RII TRACK-1

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PD/PA Meeting

Arlington, VA

16 May 2016

Topics

- FY17 Solicitation
- RII Track-1 Proposals
- Strategic Planning

RII Track-1 Update

- FY17 solicitation (16-557)
  http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=503429

- Letter of Intent (LOI)
  - *Required!   Use FastLane!*
  - *Due July 5, 2016*

- Full proposals due: **August 2, 2016**

- Eligible if:
  - No current RII Track-1, or
  - Current RII Track-1 expires by October 1, 2017

RII Track-1 Important Items (unchanged)

Letter of Intent (LOI) required!!!!!

NSF internal planning only; not considered in merit review

- Project Description page limit 35 pages
  - Budget tables A and B in Project Description

- PDF searchable lists of participants and conflicts
  - Use templates provided by NSF EPSCoR
  - In addition to NSF list of conflicts and collaborators

- Baseline data required

RII Track-1 Important Items (budget)

- $20M over 5 years
  - No longer limited to $4M/year
  - Budget request should reflect project effort/needs over time (Scope, Schedule, Budget)
  - Timely spending is required to justify continuing grant increments

- Cost sharing
  - Budget justification must explain source, nature, and amount

List of Participants

- PIs and co-PIs (appear on the cover page)
- Other funded participants (appear in budget)
- Subcontractors/Consultants (including named external evaluators)
- Advisory Board members (if named)
- Unfunded participants and collaborators (if named)

Include for each participant:
- Last and first name
- Institution and affiliation (department)
- Role in project (PI, co-PI, funded, subcontractor, advisory board, unfunded, collaborator)
  - ➢ Collaborator is unfunded participant, not from a participating org.

List of Participating Organizations

- Awardee (submitting institution)
- Subawardees (budget under G5)
- Subcontractors/consultants (budget under G3)
- Unfunded and collaborating organizations, includes:
  - Providing support, facilities, internships, etc.

Participant Warnings

- Individuals and organizations who are neither named nor funded are not participants
- Individuals or organizations submitting letters of commitment are participants
- Individuals submitting letters on behalf of organizations are not participants unless specifically named/funded
- The institutions of unfunded collaborators are not participating organizations unless the institution itself is providing a commitment

Conflicts of Interest

In addition to NSF requirement for Single-Copy Docs

List COIs for every participant (except advisory board members)
- Permanent: PhD advisor/advisee
- 5 years: postdoctoral advisor/advisee
- 4 years: collaborators (co-authors, co-PIs, includes pending)
- 2 years: co-editors
- 1 year: financial (subcontract, employment, etc.)

Include for each COI:
- Last and First name, institution
- nature of COI (PhD advisor, PhD advisee, co-author, co-PI, postdoc advisor, postdoc advisee, collaborator, co-editor, financial)

COI Warnings

- COI lists must be complete and current for every individual in the list of participants
  - Each and every participant should report complete and accurate COIs
  - Do *NOT* rely on biographical sketches to collate information
- Co-authors and co-PIs include those on works pending and in preparation
- Do not need to list participants as COI
- Do not need to list collaborators or co-editors from the submitting or subaward institutions
- Colleagues and acquaintances who are not collaborators are not COI
- The mere sharing of data, software, or IP does not pose COI

NSF Merit Review Criteria

National Science Board (NSB)

- <u>Intellectual Merit</u>
  - Potential to advance knowledge and understanding

- <u>Broader Impacts</u>
  - Potential to benefit society

NSB Review Criteria

Intellectual Merit (IM):

- Potential to advance knowledge and understanding
- Potentially transformative concepts

  - Is the plan based on a *sound rationale*?
  - Is there a mechanism to assess *success*?
  - How *well qualified* is the individual, team, or institution to conduct the proposed activities?
  - *Prior accomplishments* of the PIs/participants
  - Are there *adequate resources*?

