

International Multilateral Partnerships for Resilient Education and Science System in Ukraine (IMPRESS-U)

ANNOUNCEMENT

With this announcement we inform you about the Multilateral Partnership Initiative ‘**International Multilateral Partnerships for Resilient Education and Science System in Ukraine (IMPRESS-U)**’ launched by the Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE) of the National Science Foundation (NSF), USA in partnership with:

- Estonian Research Council (ETAG), Estonia
- Latvian Council of Science (LCS), Latvia
- Research Council of Lithuania (LMT), Lithuania
- National Science Centre (NCN), Poland
- Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA), Poland
- National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU), Ukraine
- National Academy of Sciences (NAS), USA
- Office of Naval Research Global (ONRG), USA

and private donors and foundations.

The **goals** of the partnership Initiative are to:

- (1) support excellence in science and engineering research, education, and innovation through international collaboration,
- (2) promote and catalyze integration of Ukrainian researchers in the global research community.

Unique circumstances due to the ongoing Russian military invasion in Ukraine offer a logical and rare opportunity to engage with partner countries in Eastern Europe (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland) who already make ongoing efforts to host Ukrainian researchers and students at their institutions. By engaging with NSF, we have an opportunity to significantly enhance researchers’ ability and give an excellent chance for researchers to work on multilateral international collaborative science projects. The overarching goal for this collaboration between NSF and Partner Agencies is to ensure a more resilient international science, engineering and education enterprise and to ensure that scientific progress and its contribution continue to benefit all.

NRFU will work closely with NAS to ensure appropriate funding and participation of Ukrainian researchers in the collaborative projects. Ukrainian researchers will be funded by private donors and foundations. While a Partner Agency in this collaboration, NRFU does not have funding responsibility in the IMPRESS-U initiative. This funding will be coordinated by NAS.

This partnership initiative capitalizes on prior investments, bilateral agreements, and relevant activities and provides for a multilateral arrangement to enable US researchers to submit international collaborative proposals to NSF. The proposals are expected to undergo a single review process at NSF and be jointly funded by participating agencies.

With this initiative, NSF invites visionary, ambitious, high quality collaborative research proposals that address scientific challenges in any field of science, engineering, or education. Priority will be given to projects that propose: (a) creative ways for enhancing efficiency and resiliency of international partnerships; (b) efficient concepts to prepare internationally engaged research workforce; and (c) efficient and significant contributions to build a modern, state-of-the-art research/education/innovation ecosystem in Ukraine.

Proposers are advised that all documents submitted to NSF may be shared with the other agencies.

The collaborative opportunity described in this announcement remains in effect until archived. This collaboration is intended to cover a 3-year pilot phase.

Opportunity

NSF will accept EARly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER) and international supplements to existing awards. EAGER proposal is a type of proposal used to support exploratory work in its early stages on untested, but potentially transformative, research ideas or approaches. PIs of existing NSF awards may be eligible to submit a supplemental funding request to expand their project to include a collaboration with international researchers. The proposals will be submitted by institutions eligible to submit proposals to NSF and must include international collaboration as an integral part of the work. NSF encourages proposals from diverse teams. Proposals from early career investigators are especially welcome.

A separate copy of the proposal will be submitted within one week of the NSF submission by the international applicants to their respective agencies in accordance with the agency requirements and regulations. In the case of Ukraine, a copy of the proposal will be submitted to NAS. This will be used for funding decisions only.

All initial inquiries (as required by NSF proposal guide for supplemental funding requests and EAGERS) made by interested US PIs will be reviewed internally by NSF Project Officers (POs). Submitted proposals (upon invitation only) will be reviewed by disciplinary POs and/or ad-hoc peer-reviewers or panels as appropriate. Funding recommendations will be developed and approved collectively by a panel consisting of NSF POs and designated officials from all partner agencies involved.

Partner agencies will verify that the international investigators have an active and appropriate role and confirm their eligibility at the onset of the process. It is expected that joint funding will be provided in such a way that each country funds their own scientists. Ukrainian scientists affiliated (even temporarily and/or remotely) with institutions outside of Ukraine may be eligible to be supported by the hosting country (Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, or Estonia).

Additional regulations regarding eligibility criteria may apply. PIs are recommended to consult websites of national agencies for further details. Researchers affiliated exclusively with Ukrainian

institutions may be supported by private donors and foundations through NAS in accordance with NRFU eligibility criteria (below).

