



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
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NSF 23-051

## Dear Colleague Letter: Special Guidelines for Submitting Collaborative Proposals in Cybersecurity under U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft e.V. (German Research Foundation, DFG) Collaborative Research Opportunities

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February 2, 2023

Dear Colleagues:

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft e.V. (German Research Foundation, DFG) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Research Cooperation. The MOU provides an overarching framework to encourage collaboration between U.S. and German 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 the NSF and German researchers may receive funding from DFG.

The goal of this U.S.-German collaborative research opportunity is to help reduce some of the current barriers to working internationally. Through a "lead agency model," NSF and DFG will address these issues by allowing a team of U.S. and German researchers to submit a single collaborative proposal that will undergo a single review process at the lead agency for that fiscal year, with NSF as the lead.

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

**Collaborative research proposals will be accepted to the Small Core project class of the Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace (SaTC) Program, available at**

<https://beta.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/secure-and-trustworthy-cyberspace-satc>. For German collaborators, the eligibility regulations for the "Sachbeihilfe/Research Grants Programme" apply – cf. DFG Guideline 50.01

([https://www.dfg.de/formulare/50\\_01/50\\_01\\_en.pdf](https://www.dfg.de/formulare/50_01/50_01_en.pdf)). In particular, the regulations on non-

university institutes apply and must be fulfilled by the German side on its own — cf. DFG guideline 55.01 ([https://www.dfg.de/formulare/55\\_01/](https://www.dfg.de/formulare/55_01/)).

Limits for U.S. researchers on the number of proposal submissions are described in the relevant SaTC Program solicitation referenced.

Proposals are expected to adhere to the areas of science, funding limits, and grant durations for the Small project class of the SaTC Program and DFG programs from which funding is sought. Proposals must represent an integrated collaborative effort. This document provides guidelines for the preparation, submission, review, and award of NSF-DFG collaborative research proposals.

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

## **PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION**

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Proposals will be submitted to NSF, with a separate copy submitted within one week of the NSF submission by the German applicants to DFG. The proposals will be reviewed by NSF in competition with other proposals received for the same funding round within SaTC, using NSF's merit review process. DFG will check that the German investigators have an active and appropriate role and confirm their eligibility at the onset of the process but will not conduct a parallel review and will not rank proposals. DFG intends to support the German effort for those projects whose U.S. research partner is funded by NSF.

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

## **DEADLINES**

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Neither SaTC nor DFG have submission deadlines, so proposals may be submitted at any time. In general, proposal review is completed within six months of submission. A proposer may wish to consult a program director in the relevant program about the timing of their submission.

In all cases, the same proposal must be provided to DFG (via ELAN—[https://www.dfg.de/en/research\\_funding/principles\\_dfg\\_funding/elan/index.html](https://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/principles_dfg_funding/elan/index.html)) within one week of the NSF submission.

## **GUIDELINES**

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1. The proposed work submitted under an NSF-DFG 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 German collaborator(s) and an explanation of how the team will work together.

2. The proposal must describe the intellectual merits of the proposed research, including the value of the international collaboration, and the anticipated societal benefits (broader impacts) of the effort. As broader impacts are a review requirement for both NSF and DFG, the proposal should include the relevant societal benefits.
3. The proposal should describe the full proposed research program, including the total U.S. and German resources that will be part of the project. NSF proposers should indicate only the U.S. expenses on the NSF budget form. DFG proposers should indicate only the German research expenses on the DFG budget form. The German 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 German team and justify the full U.S. project budget. Proposals that request duplicative funding may be returned without review.
4. An additional document for DFG (up to 8 pages) must be prepared and included only in the version submitted to DFG. It must contain the information required in sections 4 to 5 of the DFG research grant project description — cf. DFG guidelines 54.01 ([https://www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_01/](https://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_01/)) and 53.01 ([https://www.dfg.de/formulare/53\\_01\\_elan/](https://www.dfg.de/formulare/53_01_elan/)). This includes, among other information, the funds requested from DFG.
5. The proposal must be submitted to the Small Core project class of the SaTC Program by an eligible U.S. institution, using 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 SaTC Program solicitation (referenced above). **The German partner must submit to DFG a proposal with the identical Project Description**, with the additional information requested in step 4 above.
6. The proposal must include a Collaboration Plan that indicates how the German and U.S. components will coordinate and interact, following the structure specified for collaboration plans in the SaTC solicitation.
7. By submitting, PIs and their institutions agree that NSF may share unattributed reviews and information pertaining to the review process with DFG.
8. Involvement in a joint international proposal will count towards the limit on the number of submissions to the SaTC Program solicitation in which an individual may participate as a PI, co-PI, or Senior Personnel.
9. The title prefix of the proposal should include "NSF-DFG:" to indicate that the document is to be considered by both NSF and DFG. The remainder of the title should be

structured in accordance with the guidance contained in the relevant SaTC Program solicitation (e.g., NSF-DFG: SaTC: Core: Small: Title).

10. If the proposal is submitted as part of a set of collaborative proposals (i.e., involving more than one institution on the U.S. side), the title of the proposal must begin with "Collaborative Research:" followed by construct in step 9 (e.g., Collaborative Research: NSF-DFG: SaTC: Core: Small: Title).
11. **Do not check "collaborative" proposal unless more than one U.S.-based institution will be submitting the same proposal for separate funding** (i.e., the "collaborative" check box only applies if there is more than one collaborating institution on the U.S. side, each submitting the same proposal).
12. **German investigators should not be listed as co-PIs on the NSF Cover Sheet; German personnel should instead be listed as Other Senior Personnel.** Listing German 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 German 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 DFG policies, submitting documentation to each as appropriate.

## ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

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

In addition, the following documents must be included in NSF-DFG proposals:

1. Provide as a **Supplementary Document** a copy of the **proposed German budget** in Euros requested from DFG in English, along with a budget justification that explains the request.
2. The list of Collaborators and Other Affiliations must be separately provided for each individual identified as senior personnel on the project for both the German and U.S. partner teams. This list of persons with whom there is an affiliation is required for German and U.S. partners to assist in the selection of reviewers. See [PAPPG](#) Chapter II.D.2.h.
3. Letters of collaboration may be included following the guidance contained in [PAPPG](#) Chapter II.D.2.i.

## POST-AWARD CONSIDERATIONS

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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 DFG 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 DFG before a joint decision is made.

Questions about this DCL may be directed to Phillip Regalia ([pregalia@nsf.gov](mailto:pregalia@nsf.gov)), Program Director in the NSF Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering. Additionally, the NSF Office of International Science and Engineering helps to coordinate the overall engagement between NSF and DFG.

Sincerely,

Margaret Martonosi  
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Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering  
National Science Foundation