



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 23-135

Dear Colleague Letter: International Multilateral Partnerships for Resilient Education and Science System in Ukraine (IMPRESS-U)

August 3, 2023

Dear Colleague:

The Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) announces a new partnership with:

Estonia: Estonian Research Council (ETAG),
Latvia: Latvian Council of Science (LCS),
Lithuania: Research Council of Lithuania (LMT),
Poland: National Science Centre (NCN) and Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA),
Ukraine: National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU),
USA: National Academy of Sciences (NAS),
USA: Office of Naval Research Global (ONRG).

The goals of the partnership initiative are to: (1) support excellence in science and engineering research, education, and innovation through international collaboration and (2) promote and catalyze integration of Ukrainian researchers in the global research community.

This partnership initiative capitalizes on prior investments, bilateral agreements, and relevant activities and provides for a multilateral arrangement to enable U.S. researchers to submit international collaborative proposals to NSF. The proposals are expected to undergo a single review process at NSF and be jointly funded by participating agencies.

With this initiative, OISE invites visionary, ambitious, high quality collaborative research proposals that address scientific or technical challenges in any field of science, engineering, or education and require an international collaboration. Each proposal must engage researchers from the U.S., Ukraine, and at least one other country involved in this initiative. Priority will be given to projects that propose: (a) creative ways for enhancing efficiency and resiliency of international partnerships; (b) efficient concepts to prepare an internationally

engaged research community and technical workforce; and (c) efficient and significant contributions to build a modern, state-of-the-art research, education and innovation ecosystem in Ukraine.

Proposers are advised that all documents submitted to NSF may be shared with the agencies listed above. The collaborative opportunity described in this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) remains in effect until archived and is intended to cover a 3-year pilot phase.

OPPORTUNITY

OISE will accept EARly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER) proposals and supplemental funding requests to existing NSF awards. EAGER proposals should leverage international collaboration to support exploratory work in its early stages on untested, but potentially transformative, research ideas or approaches. Principal Investigators (PIs) of existing NSF awards may be eligible to submit a supplemental funding request to expand their project to include collaboration with international researchers. EAGER proposals must be submitted by eligible organizations (see the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG) Chapter I.E.1) and must include international collaboration as an integral part of the work. NSF encourages proposals from diverse teams. Proposals from early career investigators are especially welcome.

Scope of Research:

Any field of science, engineering, and education supported by NSF is eligible.

Preparation and Submission:

All proposals and supplemental funding requests are expected to be focused on a cutting-edge science, engineering, education, or technical innovation topic. Each research team submitting a proposal or supplemental funding request must engage researchers from the U.S., Ukraine, and at least one other country involved in this initiative. An eligible Ukrainian researcher may participate in only one submitted proposal or supplemental funding request. Ukrainian researchers may propose a long- or short-term stay at a host institution abroad and/or short-term visits to research laboratories of partner countries as feasible and appropriate. Of special interest are research teams that engage students and early career researchers.

EAGER Submissions

Complete guidance on the preparation and submission of EAGER proposals is available in [PAPPG](#) Chapter II.F.3.

EAGER proposals may only be submitted after consideration of the Concept Outline by an NSF Program Officer. The Concept Outline (PDF preferred) should not exceed two pages, list all researchers and their affiliations, briefly address the bullet points listed below, and should

be emailed to IMPRESS-U@nsf.gov. Please use the subject line "IMPRESS-U DCL: EAGER" for the email.

If selected for additional consideration, approval to submit an EAGER proposal will be sent via email from IMPRESS-U@nsf.gov.

In addition to the standard NSF PAPPG guidelines, invited proposals under this DCL should include the following:

- Proposal Title beginning with "EAGER IMPRESS-U".

Proposals must clearly and succinctly address the following:

- What is the novelty of the proposed approaches to address the science challenge and why would they work? What is the exploratory nature (for EAGERs) of the proposed projects?
- What are the proposed ways to perform research leading to resilient and efficient international partnerships? Who are the partners, and what are their contributions and roles in the project?
- What are efficient concepts to prepare an internationally engaged research workforce?
- What is the vision, strategy, and specific plans for making a significant contribution to build a modern, state-of-the-art research/education/innovation ecosystem in Ukraine? How will this serve to integrate Ukrainian researchers into the global research community?

The Project Description of the EAGER proposal is limited to eight pages and should present the full scope of work, including contributions of U.S.-based and international researchers. The PIs must make clear that the proposed activities constitute a well-integrated, collaborative project. The project description should also explain how the proposed international collaboration will enable research advances and broader impacts that go beyond what each country's teams could accomplish on their own. Per the guidance in the PAPPG, it must include clear statements as to why the project is appropriate for EAGER funding.

