
15.	What is the maximum number of subawards allowed per lead organization proposal and non-lead organization proposal?	There is no maximum number of subawards for lead and non-lead organization proposals.

	Question	Answer
16.	How will title information in the non-lead organization proposal(s) be reconciled with the lead organization proposal's title, if they are different? If the title order requires program, size, then collaborative research, can the pre-populated collaborative research text be reordered?	The PAPPG states that the collaboration allows investigators from two or more organizations "to submit a single, focused proposal." In Research.gov, that single proposal will have a single title. The lead organization proposal contains the title and the non-lead organization proposal acquires that title upon proposal linking.
17.	When preparing a collaborative proposal, does the proposal title need to begin with the term "Collaborative Research"?	Yes, both types of collaborative proposals will automatically have "Collaborative Research" inserted at the beginning of the proposal title.
18.	When the Collaborative Research title auto-generates, can other indicators be added in front of the term "Collaborative Research" (e.g., CPS: Medium: Collaborative Research: Title)?	The current design approach will let the lead organization add any required acronyms after the term "Collaborative Research" and this will be accepted by NSF.
19.	Can the Sponsored Project Office (SPO) see the proposal before the PI forwards it to the SPO/AOR?	The PI or co-PI must grant access to the SPO/AOR before they are able to view it.
20.	Does a compliance check exist to ensure that the total budget does not go over the budget limit when collaborative budgets are added together? Will both the lead organization and non-lead organization get a notification if the budget limit has been reached?	The proposal submitters are responsible for reviewing the budgets for accuracy and ensuring compliance with the guidance in the solicitation. An automated budget limit check is not currently being considered.
21.	Have there been enhancements to the compliance check features (e.g., uploading files that are compliant with 1" margins, PDF format, and correct font but receiving uploading errors.)?	Compliance check features have been enhanced. If unexpected errors occur when uploading a PDF document, please contact NSF IT Help Central at 1-800-381-1532 for assistance. The PDF can be analyzed, and a solution can be identified. NSF IT Help Central is available by phone from 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM ET Monday -Friday except federal holidays or via email to rgov@nsf .
22.	Since non-lead organization collaborators do not need to submit the Project Summary, Project Description, etc., will a check on the proposal show a "complete" proposal as long as all seven other required documents have been uploaded?	Research.gov will perform checks to ensure that all required sections have been uploaded before submission for both lead proposals and non-lead proposals. Per the requirements in the PAPPG, a non-lead proposal has fewer required sections than a lead proposal.

Managing Access

	Question	Answer
23.	Who receives the proposal request link at the non-lead organization?	<p>The proposal link request will be sent to the non-lead PI and co-PIs in the initial release. NSF is considering whether requests will also go to the non-lead SPOs, AORs, Other Authorized Users (OAUs), and others designated by the non-lead organization. Invitations to link notifications will be automated based on Research.gov user roles and verified via account management.</p> <p>Notification details have not yet been fully defined, and additional notification functionality may become available in future releases. NSF is working with the research community to confirm the requirement for who needs to receive the proposal link request, and NSF welcomes your feedback on this process.</p>
24.	Once a separately submitted collaborative proposal has been unlinked, will the non-lead organization receive an email notification, or will the unlinking only be shown on the Proposal Application screen?	An email notification could be sent to an organization that has been unlinked from a proposal. However, this feature has not yet been defined.
25.	If a non-lead organization drops out of a collaborative proposal, does the lead organization have to start a new proposal since it would no longer be a collaborative proposal? Or can a collaborative proposal be changed to a non-collaborative proposal?	If the proposal is no longer collaborative, the lead organization must start a new proposal. The ability to change from a collaborative to a non-collaborative proposal will be available in the future.
26.	If the lead organization submits its proposal before the non-leads submit their proposals, will the lead organization be notified when submissions have been completed by the non-lead organizations?	Once submissions have been completed by all non-lead organizations and the lead organization, a proposal ID number will be assigned, and an email will be generated informing that the collaborative proposal has been submitted.

