United States – Israel
Binational Science Foundation

Call for Proposals in a Joint NSF-BSF Program in Molecular and Cellular Biosciences

The U.S.-Israel Science Foundation (BSF) is pleased to announce the opening of a new round of applications in a joint funding program in Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (MCB), with the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF).

The Terms of this program are as follows:

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 these discipline, with no "special" funds. Clear understanding of it by the U.S. partner is essential before embarking on proposal writing.

Synopsis of Program:

The Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (MCB) supports quantitative, predictive, and theory-driven fundamental research and related activities designed to promote understanding of complex living systems at the molecular, subcellular, and cellular levels. MCB is soliciting proposals for hypothesis-driven and discovery research and related activities in four core clusters:

- Molecular Biophysics
- Cellular Dynamics and Function
- Genetic Mechanisms
- Systems and Synthetic Biology

MCB gives high priority to research projects that use theory, methods, and technologies from physical sciences, mathematics, computational sciences, and engineering to address major biological questions. Research supported by MCB uses a range of experimental approaches--including *in vivo*, *in vitro* and *in silico* strategies--and a broad spectrum of model and non-model organisms, especially microbes and plants. Typical research supported by MCB integrates theory and experimentation. Projects that address the emerging areas of multi-scale integration, molecular and cellular evolution, quantitative prediction of phenome from genomic information, and development of methods and resources are particularly welcome. Highest funding priority is given to

applications that have outstanding intellectual merit and strong broader impacts. **Proposals that include research motivated by relevance to human health, or address the molecular basis of human diseases and treatment are not appropriate for the Division and will be returned without review**. Full information about the program can be found in the DCL here.

2. Applications must be written jointly by an Israeli and a U.S. scientist from a U.S. research institution.

3. The NSF accepts applications only from U.S. scientist and submission to the NSF should be made by the U.S. PI alone (the Israeli does not appear as a formal co-PI on the application). However, in the collaborative 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**.

4. 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.

5. The size of the BSF grant to the Israeli is expected to be up to 70,000$/year for experimental programs and up to $40,000/year for theoretical or computer based program, **subject to the availability of funds**. BSF will follow the decision by the U.S. funding agency regarding the length of the project.

6. The program is expected to be held annually.

7. 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 only a single proposal. Moreover, a scientist who has any pending NSF-BSF application, or has any active NSF-BSF grant that is not in its last year, is not allowed to submit an application to this program

4. Israeli scientists will be allowed to submit both to an NSF-BSF program and the regular BSF program, including similar applications. In the event that they are awarded a grant in both programs, they will be funded in both, unless the research application is mostly similar, in which case only their NSF-BSF program will be funded.

5. 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, 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 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 early rejection without review**.

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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 US PI submission to the NSF MUST include the BIOGRAPHY (in the NSF format) and 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:

Proposals will be submitted no later than 5 pm (Israel time) on Nov. 21, 2017 (NSF deadline is Nov. 15, 2017).

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).