

Management Plan

SBE-UKRI Lead Agency Opportunity

Developed as an activity under the NSF-UKRI Memorandum of Understanding

The US National Science Foundation (NSF) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) both agree that - as research becomes increasingly global in nature - it is important for funding agencies to continue to identify and develop flexible mechanisms to foster and support collaborative international research. NSF and UKRI will be continuing the long history of collaboration between the UK and US in supporting research through both bilateral activities and multilateral arrangements.

This document is intended to provide guidance with respect to management and operational issues concerning the Lead Agency Opportunity between the NSF's Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). This is an activity covered by the NSF-UKRI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The participating organizations are NSF's Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences; the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC); the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC); and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

This document is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligation document. Nothing in this document authorizes or is intended to obligate the participating organizations to expend, exchange, or reimburse funds, services, or supplies, or transfer or receive anything of value. Nothing in this document may be construed to obligate the NSF or UKRI to any current or future expenditure of resources in advance of the availability of appropriations. Nor does this document obligate the NSF or UKRI to spend funds on any particular project or purpose, even if funds are available. This document, like the MOU, is not intended to create binding obligations under international law.

The goal of this Lead Agency Opportunity is to promote closer collaboration and reduce some of the barriers to working internationally that researchers currently encounter. Some of these difficulties include: identifying appropriate funding agencies, dealing with the risk of "double jeopardy" wherein one country's funding agency decides to fund the research but where the partner country's funding agency does not, and dealing with differing time tables for different funding agencies. The Lead Agency Opportunity will address these issues by allowing researchers to submit a single collaborative proposal that will go through a single review process. Applications will be integrated into existing programs at the relevant lead agency using standard review processes. There is no separate call or competition for the Lead Agency Opportunity. The Lead Agency Opportunity will be structured so that each country's researchers are supported by their own funding agency. This will allow funding agencies to maintain budgetary control over their awards.

This document outlines general principles and expectations that each participating agency should adhere to with respect to: 1) what information should be provided to proposers in terms of preparing and submitting proposals, 2) how the peer review process will be conducted, 3) how funding decisions will be made, and 4) what information will be provided to PIs on post-award conditions and reporting requirements.

Proposal preparation and submission (Stage 1) – Expression of interest (EOI)

1. Prior to submission of a full proposal, proposers will discuss within their research team where they feel the largest proportion of research lies and agree on a proposed lead agency (either NSF or a UK Research Council). The proposers should contact the relevant staff member at the proposed lead funding agency to discuss the research project. The staff member will then confirm that they will act

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as lead funding agency (and subsequently inform other participating agency(ies)) or will consult with the other agency(ies) to identify a new lead funding agency prior to returning a decision to the proposer (generally within ten working days).

2. Proposers will then be required to submit a PDF expression of interest (EOI), following the template available online, to the proposed lead agency. This should outline the research proposed, research teams involved, and bottom line estimates of funding to be requested from both the NSF and UKRI. The EOI research description should include: a brief summary, the main objectives and research challenges of the proposed research, the methodologies to be used and the outputs, impact and beneficiaries. The EOI should specify bottom line budget estimates at 100% Full Economic Cost (fEC) for the UK budget request, including indirect and estate costs, and should include all research-related and institutional administrative costs for the US budget request. The EOI should not exceed either 1,000 words or 2 pages in length. EOIs should be submitted well in advance of intended agency full proposal submission dates to allow adequate time for remit checks on both sides (generally 3 to 4 weeks).
3. The EOI PDF will be shared with the non-lead agency(ies) to check for eligibility (namely whether the proposed research fits within the participating agencies' portfolios and whether the proposed researchers and institutions meet the agencies' funding eligibility requirements). The information will also be used to gauge proposal pressure by programs and assist programs with budget planning.
4. If EOI approval has not taken place prior to a proposal submission, the proposal will be returned without review.

Proposal preparation and submission (Stage 2) – Full proposal

1. Proposers who are invited to submit a research proposal will do so in accordance with the proposal preparation requirements of the lead agency, e.g., for NSF, the *Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=papp) and for UKRI funders, the Research Funding Guide (or equivalent document) of the appropriate lead Research Council, which can be found online.
2. The full proposal should be submitted within twelve months of the EOI being approved. In the case of the original EOI expiring, applicants should contact the lead agency for clarification on how to proceed, as a new EOI may be necessary.
3. The proposal should include a description of the full proposed research program and research team and describe the total resources for the joint project (that is, the funds requested from both the NSF and UKRI). However, the budget forms submitted to the lead agency should only indicate the amount requested from that agency. A copy of the proposed requested budget of the non-lead agency(ies) should be included as part of the full proposal. In the case of NSF-led proposals, the UKRI budget pages should be added under "Supplementary Documents". For UKRI-led proposals, the NSF budget form should be submitted to Je-S as an "Other attachment". The budget (at 100% fEC) should not vary from that specified in the EOI by more than 10% and any changes should be fully justified. EOI budgets should have already taken into consideration indirect, estate and administrative costs on both the UK and US sides.
4. For projects involving human subjects/participants or animals, proposers will be required to adhere to the published policies and guidelines concerning research ethics and must have requisite institutional approvals or exemptions in place prior to any potential award.

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5. The proposal should indicate the proposal is to be considered under this Lead Agency Opportunity by prefacing the title with "SBE-UKRI".
6. Where applicable, the proposal will be submitted by established program deadlines or target dates, as determined by the lead agency.
7. Once submitted to the lead agency, the proposal will be shared with the non-lead agency(ies). The schedule for the lead agency's review process will also be shared with the non-lead agency(ies) at this point.

