

Closeout for M98120043

On 30 November 1998, a program manager¹ informed us of a concern expressed by a reviewer² of a PI's³ proposal.⁴ In the proposal, the PI described a plan to study evolutionary relationships in birds relied on examining fossil specimens available in a museum in a foreign country.⁵ The reviewer expressed strong concern that one of these specimens may have been illegally exported from a foreign country⁶ neighboring that in which the museum is located. The program officer noted that a recent article in a professional journal⁷ discussed the smuggling of fossils from the neighboring country into the country housing the museum.

We discussed with the program officer the implications of the use of illegally obtained specimens, the likelihood that this was being proposed in this case, and the role of program and awardee management, and PI responsibility. We decided that in the context this issue was raised (as a supposition about proposed work), the matter did not warrant further review by our office. It would be appropriate for the program manager to raise such issues in the context of the *Grant General Conditions (GC-1)* if the proposal were funded. Article 38 of the *GC-1*⁸, states:

The awardee should assure that award activities carried on outside the U.S. are coordinated as necessary with appropriate Government authorities and that appropriate licenses, permits or approvals are obtained prior to undertaking proposed activities. NSF does not assume responsibility for awardee compliance with the laws and regulations of the country in which the work is to be conducted.

This inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken in this case.

Cc: Integrity, IG

¹ Dr. [REDACTED] a program manager in the [REDACTED] program in the Division of [REDACTED] in the Directorate for [REDACTED]

² The reviewer is Dr. [REDACTED] a member of the [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED]

³ The PI is Dr. [REDACTED] member of the [REDACTED]

⁴ The proposal [REDACTED] is entitled [REDACTED]

⁵ The specimens are available in the [REDACTED]

⁶ [REDACTED]

⁷ [REDACTED]

⁸ GC-1(12/97)