

NSF EPSCoR PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES AND CHANGES

Denise Barnes, Head, NSF EPSCoR

Kelvin Chu, Program Director, NSF EPSCoR

PD/PA Meeting

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PROGRAMS

- Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) Track-1
 - FY 2016
- RII Track-2
 - FY 2015 RII Track-2 Focused EPSCoR Collaborations competition (NSF 15-517)



RII Track-1

- Letter of Intent (LOI) required
- Baseline data
- Formalized guidance on governance
- Emphasis on intellectual merit of research
- Number of EPSCoR review criteria decreased (10 to 5)



Baseline data

- Baseline data needed for merit review and required at beginning of award
 - Improve RII metrics at NSF EPSCoR program level
- Table B (participants)
 - Demographics baseline is first year of project data
- Table E (outputs)
 - Papers, proposals, patents for 3 years prior to award
 - Total number of:
 - Publications in research areas covered by the RII Track-1 project
 - Proposals
 - submitted to NSF (and \$ requested)
 - funded by NSF (and \$ awarded)
 - Patents awarded, pending, and licensed



Governance

- PD is the PI
- PD is from the submitting institution
- PD does not chair, co-chair, or vote on Jurisdictional Steering Committee
- RII participants do not serve on Steering Committees of other jurisdictions



Merit Review Criteria

- National Science Board (NSB) Criteria:
 - Intellectual Merit
 - Broader Impacts
- Solicitation specific
 - Jurisdictional Impacts
 - Diversity
 - Communication and Dissemination
 - Sustainability of Project Activities
 - Project Management and Evaluation



Intellectual Merit

- Potential to advance knowledge
- Potentially transformative concepts
 - Is the plan based on a *sound rationale*?
 - Is there a mechanism to *assess success*?
 - How *well qualified* is the individual, team, or institution to conduct the proposed activities?
 - *Prior accomplishments* of the PIs/participants
 - Are there *adequate resources*?



Broader Impacts

- “NSF project should contribute broadly to achieving societal goals”
- Broader Impacts may be accomplished through
 - The research itself
 - Activities directly related to research projects
 - Activities supported by the project
- <http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/publications/2011/meritreviewcriteria.pdf>



Jurisdictional Impacts

- Alignment of activities with research and S&T plan
- Potential impact on research capacity
- Integration among shared facilities and partners
- How do activities improve:
 - Research competitiveness, workforce, education, and innovation?
 - Advancement of innovation and economic development
 - Promotion of organizational connections (jurisdictions, schools, private, public)
 - How do partnerships and collaborations advance goals?



Diversity

- Broaden participation of:
 - Women and underrepresented minorities (URM)
 - Persons with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, rural, and/or first generation college students
 - Institutions (including MSI, HBCU, TCU, PUI)
- Significant and sustained impact
- Novel approaches
- Diversity of participants, leadership, advisory boards



Communication and Dissemination

- Sharing of data and information among partners and participants
- Collection and dissemination of results to: NSF, science community, public
- Novel or innovative approaches for communicating research (and other) results
- Curation and dissemination of data/samples



Sustainability Plan

- Foster and sustain programs in long-term
 - Partner contributions
 - Goals and milestones for extramural funding
 - Sustainability of partnerships and collaborations



Project Management and Evaluation:

- Management structure
- Role and interactions with leadership team
- Vision, experience, and capacity to manage
- EPSCoR Steering Committee / external advisors
- Measure outputs and outcomes across all elements
- Appropriateness of metrics and milestones
- Formative and summative evaluation to assess status, impacts, and directions
- ***Baselines for proposed targets, outcomes, research***



RII Track-1 Proposals

- Research!
 - Core of the proposal is the Intellectual Merit of the research
- Read/follow the solicitation
 - Project description elements
 - Keep merit review criteria in mind
- Write to the reviewers/panel
 - Provide information that experts in field need to judge the proposed research
 - Avoid jargon that complicates review by broad audience
 - Describe research methods, tools, approaches
 - Emphasize unique, novel, or transformative techniques, methods
 - Demonstrate integration of project elements



RII Track-1 (+)

- These are not renewals - contingency planning needed!
 - What if declined?
 - Which activities will continue?
 - Plan for incorporating feedback and resubmission
- If awarded
 - Timing of Strategic Planning (all key participants – also NSF)
 - Incorporating feedback and Programmatic Terms and Conditions (PTCs) into Strategic Planning
 - Managing phase out of any current RII Track-1



