BSF Call for Proposals in a Joint NSF-BSF Program with the Integrative Organismal System Division (IOS) - EDGE Track

The U.S.-Israel Science Foundation (BSF) is accepting applications in a joint funding program: Enabling Discovery through Genomic Tools (EDGE) track in the Integrative Organismal System Division (IOS) in the Biological Sciences Directorate (BIO) of the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF).

The Terms of this program are as follows:

Synopsis of Program:

Through the Enabling Discovery through GEnomics (EDGE) program, the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes for Health (NIH) support research to advance understanding of comparative and functional genomics. The EDGE program supports the development of innovative tools, technologies, resources, and infrastructure that advance biological research focused on the identification of the causal mechanisms connecting genes and phenotypes. The EDGE program also supports functional genomic research that addresses the mechanistic basis of complex traits in diverse organisms within the context (environmental, developmental, social, and/or genomic) in which they function. These goals are essential to uncovering the rules that underlie genomes-to-phenomes relationships and predict phenotype, an area relevant to Understanding the Rules of Life: Predicting Phenotype, one of the 10 Big Ideas for NSF investment. The goals also support the NHGRI priority to establish the roles and relationships of all genes and regulatory elements in pathways, networks, and phenotypes.

A full description of the program can be found in the IOS solicitation on the NSF website. It is strongly advised for all potentials applicants (including Israelis) to read the document carefully: https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2021/nsf21546/nsf21546.htm?WT.mc_id=USNSF_25&WT.mc_ev=click
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 programs in this discipline, with no “extra” funds. Clear understanding of this on part of the U.S. partner is essential before embarking on proposal writing.

2. This program has only full proposals stage.

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/she 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 US 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 program. 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. 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:

- **U.S. scientists** that apply with an Israeli colleague to the NSF are subject to the NSF rules only.

- **Israeli scientists without an active NSF-BSF grant** can submit up to two NSF-BSF applications per year. At least one of the applications must be to an NSF-BSF program with no deadline.
• **Israeli scientists with an active NSF-BSF grant** are allowed to submit one additional research proposal to the NSF-BSF program, provided that either the grant or the new submission is to an NSF-BSF program **with no deadline**. Otherwise, a submission is allowed only in the last year of the active grant.

• Israeli scientists can hold **no more than two** NSF-BSF awards at any point in time.

• **Both US and Israeli scientists** can simultaneously submit research proposals to the NSF-BSF program and the traditional BSF program. In the event that proposals are recommended for funding in both programs, they will each be awarded, unless there is significant overlap in the scientific question and research objectives (to the sole distinction of the BSF office). In the latter case BSF will only fund the application under the NSF-BSF program.

• In case of **similar or overlapping applications to both NSF-BSF and traditional BSF programs**, where the BSF proposal is recommended for funding but evaluation of the NSF-BSF application has not yet been completed, the BSF will defer its funding decision until the NSF-BSF awards for that program 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, availability of funds, and 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 directors and their management. These post-panel officials may introduce additional considerations, such as whether the research topic already has support from the US 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/](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, and has been also known to result in early rejection.**

**Submission:**

The 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](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg)) and submission system ([https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/](https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/)). **The US PI submission MUST include the BIOGRAPHY (in the NSF format) and BUDGET (in BSF format) of the Israeli partner as supplementary documentation.**

The Israeli scientist (only) will submit to the BSF, also providing the U.S. scientist information, according to its regulations and submission system: find [here](https://www.bsf.org.il/funding-opportunities/nsf-bsf-joint-research-grants/the-programs/).

**Timetable:**

The NSF deadline is March 16, 2021. After successful submission at NSF, proposals need to be submitted to the BSF on March 22, 2021 no later than 5 pm (Israel time).

*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 ([https://www.bsf.org.il/funding-opportunities/nsf-bsf-joint-research-grants/the-programs/](https://www.bsf.org.il/funding-opportunities/nsf-bsf-joint-research-grants/the-programs/)).*

*Questions regarding the applicability of the proposed research for this program should be directed by the US 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](mailto: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 Rozencwaig (orli@bsf.org.il ext. 109).