

EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2)

PROGRAM SOLICITATION

NSF 09-569



National Science Foundation

Office of Integrative Activities
Office of Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

November 02, 2009

REVISION NOTES

Awards made in response to this solicitation will be funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) (Public Law 111-5). As such, awards will include special reporting requirements and other non-standard terms and conditions. Unless otherwise specified, ARRA funding should be considered one-time funding.

Please be advised that the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) includes revised guidelines to implement the mentoring provisions of the America COMPETES Act (ACA) (Pub. L. No. 110-69, Aug. 9, 2007.) As specified in the ACA, each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers must include a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. Proposals that do not comply with this requirement will be returned without review (see the PAPP Guide Part I: *Grant Proposal Guide* Chapter II for further information about the implementation of this new requirement).

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

General Information

Program Title:

EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2)

Synopsis of Program:

The Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) is a program designed to fulfill the National Science Foundation's (NSF) mandate to promote scientific progress nationwide. The EPSCoR program is directed at those jurisdictions that have historically received lesser amounts of NSF Research and Development (R&D) funding. Twenty-seven states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U. S. Virgin Islands are currently eligible to participate. Through this program, NSF establishes partnerships with government, higher education and industry that are designed to effect lasting improvements in a state's or region's research infrastructure, R&D capacity and hence, its national R&D competitiveness.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will enable NSF to invest \$20 million in the Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2). Awards made under this program will provide up to \$1 million for up to 2 years to support the enhancement of inter-campus and intra-campus cyber connectivity within an EPSCoR jurisdiction. These awards are intended to enhance broadband access for academic research and the utilization of cyberinfrastructure consistent with the jurisdiction's Science and Technology (S&T) plan. The inter-campus and intra-campus connectivity targeted by these awards is expected to broaden individual and institutional participation in STEM research and education activities within and among jurisdictions and to facilitate synergy among NSF EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement activities.

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Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):

- 47.082 Trans-NSF Recovery Act Research Support

Award Information

Anticipated Type of Award: Standard Grant

Estimated Number of Awards: 20

Anticipated Funding Amount: \$20,000,000 in ARRA funds.

Eligibility Information

Organization Limit:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Only jurisdictions that meet EPSCoR criteria are eligible to submit proposals to the Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2) competition. The jurisdiction's EPSCoR governing committee must designate a fiscal agent/proposing organization as the responsible recipient for a RII C2 award. Where possible, this should be the employing organization of the Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD). See also Section I., Introduction Paragraph D for additional eligibility information.

PI Limit:

Principal Investigators/Project Directors of proposed EPSCoR projects must be affiliated with research universities, agencies, or organizations within the participant jurisdiction.

Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization: 1

- Only one Research Infrastructure Improvement: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2) proposal may be submitted in response to this solicitation by the designated fiscal agent/proposing organization, acting on behalf of a jurisdiction's EPSCoR governing committee.

Limit on Number of Proposals per PI: 1

An investigator may serve as PI or Co-PI on only **one** proposal submitted in response to this solicitation.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

- **Letters of Intent:** Not Applicable
- **Preliminary Proposal Submission:** Not Applicable
- **Full Proposal Preparation Instructions:** This solicitation contains information that deviates from the standard NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide, Part I: Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) proposal preparation guidelines. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

B. Budgetary Information

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Cost Sharing is not required under this solicitation.
- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:** Not Applicable
- **Other Budgetary Limitations:** Other budgetary limitations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

C. Due Dates

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

November 02, 2009

Proposal Review Information Criteria

Merit Review Criteria: National Science Board approved criteria. Additional merit review considerations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

Award Administration Information

Award Conditions: Additional award conditions apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

Reporting Requirements: Additional reporting requirements apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Section 3(e) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) Act of 1950, as amended, states that: "...it shall be an objective of the Foundation to strengthen research and education in the sciences and engineering, including independent research by individuals, throughout the United States, and to avoid undue concentration of such research and education." Through its Congressional mandate, NSF promotes and advances scientific progress nationwide. In 1978, public concern about undue geographical concentration of federal funding of academic research and development (R&D) led Congress to further authorize NSF to conduct the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). These Congressional instructions, which established the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, have been restated in subsequent Congressional authorizations of the Foundation's budget. Eligibility for EPSCoR participation is restricted to those jurisdictions that have historically received lesser amounts of NSF R&D funding and have demonstrated a commitment to develop their research bases and to improve the quality of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) research conducted at their universities and colleges. Twenty-seven jurisdictions including twenty-five states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U. S. Virgin Islands currently participate in one or more elements of the NSF EPSCoR program. (See section I, paragraph D, for additional EPSCoR eligibility information).

A. EPSCoR Mission and Goals

The mission of EPSCoR is to assist the National Science Foundation in its statutory function

"to strengthen research and education in science and engineering throughout the United States and to avoid undue concentration of such research and education."

EPSCoR goals are to:

- provide strategic programs and opportunities for EPSCoR participants that stimulate sustainable improvements in their R&D capacity and competitiveness, and
- advance science and engineering capabilities in EPSCoR jurisdictions for discovery, innovation, and overall knowledge-based prosperity.

