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NSF 22-033

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Program Solicitation **NSF 22-508**, Biodiversity on a Changing Planet

The following set of questions and answers refer to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the Biodiversity on a Changing Planet (BoCP) program solicitation **NSF 22-508**.

Before preparing a proposal for BoCP please read the current solicitation and refer to the latest Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG).

A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How can I learn more about the Biodiversity on a Changing Planet Program?
2. Can I send a short summary of my proposed idea to the BoCP program officers along with a specific question I may have related to the project idea?
3. If I have additional questions not addressed in this FAQ. Should I contact one of the listed program officers?

B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION QUESTIONS

4. BoCP aims to address grand challenges in biodiversity science. What is a grand challenge?
5. The solicitation lists some potential research areas as examples. Is the program restricted to these "themes"?
6. Is there a preference for any particular methodology or suite of methodologies?
7. If my research aligns well with existing research in one of the participating Directorates or divisional programs, how should I plan the proposal submission?
8. I am planning to submit a proposal for a project that is entirely based on analyzing already existing data. We will not be collecting any new data. Is this acceptable?
9. Is a Design track proposal required first, before submitting an Implementation track proposal?
10. Would a Design track grant proposal from a single organization (non-collaborative, with no subawards) be competitive?

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13. What is a Project Management Plan (PMP)?

14. Can the Data Management Plan be longer than 2 pages?

15. Do I need to include additional information in the Data Management Plan if the proposed work takes place in a polar region or involves marine organisms?

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E. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

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21. To which NSF division should I submit my proposal?

22. I have a question about the requirements for sections of the proposal listed in the NSF PAPPG (e.g., Budget and Budget Justification, Current and Pending Support, Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources) that are not addressed in the solicitation.

23. My proposal involves polar and/or marine field work, how should I proceed?

24. Are letters of interest/support from individuals or organizations permitted?

25. Can we deviate from the project duration mentioned in the program solicitation?

F. PI, CO-PIS, SENIOR PERSONNEL AND COLLABORATORS

26. One of our senior personnel (or PI/co-PI) is also participating on another BoCP proposal. Is this permissible?

27. Is there a limit on the number of PIs, co-PIs, or Senior Personnel on our proposal?

A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How can I learn more about the Biodiversity on a Changing Planet Program?

A full description of the BoCP program can be found in the [solicitation](#). In addition, a webinar was held on November 8, 2021 with a brief presentation followed by questions from investigators. Webinar materials (slides, recap post) are available [here](#).

2. Can I send a short summary of my proposed idea to the BoCP program officers along with a specific question I may have related to the project idea?

Yes, please send a one-page summary to biodiversity@nsf.gov. Please do not send your summary to an individual program officer. Emails that do not use biodiversity@nsf.gov will not be answered. If your question is complicated or if more information is necessary to answer your question a program officer may suggest a one-on-one conversation.

3. If I have additional questions not addressed in this FAQ. Should I contact one of the listed program officers?

We encourage you to send your question(s) to biodiversity@nsf.gov.

B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION QUESTIONS

4. BoCP aims to address grand challenges in biodiversity science. What is a grand challenge?

A grand challenge is an ambitious, difficult, but achievable goal with important and valuable impacts when achieved. Making progress on a grand challenge requires coordinated strategies and integrated collaborations from multiple disciplines to achieve impactful outcomes. The BoCP program supports projects using a comprehensive and integrative approach to understand biodiversity from a functional perspective, and it encourages the use of new technology and team science approaches.

5. The solicitation lists some potential research areas as examples. Is the program restricted to these "themes"?

No. A wide variety of proposals will be considered. Specific programmatic questions should be sent to biodiversity@nsf.gov.

6. Is there a preference for any particular methodology or suite of methodologies?

No. Your specific scientific questions related to biodiversity on a changing planet should drive the choice of cellular, organismal, ecological, evolutionary, geological, paleontological, and/or bioinformatic methods.