NSB Review Criteria …

Broader Impacts (BI):

"NSF projects should contribute broadly to achieving societal goals"

BI may be accomplished through:
- the research itself
- activities directly related to research projects
- activities supported by the project

http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/publications/2011/meritreviewcriteria.pdf

NSF Merit Review Criteria

EPSCoR - Solicitation ([16-557](#)) Specific (RII Track-1)

- Research Enterprise
  - Potential to enhance research competitiveness and capacity
- Jurisdictional Impacts
  - Potential to benefit the jurisdiction
- Workforce Development
  - Potential to enhance the STEM workforce and broaden participation
- Integration of Project Elements
  - Potential for added value and benefits

- All criteria are necessary – none alone are sufficient
- Full consideration during review/decision-making

RII Track-1 Proposals

- Core of the proposal is the Intellectual Merit of the Research
- Read/follow the solicitation
  - Project description elements
  - Keep merit review criteria in mind
- Write to the reviewers/panel
  - Provide information that experts in field need to judge the proposed research
  - Avoid jargon that complicates review by broad audience
    - But don't shy away from addressing specialized, domain specific issues
  - Describe research methods, tools, approaches
  - Emphasize unique, novel, or transformative techniques, methods
- Why EPSCoR RII?
  - Demonstrate integration of project elements and jurisdictional impacts

Baseline Data

Essential for Reviewers to evaluate the IM and BI

- Proposals should present baseline information and data
  - References, citations, preliminary results
  - Clear descriptions of state-of-the art and challenges

- Efforts to engage students, distinct groups, or populations must be accompanied by quantitative baseline data
  - Current numbers, enrollment, percentages, etc.

- New hires:
  - Should be included where expertise/capacity is needed
  - Should be clearly justified by proposed work
  - Jurisdiction-specific Programmatic Terms and Conditions will address proposed hires

Observations from past competitions

- Compliance checking
  - Read the solicitation
  - Follow the sections & headings for the Project Description
  - Ensure that all necessary tables are included
  - Ensure that Supplemental Documents contain Letters of Commitment, and not Letters of Support
  - Plan your submission for several days before deadline to allow fixes to be made, avoiding *Return Without Review*

- Budget
  - clear justifications needed, please ensure that subawards add up correctly
  - List postdocs, graduate, and undergraduate students on Line B
  - Budget justification must give source, nature, and amount of cost share

Feedback from Panels

Reviewers appreciate your ideas: very good, relevant, important to jurisdictions

Suggestions:

- Hypothesis-driven research that places project in the current context of the research area
- Hypotheses versus axioms
- Research goals should address the hypotheses
- Activities and deliverables should support goals/objectives
- Claims of integration of research projects (and collaborations) should be substantiated
- How will dependencies of activities/results be addressed?
  - Collection of data needed for modeling; simulation results needed for lab work; development of models or techniques needed for integration

Feedback from Panels …

- Provide sufficient details so that experts can evaluate merit of research plan

- Demonstrate current awareness of the field/problem
  - Up-to-date, relevant references
  - Address known issues, problems

- Preliminary results are appreciated

- How is your team uniquely qualified or positioned to perform the proposed work?

- Clear, legible figures with logical connection to the prose
  - Crucial information should not be only in figures

- Proposed work, methods, ideas should not be in Facilities section

Project Description remains at 35 pages!

