

## Question

## Answer

### Programmatic

Are there any programmatic differences between this year's solicitation versus last year's?

To facilitate easier planning, the new solicitation, NSF 24-598, applies to not only the current FY 25/26 Mid-scale RI-1 competition, but also to the next, FY 27/28 competition.

As funded RI-1 projects are intended for the benefit of the “whole community”, are there any limitations or concerns with proposal submissions from institutions that primarily serve other DOD-funded activities which require “US persons only”?

Any eligible institution can participate in the Mid-scale RI-1 competition. In the case of limited-access infrastructure, you will need to make a case for how the infrastructure would serve any US-based researchers.

Can the project propose a major upgrade for an existing infrastructure?

"Examples of projects that may be supported by Mid-scale RI-1 include, but are not limited to, infrastructure that supports high-priority research experiments or campaigns, major cyberinfrastructure that addresses community and national-scale computational and data-intensive science and engineering research, major shared community infrastructure and resources as may be required to enable community-scale research and upgrades and/or major new infrastructure for existing facilities." NSF 24-598 Ch. 2.

Can the proposal describe a project that will be built upon later? Similar to phase I / phase II, but phase I can independently be used to support the research being proposed.

That would be possible, but "Phase I" would need to have significant impact on its own. Awarding Phase I of the project is not a commitment on the part of NSF to Phase II.

Can the research/user community intended for the project include industry?

Yes

Under the program description (page 10 of the solicitation), it states that proposals should show the project's benefit and value to the U.S. scientific community, and that benefits could include 'broad access to research infrastructure' and 'dedicated community observing time on the infrastructure.' Could

Broad access implies that the researchers beyond those at the proposing institution (or consortium if that is the case) are able to avail of the infrastructure and/or the data it generates. The program only supports the implementation of the proposed infrastructure. Costs associated with access come under “Operations and Maintenance Costs” and plans for these must be included in the proposal. Observing time would be any time

<p>you please explain what is meant by those phrases – what are the expectations for broad access? Access for whom? Who counts as community? What does observing time mean?</p>	<p>available to the users to access the facility (e.g. telescope observing time, beam time, imaging time etc.).</p>
<p>Can we propose to incorporate space that is for meetings and collaboration, or can it only be for the physical process of during research?</p>	<p>According to the solicitation, the Mid-scale RI-1 program will not support projects that include "General-purpose buildings, support systems and equipment that are not directly required for the implementation and eventual operation of the proposed infrastructure and/or that support multi-purpose usage in addition to research"</p>
<p>Does the MsRI-1's preliminary proposal have a specific template?</p>	<p>Only as described in Section V of the solicitation.</p>
<p>The solicitation specifies that "investigators whose preliminary proposals are for capabilities similar to those currently available to the U.S. research community are unlikely to be invited to submit full proposals." My question is that if there are such existing facilities in the US, but exceeding its capacity and has long waiting list for use, will proposals for similar facilities still be considered for this Mid-scale RI1?</p>	<p>It is up to you to make the case that the available research infrastructure is unable to meet the demand, as well as the additional scientific capabilities the proposed infrastructure offers.</p>
<p>If I propose to place an instrument in a ground floor lab, can I include funds to finish/remodel/prepare other non-ground floor lab space in order to relocate tools that currently occupy the ground floor lab (assuming they won't be adversely affected by the move)?</p>	<p>Mid-scale RI projects are specific to the required research infrastructure. Funds should not be requested or used for unrelated activities.</p>
<p>Can you say more about how we know - or can demonstrate - that our project meets "research-community defined scientific needs"?</p>	<p>This could be demonstrated by workshop reports, National Academies reports, community studies/workshops/white papers, decadal surveys, or similar published work that demonstrates broad national scientific interest and priority.</p>
<p>In the presentation it talks about proposals that are campus centric will not get funded. If facilities are proposed at a specific location, do we have to show how it is used by the local community, or academics etc.?</p>	<p>Facilities that are used primarily by the campus where it is located are less compelling compared to those that have a broader reach. If it is only used by the campus where it is located, it is not within scope. The scope is amply described in the solicitation</p>

Would you please expand a little on the community needs; in addition to make the science need case, does this refer to community workshops, and/or NAS recommendations, or equivalent, could some of this broader outreach be included in a design/development proposal.