Eligibility criteria for Ukrainian participants of IMPRESS-U Initiative

The Initiative provides financial support of Ukraine-based research teams which shall include a PI and at least one PhD/Master's-student. The Ukraine-based team may also include other researchers and technical staff (if necessary). However, all team members shall be based in Ukraine.

The team could consist of researchers and technical staff (if included) representing one or more institutions (organizations).

One natural person cannot be represented in more than one application submitted for this Initiative.

Staff of the NRFU Directorate, members of the NRFU Scientific Council, and the NRFU Supervisory Board are not eligible to be project PIs and/or research team members.

Project PI is responsible for reliability and accuracy of the application, including supporting documentation. Failure to comply could be grounds for removal from further consideration under this Initiative.

The Ukraine-based PI:

- holds at least a PhD research degree (obtained or recognized in Ukraine);
- has a formal labor appointment (has the main place of employment) at a Ukrainian institution of higher education/research institution of state ownership that is registered and functions in compliance with the current legislation of Ukraine.

Upon receipt, the application will be analyzed by NAS and NRFU to determine eligibility. The following documents must accompany the proposal:

- a letter of consent of the head of the beneficiary Ukrainian institution of higher education/research institution (on the official letterhead, in English) confirming that the head of the institution gives consent for implementation of the project and that the project PI is based in Ukraine;
- a scan-copy of the PI's PhD/Doctoral diploma;
- an official certificate verifying the PI's position and the main place of employment at the institution of higher education/research institution (in Ukrainian).

On the side of the NRFU, the analysis of the information contained in the specified documents is carried out by an advisory body specially created in accordance with Clause 3) of Part 2 of Art. 50 of the Law of Ukraine "On Scientific and Scientific-Technical Activity". If necessary, this advisory body has the right to contact the Ukrainian researcher for the purpose of obtaining additional (clarifying) documents/information within the defined list of requirements. NRFU will notify NSF about the result of the analysis of the defined list of requirements by the advisory body with a formal email letter.

Only applications concluded eligible will be further considered by NSF.

IMPRESS-U Application: Ukrainian Participants

Please mind the fact that Ukrainian researchers CANNOT directly apply to NSF for financial support. Ukrainian researchers should collaborate with US researchers and researchers from at least one other country in this Initiative to craft a collaborative research proposal.

Ukrainian researchers, who are part of a collaborative team applying for NSF grants within the IMPRESS-U Initiative, are eligible to request funding from US National Academy of Sciences. Details of eligibility and instructions on how to submit budget requests are available at NAS website <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/scientists-and-engineers-in-exile-or-displaced-seed-program>

Within a week of US PIs' submission of the proposal to NSF, Ukrainian PIs participating in a US research project submitted to NSF, must submit their request to NAS to seed@nas.edu. Please mind the fact that the title of the project submitted to NAS must be the same as the title of the project submitted by the US PI to NSF.

The application package has to include the following documents:

- 1) an abstract/executive summary (not to exceed one page),
- 2) a requested budget,
- 3) a budget justification (not to exceed three pages),
- 4) a letter of consent of the head of the beneficiary Ukrainian institution of higher education/research institution (on the official letterhead, in English) confirming that the head of the institution gives consent for implementation of the project and that the project PI is based in Ukraine;
- 5) a scan-copy of the PI's PhD/Doctoral diploma;
- 6) an official certificate verifying the PI's position and the main place of employment at the institution of higher education/research institution (in Ukrainian).

The point of contact at the US National Academy of Sciences is Dr. Franklin Carrero-Martinez, Senior Director of Global Sustainability and Development, NAS, e-mail: seed@nas.edu.

Budget for Ukrainian participants of IMPRESS-U Initiative

- 1) The budget requested for Ukrainian teams has to be for two years and has to be sent to US PIs to be included in the collaborative application package as a supplementary document.
- 2) The same requested budget has to be sent to NAS as part of the application of a Ukrainian team.
- 3) Recognizing that there is an active war in Ukraine, and the situation is largely uncertain, it is envisioned that only first year budgets will be released to the team, possibly in increments. After the first year is complete and the annual report is approved, Ukrainian teams will have an option to revise their budgets for the second year depending on research performance and needs. The budget may be increased or reduced depending on the team's performance during the prior research period and current or planned composition of the research team.

4) NAS intends to raise ~\$1,000,000 from private donors and foundations for IMPRESS-U Initiative to support Ukrainian researchers to make 10-15 awards in concert with NSF. It is expected that the proposed budgets of the Ukrainian research teams will be submitted to NAS and reflect the research plans and compositions of Ukrainian research teams at the moment of submission. Funding is up to \$50,000 per year per project with a total maximum of \$100,000 over two years per project.

