



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
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NSF 16-098

## Dear Colleague Letter: Special Guidelines for Submitting Collaborative Proposals under the Division of Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental, and Transport Systems-Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council UK (CBET-EP SRC) Lead Agency Activity

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June 10, 2016

Dear Colleagues:

The Directorate for Engineering (ENG), Division of Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental and Transport Systems (CBET) of the National Science Foundation and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council UK (EPSRC) are pleased to announce the CBET-EP SRC Lead Agency Activity under a NSF/RCUK Research Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The goal of this activity is to reduce some of the barriers that researchers currently encounter when working internationally. The CBET-EP SRC Lead Agency Activity will allow US and UK researchers to submit a single collaborative proposal that will undergo a single review process.

Proposals will be accepted for collaborative research in areas at the intersection of CBET and the EP SRC's Engineering Theme's missions. Proposers should review the CBET Program Descriptions for research supported through CBET and the EP SRC Engineering Theme for further information on what areas of research are eligible for support through this activity. Proposals are expected to adhere to typical proposal budgets and durations for the relevant CBET and EP SRC program from which funding is sought.

This document provides guidelines for the preparation, submission, review, and award of CBET-EP SRC Collaborative Proposals.

### PROPOSAL PREPARATION

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1. Before submitting a proposal, researchers should identify a prospective lead agency (either NSF or EP SRC) based on where the largest proportion of their research lies.
2. At least **three months** in advance of the date the applicants expect to submit a formal proposal (for CBET, October 20th, 2016 for the next fiscal year), proposers **must** email a short Outline document containing:
  - a. A brief description of the proposed research,
  - b. The names and qualifications of the researchers, and
  - c. Bottom line estimates of total funding (including indirect costs) to be requested from NSF and EP SRC (a detailed budget is not required at this time).

The document should **not exceed 5000** characters (including spaces). If NSF is the lead agency, email to [cbetrcuk@nsf.gov](mailto:cbetrcuk@nsf.gov) and if a UK Research Council is the lead agency, email to [international@epsrc.ac.uk](mailto:international@epsrc.ac.uk). If this communication has not taken place, the proposal will be returned

without review.

3. The lead agency will share all Outlines received with the non-lead agency for both agencies to check eligibility (whether the proposed research is within the participating agencies' portfolio, and if the proposers and institutions meet agency eligibility requirements).
4. Upon confirmation from both agencies that the collaborative research proposal is appropriate for the CBET-EPSRC Lead Agency Activity, the agencies will decide which agency will act as lead. The lead agency will then contact the researchers to inform them that they may submit a full research proposal to the lead agency.

If NSF is the lead agency, proposers must comply with the proposal preparation requirements outlined in NSF's Grant Proposal Guide and submit the proposal through NSF's FastLane system (<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>) or Grants.gov (<http://grants.gov>) to the appropriate standing program within CBET within the submission window (Oct. 1-20, 2016).

If EPSRC is the lead agency, proposers must comply with the proposal preparation requirements outlined in the EPSRC's Research Funding Guide and proposals should be submitted via the Je-S system (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>) through EPSRC standard mode.

Special requirements for preparation of approved proposals include:

1. In both cases, the proposal should indicate it is to be considered under this Lead Agency Activity by prefacing the title with "CBET-EPSRC."
2. Budget Preparation as follows:
  - a. If NSF is the lead agency, the proposal should only indicate the US expenses on the NSF Budget Form. A detailed breakdown of funding requested from EPSRC, using the EPSRC Je-S form, should be added to the proposal as a Supplementary Document. This document will be shared with EPSRC to verify eligibility of costs requested. The Budget Justification section of the proposal should address the full project budget (that is, both the US and UK funding items).
  - b. If EPSRC is the lead agency the proposal should only request the UK expenses on the Je-S form. The US collaborating research organizations should be included as project partners on the Je-S form, and the funding totals by research organization should be included as project partner contributions. The Justification of Resources attachment should include a clear summary and justification of the US costs sought from NSF as well as the funding sought from EPSRC. In addition, a detailed breakdown of funding requested from NSF should be submitted to EPSRC as an Other Attachment. The latter document will be shared with NSF to verify eligibility of costs requested.
  - c. Proposals that request duplicative funding from NSF and EPSRC may be returned without review.
  - d. An institutional statement in support of the joint submission must be provided by each non-lead country partner organization in the proposal submission. This statement should be in the form of a signed letter from an authorized institutional representative including the following text: "I confirm on behalf of [insert name or institution] that the US-UK Collaborative proposal between [insert name of lead agency PI and institution] and [insert non-lead agency PI and institution] is endorsed and has been submitted by [name of research office]." For NSF this letter must be included in the Supplementary Documents; for EPSRC the letter should be provided as a cover letter to the proposal.

## **PEER REVIEW**

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CBET-EPSRC collaborative proposals will be reviewed alongside all other unsolicited or standard proposals received in the same funding round or call and will not undergo a separate or special review

process.

Proposals will be reviewed in accordance with the lead agency's review criteria. While not identical, NSF and RCUK ask reviewers to evaluate research on both its *scientific or intellectual merit* as well as its *broader or societal impacts*.

## **FUNDING DECISIONS**

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The lead agency and the non-lead agency will use their standard internal procedures to make their funding decision. The non-lead agency's funding decision will be informed by the lead agency's panel recommendation and funding decision.

NSF and EPSRC will confirm a final recommendation for funding with each other. Each agency reserves the right to fund their own country's researchers, regardless of the other lead agency's decision to fund or not. NSF and EPSRC reserve the right to negotiate final budgets with PIs prior to award.

All proposers will be advised whether their proposal has been recommended for funding or will be declined by the lead funding agency. Proposers will receive copies of the reviewers' comments and, where applicable, a panel summary.

Once a proposer has been notified of a pending award, the non-lead researcher(s) associated with the project must submit a copy of the proposal to the non-lead agency so that each agency has complete documentation of the overall proposed research project. Where EPSRC is the non-lead agency a Je-S form and mandatory attachments must be submitted through EPSRC standard mode at this stage.

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.

Should a proposal be declined for funding, proposers should refer to each agency's individual resubmission policies.

## **POST AWARD CONSIDERATIONS**

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Awardees must 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 EPSRC in any reports or publications arising from the grant.

Requests for extensions will be considered by participating agency(s) using standard procedures. Requests for changes to awards will be discussed with other involved funding agencies before a mutual decision is reached.

All NSF and EPSRC requirements for data management are applicable to investigators funded by their respective agencies.

In accordance with NSF and EPSRC (RCUK) standard procedures, awards are announced publically.

For projects involving human subjects/participants or vertebrate animals, proposers should consult both EPSRC (RCUK) and NSF policies.

Sincerely,

Pramod Khargonekar /  
Assistant Director /  
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