

Molecular Foundations for Biotechnology (MFB)

Partnerships to Transform the Industries of the Future

PROGRAM SOLICITATION

NSF 21-540



National Science Foundation

Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences
Division of Chemistry

Letter of Intent Due Date(s) (required) (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

January 14, 2021

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

March 16, 2021

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES

Any proposal submitted in response to this solicitation should be submitted in accordance with the revised *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) (NSF 20-1), which is effective for proposals submitted, or due, on or after June 1, 2020.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

General Information

Program Title:

Molecular Foundations for Biotechnology (MFB)
Partnerships to Transform the Industries of the Future

Synopsis of Program:

This initiative calls for fundamentally new approaches in chemistry to drive new directions in biotechnology, an important Industry of the Future (IoF). Collaborative high risk/high reward projects are sought; the research must involve innovative chemistry.

A multi-year campaign is envisioned (contingent on availability of funding), targeting broad annual themes. This year's solicitation calls for synergistic scientific partnerships grounded in the principles of synthetic, physical organic and molecular recognition chemistry creating novel chemical biology tools to drive innovations in biotechnology. The focus is on the development and deployment of fundamentally new techniques to modify the structure, function and/or fate of proteins interacting with small molecules for important applications in biotechnology.

Cognizant Program Officer(s):

Please note that the following information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.

- Tingyu Li, telephone: (703) 292-4949, email: tli@nsf.gov
- Herman O. Sintim, telephone: (703) 292-7244, email: hsintim@nsf.gov
- Kelsey D. Cook, telephone: (703) 292-7490, email: kcook@nsf.gov

Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):

- 47.049 --- Mathematical and Physical Sciences

Award Information

Anticipated Type of Award: Standard Grant or Continuing Grant

Estimated Number of Awards: 2 to 4

The number of awards will depend on the availability of funds and the quality of the proposals.

Anticipated Funding Amount: \$6,000,000

Anticipated funding amount is pending availability of funds

Eligibility Information

Who May Submit Proposals:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) - Two- and four-year IHEs (including community colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the US, acting on behalf of their faculty members. Special Instructions for International Branch Campuses of US IHEs: If the proposal includes funding to be provided to an international branch campus of a US institution of higher education (including through use of subawards and consultant arrangements), the proposer must explain the benefit(s) to the project of performance at the international branch campus, and justify why the project activities cannot be performed at the US campus.

Who May Serve as PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

There are no restrictions or limits.

Limit on Number of Proposals per PI or Co-PI: 1

An individual may participate (as PI, co-PI, senior personnel or funded partner) on at most one project team submitting to this solicitation. In the event that an individual exceeds this limit, proposals will be accepted based on earliest date and time of proposal submission, i.e., the first proposal will be accepted, and the remainder will be returned without review. There are no eligibility restrictions on unfunded partners, including unfunded collaborators.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

- **Letters of Intent:** Submission of Letters of Intent is required. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.
- **Preliminary Proposal Submission:** Not required
- **Full Proposals:**
 - Full Proposals submitted via FastLane: *NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) guidelines apply. The complete text of the PAPPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg.
 - Full Proposals submitted via Grants.gov: *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov* guidelines apply (Note: The *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide* is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide).

B. Budgetary Information

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:**

Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.
- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:**

Not Applicable
- **Other Budgetary Limitations:**

Not Applicable

C. Due Dates

- **Letter of Intent Due Date(s) (required)** (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

January 14, 2021
- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

March 16, 2021

Proposal Review Information Criteria

Merit Review Criteria:

National Science Board approved criteria. Additional merit review criteria apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

Award Administration Information

Award Conditions:

Additional award conditions apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

Reporting Requirements:

Standard NSF reporting requirements apply.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This solicitation will support teams of researchers conducting chemistry-led, synergistic collaborative studies in the area of small molecule-protein interactions that are potentially foundations of new biotechnology. Chemistry lies at the heart of many of the challenges confronting burgeoning biotechnology industries, and yet meeting those challenges requires varied expertise, as well as the perspective to facilitate translation of solutions into the Industries of the Future. The specific focus areas for this solicitation are described in the Program Description.

