

NSF 02-141



NSF Dear Colleague Letter

Proposals for Inter-American Materials Collaboration

Dear Colleague:

Research funding agencies in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and the United States of America are working together to enhance opportunities for collaborative activities in materials research. The agencies include the National Research Council for Science and Technology of Argentina (CONICET), the Brazilian National Council for Research (CNPq), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the Chilean National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT), the Colombian Institute for the Development of Science and Technology (COLCIENCIAS), the Mexican National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), and the United States National Science Foundation (NSF).

Such opportunities were investigated at international workshops held in May 1995 in Saltillo, Mexico, and in June 1998 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Scientists and engineers from the Americas participated in the workshops and identified possible areas for mutually beneficial collaborations. The recommendations that emerged from these workshops included: identifying and supporting cooperative research projects that leverage the strengths of each country's scientific community; the extensive use of electronic communication, information exchanges, and databases to promote and facilitate research collaborations; and educational activities at the international level. The workshop reports are posted at <http://www.iumrs.org>.

1. General Information

This Dear Colleague letter describes an activity to foster more opportunities for collaborative efforts in materials research among researchers in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and the U.S. NSF will accept proposals from eligible U.S. institutions (as defined in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide) addressing interactions among materials researchers from the U.S. and one or more of the other six countries in the two categories described below.

Concurrently, investigators at institutions in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia and/or Mexico should submit to the counterpart agency in their own country either a request for support of their side of the collaboration, or a clear indication of their involvement in the collaboration, their source of funding, and the rationale for their participation in the project. Thus, investigators in Argentina should submit their counterpart request to CONICET, those in Brazil to CNPq, in Canada to NSERC, in Chile to CONICYT, in Colombia to COLCIENCIAS, and in Mexico to CONACYT, in accordance to the guidelines prepared by each of these agencies.

These agencies will provide funding or act as coordinators for the materials competition in cases where the non-U.S. researcher has support from other sources. Projects to be supported through this competition must have a clear relevance to basic materials phenomena, synthesis, characterization, and properties, and/or to materials-related applications in processing, design and manufacturing.

NSF will consider proposals in two categories as described below. Submission of a proposal in one category is not a prerequisite for, and does not preclude, submission of a proposal in the other category.

Category A

Proposals that aim to support international collaboration in materials research among individual investigators, groups of investigators, or centers from the U.S. and one or more of the other six participating countries.

In addition to supporting the costs of research, awards may also support activities that enhance communication and linkages among research centers and organizations in the U.S. and one or more of the other six participating countries. CONICET, CNPq, NSERC, CONICYT, COLCIENCIAS, CONACYT and NSF are particularly interested in promoting cooperation and interaction among centers and organizations for the purpose of exchanging students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior researchers; providing opportunities for integrating research and training; enhancing information exchanges; and disseminating research results and education materials.

Category A proposals to NSF must be submitted by 5:00 PM local time on October 18, 2002. These proposals must be linked to a counterpart proposal to one or more of the other participating agencies, or to existing awards funded by one or more of them or other agencies. Each agency will support its side of such activities with the expectation that funding agencies from the appropriate participating country will support the costs of the other participants. Any proposal may be funded independently by a participating agency if it deems that to be appropriate.

Category B

Proposals that aim to support international activities that are at the initial (pre-research) stages of international collaborative research projects and programs, and that can cover the costs associated with organizing workshops, seminars, conferences or symposia, and travel related to the project.

Category B proposals may be submitted at any time. Proposals in this category need not be linked to counterpart proposals to the agencies in other countries, and may be funded independently by CONICET, CNPq, NSERC, CONICYT, COLCIENCIAS, CONACYT, or NSF. These proposals must conform to the guidelines of each specific agency.

2. Submission and Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals must be in accordance with the guidelines of each agency. Proposals to NSF must be submitted via FastLane in accordance with the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (see <http://www.nsf.gov/home/grants.htm>). The announcement number for these proposals is NSF 02-141. The title of the proposal should begin with "Inter-American Materials Collaboration: ".

In addition to the review criteria discussed in Chapter III of the Grant Proposal Guide, NSF will take into consideration the potential benefits from international cooperation in materials research, and the extent to which the proposal integrates research and education and promotes diversity (see Chapter III of the Grant Proposal Guide for further explanation). If you have further questions, please contact one of the NSF staff listed below. The Directorate for Engineering recommends preliminary contact with relevant NSF/Engineering staff to ascertain NSF/Engineering interest in the project area and general availability of funds prior to submission of a proposal.

Because application guidelines differ among the participating agencies and in some cases from program to program within an agency, it is not necessary to submit identical proposals to each agency. However, each proposal in Category A, and in Category B if appropriate, must be accompanied by two additional items that link it to a counterpart proposal or to an existing award, as follows:

1. Information clearly identifying the counterpart proposal(s) or funded project(s), including the name of the funding agency and program, name of the principal investigator, project title, and award number (if any), and a technical abstract (maximum 1 page) of the counterpart proposal(s);
2. A specific summary of the proposed interaction among the international participants, including the anticipated benefits of the interaction (limit: 2 pages).

For NSF proposals these additional items above must be entered into the "Supplementary Docs" FastLane form.

Representatives from NSF's Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Directorate for Engineering, and Office of International Science and Engineering will manage the review of research proposals on the U.S. side. Information about counterpart proposals will be shared among the participating agencies as appropriate.

Proposals to NSF must be received by 5:00 PM local time on **October 18, 2002**. After a joint assessment of the proposals by the participating agencies, NSF will make funding decisions by May 2003.

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The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. Grantees are wholly responsible for conducting their project activities and preparing the results for publication. Thus, the Foundation does not assume responsibility for such findings or their interpretation.

NSF welcomes proposals from all qualified scientists, engineers and educators. The Foundation strongly encourages women, minorities, and persons with disabilities to compete fully in its programs. In accordance with federal statutes, regulations, and NSF policies, no person on grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving financial assistance from NSF (unless otherwise specified in the eligibility requirements for a particular program).

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED) provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities (investigators and other staff, including student research assistants) to work on NSF-supported projects. See the program announcement or contact the program coordinator at (703) 292-6865.

The National Science Foundation has Telephonic Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Relay Service (FRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing impairments to communicate with the Foundation regarding NSF programs, employment, or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-5090 or through FRS on 1-800-877-8339.

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