B. EPSCoR Objectives

The primary objective of EPSCoR is to stimulate research that is fully competitive in the disciplinary and multidisciplinary research programs of the National Science Foundation.

Specific EPSCoR objectives are to:

- catalyze key research themes that empower knowledge generation, dissemination, and application;
- activate effective jurisdictional and regional collaborations that advance scientific research, promote innovation, and benefit society;
- broaden participation in science and engineering (S&E) by institutions, organizations, and people within EPSCoR jurisdictions; and
- use EPSCoR for development, implementation, and evaluation of future programmatic experiments that motivate positive change and progression.

Pursuit of these goals and objectives bolsters the capacity of jurisdictions to:

- enhance discovery and learning through utilization of cyberinfrastructure and other evolving technologies;
- develop the diverse, well-prepared, internationally competent and globally engaged STEM workforce

- necessary to sustain the nation's competitive edge;
- facilitate knowledge generation leading to economic development; and
- expand the scientific literacy of all citizens, and disseminate to them the importance of STEM research and education.

C. EPSCoR Investment Strategies

EPSCoR's investment portfolio is aligned with the Foundation's strategic outcome goals of DISCOVERY, LEARNING, RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE, and STEWARDSHIP:

- Discovery - Foster research that will advance the frontiers of knowledge, emphasizing areas of greatest opportunity and potential benefit, and establishing the nation as a global leader in fundamental and transformational science and engineering.
- Learning - Cultivate a world-class, broadly inclusive science and engineering workforce, and expand the scientific literacy of all citizens.
- Research Infrastructure - Build the nation's research capability through critical investments in advanced instrumentation, facilities, cyberinfrastructure, and experimental tools.
- Stewardship - Support excellence in science and engineering research and education through a capable and responsive organization.

EPSCoR uses three major investment strategies to achieve its goal of improving the R&D competitiveness of researchers and institutions within EPSCoR jurisdictions. These strategies are Research Infrastructure Improvement Program awards, Co-Funding of disciplinary and multidisciplinary research, and Outreach and Workshops.

- Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: Track-1 (RII Track-1), Track-2 (RII Track-2), and Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2) Awards.
 - RII Track-1 awards provide up to \$4 million per year for up to five years. They are intended to improve the research competitiveness of jurisdictions by improving their academic research infrastructure in areas of science and engineering supported by the National Science Foundation and critical to the particular jurisdiction's science and technology initiative or plan. These areas must be identified by the jurisdiction's EPSCoR governing committee as having the best potential to improve the jurisdiction's future R&D competitiveness.
 - RII Track-2 awards provide up to \$2 million per year for up to three years as collaborative awards to consortia of EPSCoR jurisdictions to support innovation-enabling cyberinfrastructure of regional, thematic, or technological importance. These awards facilitate the enhancement of discovery, learning, and economic development of EPSCoR jurisdictions through the use of cyberinfrastructure and other technologies.
 - RII C2 awards made in response to this solicitation will be funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Unless otherwise specified, ARRA funding should be considered a one-time event. Up to twenty of these RII C2 awards are anticipated. Each award will provide up to 1 million for up to 2 years to support the enhancement of inter-campus and intra-campus cyber connectivity within an EPSCoR jurisdiction. These awards are intended to enhance broadband access for academic research and for utilization of cyberinfrastructure consistent with the jurisdiction's Science and Technology (S&T) plan. The inter-campus and intra-campus connectivity targeted by these awards is expected to broaden individual and institutional participation in STEM research and education activities within and among jurisdictions and to facilitate synergy among NSF EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement activities.
- Co-Funding of Disciplinary and Multidisciplinary Research. EPSCoR co-invests with NSF Directorates and Offices in the support of meritorious proposals from individual investigators, groups, and centers in EPSCoR jurisdictions that are submitted to the Foundation's research and education programs, and crosscutting initiatives. These proposals have been merit reviewed and recommended for award, but could not be funded without the combined, leveraged support of EPSCoR and the Research and Education Directorates. Co-funding leverages EPSCoR investment and facilitates participation of EPSCoR scientists and engineers in Foundation-wide programs and initiatives.
- Outreach and Workshops. The EPSCoR Office considers requests for support of workshops, conferences, and other community-based activities designed to explore opportunities in emerging areas of science and engineering, and to share best practices in design and implementation in strategic planning, diversity, communication, cyberinfrastructure, evaluation, and other areas of importance to EPSCoR jurisdictions (See NSF 06-613). The EPSCoR Office also supports outreach travel that enables NSF staff from all Directorates and Offices to work with the EPSCoR research community regarding NSF opportunities, priorities, programs, and policies. Such travel also serves to more fully acquaint NSF staff with the science and engineering accomplishments, ongoing activities, and new directions and opportunities in research and education in the jurisdictions.

D. Criteria for Eligibility to Participate in the Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2)

Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity and other EPSCoR program eligibility is based on two primary considerations:

- A jurisdiction's demonstrated commitment to develop its research bases and to improve the quality of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) research conducted at its universities and colleges, and
- A jurisdiction's most recent three-year history of research funds awarded by NSF relative to the Foundation's total research budget for that same period.