Community needs should be described in documents that can be cited in the proposal. NSF only suggests examples, but those in the solicitation are neither comprehensive nor required. The broader outreach to define scope and key performance parameters are more appropriate for a planning grant.

Is it possible to have multiple universities jointly proposing a Mid-Scale RI-1?

Yes, but your proposal should come from a single lead, with collaborators supported through subawards. Mid-scale RI-1 does not accept separately-submitted, collaborative proposals.

Is the PEP or DEP contained within the Project description 10-page limit?

No. This is a separate document to be submitted as part of the supplementary materials.

When do you expect the pre-proposal results to be available? i.e., How long will we have to prepare the full proposal after the pre-proposal results are available?

Full proposal invitations should be sent by mid January. The full proposal deadline is March 19. Mid-scale RI-1 recommends that you consider beginning preparation of full proposals even before you hear whether one has been invited.

The solicitation requests "expected start date is October 01 of the second fiscal year of each competition." For prelim proposals being submitted November 18, 2024, will the expected start date be October 01, 2025?

Yes.

With respect to the start date again. The solicitation says the "earliest" expected date is October 1, but is it ok to target a later date, say January 15, 2026?

Yes, you can request a later start date, but not a sooner one. January 15, 2026 is reasonable. The start date is a placeholder, with the actual date dependent on, for example, budget appropriations, timescales for the final reviews, cost analyses and negotiations related to awards.

Is this opportunity only for construction?

Mid-scale RI-1 supports design and/or implementation (which may or may not involve construction) of research infrastructure.

Please clearly articulate expectations for what needs to be included in the pre-proposal and what, in particular, should NOT be included. Thank you.

The solicitation clearly states the required and disallowed sections for the preliminary proposal.

The preliminary proposal instructions don't list 'intellectual merit' as part of the 10-page program description, but it is still listed in the review criteria section of the solicitation. Does it still need to be its own section with a header on its own line? Proposal

Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts are the two fundamental NSF review criteria. Science drivers are included under the "Additional Solicitation Specific Review Criteria". Please look at Section VI of the solicitation. Otherwise, formatting requirements are described in the solicitation. The NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG), available at

instructions do list 'Scientific Justification' however – is that the same thing? Should the header for that section be 'Intellectual Merit' or 'Scientific Merit'? Or are they separate sections altogether?

[https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=papp](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=papp), provides guidance for proposal preparation when the solicitation is silent on an issue.

Regarding the comment about not funding non-RI organized activities such as research centers, I just want to be sure I understand - does this mean that if a research center exists, that the Mid-scale RI-1 will not support construction to expand on this center to enable new research capabilities?

It only means that the center level research will not be funded. But infrastructure that fits in an existing research center may be eligible.

Is the design activity collateral with construction/buildings?

A Design activity is meant to lead to a proposal for implementation of Mid-scale research infrastructure. It may lead to a non-Mid-scale project, but a Mid-scale design may only partially cover the complexities of large-scale major facility construction.  
Note that Mid-scale RI-1 will not support general-purpose buildings, support systems and equipment that are not directly required for the implementation and eventual operation of the proposed infrastructure and/or that support multi-purpose usage in addition to research.

Can we assume then that design-iteration/test-design is part of a "design phase". i.e., require some initial testing prior to implementation phase. Note your description above does not specify.

Yes.

We are considering submitting a design proposal. Is there a limitation (real or practical) on the ratio of external (to us) engineering contracts relative to engineering design work that would be carried out by our collaborators (academic astronomy and engineering departments)?

Within Mid-scale RI-1 budgetary limits, there is no specified limitation to the work carried out by subawards vs the awardee institution.

What is considered an “consortium project”?

Please see the “Eligibility Information/Who May Submit Proposals” section of the solicitation for the Mid-scale RI-1 definition of a “consortium”.

