



UKRI-SBE lead agency opportunity

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) , Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) , Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) , UK Research and Innovation
Co-funders:	US National Science Foundation's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (NSF/SBE)
Funding type:	Grant
Maximum award:	£1,000,000
Publication date:	20 September 2020
Opening date:	N/A
Closing date:	Open - no closing date

Last updated: 15 January 2021

This opportunity allows UK and US-based researchers to submit a collaborative proposal that will go through a single review process.

The goal is to reduce some of the barriers that researchers and funding agencies encounter when trying to work internationally.

This opportunity does not represent a separate research funding scheme – applications will be integrated into existing programmes at the relevant lead agency.

The participating agencies include UKRI councils AHRC, BBSRC and ESRC, and the [NSF/SBE](#).

Who can apply

To apply as a principal investigator, you must meet UKRI eligibility criteria and be actively engaged in postdoctoral research and be of postdoctoral standing.

This means that you either have a doctorate or can demonstrate in your application that you have equivalent research experience and/or training.

Applicants are eligible for funding whether or not they are established members of a recognised research organisation (RO).

Applicants for research grants who are not established members of a recognised RO must be hosted by the RO and provided with proper facilities to carry out the research, and provide evidence for this in the application.

US applicants whose costs are being sought from NSF should be entered as international co-investigators. They must be eligible for funding from NSF as their costs will not be covered by the collaborating UKRI research councils (AHRC, BBSRC or ESRC).

Each participating organisation has specific eligibility criteria:

- [Specific guidance for AHRC-led proposals under the NSF/SBE-UKRI lead agency agreement \(PDF, 426KB\)](#)
 - [Specific guidance for NSF-led proposals under the NSF/SBE-UKRI lead agency agreement \(PDF, 411KB\)](#)
 - [BBSRC research grants guide \(PDF, 375KB\)](#)
 - [ESRC research funding guide](#)
 - [Inclusion of UK business, third sector or government body co-investigators on ESRC proposals \(PDF, 93KB\)](#)
 - [ESRC international co-investigators policy guidance on the inclusion of international co-investigators in ESRC proposals \(PDF, 167KB\)](#).
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What we're looking for

Proposals will be accepted for collaborative research in areas where NSF/SBE and UKRI's research remits overlap.

Collaborative research proposals may be submitted in any disciplinary or interdisciplinary area which falls within the remit of the participating organisations:

- [arts and humanities](#) (AHRC)
- [biotechnology and biological science](#) (BBSRC)
- [economic and social science](#) (ESRC)
- [social, behavioral and economic sciences](#) (NSF/SBE)

The funding available will differ according to which council or agency is the lead:

- for AHRC-led proposals, the UK costs must be between £50,000 and £1 million
 - for BBSRC-led proposals, the UK costs must not exceed £1 million (there is no minimum)
 - for ESRC-led proposals, the UK costs must be between £350,000 and £1 million
 - for NSF-led proposals where AHRC is the UK funder, you can request a maximum of £350,000 for UK costs
 - for NSF-led proposals where ESRC/BBSRC is the UK funder, you can request a maximum of £1 million for UK costs
 - for NSF-led proposals, you should consult with the relevant programme(s) for budgetary norms
 - there is no minimum amount for UK contributions where NSF is the lead agency.
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How to apply

This is an open call for UKRI-led opportunities with a two-stage application process (expression of interest and full proposal).

Before applying, discuss with your research team whether the lead agency should be NSF or one of the UKRI research councils. You must base this decision on where you plan to carry out the majority of research.

If you are planning to submit an application to the NSF/SBE as the lead agency, you will need to check submission deadlines for the [SBE participating research programmes](#) most relevant to your project.

Expression of interest

You must submit your expression of interest (EOI) using the [NSF/SBE-UKRI expression of interest template \(PDF, 952KB\)](#). You must then email your completed EOI in PDF format to your chosen lead agency.

If a UK research council (AHRC, BBSRC or ESRC) is the lead agency, you must email your EOI to sbeleadagency@ukri.org.

If NSF is the lead agency, email your EOI to sbe-ukri@nsf.gov.