Regarding the second consideration, a jurisdiction is eligible to participate in EPSCoR programs if its level of research support is equal to or less than 0.75 percent of the total NSF research budget for that same period. Adjustments are made in the rare instances where a single large NSF-funded national or international facility skews the data. The NSF EPSCoR website lists these summary data and the eligibility criteria. Twenty-seven states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U. S. Virgin Islands are currently eligible to participate in NSF EPSCoR programs.

A newly eligible jurisdiction must submit a successful planning grant proposal before Research Infrastructure Improvement proposals (RII Track-1, RII Track-2, or RII C2) can be submitted. A "new" EPSCoR-eligible jurisdiction is defined as a State, US Territory, or US Commonwealth that (1) previously did not qualify via the established 0.75 percent criterion, but is declared eligible under the most recent publication of the annual NSF EPSCoR eligibility list (eligibility criteria) and (2) has demonstrated commitment to developing their research

bases. Planning grant proposals can be submitted at any time following the most recent declaration of eligibility. In order to compete for an RII Track-1, RII Track-2, and RII C2 award, the "new" jurisdiction must have received an EPSCoR planning grant.

Eligible jurisdictions may seek such planning support to formulate a documented vision and implementation design for their research, education, and innovation strategies. An expected outcome from any supported planning activity is the submission of a competitive RII Track-1, RII Track-2, or RII C2 proposal and subsequent proposals to NSF Directorates and Offices, which combine capacity-building with capability enhancement for addressing bold opportunities characterized by regional relevance and national importance.

A jurisdiction wishing to submit a planning grant proposal must notify the NSF EPSCoR Office with a letter of intent to submit and then meet with NSF EPSCoR officials to discuss the conceptual project, potential partners and estimated cost. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, the jurisdiction may be invited to submit an EPSCoR planning proposal, in accordance with NSF's grant proposal guidelines.

This solicitation describes the Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2).

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

RII C2 Program Description

Broadband connectivity within and among campuses can advance jurisdictional progress toward broader research and educational engagement at the frontiers of discovery and innovation in science and engineering. Execution of well-articulated plans for the development, deployment, and improvement of broadband connectivity will foster collaboration, prompt innovation, broaden individual and institutional participation, strengthen e-learning, create jobs, develop the workforce, contribute to the economic development of jurisdictions, and help to facilitate participation in the computing based intellectual future.

Combined jurisdictional and EPSCoR investments have facilitated the development of cutting edge cyberinfrastructure in many of the jurisdictions' research intensive institutions. In these and other institutions within the jurisdictions, however, there remain significant gaps in cyber connectivity and broadband access. This is particularly true of less research intensive institutions, especially minority serving, two-year, four-year, and rural ones. RII C2 provides a unique opportunity for jurisdictions to address such issues and to provide community colleges and minority serving institutions with advanced connections to research and research-based education that will accelerate learning, discovery, and economic development in rural and underserved communities.

The primary drivers for RII C2 investments are broadband connectivity needs within and among academic campuses. World class science and engineering research, modern cyberinfrastructure, and innovative education in STEM disciplines that can be facilitated by enhanced broadband cyber connectivity are also important motivating elements. Such investments will facilitate discovery and innovation, and enable the development of a science and engineering workforce appropriate to the future of the jurisdiction and the nation. RII C2 investments are expected to result in measureable improvements in the individual and institutional diversity within the jurisdiction and ability to successfully pursue significant opportunities in science and engineering research, education, and workforce development. The RII C2 award is expected to add specific value to the jurisdiction's academic cyber and research infrastructure not generally available through other funding.

As in other Research Infrastructure Improvement activities (RII Track-1 and RII Track-2), each jurisdiction must utilize its EPSCoR governing committee, which works closely with leaders in academe, government, and the private sector. The committee will identify potential cyber connectivity improvement strategies that are consistent with the jurisdiction's S&T plan and the associated cyberinfrastructure, diversity, and workforce development plans which, together with current RII Track-1, RII Track-2, and other RII related activities, are most likely to advance the development of a nationally competitive cyber-enabled academic R&D capability.

In preparation for submitting an RII C2 proposal, the EPSCoR governing committee is expected to have undertaken a thorough assessment of the current state of the jurisdiction's cyber connectivity and to have identified strengths, barriers, and opportunities for further development of comprehensive inter-campus and intra-campus cyber connectivity and broadband access in support of overall objectives in research, education, and innovation. The RII C2 proposal must describe the strategy and implementation mechanisms for the development, expansion, utilization, and long-term sustainability of the targeted cyber connectivity and broadband access capabilities. Successful inter-campus and intra-campus cyber connectivity improvement plans are likely to be those that provide sound platforms and opportunities for broad institutional engagement in research and research-based education that utilize the diverse human, physical, and technological resources of the jurisdiction, and contribute to its economic development.

N.B.: In all instances, clear specification of goals, performance milestones, and a timetable for achieving such milestones is a requirement for EPSCoR support.

A RII C2 award is not the appropriate mechanism to provide support for individual faculty research projects. Requests for support of such projects should be directed to NSF's research grant programs.