The Division of Chemistry interprets "partnerships" broadly. Such partnerships must be led by an Institution of Higher Education (IHE). Non-profit, non-academic research organizations may be funded partners. Additional unfunded partners may include government agencies (including national labs), for-profit organizations, and international organizations. Partnerships will enable dexterous, effective, and potentially transformative research targeting those challenges, while building a workforce trained at the relevant technical interfaces. While not required, engagement of industrial partners is encouraged. Project-related partner interactions can take many forms, including active collaborations and bidirectional visits, engaging industrial scientists in the academic labs, and student or postdoctoral internships in industrial or government labs.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This solicitation calls for synergistic scientific teams grounded in the principles of synthetic, physical organic and molecular recognition chemistry to develop novel chemical biology tools that drive innovations in biotechnology. The focus is on the development and deployment of fundamentally new techniques to modify the structure, function and/or fate of proteins with small molecules for important applications in biotechnology. Specifically, the following topics are targeted in this solicitation:

- Development of novel bioorthogonal chemistry that can be used to study protein structure and function in complex biological environments.
- Highly innovative methods for the selective labeling of (i) specific domains or motifs in proteins; (ii) specific classes of proteins based on activity class or active site architecture (e.g. creative activity-based protein profiling) or (iii) proteins in specific cellular compartments.
- Creative methods that use small molecules to alter the fate of proteins, for example, via targeted protein degradation beyond conventional bifunctional probe-based approaches.

Proposals directed at the synthesis of specific enzyme inhibitors or focused on medicinal chemistry are not appropriate for this solicitation. Similarly, projects in the areas of directed enzyme evolution and biocatalysis are not responsive to this solicitation.

These research partnerships also provide rich opportunities for professional training, and workforce development. University-based opportunities can be augmented with opportunities for internships or similar opportunities for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers to work in non-academic settings for up to three months per year.

While these research partnerships can include researchers from many sectors, the NSF funds will be used to support researchers affiliated with IHEs and non-profit, non-academic organizations. No awards or subawards will be made to government labs (including national labs), for-profit organizations, or international organizations. NSF funding can be used for university research/education activities and may support activities of faculty and their students and research associates in the for-profit, government laboratory, or international setting.

If any for-profit partners are involved in the proposed project, all partners should agree in advance how intellectual property (IP) rights will be handled. A signed partnership agreement on IP, addressing both publication and patent rights, must be submitted to NSF prior to the issuance of an award. NSF will review this agreement to ensure that the graduation of students will not be unduly affected. NSF is not responsible for the agreement reached nor the IP information exchanged between partners.

There is no maximum or minimum number of partners or researchers. Proposers are invited to construct their partnership consistent with the goals of the project and the resources available. The proposal should make a compelling case for the research project and the partnership. Partnerships involving more than one funded organization may use either method for submission of collaborative proposals described in PAPPG Chapter II.D.3, i.e., single proposal with subawards or simultaneous submission of proposals from different organizations.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

In FY 2021, the NSF Division of Chemistry anticipates funding up to four awards, each up to \$1,500,000 (total costs) over three years. Estimated program budget, number of awards and average award size/duration are subject to the availability of funds and the quality of the proposals.

IV. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Who May Submit Proposals:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) - Two- and four-year IHEs (including community colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the US, acting on behalf of their faculty members. Special Instructions for International Branch Campuses of US IHEs: If the proposal includes funding to be provided to an international branch campus of a US institution of higher education (including through use of subawards and consultant arrangements), the proposer must explain the benefit(s) to the project of performance at the international branch campus, and justify why the project activities cannot be performed at the US campus.

Who May Serve as PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

There are no restrictions or limits.

Limit on Number of Proposals per PI or Co-PI: 1

An individual may participate (as PI, co-PI, senior personnel or funded partner) on at most one project team submitting to this solicitation. In the event that an individual exceeds this limit, proposals will be accepted based on earliest date and time of proposal submission, i.e., the first proposal will be accepted, and the remainder will be returned without review. There are no eligibility restrictions on unfunded partners, including unfunded collaborators.

