Tips for Submitting NSF-BSF Proposals

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How to Choose a US Partner

- **Look mainly for content, and less for a “big name” in collaborators.**
- **Someone who is overloaded is not a good partner.**
- **Look for someone experienced (junior or senior), and if possible, who has been funded before.**
- **Find out if he currently has an NSF grant from the program you will submit to. If so, and the grant is close to ending, you are in the best shape. If not, avoid this PI since he is not likely to receive an overlapping grant in the same program.**

How to Choose a US partner

- **The limit on summer salary support by the NSF to the US PI is two months. Make sure he checks with the program director on whether having this support from another program already will affect his chances.**
- **A US PI from underrepresented group may be an important asset, but is not required**
  - **Women (except in Biology, Psychology, etc.)**
  - **African Americans**
  - **Hispanics**
  - **Native Americans**
- **A US PI from less developed states is nice, but NOT a requirement, and often makes no difference.**

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Examine Your Topic

- **The NSF has special programs for transformative ideas. In the regular programs, incremental progress programs have better chances with the panel.**
- **If your idea is transformative, have your US partner check with the program director if it may qualify for an EAGER grant (some 5% of the funds of each NSF division may go to EAGER projects, which are what we call Transformative, and have no submission deadlines).**
- **Have your US PI check with the NSF program director that your AOR is not fully funded already. The NSF program directors usually like to spread their support over a large spectrum of AORs.**

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Collaboration

- **The role of the Israeli partner should be clearly explained, in particular why his participation is an important element in the project.**
- **Both PIs should be full partners, not just figureheads. Remember that the proposal is evaluated by the NSF and if the role of the US PI will be negligible, or not impressive, the proposal is not likely to be funded, even if the idea is great!!!**

Collaboration

- **Write a collaboration plan that will explain in detail the mechanics of the collaboration. Show that you thought about it and that it is well planned.**
- **Depending on the program, you may use a separate document to describe the cooperation. Find out if it counts against the page limit.**

NSF Evaluation Process

- **In nearly all cases, a peer review panel provides *advice* to the program officers who make *recommendations* to the NSF management**
- **Panel decisions are not always followed, and other considerations may affect the NSF decision. These may include:**
  - **Is this area of research currently over funded/underfunded?**
  - **Is the US PI overfunded?**
  - **Can the project be partially funded from other NSF sources (US PI is from an underrepresented group; the project is interdisciplinary and can draw from another NSF unit, etc.)**

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NSF Evaluation Process

- **Proposals are typically rated by the panel as: Highly Competitive, Competitive, Low Competitive, Not Competitive**
- **Proposals from the top two groups may receive funding. Occasionally 'Competitive' proposals will be funded while 'Highly Competitive' will not**
- **US PI receives technical reviews and panel summery. Israeli PI may receive the information from his partner.**
- **The NSF uses two formal criteria for evaluation. Both are important:**
  - **Scientific merit**
  - **Broader impact**

Broader Impact

- **Broader impact must be addressed in every NSF proposal (not important in ISF/BSF proposals, but very important in NSF proposals)**

  Examples:

  - **How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding?**
  - **Will you be promoting teaching, training and learning of post-docs and others?**
  - **How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)?**
  - **To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks and partnerships?**

Broader Impact

- **Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding?**

- **Proposals without BI are returned without review.**
- **If two proposals have equal merit, the one with a more impressive BI will have priority!**
- **A broad impact by the Israeli is not a requirement at this time, but may be an asset. It will show that the partners take seriously this issue. You may describe in detail the training of PhD students and post-docs in your lab, and outside the classroom. Other BI aspects are also welcome.**

בהצלחה !!

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