



**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 15-118

Dear Colleague Letter: Special Guidelines for Submitting Collaborative Proposals Under the US NSF/CISE/CCF - US-Israel BSF International Opportunity

September 14, 2015

Dear Colleague:

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 NSF Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE) and the US-Israel Binational Science Foundation are pleased to announce a US-Israel collaborative research opportunity between BSF and the CISE Division of Computing and Communication Foundations (CCF). The goal is to help reduce some of the current barriers to working internationally. Through a lead agency model, NSF/CISE 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.

PROCESS SUMMARY

As described in detail below, this program is intended to encourage collaborations by US and Israeli researchers focused on research in the foundations of computing and communication. NSF will fund the US researchers and BSF will fund the Israeli researchers. Proposals must be responsive to the scope of research described in the current CCF Core Programs solicitation, and be submitted to the Small category (up to \$500,000 over 3 years for the NSF-funded portion). US researchers should obtain pre-approval from NSF before submission. US and Israeli collaborative researchers must each submit the identical research description to NSF and BSF (respectively), with each budgeting for their own participants, and including a copy of the budget for the counterparts. US participants must consent to the release of unattributed reviews to BSF. All proposals will be reviewed by NSF; those selected for funding will result in separate agreements with NSF (for US researchers) and BSF (for Israeli researchers).

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

NSF Solicitation

Computing and Communication Foundations (CCF): Core Programs [NSF 15-573](#)

BSF Solicitation

Calls for Proposals in the NSF-BSF program can be found on the BSF website using the link: <http://www.bsf.org.il/ElectronicSubmission/GatewayFormsAndGuidelines.aspx>.

Any topic within scope for the CCF Core Programs solicitation is within scope for funding through this collaborative research opportunity.

Proposals are expected to adhere to the remit, funding limits, and grant durations for the BSF and NSF programs 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-BSF collaborative proposals. During an initial 2-year period, 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 the appropriate program officer (http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=503220) to discuss the research focus of the international project.
2. Proposers should submit a **research proposal** in accordance with the proposal preparation requirements of both agencies. The proposal should include a description of the proposed research program, research team, and the total resources for the joint project (that is, the funds requested from both the NSF and BSF).

NSF proposers must comply with the proposal preparation requirements outlined in NSF's *Grant Proposal Guide* as well as any programmatic requirements stipulated by the Small proposal competition of the CCF Core Programs. The proposal must be submitted through NSF's FastLane system (<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>) or Grants.gov (<http://grants.gov>) to the appropriate CCF Core Program(s).

Both Israeli and US collaborators on a proposing team should follow directions specified by BSF and submit their joint proposal via the BSF system (<http://www.bsf.org.il/ElectronicSubmission/GatewayFormsAndGuidelines.aspx>).

3. **The budget forms submitted to each agency should only indicate the amount requested from that agency.** 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 other agency should be included as part of the full proposal (i.e., copies of the BSF budget should be included as a supplemental document in NSF submissions; copies of the NSF budget should be included in the BSF submission). The Budget Justification section of the full proposal should address the full US and Israeli project budgets, and these must be clearly differentiated in the proposal. Proposals that request duplicative funding may be returned without review.
4. In the case of NSF, the following documents must be provided as Supplementary Documents to the full proposal submission:
 - o Funding requested from BSF: A detailed breakdown of funding requested from BSF should be included, typically in the form of a spreadsheet.
 - o Consent: Proposals for consideration under this DCL must include written consent of the PIs,

acknowledging that the proposals and unattributed reviews will be shared with the partner agency, BSF, for the purpose of merit review. This consent will be in the form of a signed letter from the PI of the form, "I confirm on behalf of [insert name of US institution] that proposals and unattributed reviews will be shared with BSF."

- The list of participants required as a supplemental document by the CCF Core Programs solicitation must include both US and Israeli participants. The list of collaborators required as a supplemental document by the CCF Core Programs solicitation must include collaborators of both the US and Israeli participants. These lists are used to avoid conflicts of interest in assigning reviewers, so having the collaborators of Israelis is important.
- A Collaboration Plan (up to two pages) describing the collaboration between US and Israeli investigators is encouraged, and may be submitted as a supplemental document. This does not count against the 15 page limit for the basic proposal, as described in the solicitation.

5. The following notes pertain to the NSF submission:

- Israeli PIs should NOT be listed as co-PIs on the NSF cover sheet.
- Biographical sketches for Israeli PIs should be included as supplementary documents, not with the biographical sketches for US participants.
- Current and pending awards lists are NOT required for Israeli participants.
- If only one US institution is involved, the NSF standard of including the word "collaboration" in the title should NOT be followed, as that is an indication that more than one US institution is involved.
- The number of proposals that may be submitted in response to this DCL is limited by the underlying NSF and BSF programs, but there are no limits specifically related to this international opportunity. US PIs are limited to not more than two submissions to the CCF Core Programs solicitation. Submission of a Small proposal in response to this Dear Colleague Letter counts toward that limit (i.e., if submitting in response to this DCL, only one additional proposal (Small, Medium, or Large) may be submitted).

6. For projects involving human subjects/participants, proposers should consult both NSF and BSF policies.

7. The full proposal should indicate the proposal is to be considered under the lead agency activities by prefacing the title with "CCF-BSF:". This prefix should be placed before all other codes as described in the CCF Core Programs solicitation. For example, the full title for a submission to NSF under this DCL could be "CCF-BSF:AF:Small:Title".

8. The full proposal should be submitted by the established closing date of submission as determined by each respective agency. For NSF, this is the CCF Core Programs Small proposal deadline in November 2015. For BSF, this is the date published on the BSF website and written in the submission instructions for the program.

PEER REVIEW

NSF-BSF collaborative proposals will be reviewed alongside all other unsolicited or standard proposals received in the same competition 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.

FUNDING DECISIONS

Funding recommendations resulting from the NSF merit review process will be discussed with the partner agency (BSF). However, it is assumed that the BSF will fund all the Israelis whose U.S. collaborators are funded by the NSF, subject to the availability of funds. The lead agency (NSF) will use its usual internal procedures to determine whether a proposal will be awarded or declined. Funding decisions are subject to the availability of funds.

All proposers will be advised whether their proposal has 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.

Award letters will identify 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.

Extensions and supplements 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.