



Call for Proposals in a Joint NSF-BSF Program in Astronomical Sciences

The U.S.-Israel Binational Science Foundation (BSF) is accepting applications in a joint funding program with the division of Astronomical Sciences (AST), in the Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences of the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF).

The Terms of this program are as follows:

Synopsis of Program:

The Astronomy and Astrophysics Research Grants (AAG) Program is an inclusive and flexible funding opportunity to support research in the astronomical sciences. The Program provides individual investigator and collaborative research grants for observational, theoretical, laboratory, and archival data studies in astronomy and astrophysics. The Program also considers proposals for projects and tools that enable or enhance astronomical research. Proposals may span multiple disciplines and/or areas of study and may utilize multiple techniques.

A full description of the current program can be found in the NSF solicitation on the NSF website. It is strongly advised for all potential applicants (including Israelis) to read the document carefully:

https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=13630&org=AST&from=home

General:

1. This NSF-BSF program is not a “special” program with the NSF setting aside money for potential grants. Rather, it is an integral part of the regular NSF core programs in these disciplines, with no “special” funds. Clear understanding of it by the U.S. partner is essential before embarking on proposal writing.

2. **Prior to submission, the U.S. applicant is advised to contact the appropriate NSF program manager to discuss the research focus of his international project.**
3. Applications must be written jointly by an Israeli and a U.S. scientist from a U.S. research institution.
4. The NSF accepts applications only from U.S. scientists. Submission to the NSF should be made by the U.S. PI alone, but he has to note in the cover page that it is an “NSF-BSF Application” (the Israeli does not appear as a formal co-PI on the application). In the U.S.-Israeli applications, the role of the Israeli partner(s) must be described. **Furthermore, it should be clearly explained why the contribution of the Israeli PI to the research project is important/essential.**
5. If awarded a grant, the Israeli scientist will receive a grant from the BSF, while the U.S. scientist will receive a grant from the NSF.
6. The size of the BSF grant to the Israeli is expected to be up to \$80,000/year for experimental programs and up to \$55,000/year for theoretical or computer based research, **subject to the availability of funds.** If more than a single Israeli group is involved in the research, the budget may be increased by up to 50%.
7. BSF will follow the decision by the U.S. funding agency regarding the length of the project.
8. The program is expected to be held annually.
9. We have put together a presentation with tips for Israeli scientists who wish to submit to the NSF-BSF. You can download the presentation [here](#).

Eligibility:

- 1) All inquiries regarding the eligibility of the research topic must be made by the U.S. PIs to the program directors at NSF. BSF will not respond to any query regarding topic eligibility.
- 2) All regulations regarding eligibility of the BSF (for the Israeli PI) or the NSF (for the U.S. PI) will apply to this program.
- 3) **Each Israeli scientist is allowed to submit up to two applications/year, if at least one of them is to any of the NSF-BSF programs that have no deadline.**

- 4) Israelis with active grants are allowed to submit an additional application to any of the **NSF-BSF programs with no deadline** (they don't have to wait for the last year of their grant before submitting).
- 5) It is allowed to submit both to an NSF-BSF program and the regular BSF program, including similar applications. In the event that both applications are awarded grants, they will be funded in both, unless the research applications are mostly similar, in which case only the NSF-BSF program will be funded.
- 6) In case of similar NSF-BSF and regular BSF applications, in which the NSF evaluation was not completed by the time the regular BSF awards are made, the BSF will defer its decision regarding a possible grant to this application, until the NSF-BSF awards are announced.

Evaluation:

1. Proposals will be evaluated by the NSF, using its [criteria](#). The BSF will create a small screening panel to quickly examine the role of the Israelis in the applications, and ascertain that it is meaningful, and that they have the knowhow and facilities to perform their part in the research. This panel will also advise the BSF regarding the budget requests, but will not evaluate the scientific merit of the applications. However, Israelis may possibly take part in the NSF evaluation process as panel members and/or external reviewers.
2. BSF is likely to fund any Israeli whose partner in this program is funded by the NSF, subject to the eligibility constraints listed above and availability of funds, and to the advice of the screening panel.
3. NSF uses a conventional peer review system with expert panels and ad-hoc (external) reviews for full proposals. However, unlike the practice in Israel, panel members serve in an advisory capacity, and final decisions lie with the program managers and their management. These post-panel officials may introduce additional considerations such as whether the research topic already has support from the U.S. government, whether support from other NSF programs may be sought, etc.
4. Israeli applicants are advised that they should pay particular attention to the NSF evaluation criteria, http://nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/, which may include issues such as broad impact, data management, etc. That are either missing in BSF/ISF applications, or have a greatly different meaning (particularly the term 'broad impact'). **Failure to appropriately refer to such topics by the U.S. partner may be detrimental to the proposal, including its rejection without review.**

Submission:

The full proposals will be submitted to the program twice.

The U.S. scientist (only) will submit to the NSF using its regulations (http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg) and submission system (<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/>). **The U.S. PI submission to the NSF MUST include the BIOGRAPHY (in the NSF format), BUDGET (in the BSF format) of the Israeli partner as part of the auxiliary material.**

The Israeli scientist (only) will submit to the BSF, also providing the U.S. scientist information, according to its regulations and submission system: <http://www.bsf.org.il/ElectronicSubmission/GatewayFormsAndGuidelines.aspx?PageId=7&innerTextID=0%20>

Timetable:

Full proposals should be submitted to the BSF no later than 5 pm (Israel time) on November 21, 2019. NSF deadline is November 15, 2019.

Applicants are requested to acquaint themselves with the BSF regulation for this NSF-BSF program before they submit applications. The forms and regulations can be downloaded from the BSF website (www.bsf.org.il) under 'Guidelines and Forms'.

Questions regarding the applicability of the proposed research for this program should be directed by the U.S. partner to the program officer at the NSF.

Other questions regarding this special NSF-BSF program can be discussed with the BSF management by mail or phone (972-2-5828239): Dr. Rachel (Heni) Haring (heni@bsf.org.il ext. 110) or Ms. Yael Dressler (yael@bsf.org.il ext. 103). Questions regarding the online application system should be directed to Ms. Orli Rozencwajg (orli@bsf.org.il ext. 109).