



National Science Foundation
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Partnerships for International Research and Education (PIRE) (FAQs)

PIRE Program Solicitation is available on the [PIRE webpage](#)

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ELIGIBILITY

1. Who is eligible to serve as PI?

U.S. citizenship of the PI and other researchers on the U.S. team is not required. Collaborators in other countries should be listed as Foreign Collaborators, not as PIs, Co-PIs or other Senior Personnel. Although submission is limited to **one** proposal per submitting institution, there is no limit on number of proposals in which researchers can participate as partners or collaborators.

2. What institutions are eligible?

Eligible institutions include all U.S. academic institutions with Ph.D. granting programs that have awarded doctoral degrees in the 2009 or 2010 academic years in any area of research supported by NSF. Any institution not listed at <http://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/pire-2012-eligible-insts.xlsx> should contact [PIRE Program staff](#) regarding eligibility. Institutions that have not participated in past PIRE awards are especially encouraged to submit. Ph.D. Individuals who are affiliated with a non-Ph.D. granting institution are encouraged to work with their colleagues at Ph.D. granting institutions in developing PIRE projects; such individuals may participate in PIRE projects, as Co-PIs or Senior Personnel, with their students being supported for research related activities, and with their own institutions serving as collaborating organizations on the PIRE project via sub-Awards.

PROGRAM DETAILS

3. How many proposal submissions are expected?

Based on past competitions, we expect to receive 200 preliminary proposals and will invite 30-50 full proposals.

4. What areas of research are appropriate?

This PIRE competition will focus exclusively on the NSF-wide investment area of [Science, Engineering, and Education for Sustainability \(SEES\)](#). The SEES effort focuses on interdisciplinary topics that will advance sustainability science, engineering and education as an integrative approach to the challenges of adapting to environmental, social and cultural changes associated with growth and development of human populations, and attaining a sustainable energy future. Especially encouraged is research on global sustainability issues including, but not limited to, climate change, clean energy, food security, biodiversity, and communication networks. Concepts that underlie the science of sustainability include complex adaptive systems theory, emergent behavior, multi-scale processes, as well as the vulnerability, adaptive capacity, and resilience of coupled human-environment systems. Sustainability research projects will simultaneously consider social, economic, and environmental systems and the long term viability of those systems. More information about NSF's SEES investment area may be found on the SEES webpage at: <http://www.nsf.gov/sees/> and the [NSF Dear Colleague Letter for the Science, Engineering and Education for Sustainability \(SEES\) NSF-Wide Investment Area \(nsf11022\)](#). If you are uncertain that your project is relevant to SEES, contact an NSF program officer in the relevant research directorate. A list of PIRE-SEES program officers can be found on the NSF PIRE website (http://nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=12819&org=OISE&from=home)

5. What U.S. institutions and individuals are eligible to partner on PIRE projects?

Partnerships may include multi-institutional collaborations or arrangements with other universities/colleges, national laboratories, research museums, private sector research laboratories, industrial organizations, state and local government laboratories. (Collaborations with colleagues from U.S. government agencies and labs are welcome although strict rules govern the use of NSF funds in such collaborations. Please consult [NSF's Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#), Ch 1.E.7, for more information). PIs are encouraged to establish linkages with NSF-sponsored programs to enhance diversity (e.g., AGEF, LSAMP, HBCU-UP, TCUP, CREST, ADVANCE, all described at <http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=HRD>), especially at their own institutions. PIs are also encouraged to exploit aspects of cyberinfrastructure such as high performance computing, data analysis and visualization, and virtual organizations for distributed communities in order to support the science and engineering goals of the project, and to enable and enhance collaborations and resource sharing among the partner institutions. (Further information is available in the NSF document, Cyberinfrastructure Vision for 21st Century Discovery: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2007/nsf0728/index.jsp>.)

