



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
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NSF 15-090

## Dear Colleague Letter: Special Guidelines for Submitting Collaborative Proposals under the US NSF/BIO/IOS - US-Israel BSF International Collaborative Research Opportunity

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August 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 Division of Integrative and Organismal Systems (IOS) in the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) of the National Science Foundation and the US-Israel Binational Science Foundation are pleased to announce a US-Israel collaborative research opportunity. The goal is to help reduce some of the current barriers to working internationally. Through a lead agency model, NSF/BIO/IOS 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 at NSF which will be the lead agency.

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

### NSF/BIO/IOS Solicitation

Division of Integrative Organismal Systems Core Programs Solicitation ([NSF 13-600](#) or future versions replacing it)

### BSF Solicitation

Call for Proposals in the BSF-NSF program in Integrative Organismal Biology

Proposals are expected to adhere to the areas of science, funding limits, and grant durations for the BSF and NSF/BIO/IOS program 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/BIO/IOS-BSF collaborative research proposals. During an initial two-year phase (2016-2017), 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.

## Preliminary Proposal Preparation and Submission

1. Prior to submission, NSF proposers should contact [NSF-IOS-BSF@nsf.gov](mailto:NSF-IOS-BSF@nsf.gov) to discuss the research focus of the international project.
2. NSF proposers must submit a collaborative **preliminary proposal** in accordance with the standard requirements and submission dates as announced in the IOS Core Programs Solicitation (currently: [NSF 13-600](#)). The preliminary proposal must be submitted to one of the programs in IOS by the deadline announced in the IOS Core Programs Solicitation and IOS website using the NSF FastLane system.
3. BSF proposers should submit the collaborative preliminary proposal in accordance with standard requirements and submission due dates using the BSF online system.
4. The title of the preliminary proposal should be prefaced with "NSF-IOS-BSF:" to indicate that the document is to be considered under this joint funding opportunity. Biographical sketches of all senior personnel (including US and Israeli partners) should be prepared in accordance with the standard biographical sketch format identified in the IOS Core Programs Solicitation and uploaded in one PDF file. The project description should present the proposed research activity, demonstrate the need for international collaboration and describe the anticipated research and education benefits (broader impacts) of the proposed collaboration.
5. In addition, preliminary proposals submitted to NSF under international collaboration activities **must** include as a **Single Copy Document**:
  - a. Written consent that the proposals and unattributed reviews will be shared with the partner agency, BSF.
  - b. Bottom line estimates of total funding for the entire project and estimated funds from NSF/BIO/IOS and BSF respectively (a detailed budget is not required at this stage).
6. The preliminary proposal will be checked for eligibility (namely, whether the proposed research fits within the participating agencies' portfolios and whether the proposed researchers and institutions meet agency eligibility requirements). Involvement in a joint international collaborative research proposal will count towards the limit on number of submissions to the IOS Core Programs Solicitation. In a given year, an individual may participate as a Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI on no more than two preliminary proposals submitted in response to the IOS Core Programs Solicitation.
7. Based on the results of peer review, proposers may be invited to submit a full research proposal. Following review of the preliminary proposals, each agency will provide a written response to proposers on whether or not the proposed submission is invited to proceed.

## Invited Full Research Proposal Preparation and Submission

1. Proposers who are invited to submit a **full research proposal** will do so in accordance with the proposal preparation requirements of both agencies. NSF proposers must comply with the proposal preparation requirements outlined in the IOS Core Programs Solicitation. The proposal must be submitted through NSF's FastLane system (<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>) or Grants.gov (<http://grants.gov>) to the relevant IOS core program. Israeli proposers should follow directions set out by BSF and submit the joint proposal via the BSF system (<http://www.bsf.org.il/ElectronicSubmission/GatewayFormsAndGuidelines.aspx>). The proposal should include a description of the full proposed research program, research team, and the total resources including the total budget requested for the joint project.
2. For both NSF and BSF, the full proposal should indicate the proposal is to be considered under the partner agency activities by prefacing the title with "NSF-IOS-BSF:".
3. NSF proposers should only indicate the US expenses on the NSF budget form. BSF proposers should only indicate the Israeli research expenses on the BSF budget form. In the Budget Justification section of the full proposal NSF proposers should clearly differentiate and justify the full US and Israeli project budgets. Proposals that request duplicative funding may be returned.

- without review.
4. The NSF full proposal **must** include a copy of the proposed budget requested from BSF, in English, as a **Supplementary Document in addition** to those documents listed in the IOS solicitation.
  5. For projects involving human subjects/participants or vertebrate animals, proposers should consult both NSF and BSF policies.
  6. The full proposal should be submitted by the established submission deadline as determined by NSF/BIO/IOS and announced in the IOS Core Programs Solicitation.

### **Peer Review for Preliminary and Invited Full Research Proposals**

NSF/BIO/IOS-BSF collaborative proposals will be reviewed alongside all other standard preliminary and full proposals received in the same funding round or call and will not undergo a separate or special review process.

Both preliminary and invited full research proposals received at NSF will be evaluated according to the standard NSF merit review criteria of intellectual merit and broader impacts. The review will be conducted by NSF with the participation of BSF using the standard NSF merit review processes, rules and procedures. A description of the NSF merit review process is provided on the NSF merit review website at: <http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/meritreview/>.

### **Funding Decisions**

All proposers will be advised whether their proposals have 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.

The funding recommendations will be discussed between the partner agencies. Each agency will use its usual internal procedures to determine whether a proposal submitted to it will be awarded or declined. Each agency reserves the right to fund their country's investigators, regardless of the partner agency's funding decision. Funding decisions may be subject to the availability of funds. Each agency will notify the proposer 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.

### **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 BSF in any reports, presentations or publications arising from the award.

Extension and supplement requests 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 the other funding agency before a mutual decision is reached.