- This is not so more subprojects can be fit into proposal

IM and BI of Research and Education Activities
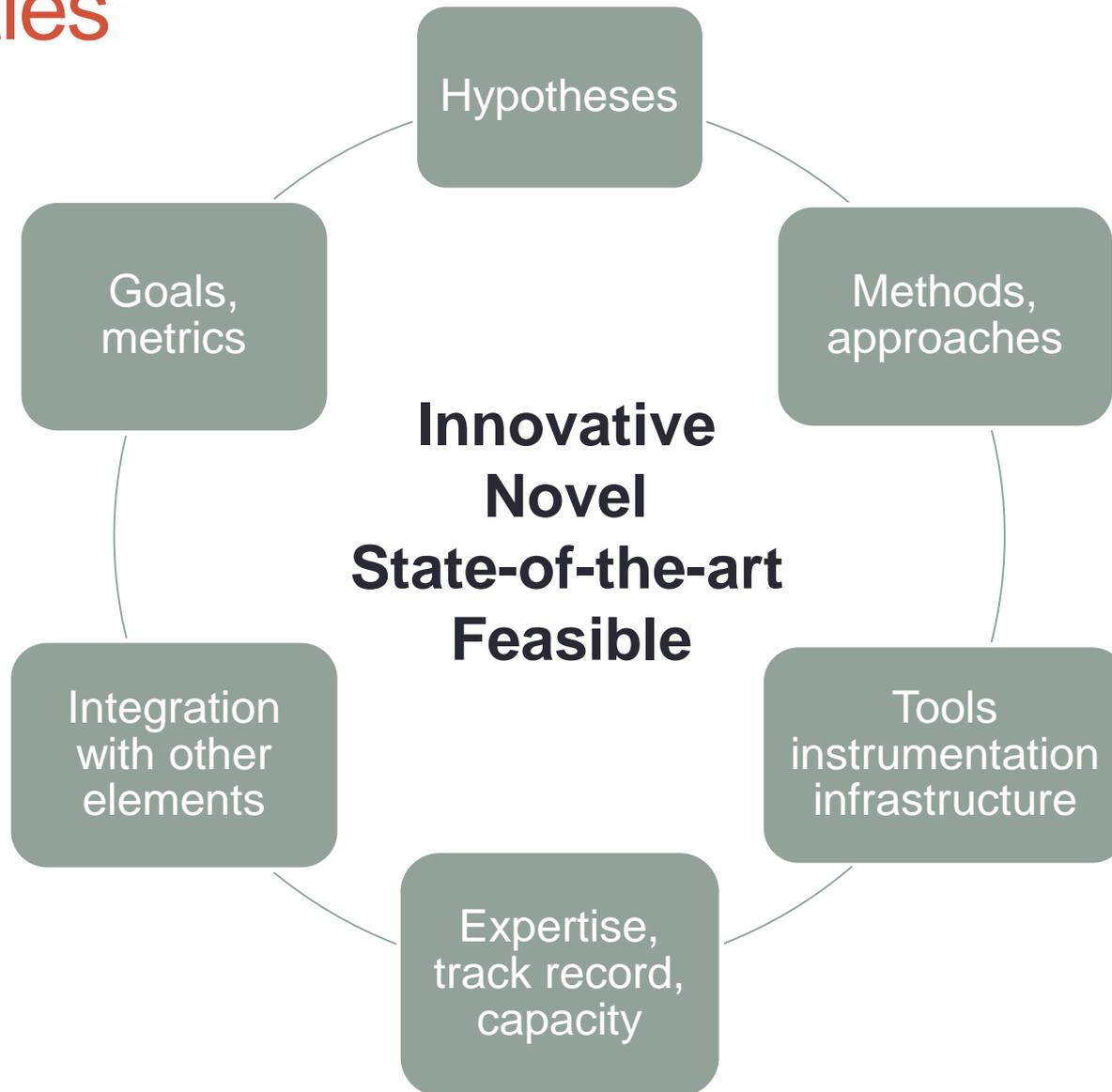
Questions?

RII Strategic Planning

Strategic Plan is the framework for implementing, managing, and monitoring the project

- Determines the scope and schedule (with original proposal and approved changes based on merit review feedback)
- Used to gauge progress
- Identifies responsible parties and relationships with management team
- Living document
- Approved by NSF EPSCoR

RII Strategic Plan

- NSF EPSCoR is striving for a level of consistency among RII Track-1 Strategic Plans

- Used by management team to implement and monitor the project

- Used by NSF to monitor progress, evaluate annual reports

- Used by Site Visit and RSV teams

- As of FY16 NSF EPSCoR has selected John Riordan (Cindy Zook Associates) to facilitate new award planning meetings
  - Virtual meeting with NSF EPSCoR, facilitator, and PDs

RII Strategic Plan

Is an opportunity to ensure:

- Activities and tasks support the goals and objectives
- Adequate resources will be available
- Participants understand and take responsibility for their roles and dependencies within the project

Is NOT an opportunity to:

- Change scope or rewrite the proposal
- Renegotiate participant roles and responsibilities
- Figure out what will be done – but *how* it will be done

RII Strategic Planning Meeting

- PD, management team, project thrust and element leads, major participants must attend
  - Also important stakeholders; discuss with your managing PO

- NSF managing PO attends

- Draft of goals, objectives, activities, timelines should be ready and provided to participants before the meeting

RII Strategic Plan Concepts

- ***Vision Statement***: long term view of the project; ideal, desired state.

- ***Mission Statement***: defines fundamental purpose of the project; supports the vision.

- ***Goals***: broad statements of what will be achieved; Actionable, Realistic, and Time bound (ART).
  - Research goals should be directly related to the proposed hypotheses

- ***Objectives***: Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART) targets that contribute to reaching the goals.
  - Progress towards objectives is how success should be measured

RII Strategic Plan Concepts

- ***Activities***: tasks and strategies to achieve the project objectives; what will be done.

- ***Outputs***: tangible products produced by the activities which can be quantified (counted).

- ***Outcomes and Impacts***: changes or benefits produced by the activities.
  - Research outcomes include discoveries and new applications

- ***Metrics***: measures of progress applied to the activities, milestones, outputs, or outcomes.

Questions?