

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
U.S.-Israel Science and Technology Foundation - USISTF
Spring 2003 Request for Proposals in Biotechnology
Deadline for Submission – June 30, 2003

- 1. Can I submit a proposal that seeks to develop a new technology?** No. The USISTF grant does not allow for the development or refinement of technologies nor the conduct of basic research nor feasibility studies of particular technologies. However, the USISTF will consider proposals that establish research consortia that share technology transfer and intellectual properties rights; and provide a broad application or benefit to the public .
- 2. Who do we contact for guidance in determining if the grant program is right for us or if there is another USISTF program that would be more appropriate for what we have in mind?** Send an email with your ideas to: siegel@usistf.org The USISTF Interim Program Director will try to answer your questions.
- 3. Are pre -proposal abstracts accepted?** No. It is OK to email brief questions to the RFP Manager (siegel@usistf.org) asking about a particular idea. The RFP Manager will not review anything more than a few lines concerning a proposal idea.
- 4. Would it be useful for me to meet with or speak to USISTF or USISTC staff before I submit and application?** No. A panel of independent peer reviewers rates the proposals. A visit with USISTF or USISTC officials and staff will have no impact on the evaluation of a particular proposal.
- 5. Some of the program and RFP requirements are general. Where can we go for more detail?** Go to the USISTF web site (<http://www.usistf.org>) and check for updates in the FAQs – if your question is not resolved by checking with the web site, contact the RFP Manager in writing by email at: siegel@usistf.org
- 6. Will the USISTF consider proposals that fall outside the “Priority Areas” described in the Spring 2003 Request for Proposals in Biotechnology?** No, just the priority areas described in this document will be considered in this call for proposals.
- 7. Does the USISTF give preference to proposals in certain “Priority Areas”?** No. All the priority areas have been identified as important issues that need to be addressed. All of these priority areas set the “climate” for partnerships and business creation by promoting the development of key support infrastructure critical to a vibrant biotechnology sector in the U.S. and Israel. In making final award selections, the USISITF reserves the right to take into account a distribution of projects in stated priority areas.
- 8. My institution has experience in the stated “Priority Areas”, however, we are not currently working in Israel, nor do we have an Israeli partner, can we still apply for a grant?** Yes. The USISTF attributes great value in addressing the priority areas and recognizes that many organizations without previous Israel experience have much to contribute. If requested, the Foundation may offer guidance and assistance in identifying appropriate partner entities in the other country after an award has been selected. These proposals must submit a request for Foundation assistance in identifying appropriate partners either in the U.S. or Israel. These proposals must include details of partnering requirements and the anticipated role of the partner(s). The proposal should also provide a timeframe and budget details for partnering activities, as well as appropriate budget allocations for the partners’ role.

9. Who selects the applications to be funded? Panels of independent peer reviews evaluate the application based on the criteria listed in the RFP. The USISTF makes the final selection based on the ranking and recommendations of the peer reviews. After individual projects are evaluated and scored by reviewers, as described in the RFP, the Foundation's Board of Directors or Official Selection Committee will select the finalists from the highest ranking proposals. The Foundation reserves the right to make awards that best meet the mission and strategic objectives of the Foundation, all factors considered. After the Foundation's Board reviews the evaluation results and makes decision concerning approval or rejection, the final funding decision is subject to ratification of the United States - Israel Science and Technology Commission.

10. Can applicants contact reviewers, or vice versa? No. All contacts and inquires must be directed to the RFP Manager in writing by email at: siegel@usistf.org

11. Does the USISTF reimburse pre -award activities? No. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made they do so solely at their own risk of not being reimbursed. Notwithstanding any verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of the Foundation to cover pre-award costs.

12. Can Principal Investigators submit more than one application – are they allowed to be subcontractors on other applications? Yes. An organization may submit more than one proposal if the proposals are for different and unrelated projects. However, it is unlikely that an organization will be awarded more than one grant.