With clear justification, can multiple instruments be put together?

Maybe. The burden is on you to provide compelling justification about the uniqueness/novelty of such an assembly/integration to reviewers. The solicitation notes that “Mid-scale RI-1 will not support multiple pieces of infrastructure/instrumentation that are grouped together, either within a single campus or for a collection of consortium or campus labs, to meet the minimum Total Project Cost but would not be widely recognized as a single, well-integrated entity that addresses documented national research priorities”.

Would NSF accept MSRI-1 design proposal if the estimated cost of future project exceeds MSRI \$100M cap?

The solicitation says: “Mid-scale RI-1 design activities include the design efforts intended to lead to eventual implementation of a Mid-scale class RI project.” While it is often not possible to predict what a design activity will lead to, reviewers will consider this when evaluating a Mid-scale design activity that is likely to lead to an implementation cost in the range of Major Facilities, and beyond the scope of Mid-scale RI-2.

## Budget

Are there guidelines or limits on how much of a Construction budget can be spent on personnel (activities such as design and software development) vs. purchase of equipment, etc.? (I know that operations cannot be funded)

No. Propose for what you need to create the infrastructure, however it is implemented.

Are formal vendor quotes required for the pre-proposal, or will non-binding ROM quotes suffice?

Copies of vendor quotations should not be included in preliminary proposals. However, all estimated budgets must have a sound and well-described Basis of Estimate.

Are we expected to budget for access as well. What I mean is, there is establishment cost and running cost. The grant will help us acquire establishment and initial investment costs with validation of operational cost. For access to researchers from other universities, there will be a fee for operation, and – our understanding – is that we are good not to include that, because this will be post implementation. Correct?

You are correct. This program only supports the implementation stage of the infrastructure project. Reviewers and NSF will want to see that you have a credible Operations and Utilization plan looking forward, and it is a required part of the proposal, but it should NOT be included as part of the budget since these are post-implementation costs.

Can the cost of the renovation of the space (building) needed for the equipment budgeted in Mid-scale?

Yes, and as with any cost, this must be well justified. That said, the solicitation is clear that Mid-scale RI-1 will not support general-purpose buildings, support systems and equipment that are not directly required for the implementation and eventual operation of the proposed infrastructure and/or that support multi-purpose usage in addition to research.

Do contingency funds need to be part of the project total budget?

Please see the latest information in the Research Infrastructure Guide (RIG), available at [https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo\\_documents.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo_documents.jsp), regarding contingency. Budget contingency, when applicable, should be presented as a part of the total amount of Other Direct Costs under section G.6 on the standard NSF budget form.

Does total project cost (TPC) include costs already incurred (spent during design and development of a project)? Or only remaining costs for implementation?

No. The only exception is for expenses incurred before the typical three-month before the project start date as mentioned in PAPPG (NSF 24-1, Chapter X Section A.2.b).

For a design award, is there a practical limitation on the percentage of the award going to external commercial engineering firms?

No, but justify.

For personnel cost, how many years will be covered? and will funding for personnel be released on an annual basis or all at once?

Personnel costs can be paid throughout the project period. As for release of funds, this depends on the funding mechanism. Please see the solicitation and PAPPG (NSF 24-1) for more information.

For the preliminary proposal, implementation track, does the budget and budget justification get uploaded/entered into research.gov like it would for a more typical research proposal for both prime and subaward? Or are these items only expected to be in BOE in the PEP?

"8. Budget and Budget Justification:  
Budgets for preliminary proposals, including budgets for any sub-awards, may be estimates but must be justified with a Basis of Estimates (BoE) included, and must be well thought out. Copies of vendor quotations, however, should not be included in preliminary proposals. If the budget includes contingency, that contingency must cover known risks and be appropriate for risk mitigation. (Contingency should be listed on Line G.6(Other) on the Budget Pages.) Note: PIs are advised to carefully consider budgets near the Mid-scale RI-1 limits; if a full proposal should be invited, refinements of project costs may result in a budget outside of Mid-scale RI-1 solicitation budget ranges, and result in an invited full proposal being ineligible and subject to decline or return without further review."

