



National Science Foundation
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NSF 11-090

Frequently Asked Questions for Science Across Virtual Institutes (SAVI)

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1. What is SAVI, Science Across Virtual Institutes?

This is a concept intended to foster interaction among scientists, engineers and educators around the globe. It is based on the principle that scientific advances can be accelerated by working together via virtual institutes that connect researchers with complementary strengths for greater impact on an identified problem.

The primary objective of SAVI is to facilitate collaboration among scientists and engineers from the U.S. and other countries by building on mutually beneficial partnerships that are initiated by NSF-supported teams of researchers, research institutes, and universities. Such virtual institutes are to serve as the creative hubs for innovative research and education activities across borders.

2. How does SAVI differ from other international collaborative activities supported across NSF?

Across NSF there are many opportunities for supporting international collaboration. While

many of the activities envisioned for SAVI could be supported by existing programs, SAVI provides a platform for teams of U.S. investigators to network with their partners abroad to form virtual institutes. SAVI does not replace existing programs that encourage collaborations between teams of U.S. investigators and their international partners. PIs should consider these programs, too, to determine the best fit for the level of activity they are planning. Examples of such programs include:

Research Coordination Networks: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=11691

Engineering Research Centers: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5502

Partnerships for International Research and Education:
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=12819

3. Who is eligible to serve as a SAVI PI?

Teams of NSF-funded investigators are eligible to apply. A team may be drawn from an existing center/institute awardee or from a virtual center/institute consisting of multiple individual investigators with complementary and mutually beneficial research and education objectives. A single individual representing the team must be designated as the SAVI coordinator, or PI, and his/her institution must serve as the U.S. lead institution responsible for management of a SAVI award. At the time of proposal submission, the U.S. team's international partners should be identified. They are expected to secure their own funding via appropriate funding organizations in their country or region. SAVI awards may be bi-lateral or multilateral.

4. How and when may one initiate a request for SAVI support?

SAVI is not a stand-alone program. SAVI proposals can be submitted as a supplemental funding request to an existing award, or as part of a full proposal to the existing NSF program that best fits the proposed subject matter. For additional guidance, potential proposers should contact the appropriate Directorate or Office representative listed below:

Biological Sciences: Susanne von Bodman, svonbodm@nsf.gov, (703) 292-7139

Computer & Information Science & Engineering: Min Song, msong@nsf.gov, (703) 292-8950

Office of CyberInfrastructure: Kevin Thompson, kthompso@nsf.gov, (703) 292-4220

Education & Human Resources: Guy-Alain Amoussou, gamousso@nsf.gov, (703) 292-5108

Engineering: Marshall Lih, mlih@nsf.gov, (703) 292-4608

Geosciences: Maria Uhle, muhle@nsf.gov, (703) 292-2250

Office of Integrative Activities: Pamela O'Neil, poneil@nsf.gov (703) 292-7403

Office of International Science and Engineering: Anne Emig, aemig@nsf.gov, (703) 292-7248

Mathematical & Physical Sciences: Dean Evasius, devasius@nsf.gov, (703) 292-8132

Office of Polar Programs: Jennifer Slimowitz Pearl, jslimowi@nsf.gov, (703) 292-4492

Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences: Elizabeth Tran, etran@nsf.gov, (703) 292-5338

5. How will NSF review requests for SAVI support?

Each Directorate and Office will review and process SAVI proposals in a manner consistent with NSF's established practices.

6. What kinds of activities and costs are eligible?

As described in the Dear Colleague Letter, [NSF 11-087](#), NSF will consider requests for support of mutually beneficial activities that are designed to meet the SAVI objectives of synergy and accelerated progress.

Examples of cooperative activities, which can be accomplished virtually or physically, include but are not limited to: collaborative research and education activities, collaborative team meetings, focused workshops, advanced study institutes, seminars, college-level courses, and focused international research experiences for students, post-doctoral fellows and other researchers.

7. Is there a maximum budget request?

Requests are expected to vary from \$50,000 to \$400,000 per year for up to five years, including both direct and indirect costs. Recommended funding will depend upon the nature of the proposed virtual institute and the level of existing funds for SAVI-relevant activities that are already supported by active grants to U.S. SAVI team awardees. SAVI funding should be considered as the supplemental resources necessary to "glue," realize, or catalyze a more suitable platform for the intended synergy.

8. Are multiple U.S. institutions eligible to partner via one SAVI?

Yes. One of the objectives of SAVI is to encourage collaborations among NSF-funded investigators who work closely in related fields and topics. SAVI encourages teams to form a "virtual" institute and to partner with international counterpart teams.

9. What areas of research and education are appropriate?

NSF will entertain SAVI proposals in any areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) supported by the Foundation, including Education (EHR), and the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE).

10. Is a data management plan required for a SAVI?

NSF proposals must describe plans for data management and sharing of the products of research, or assert the absence of the need for such plans. FastLane will not permit submission of a proposal that is missing a Data Management Plan. The Data Management Plan will be reviewed as part of the intellectual merit or broader impacts of the SAVI proposal, or both, as appropriate. More information can be found in the [Grant Proposal Guide Chapter II.C.2.j](#) of the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide*.

11. How are intellectual property rights established under a SAVI?

It is recommended that institutions consider and establish policies for intellectual property rights with their international partners as early as possible in project development.

12. Can a faculty member from an international partner institution be a co-PI on a SAVI proposal?

No, all co-PIs must be faculty from the SAVI's U.S. partner institutions. Key participants in other countries should be listed as International collaborators, not as PIs or co-PIs or other senior project personnel.

13. What documentation should be included with SAVI proposals to demonstrate commitment of international partners to the proposed activities?

At the time of proposal submission, SAVI proposals should describe the existence and level of maturity of the integral international partnership. Institutional letters of commitment and formatted biographical sketches for lead international collaborators may be included with the proposal, as supplemental documentation, to demonstrate their commitment.

14. What is the role the NSF Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE) in SAVI-related activities?

OISE will coordinate and support SAVI activities across the Foundation in partnership with other NSF programs and Directorates. However, OISE will not accept SAVI proposals. All SAVI proposals should be submitted to the existing discipline or interdisciplinary program that best fits the proposed research subject. Each NSF program will process SAVI proposals in a manner consistent with its established proposal review practices.

15. Is matching funding required, internationally?

There is no set formula for matched funding. Proposers are reminded that inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited. As such, international partners, not NSF,

should provide funding for their own participation in SAVI international collaborations. Furthermore, SAVI activities should be designed to be of mutual benefit and encourage wide distribution of the resulting materials, data, analyses, and publications within the partner countries as well as in the U.S.

NSF expects to fund only the U.S. costs of the SAVI collaboration. Extraordinary circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis, such as activities that require access to unique expertise, facilities, or data resources not generally available to U.S. investigators, that are essential contributing factors to the success of the proposed SAVI, and which cannot be funded from sources in the region or country.

In general, for student participants, the country (U.S. or foreign) sending the students is expected to pay for their travel to and expenses in the receiving country. NSF may consider arrangements for exchanges of students wherein the hosting institution provides for living expenses on a reciprocal basis.