V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Letters of Intent (*required*):

The letter of intent consists of two pages, which must include the following elements

- Project title
- List of project partners (PI, co-PI(s), senior personnel, non-academic partners), their affiliation(s), and their contribution to the proposed MFB project
- Outline of the proposed project

- Brief statements addressing the additional review criteria
- Brief statement clarifying any potential overlap between the proposed MFB project and current Federal funding

Note that submission of a Letter of Intent by the posted deadline date is required. Submitted proposals that do not correspond to a timely Letter of Intent will be returned without review.

Letter of Intent Preparation Instructions:

When submitting a Letter of Intent through FastLane in response to this Program Solicitation please note the conditions outlined below:

- Submission by an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) is not required when submitting Letters of Intent.
- Submission of multiple Letters of Intent is not permitted

Full Proposal Preparation Instructions: Proposers may opt to submit proposals in response to this Program Solicitation via FastLane or Grants.gov.

- Full proposals submitted via FastLane: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG). The complete text of the PAPPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg. Paper copies of the PAPPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-8134 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov. Proposers are reminded to identify this program solicitation number in the program solicitation block on the NSF Cover Sheet For Proposal to the National Science Foundation. Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay processing.
- Full proposals submitted via Grants.gov: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation via Grants.gov should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov*. The complete text of the *NSF Grants.gov Application Guide* is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: (https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide). To obtain copies of the Application Guide and Application Forms Package, click on the Apply tab on the Grants.gov site, then click on the Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Application Instructions link and enter the funding opportunity number, (the program solicitation number without the NSF prefix) and press the Download Package button. Paper copies of the Grants.gov Application Guide also may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-8134 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov.

In determining which method to utilize in the electronic preparation and submission of the proposal, please note the following:

Collaborative Proposals. All collaborative proposals submitted as separate submissions from multiple organizations must be submitted via FastLane. PAPPG Chapter II.D.3 provides additional information on collaborative proposals.

See PAPPG Chapter II.C.2 for guidance on the required sections of a full research proposal submitted to NSF. Please note that the proposal preparation instructions provided in this program solicitation may deviate from the PAPPG instructions.

The following information supplements the guidelines and requirements in the NSF PAPPG:

Proposal Titles: Proposal titles must indicate the MFB program, followed by a colon, then the title of the project. For example, an MFB proposal title would be **MFB: Title**. Titles of collaborative proposals arranged as separate submissions from multiple organizations should be prepared as above, but should also include "Collaborative Research" followed by a colon at the beginning of the title of the project. For example, the title of each proposal for a collaborative set of proposals would be **Collaborative Research: MFB: Title**.

Project Description:

Describe the proposed project activities in up to 15 pages. The Project Description must include the following **subsections** specifically labeled as below.

Proposals that fail to include one or more of these sections will be returned without review, without exception.

- Research Description:** This is the intellectual heart of the Project Description. The Research Description section must describe the rationale and approach of the MFB research. It should describe the challenges that drive the research and guiding hypotheses or approaches. This section should describe major tasks, the primary researcher and organization responsible for each task, and anticipated key goals or milestones.
- Partnership and Collaboration Plan:** This section should summarize how the project partnership is appropriate to the project goals, the contribution(s) of each partner, and how the leadership will assure effective collaboration. The plan should identify organizational responsibilities and how the project will be managed, including approaches for meeting project goals.
- Broader Impacts:** This section should discuss the education and training opportunities available through the project, the potential impact on future biotechnology, and any other broader impacts.

Supplementary Documents

1. Biographical Sketches for Unfunded Partners

Researchers who will be involved with the conduct of the research but not funded by the NSF award (including partners from for-profit organizations or government laboratories) will provide a Biographical Sketch in the NSF-approved format described in the PAPPG.

2. Data Management Plan (required):

Proposals must include a Supplementary Document of no more than two pages labeled "Partnership Data Management Plan." This Supplementary Document should describe how the proposal will conform to NSF policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and *explicitly describe how the data management plan will support the partnership and its goals*. For additional information see <https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp>.

3. Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan (if applicable):

Each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers must include, as a Supplementary Document, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals, *including mentoring or professional development opportunities provided by partners*. In no more than one page, the mentoring plan must describe the mentoring that will be provided to all postdoctoral researchers supported by the project, irrespective of whether they reside at the submitting organization, any subawardee organization, or at any organization participating in a simultaneously submitted collaborative project. Please be

advised that if required, FastLane will not permit submission of a proposal that is missing a Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan. See [PAPPG Chapter II.C.2j](#) for further information about the implementation of this requirement.

4. Letters of Collaboration

Letters from unfunded members of the partnership, using the format described in the PAPPG. Details of each partner's contribution to the proposed work should be fully described in the Project Description and/or the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section. Note that letters of support are not appropriate.

Single Copy Documents:

A list of Project Personnel and Partner Organizations (required). Provide current, accurate information for all personnel and organizations involved in the project. NSF staff will use this information in the merit review process to manage reviewer selection. The list **must** include all PIs, co-PIs, Senior Personnel, paid/unpaid Partners or Collaborators. This list should be numbered and include (in this order) Full name, all Affiliation(s), and Role in the project, with each item separated by a semi-colon. Each person listed should start a new numbered line. For example:

1. Mary Smith; XYZ University; PI
2. Javier Diaz; XYZ University; co-PI
3. Robert Brown; XYZ University; co-PI
4. Cheng Xian; PQR University; senior personnel
5. Susan White; DEF Corporation; Partner (unpaid)
6. Thema Gbeho; JKL LLC; Partner (unpaid)
7. Jonathon Green; NOP University, unpaid collaborator

Collaborators and Other Affiliations Information: Proposers should follow the guidance specified in [Chapter II.C.1.e](#) of the NSF PAPPG. Grants.gov Users: The COA information must be provided through use of the COA template and uploaded as a PDF attachment.

Note that the list of Project Personnel and Partner Institutions is collected by the project lead and entered as a Single Copy Document. The Collaborators and Other Affiliations are entered for each funded participant within each proposal. Single Copy Documents are available only to NSF staff.

B. Budgetary Information

Cost Sharing:

Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.

C. Due Dates

- **Letter of Intent Due Date(s) (required)** (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

January 14, 2021

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

March 16, 2021

D. FastLane/Research.gov/Grants.gov Requirements

For Proposals Submitted Via FastLane or Research.gov:

To prepare and submit a proposal via FastLane, see detailed technical instructions available at: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/newstan.htm>. To prepare and submit a proposal via Research.gov, see detailed technical instructions available at: https://www.research.gov/research-portal/appmanager/base/desktop?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=research_node_display&_nodePath=/researchGov/Service/Desktop/ProposalPreparationandSubmission.html. For FastLane or Research.gov user support, call the FastLane and Research.gov Help Desk at 1-800-673-6188 or e-mail fastlane@nsf.gov or rgov@nsf.gov. The FastLane and Research.gov Help Desk answers general technical questions related to the use of the FastLane and Research.gov systems. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this funding opportunity.

For Proposals Submitted Via Grants.gov:

Before using Grants.gov for the first time, each organization must register to create an institutional profile. Once registered, the applicant's organization can then apply for any federal grant on the Grants.gov website. Comprehensive information about using Grants.gov is available on the Grants.gov Applicant Resources webpage: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html>. In addition, the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide (see link in Section V.A) provides instructions regarding the technical preparation of proposals via Grants.gov. For Grants.gov user support, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or by email: support@grants.gov. The Grants.gov Contact Center answers general technical questions related to the use of Grants.gov. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this solicitation.

Submitting the Proposal: Once all documents have been completed, the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must submit the application to Grants.gov and verify the desired funding opportunity and agency to which the application is submitted. The AOR must then sign and submit the application to Grants.gov. The completed application will be transferred to the NSF FastLane system for further processing.