7. If my research aligns well with existing research in one of the participating Directorates or divisional programs, how should I plan the proposal submission?

Proposals submitted in response to the BoCP solicitation should integrate research across disciplines and be compelling across the subdisciplines spanned. Projects that are designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and those that present a vision of advances beyond existing efforts are encouraged. For input on proposal ideas, please contact biodiversity@nsf.gov.

8. I am planning to submit a proposal for a project that is entirely based on analyzing already existing data. We will not be collecting any new data. Is this acceptable?

Yes, the BoCP program welcomes proposals that address compelling research questions using existing data.

9. Is a Design track proposal required first, before submitting an Implementation track proposal?

No, submission or award of a Design track proposal is not required to participate in Implementation proposal submission.

10. Would a Design track grant proposal from a single organization (non-collaborative, with no subawards) be competitive?

Design proposals are aimed at building new teams with no prior collaborative track record. It is possible (and permissible) for a single organization to propose such an arrangement without the need for subawards to partner organizations. However, collaborative and interdisciplinary teams of scientists are considered essential to address the goals of this solicitation. To assess the potential competitiveness of a proposal, please note the solicitation-specific review criteria.

11. Are certain types of Broader Impacts activities prioritized?

All Broader Impacts activities will be evaluated according to the normal merit review criteria: the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes. The BoCP program will prioritize proposals that describe effective plans to find synergies between broader impacts and biodiversity science. Proposals including Broader Impact activities that specifically aim to increase the participation of underrepresented groups in biodiversity research must describe in the section labeled "Broader Impacts" how the work is led by, or developed and led in authentic partnership with, individuals and communities from underrepresented groups, including, for example: project leadership and research positions, conceptualization of the proposal, decision-making processes, and the interpretation and dissemination of evidence and research results. There are many resources available for planning effective and synergistic Broader Impacts activities including <https://researchinsociety.org>.

C. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

12. What is a Recruitment, Training and Mentoring Plan (RTMP)?

The RTMP is a required document for all proposals submitted to BoCP. It describes how the team will support targeted recruitment and training of undergraduate and graduate students and post-docs, including how the team will work meaningfully towards broadening participation in biodiversity science. The RTMP should describe plans to develop an equitable and inclusive environment to prepare students to develop broad hypotheses and to become well versed with interdisciplinary research and outreach. For more details, please see the [BoCP solicitation](#).

13. What is a Project Management Plan (PMP)?

The PMP is a required document for all proposals submitted to BoCP. Because BoCP projects will include multiple investigators and will be interdisciplinary, it is critical that the team has a strategy for including diverse perspectives, facilitating effective accomplishment of goals, developing leadership capacity, and fostering teamwork. The PMP describes how the BoCP team will engage and manage members, including their international partners (if any), to ensure the success. For Implementation proposals, naming a designated project manager and providing a communication plan are highly encouraged. For more details, please see the [BoCP solicitation](#).

14. Can the Data Management Plan be longer than 2 pages?

No, a maximum of two pages is allowed and must include two sections: (1) *Data Plans* and (2) *Intellectual Property Plans*.

15. Do I need to include additional information in the Data Management Plan if the proposed work takes place in a polar region or involves marine organisms?

Yes, please follow the instructions in the solicitation. If you are planning to work in a polar or marine environment, please contact biodiversity@nsf.gov prior to proposal submission and follow the solicitation specific Data Management Policy.

D. INTERNATIONAL AND OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

16. What kinds of international collaborations are supported by this program?

The program supports:

1. Proposals including only US-based institutions.
2. Proposals including only US-based institutions and international participation.
3. International Collaborative Proposals with a partnership between one or more US-based institutions and institutions supported by the Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) of Brazil, and/or the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa.

Please check the solicitation for details of how to submit the International Collaborative Proposals.

