



National Science Foundation

4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

For NSF Program Solicitation NSF 07-579

"Emerging Frontiers in Research and Innovation 2008 (EFRI-2008)"

1. [PI Limit] Section IV, "Eligibility Information," states "Limit on Number of Proposals per PI: 1 Each PI/co-PI may participate in only one proposal in response to this solicitation." Does this mean that an individual can be PI on one proposal and co-PI on a second proposal, or that an individual can be on one proposal only either as PI or co-PI?

An individual may participate only in one proposal as PI or co-PI.

2. Section V.A. "Proposal Preparation Instructions," under "Letter of Intent Preparation Instructions" uses the term "Other Senior Project Personnel." How many co-PIs and how many other senior personnel are allowed in a proposal?

The term "Other Senior Project Personnel" refers to the co-PIs that are to be listed on the cover page. A minimum of two and a maximum of four co-PIs are allowed, in addition to the PI. There is no limit on the number of senior personnel in addition to the PI and co-PIs listed on the cover page.

3. [Faculty Level or Equivalent] Section IV, "Eligibility Information," states under "PI Limit" that "Principal Investigators (PI) must be at the faculty level or equivalent." How is "faculty level or equivalent" for the Principal Investigators defined?

Principal Investigators (PI and co-PIs) must have a tenured, tenure-track, or non-tenure track faculty position and their institution allows them to serve as PI or co-PI. Postdoctoral researchers are not allowed to serve as PI or co-PI but they may serve as other personnel.

4. [Primary Appointment] Section IV, "Eligibility Information," states under "PI Limit" that "Principal Investigators (PI) must be at the faculty level or equivalent and the lead PI must have a primary appointment in an engineering department." How is the primary appointment determined for the lead PI?

The primary appointment is defined as the lead PI's department as identified in the proposal. Secondary and adjunct appointments are not considered to be primary appointments.

5. [Department vs. Discipline] Section IV, "Eligibility Information," states under "PI Limit" that "The PI and at least two co-PIs, all from different disciplines and with funded time committed in the budget, must be listed on the cover page or the budget page of the proposal." Can individuals from the same department serve as co-PIs as long as their disciplines are different?

Yes. Subfields of a major field are allowed as different disciplines (e.g. heat transfer and operations research within a Mechanical Engineering Department). However, note that proposals that are perceived by reviewers as not being cross- or multi-disciplinary per the "Additional Review Criteria" under Section VI, "NSF Proposal Processing and Review Procedures" may not be competitive.

6. **[Lead PI Eligibility] Section IV, "Eligibility Information," states under "PI Limit" that "Principal Investigators (PI) must be at the faculty level or equivalent and the lead PI must have a primary appointment in an engineering department." What is an "engineering department?"**

The lead PI must have a primary appointment in a department, division, college, or school with the word "engineering", the phrase "systems science", or the phrase "computer science" in its name. It is acceptable if the division, college, or school has the word "engineering" in its title, even if the department does not.

7. **[Lead PI from Centers or Institutes] Section IV, "Eligibility Information," states under "PI Limit" that "Principal Investigators (PI) must be at the faculty level or equivalent and the lead PI must have a primary appointment in an engineering department." Can the Lead PI be from an interdisciplinary Institute or Center within the university or college that is focused on one of the two topics of the program solicitation?**

That may be possible. The NSF response to this question will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Please send email to efri2008@nsf.gov to get a specific answer regarding your case, and include the NSF response in the Special Information and Supplementary Documentation section of the preliminary proposal and, if invited, of the full proposal.

8. **[Industry co-PI?] Can an individual from industry serve as a co-PI?**

Only if the individual has a faculty level or equivalent position at a U.S. university or college located in the U.S. and uses that academic affiliation as the individual's organization on the proposal cover page.

9. **For the Cognitive Optimization and Prediction (COPN) topic, are there any suggestions for what type of neuroscientist would be most suitable as a partner, and how to find such neuroscientists?**

NSF will allow neuroscientists with expertise in various fields of neuroscience, such as cognitive systems, computational neuroscience, or behavioral neuroscience that contribute to unraveling how prediction or optimization are learned in the brain, at the level described in the program solicitation. It is important to locate specific partners interested in the broad fundamental questions addressed in COPN. Among the many possible resources on the web (which NSF does not necessarily endorse in their totality) are:

<http://www.nsf.gov/crcns>
<http://neurotree.org/neurotree/>
<http://scholarpedia.org/>
<http://intramural.nimh.nih.gov/>