This should outline:

- the proposed research
- the research teams that are involved
- bottom line estimates of funding at 100% full economic cost to be requested from both the NSF and UKRI (including all research-related and institutional administrative costs for the US budget request).

Full proposal budgets should not vary from those specified in the approved EOI by more than 10%, and you must justify any changes.

The expression of interest should include:

- a brief summary
- the main objectives and research challenges of the proposed research
- the methodologies to be used
- the outputs, impact and beneficiaries.

The EOI will be shared with the non-lead agencies to check for eligibility.

Full proposal

If your EOI is accepted as falling within the scope of research typically reviewed by the NSF/SBE programme, as well as fitting within the remit of AHRC, BBSRC or ESRC, we will invite you to submit a full research proposal.

We expect that full proposals will be submitted within one year of receiving EOI approval. If more time is needed for proposal preparation, an additional EOI may be required.

If you apply with a full proposal before receiving EOI approval, the proposal will be returned without review.

You must submit all UKRI-led proposals for assessment through UKRI's [Joint Electronic Submission system \(Je-S\)](#).

If the NSF/SBE is the lead agency, you must submit your proposal via [Fastlane](#), [Grants.gov](#) or [Research.gov](#).

Your proposal should include a description of the full proposed research programme and research team and describe the total resources for the joint project (the funds requested from both the NSF and UKRI).

The costs of the US and UK organisations must be clearly differentiated in the proposal. We will reject any proposals that request duplicate funding.

For UK-led proposals, resources being requested from NSF should be entered on the separate NSF budget form. The NSF budget form is not a mandatory attachment for US-led proposals.

How we will assess your application

Your proposal will be reviewed by the lead agency using their standard review process.

For UKRI councils this entails peer review with a panel drawn from our peer review college. We may include reviewers from outside the college if college members lack necessary knowledge and expertise for a particular application.

Proposals sent to NSF/SBE will undergo NSF's [merit review process](#).

Reviewers will evaluate the proposed project on both scientific merit and broader economic or societal impacts.

If the proposal is reviewed by one of the UKRI research councils, the principal investigator will be given the chance to respond to the peer review comments on behalf of both the UK and the US teams.

For proposals submitted to the NSF/SBE, there is no such response phase in the assessment process.

US-led proposals, which have already been assessed and recommended for funding by NSF/SBE, are not assessed again by UKRI's research councils.

The lead funding agency will inform you of whether your proposal has been successful.

Contact details

- For further queries about UKRI research funding rules and proposal procedures, email sbeleadagency@ukri.org.
- For enquiries relating to the NSF/SBE-led submissions, email sbe-ukri@nsf.gov.
- If you need any help using the Je-S system, contact the Je-S helpdesk on 01793 444164 or jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org.

Additional info

Supporting documents

General

- [SBE-UKRI lead agency management plan \(PDF, 204KB\)](#)
- [Guidelines for submitting collaborative proposals to the US NSF-SBE – UKRI lead agency opportunity \(PDF, 81KB\)](#)
- [SBE-UKRI expression of interest template \(PDF, 952KB\)](#)

Arts and Humanities Research Council

- [Specific guidance for AHRC-led proposals under the NSF/SBE-UKRI lead agency agreement \(PDF, 426KB\)](#)
- [Specific AHRC guidance for NSF-led proposals under the NSF/SBE-UKRI lead agency agreement \(PDF, 411KB\)](#)
- [Guidance on completing the AHRC budget resources summary \(PDF, 140KB\)](#) (for use with proposals to NSF only)
- [NSF budget form \(DOC, 115KB\)](#)

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

- [BBSRC research grants guide \(PDF, 375KB\)](#)

Economic and Social Research Council

- [Je-S guidance for applicants \(ESRC-specific\) \(PDF, 320KB\)](#)
 - [NSF budget form \(DOC, 179KB\)](#)
 - [Guidance on completing the ESRC budget resources summary \(PDF, 59KB\)](#) (for use with proposals to NSF only)
 - [ESRC resources summary \(DOC, 140KB\)](#) (for use with proposals to NSF only)
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Related content

[NSF special guidelines for submitting collaborative proposals](#)

[SBE participating research programmes](#)

NOTE This is the first phase of our new website – let us know if you have [feedback](#) or would like to [help us test new developments](#).