Peer review

1. Proposals will be reviewed in competition with other unsolicited proposals or with proposals received in response to a specific call by the lead funding agency (that is, proposals submitted under the Lead Agency Opportunity will not undergo a special review process).
2. Proposals will be reviewed in accordance with the lead agency's review criteria. While not identical, the NSF and UKRI ask reviewers to evaluate the proposed project on both its scientific or intellectual merit as well as its broader economic or societal impacts. A description of the NSF merit review process is provided on the NSF merit review website at: https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/. UKRI assessment criteria for the appropriate lead agency(ies) can be found on the UK Research Council websites.
3. While the lead agency will bear the ultimate responsibility for obtaining written reviews, the non-lead agency(ies) will be responsible for providing names of qualified reviewers to the lead agency. These qualified reviewers should be pre-approached by the non-lead agency(ies) to maximise the rate of acceptance. Any peer reviewers who agree to review on behalf of the non-lead agency will have their contact details shared securely with the lead agency. The lead agency is expected to make good faith efforts to use these reviewers and will communicate with the non-lead agency(ies) in the event that these reviewers are non-responsive or fail to provide reviews.
4. The number of reviews required will be in accordance with the policies of the lead agency.
5. The conflict of interest and confidentiality policies of the lead agency will apply. The lead agency will be responsible for obtaining any necessary conflict of interest documentation and for resolving any conflicts in accordance with its standard rules and procedures.
6. For proposals submitted to one of the UK Research Councils as lead, as per standard review procedures, once all the peer review comments have been received, and before the appropriate panel meeting, the lead PI will be given the chance to respond to the peer review comments on behalf of both the UK and the US teams. For proposals submitted to the NSF/SBE as lead, there is no PI response phase within the merit review process.

Funding decisions

1. After the reviews are received, the lead agency will use its usual internal procedures to determine whether a proposal will be awarded or declined. In the case of NSF, an award requires a formal recommendation by the Program Officer and then endorsement by senior management and NSF's

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Division of Grants and Agreements. UKRI and NSF funding decisions may be subject to budget limits. In the case of UKRI, funding recommendations from Panels are received by UK Research Council Officers and submitted to relevant Director / Executive groups with senior budgetary responsibility for approval. UK Research Councils will fund down a ranked list of proposals recommended for funding as far as the available budget allows.

2. The lead agency will share anonymised reviews with the non-lead agency(ies), according to the lead agency's confidentiality regulations.
3. 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 (if these have not already been received as part of the UKRI PI response phase) and, where applicable, a panel summary. Proposers will be encouraged to share the results of the review with other members of their team.
4. 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(ies) so that each agency has complete documentation of the overall proposed research project.
5. If a proposal is recommended for funding; the US organization(s) will be supported by NSF and the UK organization(s) will be supported by the relevant UK Research Council(s). NSF and UKRI staff will review budgets to ensure that there are no duplications in funding.
6. Participating agencies will coordinate award timing as much as possible. However, because the participating agencies have different funding cycles, it is possible that some projects will have delayed start dates in order to wait until funds become available or until all pre-award requirements are met. Wherever possible agencies will endeavour to uphold standard turnaround times for each participating agency but in exceptional circumstances outcomes could be delayed.

Award conditions and reporting requirements

1. NSF and UKRI will clearly state in award letters and any related documents that awards resulting from this activity were made possible by the SBE-UKRI Lead Agency Opportunity.
2. Awardees will be expected to comply with the award conditions and reporting requirements of the agencies from which they receive funding.
3. Researchers will be required to acknowledge both NSF and the relevant UKRI funding agency(ies) in any reports or publications arising from the grant.
4. Requests for extensions should be submitted to the lead agency and will be considered using the lead agency's standard procedures. The lead agency will discuss requests for changes with all other involved funding agencies before a mutual decision is reached.
5. When extensions are granted, each funding agency will directly advise the relevant PI of the proper procedure for processing these. Please note that due to UKRI constraints, extensions over 12 months will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Please see <https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/news/grant-fec-tcs-january-2018-v1-pdf/> for more details.

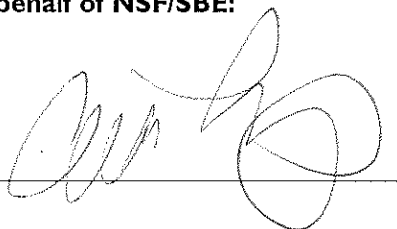
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Data sharing

1. Data is shared between UKRI and SBE to enable the secure and efficient processing of expressions of interest (EOIs) and full proposals for the NSF/SBE-UKRI Lead Agency Opportunity. Data shared includes expressions of interest, proposal attachments, anonymised peer reviews and panel comments. Data is shared via a secure extranet, where appropriate.
2. UKRI and SBE are committed to maintaining data confidentiality, protection and privacy and intend to fully abide by their own applicable laws and policies concerning the sharing of data in our collaborative activities.
3. SBE and UKRI will follow their own data retention policies once data is shared from one to the other. An internal record of data shared with SBE is kept by UKRI.
4. Further information on how UKRI processes personal data can be found in the UKRI privacy notice (<https://www.ukri.org/privacy-notice/>)

Signed on behalf of NSF/SBE:

Signature:



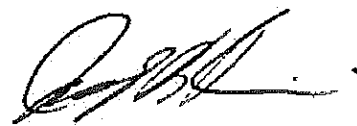
Name: Arthur W. Lupia

Title: Assistant Director

Date: 12/19/2018

Signed on behalf of UKRI:

Signature:



Name: Jennifer Rubin

Title: Executive Chair

Date: 18/12/2018

