



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
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NSF 14-094

Dear Colleague Letter: Special Guidelines for Submitting Collaborative Proposals under the US NSF/BIO/DEB - US-Israel BSF International Opportunity

SCOPE

The US National Science Foundation (NSF) and the US-Israel Binational Science Foundation (BSF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Research Cooperation. The MOU provides an overarching framework to encourage collaboration between US and Israeli research communities and sets out the principles by which jointly supported activities might be developed. The MOU provides for an international collaboration arrangement whereby US researchers may receive funding from the NSF and Israeli researchers may receive funding from the BSF.

The Division of Environmental Biology (DEB) in the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) of the National Science Foundation and the US-Israel Binational Science Foundation are pleased to announce a US-Israel collaborative research opportunity. The goal is to help reduce some of the current barriers to working internationally. Through a lead agency model, NSF/BIO/DEB and BSF will address these issues by allowing US and Israeli researchers to submit a single collaborative proposal that will undergo a single review process.

Proposals will be accepted for collaborative research in areas at the intersection of NSF/BIO/DEB and BSF as set out below:

NSF/BIO/DEB Solicitation

Division of Environmental Biology Solicitation (Core Programs) [NSF 15-609](#).

BSF Solicitation Call for Proposals in the BSF-NSF program in Environmental Biology

Proposals are expected to adhere to the remit, funding limits, and grant durations for the BSF and NSF/BIO/DEB program from which the funding is sought and must represent an integrated collaborative effort. This document provides guidelines for the preparation, submission, review, and award of NSF/BIO/DEB-BSF collaborative proposals. During an initial two-year phase (2015-2016), both agencies will evaluate the interest and success of the activities.

Proposers are advised that all documents submitted to NSF or BSF may be shared with the other agency in order to implement the two-way agency activities.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

1. Prior to submission, NSF proposers should contact NSFDEB-BSF@nsf.gov to discuss the research focus of the international project.
2. NSF proposers must submit a collaborative **preliminary proposal** in accordance with the standard requirements and submission dates as announced in the DEB solicitation. The preliminary

proposal must be submitted to one of the clusters in DEB using the FastLane system. Prospective applicants must submit a preliminary proposal by 23 January 2015, annually thereafter as announced in the DEB solicitation and DEB website. BSF proposers should submit the collaborative preliminary proposal in accordance with standard requirements and submission due dates using the BSF online system.

3. The title of the preliminary proposal should be prefaced with “NSFDEB-BSF:” to indicate that the document is to be considered under this joint funding opportunity.

Biographical sketches of all senior personnel (including US and Israeli partners) should be prepared in accordance with the standard biographical sketch format identified in the DEB solicitation and uploaded in one PDF file. In addition, **as a Single Copy Document** preliminary proposals submitted under international collaboration activities should include:

- o Written consent that the proposals and unattributed reviews will be shared with the partner agency, BSF.
 - o Bottom line estimates of funding for the entire project and estimated funds from NSF/BIO/DEB and BSF (a detailed budget is not required at this time).
4. The preliminary proposal will be checked for eligibility (namely, whether the proposed research fits within the participating agencies’ portfolio and whether the proposed researchers and institutions meet agency eligibility requirements). Involvement in a joint international proposal will count towards the limit on number of submissions. In a given year, an individual may participate as a PI, Co-PI, or senior lead investigator of a sub award on no more than two preliminary proposals submitted in response to the DEB core program solicitation.
 5. The preliminary proposal will undergo a peer evaluation for intellectual merit and broader impacts. Based on these evaluations, proposers may be invited to submit a full research proposal.
 6. Each agency will provide a written response to proposers on whether or not the proposed submission is invited to proceed.
 7. Proposers who are invited to submit a **full research proposal** will do so in accordance with the proposal preparation requirements of both agencies. NSF proposers must comply with the proposal preparation requirements outlined in the DEB core solicitation. The proposal must be submitted through NSF’s FastLane system (<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>) or Grants.gov (<http://grants.gov>) to the DEB core program.

Israeli proposers should follow directions set out by BSF and submit the joint proposal via the BSF system (<http://www.bsf.org.il/ElectronicSubmission/GatewayFormsAndGuidelines.aspx?PageId=7&innerTextID=0>).

The proposal should include a description of the full proposed research program, research team, and the total resources for the joint project (that is, the funds requested from both the NSF and BSF).

8. NSF proposers should only indicate the US expenses on the NSF budget form. BSF proposers should indicate only the Israeli research expenses on the BSF budget form. A copy of the proposed requested budget of the partner agency should be included as part of the full proposal as a supplementary document. The Budget Justification section of the full proposal should address the full US and Israeli project budgets and they must be clearly differentiated in the justification. Proposals that request duplicative funding may be returned without review.

9. In the case of NSF, the following documents must be provided as **Supplementary Documents** for the full proposal:
 - o Funding requested from BSF: A detailed breakdown of funding requested from BSF should be included.
 - o Institutional endorsement: An institutional acknowledgment of the submission must be a signed letter from an authorized institutional representative from the non-lead partner's country with the following text: "I confirm on behalf of [insert name of institution] that the US-Israel Collaborative proposal between [insert name of lead agency PI and institution] and [insert name of non-lead agency PI and institution] is endorsed and has been submitted by [name of Research Office], thereby acknowledging the proposed collaboration."
10. For projects involving human subjects/participants or vertebrate animals, proposers should consult both NSF and BSF policies.
11. The full proposal should indicate the proposal is to be considered under the partner agency activities by prefacing the title with "NSFDEB-BSF:"
12. The full proposal should be submitted by the established closing date of submission as determined by the lead agency. For DEB and BSF, the 2015 deadline is August 2, 2015 and deadlines annually thereafter as announced in the DEB core solicitation.

PEER REVIEW

NSF/BIO/DEB-BSF collaborative proposals will be reviewed alongside all other standard proposals received in the same funding round or call and will not undergo a separate or special review process.

Proposals will be reviewed in accordance with NSF's review criteria; reviewers are asked to evaluate research on both its intellectual merit and broader impacts. A description of the NSF merit review process is provided on the NSF merit review website at: <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/meritreview/>.

FUNDING DECISIONS

The funding recommendations will be discussed with the partner agency. Each agency will use its usual internal procedures to determine whether a proposal will be awarded or declined. Funding decisions may be subject to the availability of funds.

All proposers will be advised whether their proposals have been recommended for funding or will be declined. Proposers will receive copies of the reviewers' unattributed comments and, where applicable, a panel summary. Should a proposal be declined for funding, proposers should refer to the respective agency resubmission policies.

Each agency will notify the proposer that the award for joint international research is made in collaboration between NSF and BSF.

Because the participating organizations have different funding cycles, it is possible that some projects will have delayed start dates in order to wait until funds become available.

POSTAWARD CONSIDERATIONS

Awardees will be expected to comply with the award conditions and reporting requirements of the agencies from which they receive funding.

Awardees will be required to acknowledge both NSF and BSF in any reports or publications arising from the grant.

Extension and supplement requests will be considered by participating agencies using standard procedures. Requests for changes to awards pertaining to changes in scope in research or changes or delays to the research will be discussed with other involved funding agencies before a mutual decision is reached.