



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Directorate of Biological Sciences (BIO) Core Programs Solicitations

1. What is the objective of the separate track for Rules of Life (RoL) proposals?
2. What types of proposals are you looking for in the RoL track; should they be larger projects?
3. Will the review process of BIO proposals change?
4. How will RoL proposals be reviewed?
5. Will the community be told the dates of panels?
6. When is the best time to submit?
7. What will happen to proposals that come in at the end of the fiscal year?
8. How long will it take to receive a decision on my proposal?

1. What is the objective of the separate track for Rules of Life (RoL) proposals?

BIO seeks to support research that spans the traditional subdisciplines of biology to address broad, fundamental questions that advance discovery of general principles (aka Rules) operating across the hierarchy of biological organization from subcellular systems to ecosystems. The RoL track was established to encourage this type of integrative research, with a goal of fostering a re-unification of the biological sciences.

2. What types of proposals are you looking for in the RoL track; should they be larger projects?

Proposals appropriate for the RoL track should describe projects that apply integrative approaches to span levels of biological organization beyond the funding programs within a single BIO division (i.e., projects that **require** co-review by two or more of the four Divisions in BIO (Biological Infrastructure, Environmental Biology, Integrative

Organismal Systems, Molecular and Cellular Biosciences). BIO has no preconceived expectations or restrictions on the scope of RoL projects. As with all NSF proposals, the requested budget and award duration should be what is justifiably necessary to complete the proposal objectives.

3. Will the review process of BIO proposals change?

No, the standard practice is to review proposals using panel and/or *ad hoc* review, and that will not change under the no-deadline review process.

4. How will RoL proposals be reviewed?

RoL proposals are required to identify two or more BIO divisions and programs to which the proposal is appropriate for co-review. The first step in the review process will be for program officers in the specified divisions to confirm appropriateness of the project for co-review. Proposers who are uncertain of whether their research ideas are appropriate for RoL should talk with program officers in the relevant programs before submission. **Inappropriate proposals will be returned without review.** Review of RoL proposals will occur by ad hoc and/or panel(s) co-review as jointly determined by program officers in the multiple divisions.

5. Will the community be told the dates of panels?

Consistent with NSF practice, panel dates will not be announced to PIs.

6. When is the best time to submit?

Our best advice is to submit your proposal when you think it is ready. There is no time of the year that is better than others with respect to the review process or expected funding rate. Program officers will be recommending awards continuously throughout the year using a mix of standard and continuing grants that allow them to manage their program funds across multiple fiscal years.

7. What will happen to proposals that come in at the end of the fiscal year?

Review of proposals is not tied to the timing of the fiscal year. Proposals that come in late in the fiscal year will be reviewed in the same way and with the same expected decision times as proposals that come in at the beginning of the fiscal year. Proposals recommended for awards late in the fiscal year will be funded at the start of the next fiscal year.

8. How long will it take to receive a decision on my proposal?

No change in average time to award or decline decisions and release of reviews is expected with this transition to no-deadlines. All programs strive to meet the NSF

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performance goals of completing 75% of proposal recommendations within 6-months of the date of receipt.