13. Does the proposal require a detailed budget? Yes. Clarify how USISTF funds and matching funds will be used for specific items or activities, such as personnel and salaries; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; contract costs; other direct costs; indirect costs; and totals. Use the attached budget forms accompanying the RFP to show how the USISTF funds and/or matching funds will be spent. On Sheet #2 expand the budget into detailed line-item breakdown of the main categories on Sheet #1. Include a budget narrative to explain the figures presented in the budget charts.

14. Are there restrictions on the budget? Yes.

- Funds may not be used for lobbying nor activities designed to advocate religious or political views.
- The USISTF does not provide seed or start-up funding for businesses or consulting practices.
- The USISTF does not subsidize or underwrite normal operations and services of individual businesses, nor does the USISTF support individual business advertising or promotions.
- Institutions are discouraged from requesting grant monies for office infrastructure and routine operating costs of a general nature that are not directly related the project deliverables.
- Indirect costs may be requested only if your organization has already prepared an indirect cost rate proposal and has it on file, subject to audit.
- Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested *only* for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. USISTF strongly encourages applicants to request reasonable amounts of funding for salaries and fringe benefits to ensure that your proposal is competitive.
- Entertainment costs are unallowable. This includes entertainment (non-directly work related) costs of alcohol, amusement, diversion, social activities, ceremonials, and associated costs such as meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities.

- Funds for travel and food (no alcohol) may be requested *only* if these costs are directly related to implementing the proposed project. USISTF strongly encourages applicants to request reasonable amounts of funding for travel, food, and amenities to ensure that your proposal is competitive.
- USISTF will not fund the acquisition of real property (including buildings) or the construction or modification of any building.

15. What else should I consider when preparing the budget? Some budget tips:

- Make sure calculations are correct.
- Base all travel rates on coach class tickets only and in compliance with the Fly America Act.
- Per diem rates vary from place to place. For guidance, consult the U.S. Department of State website at www.state.gov/m/a/als/erdm/ (international) and www.policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/travel.shtml (US domestic).
- For guidance, domestic travel for Israelis should be based on Government of Israel domestic per diem rates.
- Equipment-related costs from requested grant funds are discouraged. In-kind equipment contributions are appropriate and encouraged.
- The budget narrative must provide a detailed explanation of all budget items – personnel, travel and per diem, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs – as shown for grant funds and for the costs-hare contributions of the applicant institution and the cooperating partners.

16. What is the definition of cost-share? Cost-share must meet the criteria defined in the RFP. Both cash and in-kind contributions will be accepted as part of the applicant’s cost-sharing when such contributions (a) are verifiable and auditable from the applicants records; (b) are reasonable for the accomplishment of the project objectives; (c) are not included as contribution for any other USISTF or U.S. federally assisted program; and (d) are not paid by the USISTF or U.S. federal government under another grant. The match is to be calculated on the total amount of the grant requested.

17. What should be included in the “Letter of Support”? These are letters of commitment. If the applicant organization has partners, such as institutions, universities, government agencies, or other organizations, include one page letters of commitment from partners explaining their role in the proposed project. The presidents, chancellors, rectors, or chief executive officers of the cooperating institution(s) and organization(s) in the U.S. and Israel must sign the letters. Do not include letters of endorsement or recommendation or have them mailed in later; they will not be considered in evaluating proposals.

18. What should be included in the narrative description of the project? You should describe precisely what your project will achieve - why, how, when, with what, and who will benefit. Carefully read the criteria set forth in the RFP in the sections entitled “Priority Areas”, “Proposal Format” and “Proposal Evaluation and Selection Criteria”. Explain each aspect of your proposal in enough detail to answer a grant reviewer’s questions. You should address the following basic elements of good grant writing to ensure that grant reviewers can fully comprehend and score your project. Address all criteria in any sequence that best demonstrates the strengths of your project. This will indicate to the reviewers how well you design and describe your project, and how effectively your project meets the RFP criteria. You should clearly and concisely explain:

- *Why:* The purpose of your project and how it will address the priority areas of the USISTF. Identify the issues you are addressing. Explain the importance to the U.S. and Israel. Specify if the project has the potential for wide application, and/or can serve as a model for a wider audience.