RII C2 awards made in response to this solicitation will be funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Unless otherwise specified, ARRA funding should be considered a one-time event. Up to twenty of these RII C2 awards are anticipated.

To ensure maximum impact of limited EPSCoR resources, requests for RII C2 funding must:

- Contribute to the jurisdiction's strategy for future research and innovation;
- Add significantly and measurably to research and education capability in S&T areas of high institutional and jurisdictional priority;
- Engage the full diversity of the jurisdiction's resources in the STEM enterprise;
- Contribute to the jurisdiction's strategy for future research and innovation; and
- Present a detailed strategy to generate subsequent, sustained non-EPSCoR funding from federal, jurisdictional, or private sector sources.

Eligible Activities

Proposals requesting funds for cyber connectivity improvement may include support for academic, jurisdictional, for-profit and non-profit organizations, as well as eligible individuals employed by such organizations both inside and outside the jurisdiction. In addition, cooperative programs among research universities, predominantly undergraduate institutions, especially minority serving

rural 2-year institutions, are eligible for EPSCoR support. In all cases, however, Project Directors/Principal Investigators of proposed EPSCoR projects must be affiliated with research universities, agencies, or organizations within the participant jurisdiction. Whereas the proposed project may employ collaborations between EPSCoR and non-EPSCoR participants, EPSCoR funding can only be requested and used for the EPSCoR-based components. In addition, all activities carried out under an EPSCoR award are subject to the restrictions concerning eligible science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines and activities detailed in the NSF Proposal and Award Policy and Procedures (PAPP) Guide found on the NSF website at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/papp/index.jsp>.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Anticipated Type of Award: Standard Grant

Estimated Number of Awards:

Duration: Award duration of up to 2 years

Anticipated Funding Amount: in FY 2010

Limitation of Awards:

- RII C2 award amount not to exceed \$1 million over a two year period.
- Special American Recovery and Reinvestment Act award conditions apply.

IV. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Organization Limit:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Only jurisdictions that meet EPSCoR criteria are eligible to submit proposals to the Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2) competition. The jurisdiction's EPSCoR governing committee must designate a fiscal agent/proposing organization as the responsible recipient for a RII C2 award. Where possible, this should be the employing organization of the Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD). See also Section I., Introduction Paragraph D for additional eligibility information.

PI Limit:

Principal Investigators/Project Directors of proposed EPSCoR projects must be affiliated with research universities, agencies, or organizations within the participant jurisdiction.

Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization: 1

- Only one Research Infrastructure Improvement: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2) proposal may be submitted in response to this solicitation by the designated fiscal agent/proposing organization, acting on behalf of a jurisdiction's EPSCoR governing committee.

Limit on Number of Proposals per PI: 1

An investigator may serve as PI or Co-PI on only **one** proposal submitted in response to this solicitation.

Additional Eligibility Info:

A newly eligible jurisdiction must submit a successful planning grant proposal before Research Infrastructure Improvement proposals (RII Track-1, RII Track-2, or RII C2) can be submitted. A "new" EPSCoR-eligible jurisdiction is defined as a State, US Territory, or US Commonwealth that (1) previously did not qualify via the established 0.75 percent criterion, but is declared eligible under the most recent publication of the annual NSF EPSCoR eligibility list (eligibility criteria) and (2) has demonstrated commitment to developing their research bases. Planning grant proposals can be submitted at any time following the most recent declaration of eligibility. In order to compete for an RII Track-1, RII Track-2, and RII C2 award, the "new" jurisdiction must have received an EPSCoR planning grant.

V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Full Proposal Instructions: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the guidelines specified in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG). The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg. Paper copies of the GPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-PUBS (7827) or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov.

The following instructions are specific to proposals submitted to the Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: Inter-Campus and Intra-Campus Cyber Connectivity (RII C2) competition and supplement the NSF GPG:

- The jurisdiction's EPSCoR governing committee shall designate a fiscal agent/proposing organization for the project. Where possible, this should be the employing organization of the Project Director.
- The proposal section labeled Project Description may not exceed 20 pages, including text, as well as any graphic or illustrative materials. Page limitations also apply to specific subsections of the proposal. Proposals that exceed the page limitations or that do not contain all items described below will be *returned without review*.

Please be advised that use of the maximum number of pages for each individual subsection exceeding the 20 page limitation specified for the project description..

PROJECT DESCRIPTION REQUIREMENTS

The RII C2 Proposal must include the following elements:

1. **NSF Cover Sheet.**
2. **Project Summary (2 pages maximum).** Provide a clear vision for and a brief summary of the proposed RII C2 project and its anticipated impacts. This summary should specify the changes in connectivity and broadband access of institutions across the jurisdiction that will result from the proposed RII C2 project. It should clearly place the proposed RII C2 activities in the context of the jurisdiction's Science and Technology Plan and its cyberinfrastructure plan, and other RII activities within the jurisdiction. The summary should describe how the RII C2 investment will facilitate research and education and their integration; broaden the development of human and institutional resources; and develop the cyber-engaged workforce needed to sustain the economic vitality of the jurisdiction. Indicate in separate paragraphs the intellectual merit and broader impacts of the proposed work.
3. **Table of Contents.** Generated automatically by the system.
4. **Project Description (20 pages maximum).** The project description should detail the current status of the jurisdiction's broadband connectivity within and among academic institutions. The project description should state the science and engineering plans and goals, and show how the cyber connectivity improvements for which NSF support is being requested will enable successful pursuit of those goals. In addition, the project narrative should describe the science and engineering research and education as well as the economic development that will be facilitated by the proposed cyber connectivity improvements. It should also describe how the proposed activities will engage the full diversity of the jurisdiction's resources in the STEM enterprise and bolster participation in the computing based intellectual future of the jurisdiction. The essential role of external engagement, including outreach, communication, and dissemination, should be clearly integrated. Required elements of the project description are:

4.1 Status and Overview (2 pages maximum). The current status of the jurisdiction's connectivity landscape, including opportunities, challenges, and needs.

4.2 Results from Relevant Prior NSF Support (1 page maximum). Results from relevant prior NSF support and summary of the relevance of that support to the proposed project.

4.3 Active NSF RII Awards (2 pages maximum). Describe the scope, duration and funding level for each RII award to your jurisdiction that is active as of the date of submission of this RII C2 proposal. Convey how the activities of those RII awards align and integrate with the proposed RII C2 activities.

4.4 RII C2-enabled Research and Education (8 pages maximum). Provide a comprehensive description of the project activities, including the broadband and cyber connectivity improvements, and the research and education components that promise to stimulate sustainable improvements in research capacity and competitiveness. Include specific goals, objectives, timelines, and milestones. The role of external engagement should be made clear. This section must also show plans for the development, deployment, and improvement of broadband connectivity to foster collaboration, prompt innovation, broaden individual and institutional participation, strengthen e-learning, create jobs, develop the workforce, and contribute to the economic development of the jurisdiction. It should illustrate how the proposed project will be aligned and integrated with the existing and/or planned jurisdictional cyberinfrastructure developments, including RII activities. A compelling rationale for how improvements in cyber connectivity and broadband access enabled by the proposed RII C2 will yield the desired objectives and outcomes must be provided.

4.5 Diversity (2 pages maximum). Diversity in all of its manifestations - institutional, individual, disciplinary, geographic - catalyzes innovation and is key to the utilization of all the nation's intellectual and physical resources. The narrative must include a description of the current state of diversity within the jurisdiction and clear plans for broader engagement of the human and institutional resources to be used in pursuit of the cyber-enabled research and education goals. Particular attention should be given to underrepresented minorities in STEM and to 2-year, 4-year, rural, and minority serving institutions. The role of external engagement in plans for broadening diversity must be described. The plan must include specific goals, timelines and milestones, and anticipated outcomes of proposed activities.

4.6 Workforce Development (2 pages maximum). Providing 2-year, 4-year, rural, and minority serving institutions with access to networks and tools can accelerate economic growth and job creation in rural and underserved communities. Clearly describe how RII C2 activities will prepare and engage the diverse next generation STEM workforce to be able to design, deploy, manage, and use new generations of cyber based technology and its applications. Describe specific anticipated impacts of RII C2 enabled workforce development on the employment outlook in the jurisdiction.

4.7 Evaluation and Assessment (2 pages maximum). A comprehensive evaluation and assessment plan must be included. The plan must identify metrics to be used to evaluate and assess demonstrative impacts and outcomes, both during and after the award period. The narrative should indicate how the planned inter/intra campus connectivity will advance scientific, educational, and economic competitiveness within the jurisdiction. The plan must include review, evaluation, and assessment by a diverse group of **independent external experts**.

4.8 Sustainability (2 pages maximum). A plan for long term sustainability of the improved cyber connectivity and broadband access, including maintenance, upgrades, and replacement of physical infrastructure, as appropriate, must be presented. This plan must contain a strategy for sustaining the RII C2 enabled improvements in research and education within the jurisdiction, as well as strategies to ensure continuity of training and professional development activities for educators, technicians, and other personnel.

4.9 Management Plan (2 pages maximum). The plan must describe how the project will be managed and provide a description of the roles of all individuals and organizations involved. Also, the plan should include a description of how the management team will coordinate with the existing management structures of other RII projects. In addition, the plan must describe how the team will coordinate the investments and activities across various academic campuses. It is important that the project's management team be sufficient in number, diversity, and expertise to assume technical and administrative oversight of the project. It is expected that the management team will be responsible for working with other public and private sector partners to expand access to and breadth of broadband services across the jurisdiction.

5. **References Cited** in the Project Description should be listed here.
6. **Biographical Sketches.** Include a biographical sketch for each faculty level participant according to standard NSF guidelines.
7. **udget pages and budget justification. Complete budget pages for each year of support (1-2). A two-year cumulative budget will be automatically generated by FastLane. Also provide a budget justification for the entire two years of support that may not exceed 3 pages.**
8. **Current and Pending Support.** List current and pending support for each faculty level participant.
9. **Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources**
10. **Supplementary Documentation**
 - a. List of Participants. Provide a list of participating senior investigators (faculty level and equivalent) by name, organizational and departmental affiliation.
 - b. List of Conflicts. Provide a single, alphabetically ordered list of conflicts of interests, including collaborators, and former students and advisors for the PIs and key senior level participants.
 - c. Letters of Commitment. Include only official letters with specific commitments of resources from participating institutions or organizations anticipated to receive subawards, or from organizations that will provide resources for the project. Scan your signed letters and upload them into the Supplementary Documents section of FastLane, but do not send originals.