	Question	Answer
27.	How does the lead organization get the temporary ID for the non-lead organizations, in order to send the link invitation?	The temporary ID must be shared outside the Research.gov system. Since all individuals involved with a collaborative proposal should be communicating and collaborating, there is no search feature available.
28.	Do you have to unlink proposals to make changes to your part and then relink the proposals?	No, both lead and non-lead organization proposals can be edited after linking. Linking the proposals ensures they are together as a collaborative. Lead and non-lead organizations can make changes to their respective proposals up to the point of submission and even afterward using a PFU.
29.	Will non-lead organizations be able to see the entire proposal, or at least the parts that are not proprietary?	The non-lead organization will have view-only access to the lead organization proposal. NSF is in the process of determining which proposal pieces can be viewed by non-lead organizations. NSF is aware that single-copy or proprietary parts of proposals cannot be shown.
30.	Does the non-lead organization need to generate a proposal and share the proposal number with the lead organization in order for the lead organization to send a request to link? What if the non-lead and lead organization proposal titles do not match?	The non-lead organization must start a proposal with the lead organization for the lead organization to send a link request. When linking occurs, both proposals will have the same title—the title of the lead. The lead organization can make changes to the title and those changes will propagate down to the non-lead organization(s).
31.	Can the lead organization edit the personnel of the subaward organization?	In a separately submitted collaborative proposal, a non-lead organization would manage its own personnel and budgets. A collaborative proposal from one organization, the prime organization with subawards can edit the subaward personnel.
32.	At what point in the process can the SPO see the collaborative screens that the PI sees?	Once the PI grants access to the SPO by clicking the "Share with SPO/AOR" button, the SPO can access the proposal, has the ability to link non-lead proposals, and can view what the PI can view.
33.	Will non-lead proposal submitter(s) see warning information about related proposals not yet submitted?	NSF is determining how to provide this functionality. Currently, the lead organization can see the non-lead organization's warning information.

	Question	Answer
34.	Who initiates the request to link proposals? How will the linking process work?	<p>The lead organization enters the Temporary ID Number of the non-lead organization proposal to initiate the link request. The non-lead organization proposal PI and co-PI(s) receive an email message saying a link request exists in Research.gov. The non-lead organization proposal PI or co-PI(s) logs in to Research.gov and the In-Progress Proposals screen shows "Link request pending." Upon accepting the request in the non-lead organization proposal, linking is complete. Research.gov eliminates the need for a PIN. Whether OAU's should also receive the link requests and be able to accept them is being reviewed and is a feature which may be included in a future release.</p> <p>NSF is also considering including the SPO/AOR on link-related email notifications.</p>
35.	Once collaborative proposals have been unlinked, can proposals be relinked?	The lead organization proposal PI or co-PI can initiate another link request and the proposals can be relinked.
36.	Does the PI at the non-lead organization still need to initiate the proposal and request for SPO/AOR access before it can be linked?	Once the PI initiates a proposal it can immediately be linked, regardless whether the SPO/AOR has been granted access.
37.	Can a non-lead organization unlink a collaborative proposal if it is decided that there is no longer interest in collaborating? Is a non-lead organization able to unlink a proposal?	For the initial release, the lead organization can execute unlinking when needed. The ability for the non-lead organization to unlink a proposal and notify the lead organization (and other non-lead organizations, if any) is planned for a future release.
38.	Can PIs link proposals after the proposal has been shared with the SPO/AOR?	Yes, proposals can be linked after being shared with the SPO/AOR.
39.	What happens if the PI gives SPO/SPO access before linking?	Linking and unlinking are available until submission of a collaborative proposal.
40.	When adding a subaward organization, do senior personnel also have to be added for the subaward?	Senior personnel who are funded on the subaward budget must be added to the subaward.

	Question	Answer
41.	If a collaborative proposal is created with one other organization but the organizations are unlinked prior to submission, can one organization still submit?	Each lead organization in a separately submitted proposal must have at least one linked non-lead organization proposal in order to submit.

Future Enhancements

	Question	Answer
42.	Can the Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan be opened in the non-lead organization proposal if the non-lead organization is the only institution that has a postdoctoral researcher?	NSF is looking at how best to address this. This process has not yet been defined.
43.	Will separately submitted collaborative proposals flow into Cayuse 424 proposals?	Integration with Cayuse 424 is not in the current development plans but can be considered in the future.