



National Science Foundation
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NSF 13-129

Frequently Asked Questions for **NSF 13-605**, Catalyzing New International Collaborations (CNIC)

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ELIGIBILITY

1. Who is eligible for the CNIC program?

See the Grant Proposal Guide at http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg for information on eligibility. CNIC has no additional requirements or restrictions.

2. How is a 'new' collaboration defined?

Note that CNIC supports only **new** international collaborations. A 'new' collaboration is one that is new to the investigator (and co-PI(s) if applicable). This can mean a new collaborative relationship or a **substantially** different research direction. Proposed projects for which collaborators have only met at a conference or maybe not at all, not yet undertaken any joint research, and not yet visited each other's locations, would be considered new. Projects for which the collaborators have already published or received funding together will not necessarily be ineligible, but will require detailed justification for why they should be considered new.

3. Where can I use a CNIC award?

Travel can be proposed to any country(ies) that is(are) not explicitly proscribed by the Department of State (see current information at <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/Programs.aspx> and <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/list/c14151.htm>). No countries have a favored status for CNIC funding; rather, funding decisions are based on how well the proposal meets the program guidelines and NSF's review criteria.

4. What areas of research are supported by CNIC awards?

CNIC proposals may cover any field of science and engineering research and education supported by NSF. The expected outcome of a CNIC award should be submission of a full research proposal(s) to an NSF research program. Information on the NSF Directorates is at <http://www.nsf.gov/staff/orglist.jsp>; multi-disciplinary or cross-cutting programs are listed at http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_list.jsp?type=xcut. Program websites contain information on what is supported, including lists of previously funded projects. The Directorates should be contacted directly with questions concerning technical area eligibility for NSF funding.

5. What forms of collaboration are funded?

The CNIC program will support US-based researchers' participation in activities such as short research planning visits, international workshops, initial data gathering activities, and initial proof-of-concept. CNIC awards are meant to be a direct precursor to submission of a research proposal to an NSF core research program. A CNIC award is **not required**, however, prior to submission of an NSF research proposal including an international collaboration.

6. Can CNIC support international workshops?

Yes. This is a change from the FY2013 solicitation.

7. What is the difference between a workshop and a planning visit?

A CNIC **planning visit** generally involves one PI plus, possibly, a small number of student(s) and/or co-PI(s) and/or postdoctoral researcher(s) visiting a potential collaborator(s) abroad, to work out specifics for future collaborative work that could be supported by NSF. A CNIC **workshop** should explore a broader topic rather than focusing on one project, should involve researchers from several US institutions and several foreign institutions, and should lead to multiple collaborative proposals in a new scientific area. NSF will support expenses of the US-based workshop attendees only.

8. What if I have an active NSF Award?

PIs with active NSF awards may be eligible to seek Supplemental funding additional to their existing award, which may be co-funded by ISE through a non-CNIC internal mechanism. PIs wishing to submit a Supplement proposal should correspond first with the cognizant Program Officer for their existing award.

9. What is the difference between Supplement and CNIC support?

| | Supplement proposal | CNIC proposal |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Must PI currently hold an NSF award? | Yes , in the same technical field as the proposed international activity | Doesn't matter |
| Submission must ... | be approved beforehand by the cognizant PO for the original award (no formal CNIC involvement) | be discussed beforehand with the OISE Country/Regional PO |
| Submission timing | Consult cognizant PO | Four target dates per year |
| Project description maximum length | GPG limit applies | Eight pages |
| Limitation on funding request | PIs may request additional funding for any other activities in the same Supplement proposal, subject to agreement by the cognizant PO | Funds requested must be limited to those for a new international catalytic activity only |
| Maximum award | Total of all Supplement awards must not exceed 20% of the initial award amount | \$75,000 including indirect costs |
| Indirect cost % rate | = Indirect cost % rate applied on initial proposal | Based on institution's current policy (in some cases, an off-campus rate may apply) |
| Must proposals adhere to all the requirements of | For international activities, proposers are recommended to follow the documentation | Yes |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| the CNIC solicitation? | requirements specified by the CNIC solicitation | |
| Review is usually... | internal by experts within NSF | for planning visits, external by experts outside NSF; for workshops, may be internal or external |
| Period between proposal submission and first travel | Consult cognizant PO | Minimum of eight months after target date is advised |

COMMUNICATION WITH NSF REQUIRED BEFORE SUBMISSION

10. What is the difference between disciplinary and Country/Regional program officers?

Disciplinary Program Officers are associated with NSF programs in a specific field of science and engineering research and education supported by the NSF Directorates; they are listed on the respective website for each NSF Directorate. OISE Country/Regional Program Officers are associated with NSF activity in a specific country or geographic region, and are listed at <http://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/country-list.jsp>.

11. Why do I need to contact a Country/Regional program officer prior to submission?

It is always good practice to discuss planned proposals with a Program Officer prior to submission. In CNIC, the Country/Regional Program Officer may wish to discuss technical issues (e.g., to which active NSF program the follow-on proposal(s) is(are) to be submitted), budgetary issues (e.g., compliance with the solicitation), eligibility (e.g. newness of the collaboration), and unique country or regional issues. The Country/Regional Program officer may in turn refer the inquirer to other NSF Program Officers as appropriate. As a courtesy for information purposes, it is also good practice for a potential proposer to inform the disciplinary Program Officer(s), for the NSF program(s) to which the follow-on proposal(s) would be submitted, of the intent to submit a CNIC proposal, although no response from the Disciplinary Program Officer is required. If the Country/Regional or other Program Officers offer advice, be sure to follow it carefully.