BUDGET

6. Can PIRE funds be used to support the salary or travel-related expenses of foreign participants?

NSF funds are intended to support the U.S. side of a research and education collaboration; the international collaborators should seek funding for their participation in the project from their own funding sources. NSF is working with counterpart funding organizations to enhance opportunities for collaborative activities in sustainability research and education between U.S. investigators and their colleagues abroad. Additional funding for international collaborators on PIRE projects may be available from: United Kingdom Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC); United Kingdom Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC); Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (MES); Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST); Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research

(IAI); U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); and, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). Proposers are also free to negotiate with any other research funding bodies not listed. For special funding opportunities, refer to section "**ADDITIONAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**" of the current PIRE solicitation, section II.D.

For projects involving exchanges of researchers and/or students, reciprocal arrangements for provision of housing and subsistence are allowed and are encouraged, with adherence to the overall principle that each side supports equivalent costs. Please refer to the Solicitation under the Section on Allowable Costs.

7. **My institution participates in a large Study Abroad program in the country where my PIRE will be working. Can I include the cost of Study Abroad programs for undergraduate students in my budget?**

Inclusion of Study Abroad costs would be considered only in the case that the activity provides an essential and integral part of the students' international **research** experience. The activity must be primarily research and details of the experience provided in the PIRE proposal under the education plan.

8. **Can the PIRE grant support sabbatical leave for a PI or co-PI?**

PIRE is not intended as a sabbatical support program. PIRE salary support for the PI is limited to two months per year and salary for co-PI(s) and Senior Personnel (including as consultants and in sub awards) is limited to one month per year.

Please refer to the General Proposal Guide (GPG), which is online at the NSF website.

9. **Must we request the same level of budget for each year?**

No. You are encouraged to request the budget that makes sense for your project. Ramping up the budget as the project develops may make sense in many cases.

10. **Can we use some of the budget to support project coordination? Must a project coordinator be a Co-PI?**

For some of the current PIRE projects, strong coordination has been a key contributor to early success. So yes, part of the PIRE budget may be used to support project coordination, (e.g., part-time salary for a coordinator, coordination meetings, support for an outside advisory committee) on a scale commensurate with the complexity of the partnership. The project coordinator does not have to be a PI or Co-PI, but the amount of salary that they can receive from the PIRE award is limited to two months per year for a PI and one month per year for a Co-PI or other Senior Personnel.

OTHERS

11. **When and where should my foreign collaborator seek funding on his/her side?**

PIs are encouraged to be in contact with their foreign counterparts and encourage their collaborators to seek funding from their own sources as they develop their preliminary proposals.

NSF is working jointly with select counterpart national, international and multinational funding organizations to enhance opportunities for collaborative activities between U.S. investigators and their colleagues abroad. NSF has entered into co-funding/collateral funding agreements with seven agencies to provide funding opportunities for international collaborators. These agencies are:

- U.K. Research Councils:
 - U.K. Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
 - U.K. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
- Ministry of Education and Science (MES) of the Russian Federation (R.F.)
- Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)

- Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA)
- U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

For these special funding opportunities, refer to section "**ADDITIONAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**" of the current PIRE solicitation, section II.D.

In addition, PIs may want to discuss with the relevant country program officers in OISE additional mechanisms for international collaborators to seek support in their own countries. OISE Program Officers are listed by region at (<http://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/country-list.jsp>).

RELEVANT LINKS

NSF Home Page: <http://www.nsf.gov>

Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE): <http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=OISE>

PIRE homepage: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=12819

OISE Staff by Country: <http://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/country-list.jsp>

How to Prepare Your Proposal: <http://www.nsf.gov/funding/preparing/>

NSF's Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide:
http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf11001/nsf11_1.pdf

NSF Grants.gov Application Guide:
<http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/docs/grantsgovguide.pdf>

U.K. Research Councils:

- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC): <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/>
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC): <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/>

Ministry of Education and Science (MES) of the Russian Federation: <http://eng.mon.gov.ru/>

Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST): <http://www.jst.go.jp/alca/en/index.html> or
<http://www.jst.go.jp/kisoken/en/>

Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI): <http://www.iai.int/>.

USAID: <http://www.usaid.gov/locations/>

U.S. EPA: <http://www.epa.gov/>