National Science Foundation
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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) regarding: "Cyber-enabled Discovery and Innovation (CDI)" (NSF 07-603)

UPDATED FAQs:

* Why are you using a range of dates for submission of Letters of Intent (LoI), Preliminary Proposals, and Full Proposals?

* How do I determine whether my proposal is Type I or Type II? For instance, we have five PI s and we plan on splitting the equivalent funding of two PI summer months and two to three graduate students among all of us. Does this still sound reasonable for a Type I proposal?

* Are there "hot topics" or application areas that NSF is encouraging?

* Does "computational thinking" refer to computation in the narrow sense of computer science (e.g. algorithms and complexity) or in the broader sense of a quantitative theory?

* Should I discuss my proposal with NSF officers?

* For a multi-institutional collaborative project that would involve multiple components at the full-proposal stage, should each institution submit a letter of intent (LOI) and a preliminary proposal?

* Do collaborations across disciplines housed within an NSF directorate count as multidisciplinary?   Is CDI strictly looking for collaborations across NSF directorates?

* On the CDI proposal team, is track record of prior collaboration needed? Do we have to have preliminary results?

* How will my (preliminary or full) proposal be reviewed?

* If I am successful in obtaining CDI funds this year, does this disqualify me from the competition or disadvantage me in any way in the coming years?

1. Why are you using a range of dates for submission of Letters of Intent (LoI), Preliminary Proposals, and Full Proposals?

   We chose to utilize submission windows for this funding opportunity. Submission windows are designated periods of time during which proposals will be accepted for review by NSF. It is NSF's policy that the end date of a submission window converts to, and is subject to, the same policies as a deadline date.

2. How do I determine whether my proposal is Type I or Type II?

For instance, we have five PI s and we plan on splitting the equivalent funding of two PI summer months and two to three graduate students among all of us. Does this still sound reasonable for a Type I proposal?

Proposal types are self-identified by project teams, based on the guidelines given in the solicitation:

* Type I awards will require efforts up to a level roughly comparable to: summer support for two investigators with complementary expertise; two graduate students; and their collective research needs (e.g. materials, supplies, travel) for three years.
* Type II awards will require larger (than Type I) efforts up to a level roughly comparable to: summer support for three investigators with complementary expertise; three graduate students; one or two senior personnel (including post-doctoral researchers and staff); and their collective research needs (e.g. materials, supplies, travel) for four years. The integrative contributions of the Type II team should clearly be greater than the sum of the contributions of each individual member of the team.

3. Are there "hot topics" or application areas that NSF is encouraging?

No. CDI seeks advances on all frontiers of science and engineering.

4. Does "computational thinking" refer to computation in the narrow sense of computer science (e.g. algorithms and complexity) or in the broader sense of a quantitative theory?

We want "computational thinking," with its five components spelled out in the solicitation, to mean all concepts, models, methods, algorithms, and tools of computational sciences and engineering. The innovations in, or innovative use of, these components should be made clear in the proposal.

5. Should I discuss my proposal with NSF officers?

It is recommended that you discuss only the suitability of your planned proposal for CDI. Once submitted, proposals may not be discussed with NSF officers, as this would constitute unfair competition, or the perception thereof.

6. For a multi-institutional collaborative project that would involve multiple components at the full-proposal stage, should each institution submit a letter of intent (LOI) and a preliminary proposal?

   No. Only one LoI should be submitted for each proposed project. If a collaborative project is being developed, the corresponding investigators should decide which member of the proposing team will submit the LoI. Similarly, only the lead institution should submit the preliminary proposal, including information about all participants from all institutions as directed in the solicitation.

7. Do collaborations across disciplines housed within an NSF directorate count as multidisciplinary? Is CDI strictly looking for collaborations across NSF directorates?

   Directorates definitely house sufficiently different programs (that are not collaborating at the moment) that CDI can bridge. Collaborations across different disciplines/ fields that result in "unconventional" partnerships are sought, regardless of which NSF organization houses these.

8. On the CDI proposal team, is track record of prior collaboration needed? Do we have to have preliminary results?

   These are not required, as CDI aims to spur new collaborations and transformative research ideas.

9. How will my (preliminary or full) proposal be reviewed?

   CDI proposals will be reviewed by multi-disciplinary panels run by two or more NSF program officers from different NSF organizational units. Proposals will be grouped into sets with maximum commonality in areas of advancement. Panels will be composed of reviewers suitable for the set of proposals to be evaluated.

10. If I am successful in obtaining CDI funds this year, does this disqualify me from the competition or disadvantage me in any way in the coming years?

    No.