



**Towards the Operationalization**

**of**

**International Collaborative Research Projects in Ocean Sciences**



## Separate Process



### EU/NSF Joint Call for Proposals

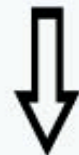
EU PIs prepare proposal in  
relation to text in Framework  
Program, noting  
US collaborators



EU Reviews  
EU Proposal in the context of the  
Framework Program



EU funding decisions  
By managers



If both sides have fundable proposals

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Funding of EU  
proposal

NSF PIs prepare separate  
proposals noting links to  
aspects of EU proposal



Peer review of  
NSF proposals by  
NSF reviewers



NSF panel review  
of proposals



NSF funding decisions  
based on panel  
recommendations and EU  
decision on EU proposal

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Funding of accepted  
NSF proposals

What we need is a coherent collaboration.

- ✓ Coordinate and focus activities
- ✓ Avoid research gaps
- ✓ Synchronize timing
- ✓ Provide adequate funding and expertise
- ✓ Optimize usage of funding – avoid overlaps
- ✓ Build international collaborations (EU Nation States; US; Canada; EC)
- ✓ Build research teams
- ✓ Optimization and sharing of platforms (e.g. Ships)
- ✓ Provide a coherent dissemination of results to the general public and end users

## Some Questions to Consider as we discuss the “Strawman”

- ✓ Unified or Parallel National Programs...  
*(The whole is greater than the sum of the parts)*
- ✓ Unified or parallel proposal review process? Pros and cons.
- ✓ Agreement on merit review: do we have a unified set of criteria?
- ✓ How do we handle differing conflict of interest policies?
- ✓ Post-award project management: unified or parallel ?
- ✓ Project review process and renewal: on what time scale?

**Step 1: PROJECT Concept:**

Concept based on “theme” proposals from;

- ✓ the scientific community. from self-generated discussions and workshops.
- ✓ the scientific community based on international groups: e.g. IGBP IMBER/ SOLAS working group; SCOR, IOC, PICES, ICES working groups; BELMONT Forum, etc
- ✓ agency representatives US (NSF, NOAA), Canada ( NSERC, DFO) EC, similarly within e.g., Norway, Germany, UK, France, Spain

**Step 2: Selection of Theme/s for potential international support by multiple agencies.**

- ✓ Meeting of participating funding agencies (national, multilateral) to evaluate and assess merit of Themes (as needed).
- ✓ Selection of themes for the potential development of collaborative projects

### **Step 3: Decision on National Participation**

- ✓ Discussions of theme relevance and need for the activity on the National Level
- ✓ Agreement or rejection of theme by national funding agencies
- ✓ Participating nations decide on activity participation and the level of financial contribution.

## **Step 4: Establishment of an International Scientific Steering Committee (ISSC)**

### ***Makeup:***

Comprised of scientists from Nations providing financial support for the potential program.

### ***Actions:***

- ✓ - Cooperative financial support and agency oversight of ISSC process and products
  
- ✓ - Determination of conflict of interest policies



### **III. THE SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION COMMITTEE (SEC)**

The SEC is established as soon as the proposals have been received. The SEC reports to the JMC and is supported by the Call Secretariat.

#### **Members of the SEC**

The SEC consists of scientific experts. Each participating SEAS-ERA funding partner may suggest two to three members. Non-funding SEAS-ERA partners who have researchers involved in proposals may also suggest members. It would be desirable for each proposal to be evaluated by members of the committee who are from a country outside of the proposal applicants.

The JMC decides on the final composition of the SEC and selects the chair. Selection takes into account the appropriate qualification of the SEC members and scientific coverage and disciplinary competence. National and gender balance is preferred, but there are no fixed quota. Individual expertise is the most important criterion.

Members take part in the SEC as independent experts and are not representing any organisation, nor can they send any replacements.

#### **Mandate of the SEC**

- Provides the peer review for the scientific assessment of the proposals.
- Ranks and recommends proposals on the basis of the criteria published in the call and the scientific assessments.
- Provides a written summary to explain its decisions to the JMC and the applicants.
- Composition of the SEC is to be made public after the decision of funded projects is made.

## **Step 5: Development of Coordinated/Joint call for Joint Proposals**

Call text developed by the National and International funding agencies in collaboration with the ISSC.

### ***Issues:***

- ✓ Consideration of constraints, policies, practices, of participating agencies.
  
- ✓ Decisions about nature of joint calls (unified, parallel) and the review processes and criteria required; seeking simplest approaches given constraints
  
- ✓ Consideration of eligibility requirements within participating nations based on funding agencies
  
- ✓ Consideration of nature of research (fundamental; use-inspired or not; more applied in nature) based on participating agencies.

## **Step 6: Single Call for Proposals**

✓ One Call released

✓ Call is open to all scientists from all nations providing funding.