Note: Do not submit additional letters of support which do not provide specific commitments of resources.

Proposers are reminded to identify the program solicitation number (NSF 09-569) in the program solicitation block on the NSF Cover Sheet For Proposal to the National Science Foundation. Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay processing.

B. Budgetary Information

Cost Sharing: Cost sharing is not required under this solicitation.

Other Budgetary Limitations:

Funding requests can be for durations of up to 2 years. Total budgets for NSF support cannot exceed \$1 million.

Budgets should include sufficient funding for participation in evaluative activities including reverse site visits.

C. Due Dates

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

November 02, 2009

D. FastLane Requirements

Proposers are required to prepare and submit all proposals for this program solicitation through use of the NSF FastLane system. Detailed instructions regarding the technical aspects of proposal preparation and submission via FastLane are available at: <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/newstan.htm>. For FastLane user support, call the FastLane Help Desk at 1-800-673-6188 or e-mail fastlane@nsf.gov. The FastLane Help Desk answers general technical questions related to the use of the FastLane system. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this funding opportunity.

Submission of Electronically Signed Cover Sheets. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must electronically sign the proposal Cover Sheet to submit the required proposal certifications (see Chapter II, Section C of the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) for a listing of the certifications). The AOR must provide the required electronic certifications within five working days following the electronic submission of the proposal. Further instructions regarding this process are available on the FastLane Website at: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.jsp>.

VI. NSF PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Proposals received by NSF are assigned to the appropriate NSF program where they will be reviewed if they meet NSF proposal preparation requirements. All proposals are carefully reviewed by a scientist, engineer, or educator serving as an NSF Program Officer, and usually by three to ten other persons outside NSF who are experts in the particular fields represented by the proposal. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with the oversight of the review process. Proposers are invited to suggest names of persons they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal and/or persons they would prefer not review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process at the Program Officer's discretion. Submission of such names, however, is optional. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts of interest with the proposal.

A. NSF Merit Review Criteria

All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two National Science Board (NSB)-approved merit review criteria: intellectual merit and the broader impacts of the proposed effort. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

The two NSB-approved merit review criteria are listed below. The criteria include considerations that help define them. These considerations are suggestions and not all will apply to any given proposal. While proposers must address both merit review criteria, reviewers will be asked to address only those considerations that are relevant to the proposal being considered and for which the reviewer is qualified to make judgements.

What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?

How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of the prior work.) To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

Examples illustrating activities likely to demonstrate broader impacts are available electronically on the NSF website at: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/gpg/broaderimpacts.pdf>.

NSF staff will give careful consideration to the following in making funding decisions:

Integration of Research and Education

One of the principal strategies in support of NSF's goals is to foster integration of research and education through the programs, projects, and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions provide abundant opportunities where individuals may concurrently assume responsibilities as researchers, educators, and students and where all can engage in joint efforts that infuse education with the excitement of discovery and enrich research through the diversity of learning perspectives.

Integrating Diversity into NSF Programs, Projects, and Activities

Broadening opportunities and enabling the participation of all citizens -- women and men, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities -- is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

Additional Review Criteria:

Reviewers for the RII Cyber Connectivity competition will also consider the following specific aspects of intellectual merit and broader impacts:

1. **Strategic Fidelity and Impact.** How well are the proposed cyber connectivity enhancements and the education, diversity, workforce development, and sustainability plans aligned with central research themes? Is there sufficient alignment with other RII C2 investments in the jurisdictions? How is the project likely to have the proposed impacts on the research and education capability and capacity of the jurisdiction? How does each proposed component contribute to improved competitiveness in research, education, and innovation?
2. **Value Added.** How do the proposed activities add value at the institutional, jurisdictional and regional levels in research, education, and economic development? How will the additional value be measured? How does the project advance the jurisdiction's innovation and economic development plans through greater emphasis on connections and linkages within and among academic campuses and private and public sectors? How will the proposed project result in increased diversity in the jurisdiction's workforce?
3. **RII C2-enabled Research and Education.** How well are the proposed cyber connectivity enhancements aligned with the needs and priorities of the jurisdiction's research infrastructure improvements, education, workforce development, external engagement and economic development plans? How is the project likely to have a meaningful impact on research and education capacity and capability in the jurisdiction, especially in rural and underserved areas? How will the proposed strategies, programs, and projects advance the jurisdiction's innovation and economic development? Do they give rise to greater emphasis on creativity, inventiveness, technology transfer, potential commercialization, and national R&D competitiveness?