Observations from FY 2015

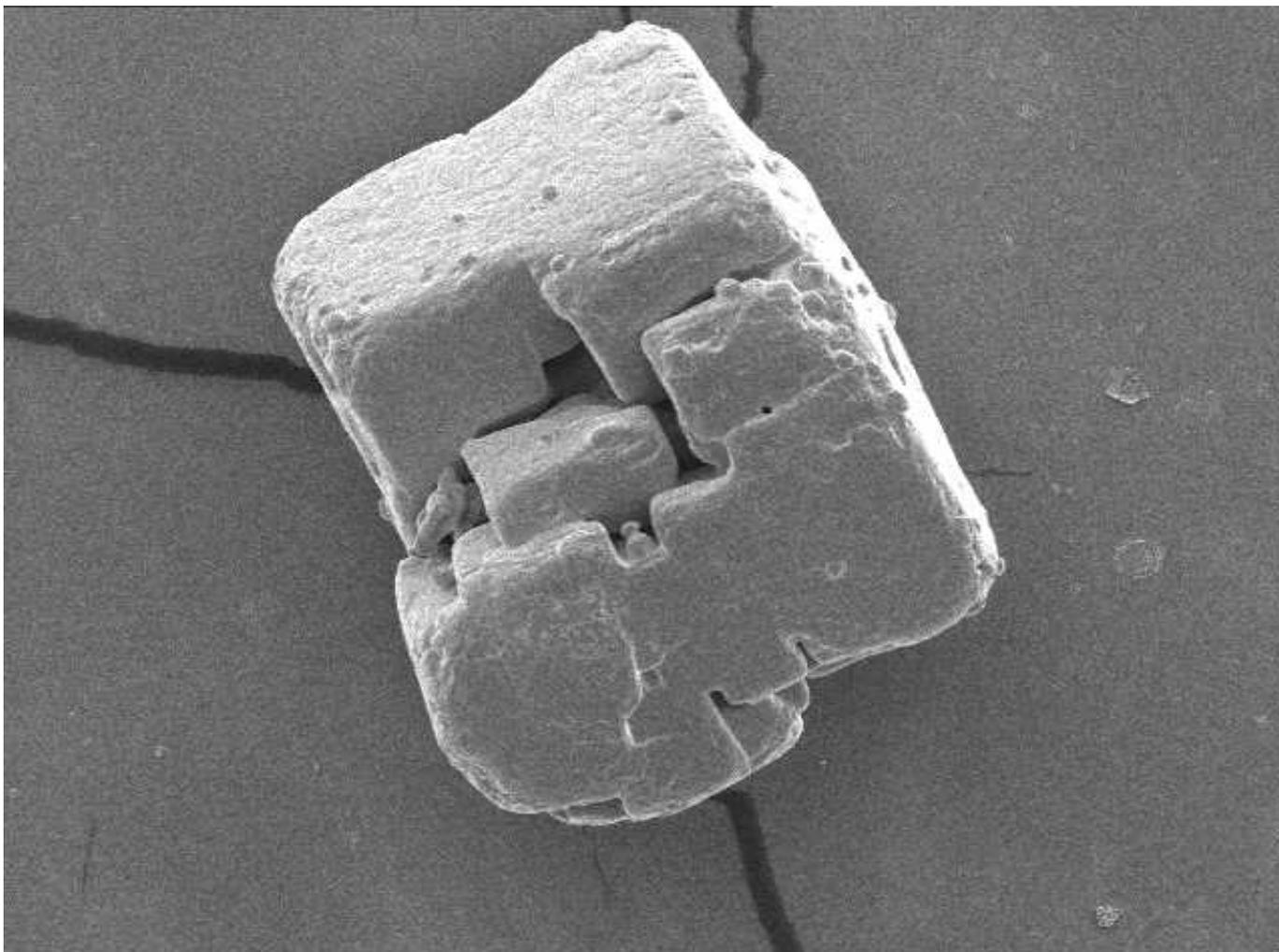
- Compliance checking
 - Follow the sections & headings for the Project Description
 - Ensure that all necessary tables are included
 - Ensure that Supplemental Documents contain Letters of Commitment, and not Letters of Support
 - Baseline data **is required**.
 - Budget – clear justifications needed, please ensure that subawards add up correctly
 - Biosketches
- Jurisdiction-specific Programmatic Terms and Conditions for FY 2015 awards will address proposed hires.