With respect to budget, I know limits is 20m. If the final project is 18, and when the time comes - with inflation - the new amount is 21. Can the university opt to cover the remaining portion in cost share, or will we lose the opportunity?

According to the solicitation, voluntary committed cost sharing is not allowed. For this reason, Mid-scale proposals are required to provide a risk register. A Mid-scale RI-1 budget must stay under \$20M, and the project management plan should contain contingencies for things such as inflation.

Can you please clarify regarding what is written within the solicitation about the budget for the preliminary proposal? Is budget/budget justification only contained within the PEP or within the typical places in research.gov?

Budget information will be entered in the typical locations in Research.gov, not only in the PEP/DEP.

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## Project Management

See: [https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo\\_documents.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo_documents.jsp)

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Can additional sections be added to the PEP? For example, an introduction section?

Please follow the linked template (at [https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo\\_documents.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo_documents.jsp)). The Overview section can serve as the introduction. However, all the sections of the PEP are required.

Can the PEP template be provided as a Word document? The current version that I can find is a pdf.

There is not yet a PEP template in Word format, though it is possible there may be one in the future.

In the preliminary proposal should we also talk about the key elements of Project Management like Risk Register? Or it is for the full proposal?

At the preproposal stage the DEP or PEP should contain an appropriate level of discussion to demonstrate that the project team understands the complexity in project management. However, it is not expected that the preproposal DEP or PEP will have all the details clearly outlined, since the DEP and PEP will continue to improve at each stage of the solicitation (and throughout the project, if awarded). For the preproposals that are invited to submit a full proposal, the full proposal PEP or DEP will require greater details.

Is it recommended to work with a project management consultant for the PEP?

A PEP/DEP is a specific project management document, and it will serve the project better if project management expertise is involved in the development of the PEP/DEP and the infrastructure project overall.

So which RIG should we refer to when developing the initial proposal?

Information on the Research Infrastructure Guide (RIG) can be found at [https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo\\_documents.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo_documents.jsp). The items in “quotes” below refer to that web page:

For all general project management, risk management or schedule, or for putting together a work breakdown structure, you will want to refer to the current RIG (“Research Infrastructure Guide (RIG) – December 2021”).

For specifically preparing the PEP/DEP, for both the preliminary and (if invited) full proposal, the preparer should use the “DRAFT RIG Revision Section 2.9 Mid-scale RI”. The DEP or PEP formats discussed in the webinar, along with further information on the 10 components are found in the “Draft RIG Revision Section 3.4 Design Stage Planning” and “Draft RIG Revision Section 3.5 Construction Stage and Implementation Planning”. The PEP template is available under “ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE” as “Mid-scale RI – PEP Template – September 2024”.

The RFP refers to a ‘Design Execution Plan (DEP)’ and refers to the RIG for definition. The RIG does not define the DEP. Can you please provide a bit more clarity on the DEP? Is there a DEP template?, like there is for a PEP?

As with the previous question, the DEP is a new document replacing the PEP for Design proposals. Please see the draft revised RIG at ([https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo\\_documents.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo_documents.jsp)). The solicitation points to the relevant page for Research Infrastructure Documents and Guidance. The Design Stage Planning lists the requirements of the DEP.

What is the page limit for a PEP in the pre-proposal and in the full proposal?

There is no page limit. The PEP/DEP can be as detailed as required by the project. Note however, a preliminary proposal does not require a full PEP/DEP and an initial version that is sufficiently developed is acceptable – that said, including a very detailed PEP/DEP is certainly allowed.

When will the new RIG be out for public comment and feedback?

Public comment for the revised RIG will begin in November. We expect it to be published in spring 2025.

Why do you make a difference between DEP and PEP? I am not aware of this difference being made anywhere else, be it public or private projects.

The specifics of a Project Execution Plan (PEP) do not always translate directly to the specifics of a design activity. The difference between the DEP and PEP is described on slide 14 of the town hall presentation. Please download the PDF of the presentation from the same web page where you found this document.