Proposers that submitted via FastLane or Research.gov may use Research.gov to verify the status of their submission to NSF. For proposers that submitted via Grants.gov, until an application has been received and validated by NSF, the Authorized Organizational Representative may check the status of an application on Grants.gov. After proposers have received an e-mail notification from NSF, Research.gov should be used to check the status of an application.

VI. NSF PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Proposals received by NSF are assigned to the appropriate NSF program for acknowledgement and, if they meet NSF requirements, for review. All proposals are carefully reviewed by a scientist, engineer, or educator serving as an NSF Program Officer, and usually by three to ten other persons outside NSF either as *ad hoc* reviewers, panelists, or both, who are experts in the particular fields represented by the proposal. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with oversight of the review process. Proposers are invited to suggest names of persons they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal and/or persons they would prefer not review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process at the Program Officer's discretion. Submission of such names, however, is optional. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts of interest with the proposal. In addition, Program Officers may obtain comments from site visits before recommending final action on proposals. Senior NSF staff further review recommendations for awards. A flowchart that depicts the entire NSF proposal and award process (and associated timeline) is included in PAPPG Exhibit III-1.

A comprehensive description of the Foundation's merit review process is available on the NSF website at: https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/.

Proposers should also be aware of core strategies that are essential to the fulfillment of NSF's mission, as articulated in *Building the Future: Investing in Discovery and Innovation - NSF Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2018 – 2022*. These strategies are integrated in the program planning and implementation process, of which proposal review is one part. NSF's mission is particularly well-implemented through the integration of research and education and broadening participation in NSF programs, projects, and activities.

One of the strategic objectives in support of NSF's mission is to foster integration of research and education through the programs, projects, and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions must recruit, train, and prepare a diverse STEM workforce to advance the frontiers of science and participate in the U.S. technology-based economy. NSF's contribution to the national innovation ecosystem is to provide cutting-edge research under the guidance of the Nation's most creative scientists and engineers. NSF also supports development of a strong science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce by investing in building the knowledge that informs improvements in STEM teaching and learning.

NSF's mission calls for the broadening of opportunities and expanding participation of groups, institutions, and geographic regions that are underrepresented in STEM disciplines, which is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

A. Merit Review Principles and Criteria

The National Science Foundation strives to invest in a robust and diverse portfolio of projects that creates new knowledge and enables breakthroughs in understanding across all areas of science and engineering research and education. To identify which projects to support, NSF relies on a merit review process that incorporates consideration of both the technical aspects of a proposed project and its potential to contribute more broadly to advancing NSF's mission "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes." NSF makes every effort to conduct a fair, competitive, transparent merit review process for the selection of projects.

1. Merit Review Principles

These principles are to be given due diligence by PIs and organizations when preparing proposals and managing projects, by reviewers when reading and evaluating proposals, and by NSF program staff when determining whether or not to recommend proposals for funding and while overseeing awards. Given that NSF is the primary federal agency charged with nurturing and supporting excellence in basic research and education, the following three principles apply:

- All NSF projects should be of the highest quality and have the potential to advance, if not transform, the frontiers of knowledge.
- NSF projects, in the aggregate, should contribute more broadly to achieving societal goals. These "Broader Impacts" may be accomplished through the research itself, through activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. The project activities may be based on previously established and/or innovative methods and approaches, but in either case must be well justified.
- Meaningful assessment and evaluation of NSF funded projects should be based on appropriate metrics, keeping in mind the likely correlation between the effect of broader impacts and the resources provided to implement projects. If the size of the activity is limited, evaluation of that activity in isolation is not likely to be meaningful. Thus, assessing the effectiveness of these activities may best be done at a higher, more aggregated, level than the individual project.

With respect to the third principle, even if assessment of Broader Impacts outcomes for particular projects is done at an aggregated level, PIs are expected to be accountable for carrying out the activities described in the funded project. Thus, individual projects should include clearly stated goals, specific descriptions of the activities that the PI intends to do, and a plan in place to document the outputs of those activities.

These three merit review principles provide the basis for the merit review criteria, as well as a context within which the users of the criteria can better understand their intent.

