



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 21-035

Dear Colleague Letter: Special Guidelines for Submitting Collaborative Proposals under U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and The Academy of Finland (AoF) Collaborative Research Opportunities

December 23, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

The U.S. National Science Foundation's (NSF) Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE) and the Academy of Finland (AoF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Research Cooperation. The MOU provides an overarching framework to encourage collaboration between U.S. and Finnish research communities and sets out the principles by which jointly supported activities might be developed. The MOU provides for an international collaboration arrangement whereby U.S. researchers may receive funding from NSF and Finnish researchers may receive funding from AoF.

NSF and AoF have a history of collaboration to support bilateral research. This new NSF-AoF collaborative research opportunity focuses specifically upon discoveries and innovations in the areas of artificial intelligence and wireless communication technologies. Through a "lead agency model," NSF and AoF will allow proposers from both countries to collaborate to write a single proposal that will undergo a single review process at NSF.

The collaborative opportunity described in this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) remains in effect until archived.

Collaborative research proposals under this opportunity will be accepted to the Small project class of the CISE Core Programs, available at https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=505667, specifically in the areas of artificial intelligence and/or wireless communication technologies.

A close-to-final draft of the full proposal for submission to NSF, in NSF format, must be submitted to AoF via the [AoF's online services](#) at least four weeks prior to the NSF

submission. Draft proposals will only be accepted from Finnish applicants who have submitted an 'Intention to Submit' form to AoF using the template provided in the relevant AoF calls. AoF uses the close-to-final draft proposals to check the budget and plan for possible funding.

Proposals are expected to adhere to the research areas (artificial intelligence and wireless communication technologies), funding limits, and grant durations for the participating NSF programs (see website link above) and for the AoF programs from which funding is sought.

Proposals **must** represent an integrated collaborative effort between the U.S. and Finnish researchers. The proposal must be submitted to the Small Project class of the CISE Core programs by an eligible U.S. organization. Limits for U.S. researchers on the number of proposal submissions are described in the current CISE Core Programs solicitation referenced above.

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

PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

Proposals will be submitted to NSF, with a separate close-to-final draft copy submitted by the Finnish applicants to AoF four weeks prior to the NSF submission. The proposals will be reviewed by NSF in competition with other proposals received for the same funding round of the program to which the proposal is submitted, using NSF's merit review process. AoF will check that the Finnish investigator has an active and appropriate role and confirm his/her eligibility at the onset of the process but will not conduct a parallel review and will not rank proposals. AoF intends to support the Finnish effort for those projects for which the U.S. research component is funded by NSF.

There are no separate NSF funds available for this effort; proposals must compete with all other proposals submitted to the CISE Core Program competition and must succeed on the strengths of their intellectual merit and broader impacts.

DEADLINES

As the Small project class within the CISE Core Programs has moved to a "no-deadline" format, the applicable AoF timetables published in relevant funding calls at [Academy of Finland's Apply for Funding](#) link will be honored. Proposals submitted late in a given U.S. fiscal year (FY) may be held over for consideration in the following FY. In general, proposal review is completed within six months of submission.

In all cases, a close-to-final draft of the same proposal must be submitted to AoF four weeks prior to the NSF submission.