The project descriptions for both the international and NSF submissions must have the same title and include the same content even if proposals are submitted in different languages. For proposals to NSF:

- a. NSF requires proposers to comply with the proposal preparation requirements for EAGER proposals outlined in [PAPPG](#) Chapter II.F.3. NSF requires proposers to submit the proposal through [Research.gov](https://research.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov).
- b. The proposal to NSF should include only the U.S. expenses in the Budget and Budget Justification sections. International portions of the budget should be submitted in Supplementary Documents for information only.

- c. For proposals submitted to NSF, the full names and affiliations of foreign personnel should be listed in the Overview section of the Project Summary as "non-NSF funded collaborators." This listing is for administrative purposes and is not intended to characterize the level or value of the contribution of international research personnel to the project. *Guidance specific to "non-NSF funded collaborators" is as follows:*
 - i. Biographical Sketch - Required. The biographical information must be clearly labeled "Non-NSF Funded Collaborators" and uploaded as a single PDF file in the Other Supplementary Documents section of the proposal.
 - ii. Current and Pending Support, Results of Prior Research, and Collaborators and Other Affiliations (COA) - Not required for non-NSF-funded collaborators.

Supplemental Funding Requests

Complete guidance on the preparation and submission of supplemental funding requests is available in Chapter VI.E.5 of the [PAPPG](#).

Prior to submission of a supplemental funding request, the U.S. PI must submit a summary of the proposed work for review by NSF. The summary should not exceed two pages, list all researchers and their affiliations, and briefly address the bullet points listed above. The summary (PDF preferred) should be sent to IMPRESS-U@nsf.gov, with a CC to the award's cognizant program director. Please use the subject line "IMPRESS-U DCL: Supplement:" followed by the title of the original award and the 7-digit award number for which the supplement is requested.

If selected for additional consideration, approval to submit a supplemental funding request will be sent via email from IMPRESS-U@nsf.gov.

If invited to submit, the supplemental funding request must be submitted via Research.gov and include the following components:

- a. A summary of the proposed work that addresses the bullet points listed above and includes a list of all researchers who will participate in the research work proposed in the supplement with their full names and affiliations.
- b. A justification of the need for the supplemental funds.
- c. A budget and budget justification for the U.S. expenses only.
- d. As a supplementary document: The email from the program director providing approval for submission of the request.
- e. As a supplementary document: Budget for the international portions of the budget.
- f. As a supplementary document: Biographical Sketch(es) for the foreign personnel clearly labeled "Non-NSF Funded Collaborators."

Deadlines:

There are no deadlines for proposal submissions or supplemental funding requests under this DCL, so proposals and requests may be submitted at any time. All proposals and supplemental funding requests will be reviewed as soon as practical.

A proposer or NSF PI must contact and consult with an NSF Program Director in OISE and/or the relevant disciplinary program in advance regarding the content and timing of their submission.

Budgets:

For the U.S. effort in the EAGER proposals, PIs may request NSF funding of up to \$300,000 and an award duration of up to two years. Typical supplemental funding requests to existing NSF awards are not to exceed 20% of the original award budget.

Review Process:

Concept outlines (for EAGER proposals) and email inquiries (for supplemental funding requests) submitted by interested U.S. PIs will be reviewed internally by NSF Program Directors (PDs). Submitted EAGER proposals and supplemental funding requests (upon invitation from NSF/OISE only) will be reviewed by disciplinary NSF PDs and/or ad-hoc peer-reviewers or panels as appropriate, following NSF's merit review process, as applicable. Funding recommendations will then be developed and approved collectively by a panel consisting of NSF PDs and designated officials from all partner agencies involved. Proposers are advised that all documents submitted to NSF may be shared with the agencies listed above.

Anticipated Number of Awards:

OISE expects to make 10-15 collaborative international awards subject to availability of funds and quality of proposals.

How to apply to Partner Agencies:

Upon invitation from NSF OISE, EAGER proposals or supplemental funding requests will be submitted to NSF. In addition, a separate copy of the proposal or supplemental funding request must be submitted within one week of the NSF submission by the collaborating international applicants to their country's funding agency listed at the top of this DCL in accordance with the requirements and regulations of that agency. Details and instructions of how to submit are available at NSF

(<https://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/IntlCollaborations/Ukraine.jsp>) and at each agency's website (please see more details below).

Partner agencies will check that the international investigators have an active and appropriate role in the collaborative effort and confirm their eligibility shortly after the proposal is received. It is expected that joint funding will be provided in such a way that each country funds their own researchers. Ukrainian researchers affiliated (even temporarily and/or remotely) with institutions outside of Ukraine may be eligible to be supported by the hosting country.

Additional regulations regarding eligibility criteria may apply, PIs are recommended to consult websites of partner agencies for further details. Researchers affiliated exclusively with Ukrainian institutions may be supported by private donors and foundations through the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in accordance with National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU) eligibility rules.