With the revisions to the RIG ongoing, is it expected that the requirements on the PEP will change between preproposal (submission in 2024) and possible invited proposal (submission in 2025)?

The DEP and PEP requirements will not change between preproposal and full proposal. For both stages, the preparer should use the PEP format discussed at the webinar and noted in the documents that are referenced in the solicitation and the Research Infrastructure Office (RIO) web page - linked from the Mid-scale RI-1 program web page: ([https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo\\_documents.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/lfo/lfo_documents.jsp)). The specific documents for further information on the DEP and PEP format, along with further information on the 10 components are the “Draft RIG Revision Section 3.4 Design Stage Planning” and “Draft RIG Revision Section 3.5 Construction Stage and Implementation Planning” along with the PEP template “Mid-scale RI – PEP Template – September 2024”.

How many MSRI-1 proposals typically request contingency, and what is the typical percentage? Same for those MSRI-1 that are awarded. Thanks.

Contingency is often requested. We cannot give an amount or percentage, since it varies by project/activity. Contingency is based on a calculation, which is described in the RIG. During the review, particularly at the financial review prior to an award, if one is to be made, the appropriateness of contingency is evaluated. Be careful not to let contingency revisions lead to a budget outside of the program limits. Similarly, under-estimating contingency will likely raise a flag in the financial review.

## Discipline-related

Can a Mid-scale RI1 be submitted through TIP? or can TIP participate in the Mid-Scale, review, award, execution? How is NSF handling TIP inclusion? (seems like they were participants in prior Mid scale RFPs)

TIP is currently not participating in the Mid-scale RI-1 competition. If the Mid-scale RI-1 working group believes your project would be of interest to TIP, we may reach out to a Program Official in that Directorate. Although TIP was listed in the previous solicitation, they did not participate in the competition. Note that proposals are not submitted “through” Directorates, but rather arrive in the Office of Integrative Activities (OIA) for compliance checking, before being assigned to Divisions within Directorates based largely on PI preference, as indicated on the Cover Page.

The physics directorate does not seem to be involved. Does this that you don't encourage Physics based projects, such as plasma physics?

See the above response regarding assignment of proposals to Divisions within Directorates. Physics (PHY) is a Division within the Math and Physical Sciences (MPS) directorate. All five Divisions within MPS participate in Mid-scale RI-1. Points of Contact for all Directorates can be found on the Mid-

scale RI-1 Program Page at <https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/mid-scale-ri-1-mid-scale-research-infrastructure-1>. (Dr. John Papanikolas, [jpapanik@nsf.gov](mailto:jpapanik@nsf.gov), is the representative for MPS on the working group and should be your contact.)

Is the EDU directorate involved deeply as well, and who are the contacts?

The EDU Directorate participates in both Mid-Scale R1 and R2 Programs. EDU's contact person is Carleitta L. Paige-Anderson [cpaigean@nsf.gov](mailto:cpaigean@nsf.gov)

What about virtual infrastructure, such as those widely needed multidisciplinary educational and curricular infrastructures, pedagogy, and resources provisioning to modernize early computing literacy courses for STEM and non-STEM disciplines along big data, AI, parallel and distributed computing, and security?

The solicitation specifically states that virtual infrastructure is allowed. We recommend you reach out to the relevant cognizant Program Director in the most appropriate Directorate, in this case EDU. See the Mid-scale RI-1 Program Page (<https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/mid-scale-ri-1-mid-scale-research-infrastructure-1>) for a list of disciplinary contacts.

Is it possible to include health data in the research part or is that excluded and research on that should be submitted to NIH?

While requests for funding health or clinical research should go to NIH, health research may be conducted using NSF-supported research infrastructure. This research would be considered a broader impact.

My question is not only relevant to EDU but to all directorates, being multidisciplinary. What about your own directorates and disciplines?

The Directorate of STEM Education (EDU) participates in Mid-scale RI-1 to support infrastructure in support of education research, which is often multidisciplinary. Mid-scale RI-1 projects/activities may be multidisciplinary, and PIs are encouraged to select on the Cover Sheet one or more relevant divisions for the review of the proposal, depending on the level of connection across NSF Divisions.