How well are the proposed cyber connectivity plans coordinated with existing and/or unfolding cyberinfrastructure plans and strategies of the jurisdiction? How will the proposed activities be integrated and coordinated with the existing and/or planned RII Track-1, RII Track-2, or other RII relevant activities and programs? In particular, how will the proposed broadband access complement and enhance the cyber-related programs and activities already in place? Is there a clear, comprehensive plan for cyber

connectivity and broadband access between and among campuses in support of overall objectives in research, education, innovation and economic development? How well articulated are the roles of cyber connectivity and broadband access in the diversity and workforce development plans of the jurisdiction? How do these roles facilitate attainment of the goals of those plans?

4. **Diversity.** How clearly expressed is the current state of diversity within the jurisdiction? How well conceived and articulated are the plans to more broadly engage the jurisdiction's human and institutional resources in pursuit of the cyber enabled research and education goals? Is there a clearly defined and accurate resourced path to increased broadband access at 2-year, 4-year, rural, and minority serving institutions?
5. **Workforce Development.** How will RII C2 activities contribute to the development of the jurisdiction's STEM workforce? How well does the plan create experiences that prepare tomorrow's workforce to design, deploy, and use cyber based technologies? Are the plan activities likely to accelerate the pace of positive change leading to creation of new jobs and increased economic prosperity? How does the workforce development plan build upon and utilize existing state and regional networks that already afford various levels of connectivity to universities, 2- and 4-year colleges, K-12 schools, and libraries?
6. **External Engagement.** How well is external engagement integrated into the various elements of the RII C2 project? How does external engagement spark new forms of collaboration and social interaction such as e-learning or e-science? How effectively does external engagement contribute to the efficient sharing of data and information among and beyond project partners? Is there a coordinated process for the collection and dissemination of major results to various audiences, e.g., scientific and educational communities, other EPSCoR jurisdictions, the general public, and the NSF?
7. **Evaluation and Assessment.** How effective is the proposed plan likely to be in measuring the outputs and outcomes of the RII C2 project? How clear and appropriate are the proposed metrics and criteria for assessing project accomplishments according to a well defined schedule? How clearly defined are processes for reliably capturing and analyzing metric-related data and reporting it in a timely manner? Are the appropriate formative and summative evaluation plans for assessing status, major impacts, and future directions described? How adequately resourced are the evaluation and assessment tasks? Are the independent, external evaluators appropriate?
8. **Sustainability.** How clear, reasonable, and viable are the plans for sustainability? How does the plan address sustainability of human, physical, and cyber infrastructure? How will the project team contribute to the sustainability of a more competitive research and education enterprise driven by cyber-based discovery and innovation?
9. **Management Plan.** How clearly structured and likely to be effective is the management plan? Do the Project Director and the management team demonstrate the vision, experience and capacity to lead the RII C2 project? Do the Project Director and management team have knowledge of and connections with appropriate national academic research networks? Are the membership and roles of the jurisdiction's EPSCoR governing committee and external advisors plainly identified, and is their involvement in the project clear, well defined, and free of conflicts of interest?

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation will be reviewed by Ad hoc Review and/or Panel Review.

Reviewers will be asked to formulate a recommendation to either support or decline each proposal. The Program Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation.

After scientific, technical and programmatic review and consideration of appropriate factors, the NSF Program Officer recommends to the cognizant Division Director whether the proposal should be declined or recommended for award. NSF is striving to be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. The time interval begins on the deadline or target date, or receipt date, whichever is later. The interval ends when the Division Director accepts the Program Officer's recommendation.

A summary rating and accompanying narrative will be completed and submitted by each reviewer. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers, are sent to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Officer. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

In all cases, after programmatic approval has been obtained, the proposals recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Division of Grants and Agreements for review of business, financial, and policy implications and the processing and issuance of a grant or other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants and Agreements Officer may make commitments, obligations or awards on behalf of NSF or authorize the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of NSF should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with a NSF Program Officer. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants and Agreements Officer does so at their own risk.

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Notification of the Award

Notification of the award is made to *the submitting organization* by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Principal Investigator. (See Section VI.B. for additional information on the review process.)

B. Award Conditions

An NSF award consists of: (1) the award letter, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the proposal referenced in the award letter; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (GC-1); * or Research Terms and Conditions * and (5) any announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter. Cooperative agreements also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Financial and Administrative Terms and Conditions (CA-FATC) and the applicable Programmatic Terms and Conditions. NSF awards are electronically signed by an NSF Grants and Agreements Officer and transmitted electronically to the organization via e-mail.

*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Website at http://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award_conditions.jsp?org=NSF. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov.

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the NSF *Award & Administration Guide* (AAG) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=aag.

Special Award Conditions:

The following special award conditions apply to awards made with funds appropriated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA):

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Award Terms

The Recovery Act mandates a significant level of transparency and accountability. The law and implementing guidance identify specific conditions for awards made with Recovery Act funding. As such, recipients of ARRA funds must comply with standard NSF award conditions (Research Terms and Conditions or Grant General Conditions, as applicable) as well as the requirements set forth in ARRA, including, but not limited to, the reporting requirements specified in the award term entitled, "*Reporting and Registration Requirements under Section 1512 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Public Law 111-5*", as well as the accompanying OMB guidance (available on the Recovery.gov website.) Awardees are advised that failure to submit timely reports may result in NSF taking administrative action, including disallowance of costs or suspension or termination of the award.