- *Who:* Explain who will conduct the project; identify the target audience and demonstrate an understanding of the needs of that audience. Important: explain your recruitment plan to attract your target audience.
- *How:* Explain your strategy, objectives, activities, delivery methods, and outcomes to establish for reviewers that you have realistic goals and objectives and will use effective methods to achieve them. Clarify for the reviewers how you will complete all basic steps from beginning to end. Do not omit steps that lead up to or follow the actual delivery methods (*e.g.*, if you plan to conduct workshops, specify where, who is the target audience, number of participants, content, and anticipated outcomes). Demonstrate that the project produces quality deliverables, and outcomes.
- *With What:* The proposal should clearly indicate how the grant funds and cost-share will be effectively used.

19. Is it possible to change the budget once the project is underway? We understand that changes happen. If changes to the budget are required, you will need to submit a written request for changes to the USISTF Program Director. An amendment to the budget may be made only after approval by the USISTF. The total funding from the USISTF for a project cannot exceed \$150,000.

20. Is development of virtual tools and information systems considered a legitimate activity? Yes. The USISTF encourages the efficient and cost-effective use of information technologies to achieve the objectives of the priority areas. Information technologies are viewed as tools in implementing a project and not simply an end product.

21. My project is already funded by a different source; may I request additional funds from USISTF to make the pot larger? The USISTF does not provide support for supplementary funding for otherwise already approved and funded efforts that do not provide a distinct, additional, and new component; nor funding solely for maintenance of existing programs. You are required to identify all existing funding sources for the specific proposal and tasks for which you are requesting funds from the USISTF.

22. I have submitted the project described in this proposal to other sources for funding, must I declare this? Yes. You should indicate the status of that application for funding and explain how receiving funding requested from another source will affect your request for funds from the USISTF.

23. What are the policies concerning Intellectual Property (IP) Rights that may be developed in the USISTF Grant Program? The IP will reside with the Principle Investigators; however, the USISTF will retain certain user rights outlined in the USISTF Funding Agreement. Copyrights in any work produced in performance of the award are subject to nonexclusive, nontransferable, irrevocable, paid-up worldwide license for the Governments of the U.S. and Israel to reproduce, prepare derivative works, perform publicly, and display publicly the work, or authorize others to do so on their behalf, for government purposes.

24. Does winning an award from the USISTF imply a commitment to future funding? No. There is no obligation for future funding. If an application is selected for funding under the RFP Program, there is no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award.

25. Does the work have to be conducted in the United States and/or Israel? Yes, unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate a compelling reason to include a third country.

26. Will the RFP Manager provide feedback on all proposals that get rejected? If requested in writing, the RFP Manager will provide you with a brief written summary of the salient points raised by the reviewers.

27. Does having previously worked with or submitted a proposal to the USISTF give me a competitive advantage in this RFP? No. All proposals will be evaluated by panels of independent peer reviewers based on their merit and adherence to the requirements and criteria stated in this RFP.

28. Once a proposal has been approved, whom does the grant go through? Once a decision to award funding has been ratified by the US-Israel Science and Technology Commission, funding will be made directly to the organization(s) selected for awards in accordance with the terms and conditions of the USISTF's standard Project Funding Agreement, which is available on the USISTF's website (<http://www.usistf.org>) or upon request. The USISTF reserves the right to negotiate with applicants selected to receive awards over the cost and scope of the proposed project; to seek consolidation of one or more proposals into a single project; or to require proposals to add or delete a task(s) in order to improve the probability of success and the fulfillment of the USISTF's goals and objectives.

Please refer to the updates of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for further clarifications, located on the Foundation web site: <http://www.usistf.org/RFP.html>

For further information, you should contact in writing Dr. Marc Siegel, the RFP Program Manager at email: siegel@usistf.org.

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