



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

NSF 18-067

Dear Colleague Letter: Special Guidelines for Submitting Collaborative Proposals under the Division of Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental, and Transport Systems, the Division of Civil, Mechanical and Manufacturing Innovation, and the Division of Electrical, Communications and Cyber Systems - the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (ENG-EPSC) Lead Agency Activity

April 13, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

The Directorate for Engineering (ENG), Division of Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental and Transport Systems (CBET), the Division of Civil, Mechanical and Manufacturing Innovation (CMMI), and the Division of Electrical, Communications and Cyber Systems (ECCS) of the National Science Foundation and the Engineering, ICT and Manufacturing the Future Themes of the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) are pleased to announce the ENG-EPSC Lead Agency Activity. The goal of this activity is to reduce some of the barriers that researchers currently encounter when working internationally. The ENG-EPSC 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, CMMI, and/or ECCS with the EPSRC Engineering, ICT and/or Manufacturing the Future Themes' programs. Proposers should review the CBET, CMMI, and ECCS Program Descriptions for research supported through these divisions and the EPSRC website 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, CMMI, and ECCS programs and EPSRC Themes from which funding is sought.

A list of participating ENG programs in CBET, CMMI, and ECCS can be found at <https://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/IntlCollaborations/UK.jsp>. Please note that this activity ONLY includes unsolicited core programs in these divisions. No cross-cutting or agency-wide special programs are eligible.

Relevant EPSRC Programs can be found at <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/about/partner/international/agreements/nsf/>

This document provides guidelines for the preparation, submission, review, and award of ENG-EPSC Collaborative Proposals.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

1. Before submitting a proposal, researchers should identify a prospective lead agency (either NSF or EPSRC) based on where the largest proportion of their research lies.
2. For proposers to be invited to submit a formal proposal, an expression of interest/white paper must be submitted **no later than July 1, 2018**, containing:
 - a. An indication of the target program in both NSF-ENG and EPSRC for the proposed topic. Please note this is not the only program that will consider the topic, but it allows for faster review of the topic.
 - b. A brief description of the proposed research - a breakdown of the UK/US components,
 - c. The names and affiliations of the researchers, and
 - d. Bottom line estimates of total funding (including indirect costs) to be requested from NSF and EPSRC (a detailed budget is not required at this time).
3. If NSF is the lead agency, proposers should email the white paper to ENGUKRI@nsf.gov; the document should not exceed 5000 characters (including spaces).
4. If EPSRC is the lead agency, the expression of interest must be submitted using the Smart Survey at <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/about/partner/international/agreements/nsf/>.
5. If this communication has not taken place, the proposal will be returned without review.
6. **Please note that this due date of July 1, 2018, is a deadline requirement of all participating programs for this lead agency activity, including those with varying submission windows or open deadlines.**
7. The lead agency will share all expressions of interest/white papers received with the non-lead agency in order for both agencies to validate whether the proposed research is within the participating agencies' portfolio, and if the institutions meet agency eligibility requirements).
8. Upon confirmation from both agencies that the collaborative research proposal is appropriate for the ENG-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. In some cases, an alteration of the NSF and/or the EPSRC budget request may be required in the full proposal submission.

Special proposal preparation requirements include:

1. The proposal should indicate it is to be considered under this Lead Agency Activity by prefacing the title with "CBET-EPSRC", "CMMI-EPSRC", or "ECCS-EPSRC" depending on the NSF division that will perform the proposal review.
2. If NSF is the lead agency:
 - a. Proposers must comply with the proposal preparation requirements outlined in NSF's Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG). The proposal must be submitted via either NSF's FastLane system (<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>) or Grants.gov (<http://grants.gov>) to the appropriate standing program within CBET.
 - b. The proposal should only include the funds requested from NSF on the Budget. A detailed breakdown of funding requested from EPSRC, using the EPSRC Je-S form, should be included as a Supplementary Document. This document will be shared with EPSRC to verify the eligibility of funds requested. The Budget Justification should address the full project budget (that is, both the US and UK funding items).
 - c. The UK investigators should be included as "non-funded senior personnel". A Biographical Sketch for each of these individuals should be provided in the Biographical Sketch section of the proposal with a format that conforms to the NSF PAPPG guidelines. Current and Pending Support" information for UK investigators does not have to be provided, however, the form

can be left blank, entered as "0", or "none". A "Results of Prior Support" Section also is NOT required for the UK personnel.

3. If EPSRC is the lead agency:
 - a. 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 via the 'NSF(ENG)-EPSRC: EPSRC-Led Peer Review' call.
 - b. The proposal should only include the UK funds requested 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 funds requested from NSF, as well as the fund requested 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 the eligibility of funds requested.
4. Proposals that request duplicative funding from NSF and EPSRC may be returned without review.
5. 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

ENG-EPSRC collaborative proposals will be reviewed alongside all other unsolicited proposals received in the same funding round 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 EPSRC ask reviewers to evaluate research on both its *scientific or intellectual* merit as well as its *broader or societal impacts*.

FUNDING DECISIONS

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 unattributed 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

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 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 standard procedures, awards are announced publicly.

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

Sincerely,
Dawn Tilbury
Assistant Director
Directorate for Engineering