Ukrainian researchers, who are part of a collaborative team applying for NSF grants within the IMPRESS-U initiative, are eligible to request funding from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS). Ukrainian PIs participating in a U.S. research project submitted to NSF must submit their request to seed@nas.edu. Details of eligibility and instructions on how to submit budget requests are available at the NAS website (<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/scientists-and-engineers-in-exile-or-displaced-seed-program>) and the NRFU website: In Ukrainian: <https://nrfu.org.ua/contests/mizhnarodni-inicziatyvy/> In English: <https://nrfu.org.ua/en/contests/international-initiatives/>.

Polish researchers, who are part of a collaborative team applying for **international supplements** to existing NSF awards within the IMPRESS-U initiative, are eligible for funding from Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA). The applications should be submitted in English to NAWA through <https://programs.nawa.gov.pl>. The call announcement, together with call documents and guidelines for applicants, is available at: In Polish: <https://nawa.gov.pl/naukowcy/impress-u> In English: <https://nawa.gov.pl/naukowcy/impress-u>.

Polish researchers, who are part of a collaborative team applying for **EAGER grants** within the IMPRESS-U initiative, are eligible for funding from National Science Centre of Poland (NCN). The applications should be submitted in English to NCN through <https://osf.opi.org.pl>. The call announcement, together with call documents and guidelines for applicants, is available at: In Polish: <https://www.ncn.gov.pl/en/ogloszenia/konkursy/impress-u> In English: <https://www.ncn.gov.pl/en/ogloszenia/konkursy/impress-u>.

Estonian researchers, who are part of a collaborative team applying for NSF grants within the IMPRESS-U initiative, are eligible to request funding from Estonian Research Council (ETAG). Proposed budget of the Estonian applicants must be filled in on the ETAG's budget form. The budget form and copy of the full proposal submitted to NSF should be sent to the ETAG point of contact after the submission of the proposal to NSF. Detailed call information (including the budget form) and national eligibility criteria are available at <https://www.etag.ee>: In Estonian: <https://etag.ee/rahastamine/partnerlus-ja-koostootetused/ukraina-toetusmeede/> In English: <https://etag.ee/en/funding/partnership-funding/partnership-funding-ukraine/>.

Lithuanian researchers, who are part of a collaborative team applying for NSF grants within the IMPRESS-U initiative, are eligible to request funding from Research Council of Lithuania

(LMT). Funding will be provided according to General rules for the competitive funding of research and dissemination projects of the Research Council of Lithuania. Any additional requirements will be published in the announcement of the Call for Proposals on the LMT website (<https://www.lmt.lt/>).

Latvian researchers, who are part of a collaborative team applying for NSF grants within the IMPRESS-U initiative, are eligible to request funding from Latvian Council of Science (LCS). Funding will be provided according to LCS rules and regulations. Detailed call information and national eligibility criteria will be published in the announcement of the Call for Proposals on the LCS website (<https://www.lzp.gov.lv>).

International researchers from any of the participating countries and Ukraine may be referred by NSF to Office of Naval Research Global (ONRG) regarding submission of a funding request to ONRG in addition to national agency funding requests of the involved partner countries. ONRG does not fund U.S. institutions or foreign Government entities. ONRG expects to award one or multiple grants under the IMPRESS-U initiative (following NSF referral and by ONRG invitation only). The number of grants and amounts of funding for each grant will depend on proposals submitted. Typical awards range from \$20,000 to up to \$150,000 per year. For more information about ONRG, please see the ONRG website at <https://www.nre.navy.mil/organization/onr-global>. The ONR Broad Agency Announcement can be found here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=343846>. Eligibility requirements are found on page 10 and full proposal guidelines start on page 15 (Questions should be directed to the ONR Global grants at ONRG.GrantProposals@mail.mil).

Questions about this DCL should be addressed to:

- Maija M. Kukla, Program Director, OISE/OD/NSF at IMPRESS-U@nsf.gov.

Questions regarding details of IMPRESS-U submission to partner agencies should be addressed to:

- Katarzyna Pietruszyńska, NAWA, e-mail: katarzyna.pietruszynska@nawa.gov.pl
- Magdalena Dobrzańska-Bzowska, NCN, e-mail: magdalena.dobrzanska-bzowska@ncn.gov.pl
- Viktoras Mongirdas, LMT, e-mail: viktoras.mongirdas@lmt.lt
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- Olga Polotska, NRFU, e-mail: polotskaoo@nrfu.org.ua
- Martina Barnas, ONRG, email: martina.m.barnas.civ@mail.mil
- Franklin Carrero-Martinez, U.S. NAS, e-mail: seed@nas.edu
- Lauma Muižniece, LCS, e-mail: lauma.muizniece@lzp.gov.lv

Useful resources for interested prospective PIs and international research teams will be provided: Interested PIs are invited to attend a webinar, which will be offered soon after the publication of this DCL. The zoom link to the webinar will be provided at <https://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/IntlCollaborations/Ukraine.jsp>.

Weekly office hours to ask your questions directly of Program Directors will be established.

Looking for partners and collaborators: a partnership portal is available at <https://www2.ncn.gov.pl/partners/impressu/>.

Sincerely,

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Susan Marqusee
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