17. Can a foreign institution, as a partner or subcontractor, be financed with funds from a BoCP award?

Generally, it is expected that any non-U.S. participants will secure support from their own national funding programs. However, the [PAPPG](#) describes the situations in which NSF will support research programs and people internationally. PIs who wish to include international funding in their budget are encouraged to read the PAPPG and contact a Program Officer at biodiversity@nsf.gov.

18. Is it possible to provide funding to collaborators from non-profit organizations?

Yes, it is allowable to include funds for a non-profit organization to cover fee for service activities. Be sure that the roles and contributions of all partners are explained in the Project Management Plan. Please consult the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) for guidance on subawards or collaborative proposals https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg22_1/nsf22_1.pdf.

19. Can Federally-Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) participate in proposals to this solicitation?

FFRDCs are not eligible as proposing (lead) organizations. In general, NSF does not normally support research or education activities by scientists, engineers or educators employed by Federal agencies or FFRDCs. However, FFRDCs may, under certain circumstances, be included as subawardees to proposals to this program. BoCP will consider requests for an exception only when the other Federal agency or FFRDC can make unique contributions to the needs of researchers elsewhere. A request for an exception must provide specific detail about what unique contributions the other Federal agency or FFRDC can provide and be submitted biodiversity@nsf.gov prior to proposal submission. Please note that employees of other Federal agencies and/or FFRDCs may participate as unfunded collaborators. The PAPPG provides additional guidance https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg22_1/nsf22_1.pdf.

E. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

20. Is there a deadline?

Yes, proposals are due to NSF on March 25, 2022 by 5 p.m. submitter's local time. Please allow enough time to get all required documents uploaded in Research.gov or Grants.gov. If you are planning a submission with an international collaborative partner, please note the separate deadlines in the solicitation. The deadline for NSFC submission is March 29, 2022. The deadline for the FAPESP submission is March 30, 2022. (The deadline for the FAPESP eligibility pre-consultation is March 4, 2022.) The deadline for the NRF submission is March 31, 2022.

21. To which NSF division should I submit my proposal?

All proposals will be submitted to the Division of Environmental Biology. Submitters will find that this is the only available Unit of Consideration for submissions.

22. I have a question about the requirements for sections of the proposal listed in the NSF PAPPG (e.g., Budget and Budget Justification, Current and Pending Support, Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources) that are not addressed in the solicitation.

The BoCP solicitation addresses only the deviations from the PAPPG, including program-specific considerations for certain sections. Where deviations are not otherwise addressed in the solicitation, submissions must conform fully to the Proposal Preparation Instructions outlined in the NSF PAPPG, including all required sections of the proposal https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg22_1/nsf22_1.pdf.

23. My proposal involves polar and/or marine field work, how should I proceed?

Please send an email to biodiversity@nsf.gov as early as possible in the proposal planning process. We welcome these proposals. However, proposals centered on Polar and/or Marine habitats must be discussed prior to submission with the BoCP team for additional guidance and logistics requirements.

24. Are letters of interest/support from individuals or organizations permitted?

This program does not allow the submission of letters of endorsement. Letters of collaboration are permitted and must use the limited text in the PAPPG. Please consult the PAPPG for this distinction and for guidance on submission of letters of collaboration: https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg22_1/nsf22_1.pdf.

25. Can we deviate from the project duration mentioned in the program solicitation?

No, proposals submitted to the Design track should plan their projects over a maximum of three (3) years, and proposals submitted to the Implementation track should plan for a maximum of five (5) years for their project.

F. PI, CO-PIS, SENIOR PERSONNEL AND COLLABORATORS

26. One of our senior personnel (or PI/co-PI) is also participating on another BoCP proposal. Is this permissible?

Yes. There are no restrictions or limits on the number of proposals that a PI or co-PI can submit for consideration each year.

27. Is there a limit on the number of PIs, co-PIs, or Senior Personnel on our proposal?

There are no restrictions or limits, but the proposal cover page does limit the number to one PI and up to 4 co-PIs. Any remaining participants can be listed as Senior Personnel.