All ARRA funded awards will incorporate the following language:

This award is funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) (Public Law 111-5) and is subject to ARRA Terms and Conditions, dated April 2009, available on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award_conditions.jsp?org=NSF

Given the goals of the Recovery Act, awardees also are advised that they are expected to expend funds in a timely manner of on allowable costs and that NSF will be monitoring awards for expenditures. If, after 12 months, no allowable expenditures have taken place, NSF may consider reducing or terminating the award and reallocating the funds.

ARRA Award-Specific

There also may be ARRA award specific terms, as necessary and appropriate.

C. Reporting Requirements

For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the Principal Investigator must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer at least 90 days before the end of the current budget period. (Some programs or awards require more frequent project reports). Within 90 days after expiration of a grant, the PI also is required to submit a final project report.

Failure to provide the required annual or final project reports will delay NSF review and processing of any future funding increments as well as any pending proposals for that PI. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

PIs are required to use NSF's electronic project-reporting system, available through FastLane, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. Such reports provide information on activities and findings, project participants (individual and organizational) publications; and, other specific products and contributions. PIs will not be required to re-enter information previously provided, either with a proposal or in earlier updates using the electronic system. Submission of the report via FastLane constitutes certification by the PI that the contents of the report are accurate and complete.

Special reporting requirements apply to awards funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Please refer to the Special Award Conditions in Section VII.B. of this solicitation for additional information.

VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- Denise M. Barnes, Program Director, 1122, telephone: (703) 292-5179, fax: (703) 292-9047, email: dbarnes@nsf.gov
- Arlene A. Garrison, Program Director, 1122, telephone: (703) 292-8361, fax: (703)-292-9047, email: aagarris@nsf.gov
- Maija M. Kukla, Program Director, 1122, telephone: (703) 292-4940, fax: (703) 292-9047, email: mkukla@nsf.gov
- Uma D. Venkateswaran, Program Director, 1122, telephone: (703) 292-7732, fax: (703)-292-9047, email: uvenkate@nsf.gov

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact:

- FastLane Help Desk, telephone: 1-800-673-6188; e-mail: fastlane@nsf.gov.

IX. OTHER INFORMATION

The NSF Website provides the most comprehensive source of information on NSF Directorates (including contact information), programs and funding opportunities. Use of this Website by potential proposers is strongly encouraged. In addition, National Science Foundation Update is a free e-mail subscription service designed to keep potential proposers and other interested parties apprised of new NSF funding opportunities and publications, important changes in proposal and award policies and procedures, and upcoming NSF Regional Grants Conferences. Subscribers are informed through e-mail when new publications are issued that match their identified interests. Users can subscribe to this service by clicking the "Get NSF Updates by Email" link on the [NSF web site](#).

Grants.gov provides an additional electronic capability to search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities. NSF funding opportunities may be accessed via this new mechanism. Further information on Grants.gov may be obtained at <http://www.grants.gov>.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent Federal agency created by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 USC 1861-75). The Act states the purpose of the NSF is "to promote the progress of science; [and] to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering."

NSF funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. It does this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 2,000 colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, businesses, informal science organizations and other research organizations throughout the US. The Foundation accounts for about one-fourth of Federal support to academic institutions for basic research.

NSF receives approximately 40,000 proposals each year for research, education and training projects, of which approximately 11,000 are funded. In addition, the Foundation receives several thousand applications for graduate and postdoctoral fellowships. The agency operates no laboratories itself but does support National Research Centers, user facilities, certain oceanographic vessels and Antarctic research stations. The Foundation also supports cooperative research between universities and industry, US participation in international scientific and engineering efforts, and educational activities at every academic level.

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities to work on NSF-supported projects. See Grant Proposal Guide Chapter II, Section D.2 for instructions regarding preparation of these types of proposals.

The National Science Foundation has Telephonic Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing impairments to communicate with the Foundation about NSF programs, employment or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-5090 and (800) 281-8749, FIRS at (800) 877-8339.

The National Science Foundation Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111.

The National Science Foundation promotes and advances scientific progress in the United States by competitively awarding grants and cooperative agreements for research and education in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

To get the latest information about program deadlines, to download copies of NSF publications, and to access abstracts of awards, visit the NSF Website at <http://www.nsf.gov>

- **Location:** 4201 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22230
- **For General Information** (NSF Information Center): (703) 292-5111
- **TDD (for the hearing -impaired):** (703) 292-5090
- **To Order Publications or Forms:**
 - Send an e-mail to: nsfpubs@nsf.gov
 - or telephone: (703) 292-7827
- **To Locate NSF Employees:** (703) 292-5111

PRIVACY ACT AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENTS

The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; and project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the proposal review

process; to proposer institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies or other entities needing information regarding applicants or nominees as part of a joint application review process, or in order to coordinate programs or policy; and to another Federal agency, court, or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See Systems of Records, NSF-50, "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004), and NSF-51, "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records, " 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0058. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate and any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to:

Suzanne H. Plimpton
Reports Clearance Officer
Division of Administrative Services
National Science Foundation
Arlington, VA 22230

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