



The National Science Foundation (NSF) engages in partnerships with other federal agencies, industry, foundations, non-profits, and international funding agencies and organizations. Partnerships offer opportunities to amplify economic and societal benefits for the United States, such as accelerating discovery and the transition of research to practice. Partnering can also generate significant costs and risks for the agency, which must be carefully considered prior to embarking on any new partnership.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WITHIN THE RISK, COST, AND BENEFIT LANDSCAPE

BENEFITS | The benefits of the partnership to all parties should be clear and aligned with NSF's mission and applicable policies.

COSTS | The costs (e.g., resources, time, effort) and risks to the agency (e.g., public perception, reputation) should be considered and a determination made that the value of the partnership outweighs any potential cost and risk factors.

OUTCOMES | A partnership should enhance the proposed achievement or potential outcomes of research, education, or innovation in one or more of the following ways:

- a. Expand or accelerate the achievement of research, education or innovative outcomes (including transition of research to practice);
- b. Enable NSF and/or the U.S. research community to achieve what would not be possible in the absence of the partnership;
- c. Provide unique training and/or research experiences for students, trainees;
- d. Provide access to and/or share resources and/or expertise needed to support research and education; and/or
- e. Coordinate and reduce redundancy across the U.S. research portfolio.

IMPLEMENTATION FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED

AUTHORIZATION | Formal and informal partnership approaches have different approval requirements. Thoughtful consideration of the goals and resources needed can help identify the most appropriate options.

RESOURCES | Prior to initiating a partnership activity, the resources (e.g., human, financial, technological) required and, at minimum, the strategy for identifying the necessary resources should be identified.

CONTEXT | Potential partnership opportunities should be coordinated, where appropriate, with any existing NSF agreements with the partner organization as well as the interests of other stakeholders within NSF.

OVERSIGHT | Partnership arrangements should include a plan to monitor progress, identify and manage issues that arise, evaluate the partnership's successes and challenges, and assess appropriate next steps (e.g., sunseting, continuing, or expanding) for the partnership.