Observations from FY 2015

- Feedback from Panels:
 - Provide sufficient details so that experts can evaluate details of research plan
 - Hypothesis-driven research that places project in the current context of the research area

FY 2016 RII Track-1



FY 2016 RII Track-1 Anticipated Timeline

- Letter of Intent due – July 2015
- Proposals due – August 2015
- Panel review (6-8 weeks) – October 2015
- Communication to PDs (2 weeks) – November 2015
- EPSCoR office and Director's Review Board (6-8 weeks) – March 2016
- Formalize recommendations (4 weeks) – April 2016
- Recommendation processing to DGA – May 2016
- Target award start date – June 2016



FY 2016 RII Track-1 Anticipated changes

- Increased page allowances for Research and Education section and proposal length, with concomitant increase in overall proposal length



FY 2015 RII Track-2 Focused EPSCoR Collaborations (FEC)

- Solicitation NSF 15-517
- Released 18 November 2014
- Proposals due 20 February 2015



Inter-jurisdictional collaborations

- Want to promote productive collaborations that are capable of sustained activities beyond the award period.
- National Academy of Sciences study, EPSCoR 2020 and EPSCoR 2030 workshops call for mechanism to facilitate multi-jurisdictional collaborations - studies emphasized use of experimental approaches.
- Combine small group expertise distributed in different EPSCoR jurisdictions into a “critical mass” capable of competing for large scale NSF or other agency competitions



Community feedback on RII Track-2

- Project management
 - Keeping track of who is eligible
 - Negotiating partnership (“dance card”)
 - Award size independent of number of partners
- Programmatic
 - Reporting – each member of the consortium has to submit a report and other FASTLANE issues
 - No-cost extensions (NCEs) requested by a subset of consortium members
 - Collaborations – evidence of genuine, sustained collaborations is needed



FY 2015 RII Track-2 FEC (NSF 15-517)

- Investigator-driven
- Promote disciplinary collaborations in topical areas aligned with NSF and national priorities
- Changes in scope and duration
- Award amount scales with # of participants
- Reduces reporting burden
- Reduces administrative burden in finding collaborations



RII Track-2 FEC Eligibility

- Jurisdictions
 - In FY 2015, institutions in all twenty-eight jurisdictions that are eligible for RII activities may submit proposals (AL, AK, AR, DE, GU, HI, ID, KS, KY, LA, ME, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NM, ND, OK, PR, RI, SC, SD, VT, VI, WV, and WY)
- Institutions
 - One proposal submitted (as lead) per institution. Language follows Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) for eligible institutions
 - No limit on # of proposals in which a institution/jurisdiction can participate as a non-lead collaborator



PI & co-PIs

- Each participating jurisdiction in a collaboration should be represented by a PI or co-PI.
- An individual can serve as a PI or co-PI on only one proposal for the FY15 RII Track-2 FEC competition.
- PI and co-PIs must be active researchers in the field of proposed research activities.



Focus Areas for FY 2015

- Research focus of proposals should be “themes that are consistent with NSF priorities, including such areas as cognitive science and neuroscience, clean energy, and food security.”



Award Size and Duration

- Up to 6 M\$ over 4 years
 - Budgets must be commensurate with activities proposed.
 - Budget must include funds to recruit or develop junior or early-career faculty.
 - 2 participating jurisdictions – up to \$1M annually
 - 3 or more participating jurisdictions – up to \$1.5M annually
- Awards made as Cooperative Agreements.
 - Annual increments



Merit Review Criteria

- National Science Board Criteria
 - Intellectual Merit
 - Broader Impacts
- Solicitation-Specific Review Criteria
 - Research Enterprise
 - Jurisdictional Impacts
 - Integration of Project Elements
 - Enhanced and Broadened Participation



Post-award Assessment

- Site Visit or Reverse Site Visit planned in Year 2.
- Annual evaluation of all FY15 RII Track-2 FEC awards by external contractor.
 - Data collected across all funded projects
 - Annual Evaluation and assessment done by contractor, reported to PIs and NSF EPSCoR. PI submits response w/ annual report.



Anticipated Timeline

- Solicitation released - late November 2014
- Proposals due - late February 2015
- Merit review - mid April 2015
- Actions to DGA - July 2015
- Award target date - August 2015



Thank you.



Project Description (20 pages maximum)

- Status and Overview (2 pages maximum)
- Results from Relevant Prior Support (2 pages maximum)
- Research, Collaboration & Workforce Development (15 pages maximum)
 - Research Activities
 - Collaboration and Partnerships
 - Rationale for collaboration and role of each faculty-level participant
 - Workforce Development
 - Junior faculty recruitment, mentoring, development
- Evaluation and Assessment Plan (2 pages maximum)
- Sustainability Plan (2 pages maximum)
 - Provide annual metrics for submission of proposals to NSF in the focus area
- Management and Coordination Plan (2 pages maximum)