2. Merit Review Criteria

All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two National Science Board approved merit review criteria. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

The two merit review criteria are listed below. **Both** criteria are to be given **full consideration** during the review and decision-making processes; each criterion is necessary but neither, by itself, is sufficient. Therefore, proposers must fully address both criteria. (PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.d(i) contains additional information for use by proposers in development of the Project Description section of the proposal). Reviewers are strongly encouraged to review the criteria, including PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.d(i), prior to the review of a proposal.

When evaluating NSF proposals, reviewers will be asked to consider what the proposers want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful. These issues apply both to the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions. To that end, reviewers will be asked to evaluate all proposals against two criteria:

- **Intellectual Merit:** The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge; and
- **Broader Impacts:** The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

The following elements should be considered in the review for both criteria:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to
 - a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and
 - b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the United States; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education.

Proposers are reminded that reviewers will also be asked to review the Data Management Plan and the Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan, as appropriate.

Additional Solicitation Specific Review Criteria

- Potential for significant impact in chemistry, including chemical biology
- Potential for significant impact in biotechnology
- Likely synergy and effectiveness of the proposed partnership in meeting the goals of the proposed project

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation will be reviewed by Ad hoc Review and/or Panel Review.

Reviewers will be asked to evaluate proposals using two National Science Board approved merit review criteria and, if applicable, additional program specific criteria. A summary rating and accompanying narrative will generally be completed and submitted by each reviewer and/or panel. The Program Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation.

After scientific, technical and programmatic review and consideration of appropriate factors, the NSF Program Officer recommends to the cognizant Division Director whether the proposal should be declined or recommended for award. NSF strives to be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. Large or particularly complex proposals or proposals from new awardees may require additional review and processing time. The time interval begins on the deadline or target date, or receipt date, whichever is later. The interval ends when the Division Director acts upon the Program Officer's recommendation.

After programmatic approval has been obtained, the proposals recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Division of Grants and Agreements for review of business, financial, and policy implications. After an administrative review has occurred, Grants and Agreements Officers perform the processing and issuance of a grant or other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants and Agreements Officer may make commitments, obligations or awards on behalf of NSF or authorize the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of NSF should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with a NSF Program Officer. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants and Agreements Officer does so at their own risk.

Once an award or declination decision has been made, Principal Investigators are provided feedback about their proposals. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers or any reviewer-identifying information, are sent to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Officer. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Notification of the Award

Notification of the award is made to *the submitting organization* by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Principal Investigator. (See Section VI.B. for additional information on the review process.)

B. Award Conditions

An NSF award consists of: (1) the award notice, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the proposal referenced in the award notice; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions

(GC-1)*; or Research Terms and Conditions* and (5) any announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award notice. Cooperative agreements also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Financial and Administrative Terms and Conditions (CA-FATC) and the applicable Programmatic Terms and Conditions. NSF awards are electronically signed by an NSF Grants and Agreements Officer and transmitted electronically to the organization via e-mail.

*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Website at https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award_conditions.jsp?org=NSF. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-8134 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov.

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the NSF *Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) Chapter VII, available electronically on the NSF Website at https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg.

Special Award Conditions:

If any for-profit partners are involved in the proposed project, all partners should agree in advance how intellectual property (IP) rights will be handled. A signed partnership agreement on IP, addressing both publication and patent rights, must be submitted to NSF prior to the issuance of an award. NSF will review this agreement to ensure that the graduation of students will not be unduly affected. NSF is not responsible for the agreement reached nor the IP information exchanged between partners.

C. Reporting Requirements

For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the Principal Investigator must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer no later than 90 days prior to the end of the current budget period. (Some programs or awards require submission of more frequent project reports). No later than 120 days following expiration of a grant, the PI also is required to submit a final project report, and a project outcomes report for the general public.

Failure to provide the required annual or final project reports, or the project outcomes report, will delay NSF review and processing of any future funding increments as well as any pending proposals for all identified PIs and co-PIs on a given award. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

PIs are required to use NSF's electronic project-reporting system, available through Research.gov, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. Such reports provide information on accomplishments, project participants (individual and organizational), publications, and other specific products and impacts of the project. Submission of the report via Research.gov constitutes certification by the PI that the contents of the report are accurate and complete. The project outcomes report also must be prepared and submitted using Research.gov. This report serves as a brief summary, prepared specifically for the public, of the nature and outcomes of the project. This report will be posted on the NSF website exactly as it is submitted by the PI.