Eligible costs for Ukrainian participants of IMPRESS-U Initiative

Under this Initiative, the funds may be provided for the following cost items:

1) Direct costs:

- labor remuneration (salary);
- accruals for labor remuneration (salary);
- materials required for the research implementation;
- minor research equipment (the Initiative is not intended to purchase major research equipment or make significant developments of major research infrastructure of institutions in Ukraine);
- business trip expenses.

2) Indirect costs: The total sum of indirect costs (costs that are not directly related to the research implementation, but are necessary to ensure the full implementation of the project) cannot exceed 15% of the total cost of 'Direct costs'.

Expenses for all cost items must be justified.

Scope of Research: any field of science, engineering, innovation, and education usually supported by NSF is eligible.

Anticipated Number of Awards: NSF expects to make 10-15 collaborative international awards subject to availability of funds and quality of proposals.

Collaborative Proposal Preparation and Submission: All proposals are expected to be focused on a cutting-edge science, engineering, education, or innovation topic (similarly to regular NSF supplements and EAGERs). Each proposal must engage researchers from the US, Ukraine, and at least one other country involved in this Initiative. Ukrainian researchers may propose a long- or short-term stay at a host institution abroad and/or short-term visits to research laboratories of partner countries as feasible and appropriate. Of special interests are research teams that engage students and early career researchers.

In addition to the standard PAPPG guidelines, proposals under [NSF DCL](#) submitted by US PIs to [NSF](#) should include the following:

- Proposal Title beginning with IMPRESS-U and the type of proposal: e.g., "IMPRESS-U EAGER:".
- E-mail documentation from at least one DCL cognizant Program Officer confirming approval to submit an EAGER proposal must be uploaded as a Supplementary Document.

In addition to standard Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts, proposals must clearly and succinctly address the following requirements.

- What is the novelty of proposed approaches to address the science challenge and why would they work? What is the exploratory nature (for EAGERs) of the proposed projects?
- What are proposed ways to perform research leading to resilient and efficient international partnerships? Who are the partners, what are their contributions and roles in the project?
- What are efficient concepts to prepare internationally engaged research workforce?
- What is your vision, strategy, and specific plans for making a significant contribution to build modern, state-of-the-art research/engineering/education/innovation ecosystem in Ukraine? How will this serve to integrate Ukrainian researchers into the global research community?

Project descriptions of NSF proposals will present the full scope of work, including contributions of U.S.-based and international researchers. The PIs must make clear that the proposed activities constitute a well-integrated collaborative project. The project descriptions should also explain how the proposed international collaboration will enable intellectual progress and broader impacts that go beyond what each country's teams could accomplish on their own.

The project descriptions for both the international and NSF submissions must include the same content.

For proposals to NSF submitted by US PIs:

- a. NSF requires proposers to comply with the proposal preparation requirements outlined in [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide \(PAPPG\)](#). NSF requires proposers to submit the proposal through Research.gov
- b. The proposal to NSF should include only the US expenses in the Budget and Budget Justification sections. International portions of the budget should be submitted in Supplementary Documents for information only. Thus, the budget of the Ukrainian part of the research team must be prepared and sent to US PIs to be submitted as a supplementary document.

Deadlines: There are no deadlines for proposal submissions under this Initiative, so proposals may be submitted at any time. All proposals will be reviewed as soon as practical.

A USA proposer must contact and consult the NSF program director at OISE and/or in the relevant disciplinary program about the content and timing of their submission.

Questions about IMPRESS-U DCL should be addressed to:

- Maija M. Kukla, Program Director, OISE/OD/NSF at IMPRESS-U@nsf.gov

Questions regarding details of IMPRESS-U submission by Ukrainian researchers should be addressed to:

- Franklin Carrero-Martinez, US NAS, e-mail: seed@nas.edu.

- Olga Polotska, NRFU, e-mail: polotskaoo@nrfu.org.ua

Prospective PIs are recommended to consult NSF website for additional **useful resources** at the link <https://www.nsf.gov/od/oise/IntlCollaborations/Ukraine.jsp>

To search for potential partners within the IMPRESS-U Initiative, project managers can use the search tool kindly provided by the

by the National Science Center of Poland at <https://www2.ncn.gov.pl/partners/impressu/>

Learn more about IMPRESS-U at the [link](#).