12. What information is useful to provide in correspondence with the Country/Regional Program Officer?

It is helpful to summarize the scientific issues to be explored and to indicate the names and institutional affiliations of key foreign collaborators, the necessity and prior history (if any) of the proposed international collaboration or workshop, to which active NSF program the follow-on proposal(s) is(are) to be submitted, and perhaps a non-binding guestimate of expected budget categories and approximate amounts (one or two significant figures). In first instance, all this should be limited to one page **absolute maximum**. The Country/Regional Program Officer may subsequently ask for more clarification or suggest consultation with other NSF Program Officers as appropriate in each individual case. Remember to keep copies of all these e-mails, as they **must** be included in the Supplementary Documents of the resulting CNIC proposal.

WRITING A CNIC PROPOSAL

13. What can be supported with CNIC funds?

The award supports travel expenses for international planning visits taken by the PI (and a small number of other researchers, if applicable) or small international workshops. PIs are encouraged to

include student(s) and/or postdoctoral researcher(s) accompanying the PI abroad. CNIC support for students or postdoctoral researchers is limited to US citizens and legal US permanent residents. Other small expenses incurred undertaking the catalytic activity, such as supplies, can be included. CNIC funds **cannot** be used to support travel, salary, or any other expenses of any **non-US-based researchers or participants**. Equipment purchases **cannot** be supported by CNIC. Salary can be claimed only for time spent on the project while located outside the US plus necessary time to get there. Persons splitting time between the US and another country cannot claim salary through CNIC for the time spent conducting research in the US. For projects needing more than the maximum award under CNIC, funding should be sought directly through NSF's disciplinary or core programs.

14. Do I need to include students in a CNIC project?

No, but it is strongly encouraged. Students may be undergraduate or graduate.

15. Can postdoctoral researchers or students apply independently for a CNIC award?

This depends upon whether their home institution allows them to act as PIs on NSF proposals. CNIC is not intended to function as fellowship funding for students or postdoctoral researchers.

16. How long can visits be?

CNIC projects may run for 12 months maximum, but the time abroad undertaking planning or a workshop is typically much shorter than that.

17. What information do I need to include about the non-US-based collaborator(s)?

The solicitation specifies the formal requirements. Taken together, these should provide evidence of true intellectual collaboration abroad. The 'principal foreign collaborator(s)' on which most details are needed may be interpreted to mean the equivalent of Assistant Professor level and above. On the Cover Sheet, do **not** include the foreign collaborator(s) as Co-PIs as they cannot be awarded support under CNIC.

18. How much detail is needed in the budget?

An ideal Budget Justification will itemize separately the cost of airfares per person to each destination, cost and destination(s) of ground travel per person (or per vehicle) and mode of transport, budgeted amounts per person per day for lodging, budgeted amounts per person per day for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE), trip lengths, total budgeted per diems per person, description and amounts for materials needed, precise durations for which salaries/stipends are requested, annual equivalent salaries/stipends, benefits %, total salary request per person, any other essential costs requested with a clear description, and indirect cost category (e.g. 'on-campus' or 'off-campus'), % rate and \$ basis. CNIC budgets are merit-reviewed along with the rest of the CNIC proposal.

19. How will my non-US-based collaborator be funded?

NSF expects that foreign collaborators will seek support from the science funding agencies in their home countries. In some countries, funding for non-US scientists can be sought through the USAID Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) program. Information about PEER is available at <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/dsc/peer/index.htm>.

AFTER SUBMISSION

20. How will CNIC proposals be reviewed?

CNIC proposals may be reviewed by external ad-hoc or panel reviewers, as well as by internal reviewers as needed.

21. **How long will it take to get an answer?**

CNIC proposals must be merit-reviewed, so the timing will depend on how quickly reviews are returned and on how many other proposals are received around the same time. While we aim to respond to CNIC proposals as quickly as possible, it can take up to six months after the later of the submission or the respective target date for an award decision to be finalized.

22. **How is a CNIC proposal checked for compliance?**

Before being sent for review, CNIC proposals are routinely checked for the following:

General:

- Start date more than eight months ahead of target date
- Inclusion of all sections of proposal required in program guidelines and GPG
- Compliance with margin, font and page limits

Cover Page:

- Title includes collaboration country(ies)
- Cover Page contains Country Code(s)
- Electronic signature present

Project Summary:

- Names, Institutions, and roles of foreign collaborators
- Follow-on NSF Program (destination of subsequent proposals) identified clearly
- Intellectual Merit and Broader Impact addressed

Project Description:

- Research and education objectives described
- Intellectual collaboration: expertise, contributions, division of labor
- History of collaboration, why it is 'new'
- Justification for selecting the destination venue
- Student and/or early career researcher involvement described if travel is requested for them
- Schedule of trip activities included
- Strategies to continue the collaboration & relevance to the NSF Program identified in the Summary
- Broader impacts
- Results from prior NSF support

Biographical Sketches:

- 2-page biosketch in NSF format for US PI (and each Co-PI if applicable)

Budget:

- Maximum budget within limit
- Salaries requested only for time abroad
- No support for overseas-based persons
- No equipment requested

- No voluntary cost-sharing
- Detailed Budget Justification present

Current & Pending support:

- Current & Pending support listed

Facilities:

- Facilities & equipment at US institution

Supplementary Documents:

- Data management plan
- Postdoc mentoring plan included, if postdoc travel is requested
- Inclusion of 2-page biosketch (in NSF format) and letter of collaboration from each non-US-based collaborator. (In the case of Workshops, biosketches and letters showing intent to attend from all principal foreign attendees known at the time of submission must be included.)
- Facilities & equipment at partner institution(s)
- Evidence of prior contact with OISE Country/Regional Program Officer, and other Program Officers if applicable

If any of these aspects are non-compliant, the CNIC program may request that the proposal be withdrawn or it may be Returned Without Review (RWR).