



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

NSF 09-60

German-USA Collaboration in Computational Neuroscience

Over the last decade, both Germany and the United States have developed organizational infrastructures for coordinating and funding research and education in computational neuroscience to enable advances in technology, health, and many areas of science, engineering, and mathematics. Due to its strongly interdisciplinary character, computational neuroscience builds on collaborations between researchers from different backgrounds. There have been multiple initiatives, both in the United States and in Germany, to create funding structures that promote the style of interaction required for this field to grow.

Both countries now play leading roles in this emerging and rapidly developing field. Many scientific ties among researchers from both countries have been established on an ad hoc basis. The US-German workshop on "Growing Connections in Computational Neuroscience" in June 2008 in Munich revealed the need for a more streamlined process to support international collaborative research, in order to lift these collaborative efforts to a higher level. Therefore, under the terms of this Dear Colleague Letter, both countries will support German-US joint research projects in computational neuroscience. A parallel *Richtlinie* is being issued by the German Federal Ministry of Research and Education (BMBF).

NSF and BMBF will accept proposals for US-German collaborative research in computational neuroscience in November, 2009. Collaborating investigators at German and US institutions may submit proposals for joint research projects describing research objectives and plans, and strategies for exchange of scientists, results, data, and modeling tools. Computational neuroscience is inclusively defined, encompassing a broad range of computational and biological goals and approaches. Collaborations are expected to leverage complementary expertise, enabling the collaborating investigators to pursue innovative research approaches and make significant advances on important and challenging problems. Proposals will be evaluated according to their intellectual merit, broader impacts, and the quality and value of the international collaboration. NSF and BMBF will implement a joint evaluation, with reviewers identified by both organizations.

Proposal budgets should include travel funds for the PI to attend an annual symposium, in either the United States or Germany, to exchange views about the ongoing research activities and their results, and to ensure close links and intensive communication between research groups. Other German and US researchers, other international guests, doctoral students, and post-doctoral researchers will also be included in these events. The US components of joint research projects selected for funding will be funded under the *Collaborative Research in Computational Neuroscience* program, a joint program between NSF and NIH; the German components will be funded by BMBF.

Activities aimed at exploring new German-US collaborations, such as planning visits or student exchange, are also encouraged. Investigators who are interested in such activities are encouraged to contact the agency representatives listed below by September 30, 2009.

To apply for funding for US-German joint research projects, German and US investigators should submit proposals with identical project descriptions to NSF and BMBF as follows:

1. The proposal to NSF should be submitted according to the guidelines of NSF solicitation [08-514: Collaborative Research in Computational Neuroscience](#) by the deadline date of November 17, 2009. Proposal titles should begin with the phrase, "US-German Collaboration." The NSF proposal should

be submitted by the US partner in the collaboration. Budget pages for the German partner should be submitted as a supplementary document.

Agency Representative
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2. The proposal to BMBF should be submitted to the project management organization Projektträger im DLR für das BMBF -Gesundheitsforschung -
Heinrich-Konen-Straße 1
& 53227 Bonn
Tel: 0228-3821-210
Fax. 0228-3821-257
Internet: www.pt-dlr.de

Agency Representative
Dr. Rainer Girgenrath
Tel: 0228-3821-200
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Applicants are urged to contact the project management organization for advice on applications. The organization will provide further information and details. Forms for funding applications, guidelines, leaflets, information and auxiliary terms and conditions are available on the Internet at <http://www.foerderportal.bund.de/> or can be obtained from the project management organization. Applicants are strongly advised to use the electronic application system "easy" to draft (project outlines and) formal applications (<http://www.foerderportal.bund.de/>). Collaborating investigators in US-German joint projects selected for funding will provide assurance to BMBF that a cooperation agreement, covering issues including intellectual property, has been established.