



National Science Foundation  
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## Dear Colleague Letter: International Collaboration Opportunities related to the NSF Investments in Understanding the Brain

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Dear Colleague:

NSF has recently established a Foundation-wide effort to **enable scientific understanding of the full complexity of the brain through targeted, cross-disciplinary investments in research, technology, and workforce development**. This broad multi-year effort includes NSF's participation in the multi-agency Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative (see thematic areas at <http://nsf.gov/understandingthebrain>).

A growing number of complementary international activities are underway, such as the European Union's Human Brain Project, that are designed to enable discoveries that will change our fundamental understanding of the structure and function of the brain.

NSF is interested in promoting international scientific cooperation that links scientists and engineers from a range of disciplines and organizations across international borders. The purpose of this Dear Colleague Letter is to identify existing NSF funding opportunities that are available for U.S. researchers working in cognitive science, neuroscience, and other related areas of brain research and technology development to enhance their research through international collaboration. Such partnerships may be bilateral or multilateral. The U.S. team's international counterparts should have support or obtain funding through their own national or regional sources.

### NSF EXISTING INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS AND MECHANISMS

- Partnerships for International Research and Education (PIRE) supports high quality, five-year projects across all NSF-supported disciplines in which advances in research and education depend critically on international collaboration. [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=12819](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=12819)
- Research Coordination Networks (RCN) supports groups of investigators to communicate and coordinate their research, training and educational activities across disciplinary, organization, geographic and international boundaries. [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=11691](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=11691)
- Scientists working in the area of computational neuroscience can explore international opportunities within the Collaborative Research in Computational Neuroscience (CRCNS) activity. [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5147&org=IIS](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5147&org=IIS)
- NSF Research Traineeships (NRT) support interdisciplinary research training, and institutional training grants. International collaborations are encouraged. [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=505015](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=505015)
- The Science Across Virtual Institutes (SAVI) Program is designed to facilitate collaboration among teams of NSF-supported scientists and engineers and their international partners to foster enhanced research collaboration, data sharing, networking, and technical

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- exchanges. [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=504756](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=504756)
- The International Research Experiences for Students (IRES) Program supports the engagement of U.S. undergraduate and graduate students in high-quality research abroad that is led by the U.S. PI and conducted in collaboration with foreign counterparts. [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=12831](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=12831)
  - The Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide (GROW) Program expands opportunities for recipients of NSF Graduate Research Fellowships to engage in international research collaboration at sites in identified partner countries. [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=504876](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=504876)
  - The Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers (I/UCRC) Program provides opportunities for academia, industry and government agencies to engage in pre-competitive collaborative research that may result in sustainable partnerships and global workforce development. [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5501](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5501)
  - NSF PIs with currently active awards can contact their cognizant program officers to discuss the possibility of supplemental funding to support international collaborations with scientists working abroad.
  - A number of NSF directorates have established collaboration mechanisms with specific international entities that may be relevant; please visit directorate websites for more information.
  - U.S. based PIs also can submit proposals for international workshops according to the guidelines described in the [NSF Grant Proposal Guide](#).

Researchers in the U.S. who wish to collaborate internationally are encouraged to explore these existing activities and opportunities to promote a global effort to enhance the scientific understanding of the brain. This Dear Colleague Letter is not a special competition or new program. Proposals must comply with the guidelines of the applicable solicitation or program and will be evaluated using NSF's merit review criteria and any additional review criteria specified in the funding opportunity.