### **Individual Proposals:**

#### ***Proposal style.***

✓ Individual researcher, projects (national level)

✓ Small and large collaborative team projects (national and international levels)

✓ Joint programs (multiple, integrated, collaborative projects; international level)

**Note:** Proposals focused on basic science as well as of an applied nature.

## **Step 7: Review process:**

### ***International Reviewers***

- ✓ International reviewers selected and agreed upon by the funding agencies and ISSC based on agreed approaches
  
- ✓ Determination of conflict of interest policies
  
- ✓ Cooperative management of review processes

# Review Criteria

- ✓ Scientific merit (5)
- ✓ Importance for realizing the overall goal of the project 'including clear defined international bridging activities'(5)
- ✓ Quality of the individual or team. (5)
- ✓ Contribution to society (5)
- ✓ Management and dissemination Plan. (5)

Other required criteria based on participating agency policies (e.g., milestones and deliverables to the project with time lines; diversity of participation; training and education elements, etc.)

Note: Weighting above to be established following discussions with the funding agencies and ISSC. Potential for funding agency specific weighting.



Upon receiving **full proposals**, international reviewers will evaluate these full proposals according to the following criteria:

**1. Scientific Aspects**

1. Scientific quality of the proposed research
2. Relevance to the call
3. Novelty, originality and innovation
4. Clarity of the hypothesis, theories and/or research questions
5. Quality of applicants and suitability of the consortium
6. Level of transdisciplinarity

**2. Project management and added value:**

1. Feasibility and risk
2. Level of integration and collaboration
3. European added value
4. Quality of project governance
5. Suitability of budget requirements
6. Networking and dissemination activities
7. Training opportunities

### **Step 8: Project Selection: Part 1**

- ✓ All reviews disseminated to the funding agency personnel for examination/evaluation.
  
- ✓ All reviews evaluated by the ISSC,
  
- ✓ ISSC propose a ranking based on
  - Specified review criteria
  - critical nature of the contribution to the overall goals of the program
  - links and time lines within the overall project

## **Step 9: Project Selection Part 2**

- ✓ Meeting of the ISC and Funding agencies to discuss ranking and selection.
- ✓ ISSC and agency ranking compared.
- ✓ ISSC presentation of a coherent plan of the projects to be funded designed to address the overarching goal of the project.
- ✓ Agency consensus on projects to be funded.



## **Step 10 Project Negotiation**

- ✓ Funding agencies negotiate with the leaders of the selected projects.
- ✓ Formalization of contracts and grants according to agencies policies and procedures

## **Step 11: Project Start up**

All projects commence at the same time or are coordinated to start based on the temporal needs of the overall project. I.e. projects start as necessary data or tools are made available from other sources.

### **Project Management:**

- ✓ The international steering committee acts as an advisory body to both the project participants and the funding agencies.
- ✓ Individual projects are managed by a lead PI who acts as the project representative in discussions with the ISSC and funding agencies as well as ensuring project activities are completed and is responsible for project reporting

## Reporting

- ✓ Project reports from all funded reports projects as constrained by agencies policy and procedures but detailing;
- ✓ Progress, products challenges and problems
- ✓ coherence of activities with the milestones and deliverables
- ✓ Other matters (e.g., financial accounting; changing budgetary needs; changing personnel, etc.)

## **Project Report Reviews and Project Continuation.**

- ✓ 18 Month and final reports dependent upon project duration and agreement by the national funding agencies.
- ✓ Individual Project Reports reviewed by independent reviewers selected by the funding agencies in discussion with the ISSC. (Funding agencies determine the reviewers)
- ✓ Reviewer Reports disseminated to the funding agencies and the ISSC
- ✓ Meeting of the ISSC and the funding agencies to assess the status of the individual projects. Presentations by the project leaders in response to the reviews.
- ✓ Continuation or termination of individual projects based on accomplishment of planned activities. Based on discussions between the ISSC and funding agencies funding agencies continue or cancel funding to individual projects. (final decision up to the funding agencies).

## Other Issues

### ***Funding for PIs***

- ✓ PIs are funded by contributions from their National funding agencies.

### ***Deviations from own for own funding.***

- ✓ Where the contribution is viewed as critical to the project (gap) and sufficient funds are unavailable from the funding nation or the nation is not part of the consortium of participating nations. The ISSC can present a proposal for evaluation and for potential funding to the consortium of funding agencies from participating nations who can agree if the proposal by the ISSC is accepted to secure funding by mechanisms appropriate to the various participating nations.

The proposal shall outline;

- ✓ the critical nature of activity by the PI or team
- ✓ the necessity for use of specific facilities unavailable within the consortium of PIs.
- ✓ The need to develop expertise in the area.



# Funding model



## **Virtual common pot**

The funding partners agree on launching a joint call using a model constituting of a joint call and evaluation but national funding. Basically, each funding partner will fund its own national scientific teams (following the 'juste retour' model).

Depending on national rules, each partner can use different levels of flexibility. The Partners agree on four levels of flexibility in this funding model:

- an agency does not have to spend all the money that has been provisionally reserved;
- some agencies may be able to come up with extra money to fund good proposals;
- some agencies may be able to fund foreign teams;
- most agencies would be able to fund foreign teams via subcontracting.

SEAS-ERA is aiming to fund as many of the highest ranked proposals as possible. Funding gaps may arise in the ranking when one of the partners runs out of money. SEAS-ERA intends to deal with these gaps through the four levels of flexibility.