We have been installing portable cosmic ray detectors in six countries for monitoring the changes in space weather. We would like to take this opportunity to expand detector network in many countries. Data will be shared to public. Is this a valid project?

Please contact the relevant Mid-scale RI-1 Working Group member in the Directorate supporting the research the infrastructure would enable. Points of Contact for all Directorates can be found on the Mid-scale RI-1 Program Page at <https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/mid-scale-ri-1-mid-scale-research-infrastructure-1>.

We plan to submit a planning proposal for a marine science facility that would need to use seawater pumped in from the ocean. We have an existing seawater system that may need to be updated for the facility to function. Would we need to ensure that any additions or upgrades are solely for the new facility in order to avoid the prohibition on supporting general-use systems?

Mid-scale RI-1 does not support planning grants, but rather Design or Implementation. That said, if it makes sense to upgrade an existing system as part of a new capability, this could be justified if it is essential to the new capability that is the heart of the project. It should not be to repair a broken seawater intake. Please reach out to the relevant cognizant Program Officer.

Is it helpful / desirable / indifferent for proposed infrastructure projects to serve communities across more than one NSF division?

The infrastructure should serve the needs of the relevant community. Whether infrastructure is restricted to one discipline or spans multiple disciplines that are represented across NSF depends on the science to be enabled.

## Technical (+ Design/Implementation)

Can design phases include testing on small demonstration unit/infrastructure to ensure readiness for larger scale implementation (in the next phase) ... or must it be completely "paper" design of future infrastructure implementation?

Design Activities may include the construction of physical prototypes. You may be able to find some examples by doing an award search on the NSF web site, although with only three competitions to-date, the number of examples may be small.

Can you outline the three easy-to-define principal elements distinguishing whether a submitted proposal should apply to implementation versus design?

A Mid-scale RI-1 design activity is meant to lead to readiness for a Mid-scale class implementation project. It is the implementation project that produces the research infrastructure. Beyond that, you can reach out to the cognizant NSF Program Officer in the relevant Directorate to discuss your project.

Could this fund, in addition to construction of a device, installation of chilled water necessary for machine operation?

From the solicitation: "NSF defines Research Infrastructure (RI) as any combination of facilities, equipment, instrumentation, or computational hardware or software, and the necessary human capital in support of the same." Look at your requirement from this perspective.

Do you have any specific advice for socio-technical research infrastructures that propose building a cloud infrastructure, e.g., for research data storage, processing, analysis, and sharing? In software development, design and implementation are not as clearly distinct.

An agile/spiral activity that leads to satisfying the science drivers and community priority might well be considered to be implementation. Please contact program officers in the relevant discipline(s) (CISE/OAC, SBE etc.) for guidance.

For the Design proposals, could this support computational research that is needed to guide and validate the design process?

Computational "research" *leading to* design may be a red flag, since Mid-scale RI-1 does not support early-phase "research" leading to a project. However, computational efforts *to validate* a design may well be part of the design process itself. As frequently noted, please contact a disciplinary Program Officer for guidance.

Guess the submission can be a combination of design + implementation that would be <20M for 5 years?

Proposals are for either design or implementation, not both. Yes, there may be overlap, i.e., some elements of final design in an implementation project or implementation of a prototype in a design activity. As the solicitation

notes, “Successful award of a Mid-scale RI-1 design activity does not imply NSF's commitment to future implementation of that project, and hence the acquisition or development of long-lead items will not be considered as part of design activities”.

Would infrastructure in the midst of beta testing be considered in the design phase or implementation phase?

There needs to be an operating facility/capability for research use at the end of an implementation award. There needs to be an actionable design at the end of a design award. Neither is a research proposal. As the solicitation notes, “While Mid-scale RI-1 will not support early phase Research and Development to addresses technological issues that are appropriate for funding through regular research programs, the program may consider prototypes on a case-by-case basis.”

## Personnel

Can a postdoctoral fellow be listed as a co-PI?

This is a decision for the proposing organization (e.g., university SRO). Reviewers may look for evidence that the postdoc will offer needed expertise and will see the project through.