More comprehensive information on NSF Reporting Requirements and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) Chapter VII, available electronically on the NSF Website at https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pappg.

VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Please note that the program contact information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- Tingyu Li, telephone: (703) 292-4949, email: tli@nsf.gov
- Herman O. Sintim, telephone: (703) 292-7244, email: hsintim@nsf.gov
- Kelsey D. Cook, telephone: (703) 292-7490, email: kcook@nsf.gov

For questions related to the use of FastLane or Research.gov, contact:

- FastLane and Research.gov Help Desk: 1-800-673-6188
- FastLane Help Desk e-mail: fastlane@nsf.gov.
- Research.gov Help Desk e-mail: rgov@nsf.gov

For questions relating to Grants.gov contact:

- Grants.gov Contact Center: If the Authorized Organizational Representatives (AOR) has not received a confirmation message from Grants.gov within 48 hours of submission of application, please contact via telephone: 1-800-518-4726; e-mail: support@grants.gov.

IX. OTHER INFORMATION

The NSF website provides the most comprehensive source of information on NSF Directorates (including contact information), programs and funding opportunities. Use of this website by potential proposers is strongly encouraged. In addition, "NSF Update" is an information-delivery system designed to keep potential proposers and other interested parties apprised of new NSF funding opportunities and publications, important changes in proposal and award policies and procedures, and upcoming NSF *Grants Conferences*. Subscribers are informed through e-mail or the user's Web browser each time new publications are issued that match their identified interests. "NSF Update" also is available on [NSF's website](#).

Grants.gov provides an additional electronic capability to search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities. NSF funding opportunities may be accessed via this mechanism. Further information on Grants.gov may be obtained at <https://www.grants.gov>.

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NSF funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. It does this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 2,000 colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, businesses, informal science organizations and other research organizations throughout the US. The Foundation accounts for about one-fourth of Federal support to academic institutions for basic research.

NSF receives approximately 55,000 proposals each year for research, education and training projects, of which approximately 11,000 are funded. In addition, the Foundation receives several thousand applications for graduate and postdoctoral fellowships. The agency operates no laboratories itself but does support National Research Centers, user facilities, certain oceanographic vessels and Arctic and Antarctic research stations. The Foundation also supports cooperative research between universities and industry, US participation in international scientific and engineering efforts, and educational activities at every academic level.

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED) provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities to work on NSF-supported projects. See the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* Chapter II.E.6 for instructions regarding preparation of these types of proposals.

The National Science Foundation has Telephonic Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing impairments to communicate with the Foundation about NSF programs, employment or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-5090 and (800) 281-8749, FIRS at (800) 877-8339.

The National Science Foundation Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111.

The National Science Foundation promotes and advances scientific progress in the United States by competitively awarding grants and cooperative agreements for research and education in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

To get the latest information about program deadlines, to download copies of NSF publications, and to access abstracts of awards, visit the NSF Website at <https://www.nsf.gov>

- **Location:** 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314
- **For General Information** (NSF Information Center): (703) 292-5111
- **TDD (for the hearing-impaired):** (703) 292-5090
- **To Order Publications or Forms:**
 - Send an e-mail to: nsfpubs@nsf.gov
 - or telephone: (703) 292-8134
- **To Locate NSF Employees:** (703) 292-5111

PRIVACY ACT AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENTS

The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; and project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the proposal review process; to proposer institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies or other entities needing information regarding applicants or nominees as part of a joint application review process, or in order to coordinate programs or policy; and to another Federal agency, court, or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See [System of Record Notices](#), NSF-50, "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," and NSF-51, "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records." Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0058. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate and any other aspect of this

collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to:

Suzanne H. Plimpton
Reports Clearance Officer
Office of the General Counsel
National Science Foundation
Alexandria, VA 22314

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