GUIDELINES

1. The proposed work submitted under a CISE-AoF collaboration must represent an integrated collaborative effort. The Project Summary and Project Description of the proposal must include a description of the collaboration, including an explanation of the role(s) of the Finnish collaborator(s) and an explanation of how the team will work together.
2. The Finnish investigator(s) must obtain a 'Confirmation of Eligibility for Funding' letter from AoF to be included in the NSF submission as a supplementary document. The instructions to obtain the letter are provided in relevant funding calls at <https://www.aka.fi/en/research-funding/apply-for-funding/calls-for-applications/>. The letter will serve as a proof of eligibility for the Finnish investigator(s) and outline the level of budget commitment from AoF subject to NSF selecting the integrated proposal for funding following established NSF merit review/selection processes.
3. The proposal must describe the intellectual merits of the proposed research, including the value of the international collaboration, and the anticipated broader impacts (including societal benefits) of the effort. As broader impacts are a review requirement for both NSF and AoF, the proposal should include relevant societal benefits as well.
4. The proposal should describe the full proposed research program, including the total U.S. and Finnish resources that will be part of the project. NSF proposers should indicate only the U.S. expenses in the NSF budget. AoF proposers should indicate only the Finnish research expenses on the AoF budget form. **The Finnish budget and budget justification must be included in the NSF proposal as a Supplementary Document.** The Budget Justification section of the NSF proposal should clearly differentiate the U.S. budget from any similar funds requested by the Finnish team and justify the full U.S. project budget. Proposals that request duplicative funding may be returned without review.
5. A close-to-final draft of the full proposal for submission to the NSF, in NSF format, must be submitted to AoF via the AoF's [online services](#) at least four weeks prior to the NSF submission. AoF will accept draft proposals only from Finnish applicants who have submitted an 'Intention to Submit' form using the template provided in the relevant AoF calls.
6. The proposal must be submitted to the Small project class of a CISE Core Program by a U.S. organization, using the NSF FastLane system (<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/>), Research.gov (<https://www.research.gov/>), or Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>). Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the standard requirements described in the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#) and comply with requirements in the CISE Core Programs solicitation (referenced above).
7. By submitting, Principal Investigators (PIs) and their organizations agree that NSF may share unattributed reviews and information pertaining to the review process with AoF.
8. Involvement in a joint international proposal will count towards the limit on the number of

submissions to the Core Programs solicitation in which an individual may participate as a PI, co-PI, or senior personnel, as specified in the Core Programs solicitation to which the proposal is submitted (for example, for FY 2021, the CISE Core Programs solicitation limits this number to two).

9. The title of the proposal should be prefixed with "NSF-AoF:" to indicate that the document is to be considered by both NSF and AoF.
10. If the proposal is submitted as part of a set of collaborative proposals, the title of the proposal should begin with "Collaborative Research:" followed by "NSF-AoF".
11. **Do not check "collaborative" proposal unless more than one U.S.-based organization will be submitting the same proposal for separate funding** (i.e., the "collaborative" check box only applies if there is more than one collaborating organization on the U.S. side, each submitting the same proposal).
12. **Finnish investigators should not be listed as co-PIs on the NSF Cover Sheet. Finnish personnel should instead be listed as Other Senior Personnel.** Listing Finnish partners as Other Senior Personnel will help ensure that NSF systems automatically request the additional documents that are required. Information on "current and pending support" is required for all personnel listed as "senior personnel."
13. Biographical sketches should be provided for Finnish partners and for the U.S. investigators and should be prepared in accordance with the standard biographical sketch format described in the [PAPPG](#).
14. For projects involving human subjects/participants or vertebrate animals, proposers should follow both NSF and AoF policies, submitting documentation to each as appropriate.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

The NSF proposal must include the documents requested in the CISE Core Programs solicitation.

In addition, the following documents must be included in CISE-AoF proposals:

1. Provide as a **Supplementary Document, a 'Confirmation of Eligibility for Funding'** letter obtained by **Finnish partner(s)** from AoF.
2. Provide as a **Supplementary Document** a copy of the proposed Finnish budget requested from AoF in English using U.S. Dollars, and a budget justification that explains the request.
3. Provide a list, as a **Single Copy Document**, of **collaborators and other affiliations** for each Senior Personnel included in a proposal, **including Finnish partners**. This list of persons with whom there is an affiliation is required for Finnish and U.S. partners to assist in the selection of reviewers. See [PAPPG](#) Chapter II.C.1.e.
4. Letters of collaboration may be included; however, they **must** comply with the requirements in [PAPPG](#) Chapter II.C.2.j.

POST AWARD 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 AoF in any reports or publications resulting from the award. Requests for changes in awards (for example, changes in scope) will be discussed by NSF and AoF before a joint decision is made.

Questions about this DCL may be directed to Murat Torlak (mtorlak@nsf.gov), Program Director in the CISE Division of Computer and Network Systems. Additionally, the NSF Office of International Science and Engineering helps to coordinate the overall engagement between NSF and AoF.

Sincerely,

Margaret Martonosi
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National Science Foundation