Can the funds support PhD students who are working on developing the infrastructure?

Yes.

Can we add/change PI/SP team members between the preliminary and full proposals?

This is not encouraged, but there are instances where a co-PI or a PI is no longer able to serve on a full proposal. Given a full proposal has been invited, keep in mind that a change of PI could change the nature of the proposal. That said, the solicitation does note “Any one individual may be the Principal Investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) for no more than one preliminary or full proposal. A PI or co-PI for a preliminary proposal who is not invited for a full proposal submission may later serve as a co-PI or other senior personnel on an invited full proposal at the full-proposal organization's and PI's discretion.”

Are there any requirements on the number of PIs? Our thought process is to have one PI, and a list of participants from current and other universities. Is that perceived negatively or is there any other preferred mechanism?

Research.gov allows one PI and up to four co-PIs. Others would be Senior Personnel. As for the perception, that is not something we can really address. Our best advice is to think what you as a reviewer would want to see.

<p>Could there be additional senior personnel or subawards between the preliminary and full proposals?</p>	<p>Yes, this would be allowed, as long as the full proposal budget stays within RI-1 limits. If a full proposal is invited, keep in mind that personnel changes could change the nature of the proposal. Thus, such changes should only happen on an exceptional basis. That said, the solicitation does note “Any one individual may be the Principal Investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) for no more than one preliminary or full proposal. A PI or co-PI for a preliminary proposal who is not invited for a full proposal submission may later serve as a co-PI or other senior personnel on an invited full proposal at the full-proposal organization's and PI's discretion.”</p>
<p>Can potential users of the infrastructure in their role as lead-users be part of the proposal (e.g.) to be part of the process of community involvement or in other words – what are mechanisms to fund the onboarding of users?</p>	<p>Involvement of users would be part of the Operations and Maintenance (O&amp;M) phase. Mid-scale RI-1 awards are for implementation (i.e., construction) or design of the infrastructure. Project personnel should be those with a direct role in the implementation or design.</p>
<p><b>Geographic and EPSCoR-related questions</b></p>	
<p>To be classified as coming from and EPSCOR State, does an EPSCOR State have to house the lead institution of a Consortium or multi-institution proposal?</p>	<p>Yes, the proposing organization and project management must be in an EPSCoR jurisdiction, though the infrastructure may be elsewhere (such as the case when the location is critical to the infrastructure).</p>
<p>Is there anything that EPSCoR state submissions should do in terms of indicating such, aside from checking the box on the cover page? For example, to respond to something specific within EPSCoR program?</p>	<p>No, just write a strong proposal.</p>
<p>How do I know if my institution is in an EPSCoR jurisdiction?</p>	<p>see <a href="https://new.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/epscor/state-websites">https://new.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/epscor/state-websites</a></p>
<p>Will having partners/users in non EPSCoR regions play against the submission?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Are there any geographic or institution type eligibility limitations?</p>	<p>The opportunity is open to all eligible institutions as defined in the solicitation “Proposals may only be submitted by organizations located in the United States, its territories, or possessions.” For more, please see the solicitation, NSF 24-598.</p>

## International

Can a foreign university/institution be a subawardee?

NSF rarely provides funding support to foreign organizations. In cases however, where the proposer considers the foreign organization or foreign individual's involvement to be essential to the project, they must justify the benefit to U.S. research and education. Please see in NSF PAPPG 24-1 Ch1.E.2c details on what the justification must include.

Can the implementation be an international project ranging in a number of countries?

Yes, but you should discuss the proposal with the appropriate Directorate Mid-scale RI-1 representative(s) as well as the Mid-scale RI-1 representative from the Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE).

Do foreign collaborators have to use SciENCv for their required bios or can they use a fillable PDF?

Collaborators based in foreign countries cannot access the online NSF SciENCv template. They may use a fillable PDF.

The solicitation says "Proposals may only be submitted by organizations located in the United States, its territories, or possessions ..." Can an eligible organization in the US apply for Mid-scale RI for infrastructure outside the US (that otherwise would tick the boxes of scientific merit, scientific needs, diverse workforce, etc)?

While the proposing organization and management must be in the United States, its territories, or possessions, the infrastructure may be located outside the United States if it is justified scientifically. However, the capability must be available by open access to the US community, as noted. NSF constructs foreign-based telescopes, which are available to everyone. You need to make your case.

Is there a specific letter template/language for the foreign collaborators?

All submissions must be in English. Please read through the Proposal Preparation sections for both preliminary and full proposals. Note that preliminary proposals ask for a list of collaborating personnel and institutions, but the letters (statements of substantive collaboration, described in section V.A under Full proposals 7.e) are for full proposals - only if invited - and there is a template.

## Miscellaneous

Can the same team submit an MRI proposal for a campus-centric proposal and a Mid-scale RI-1 design proposal that looks at a future build for wider nationwide non-campus specific use?

Neither Mid-scale RI-1 nor MRI preclude submission of a proposal to one program while also submitting a proposal to the other. However, the proposals would need to be substantively different, as the goals of the programs are quite different in focus. Please note that if the science drivers of the two proposals are similar, even though they may have different user

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bases, the two proposals are likely to be reviewed within the same NSF programs. Additionally, each proposal would appear in the Current and Pending (Other) Support document of both and will be flagged by NSF and reviewers. This may lead to questioning of the relationship between the proposals. As PI, knowing that reviewers will be aware of both submissions, it is incumbent on you to justify awarding of each in the presence of the other.

Can we submit a Midscale R1 implementation grant if we have an ongoing Midscale R1 design grant? Should one end for another to start?

One project need not be completed before a second is proposed for. An institution could have multiple simultaneous Mid-scale RI-1 awards, or if the first grant is a Design Activity, and you are ready to propose for the Implementation of that project, you may submit the implementation proposal while the design activity continues. As noted above, each proposal would appear in the Current and Pending (Other) Support document and will be noticed by NSF and reviewers. This may lead to questioning of the relationship between the proposals. As PI, knowing that reviewers will be aware of both activities, it is incumbent on you to justify awarding of an implementation award during the ongoing work on the other.

I thought I saw a slide with directorate-specific Q&A webinars, if this was accurate can you please show the slide again? I'm having a hard time finding this schedule online.

The slides will be posted and accessible from the Mid-scale RI-1 Program Page. Directorate-specific webinars will also be posted on the Mid-scale RI-1 web page. You can also reach out to the Directorate representative, listed on the Mid-scale RI-1 Program Page, who can point you to their specialized webinar or its recording (should there be one).

If all other aspects of two proposals are the same merit-wise, will an implementation proposal submitted by a design awardee be favored over an implementation proposal that did result from a design award?

There are no such preferences.

If the building is not built yet but needed for the grant. Can the university commit to that building in case we get funding, or that will be considered cost share?

Consider how a review panel would see this. If the building where the infrastructure would be implemented does not exist, would a review panel recommend supporting a proposal with this risk? The university should demonstrate its capacity to host the infrastructure in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources document. The promise of a building should the project be awarded does not look like a "resource". In addition, please note in the solicitation what Mid-scale RI-1 will not fund: ***The Mid-scale RI-1 program will not support projects that include the***

**following: ...** General-purpose buildings, support systems and equipment that are not directly required for the implementation and eventual operation of the proposed infrastructure and/or that support multi-purpose usage in addition to research.

Is there an expectation of having successfully been awarded an MRI project before submitting a Mid-scale RI-1?

There is no such expectation.

There have been 28 previous awards over the 3 previous competitions; how does that compare to the total number of proposals? i.e., what has been the historical success rate?

The number of competitions to date is small. We are unable to speak about success rates.

What would be the most recommended program for submitting a planning grant to get ready for a future Mid-scale RI-1?

Mid-scale RI-1 does not support planning grants. Please contact the relevant NSF Division regarding the availability of planning grants.

Are there any workshops on mid-level proposal/grant writing

See <https://researchinfrastructureoutreach.com/>. This web site contains many resources, both recorded and textual.

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