International Research Fellowship Program (IRFP)

Program Announcement

NSF 01-135

DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

DEADLINE(S): October 22, 2001

(In future years, October 1 annually)

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

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SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Program Title:

International Research Fellowship Program (IRFP)

Synopsis of Program:

The objective of the International Research Fellowship Program is to introduce scientists and engineers in the early stages of their careers to opportunities abroad, thereby furthering NSF's goal of establishing productive, mutually-beneficial relationships between U.S. and foreign science and engineering communities. These awards are available for research in any field of science and engineering research and education supported by NSF. Foreign science or engineering centers and other centers of excellence in all geographical regions are eligible host institutions.

Cognizant Program Officer:

- Susan Parris, Division of International Programs, Room 935, telephone: (703)292-7225, email: sparris@nsf.gov.

Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:

- 47.074 --- Biological Sciences

- 47.070 --- Computer and Information Science and Engineering

- 47.076 --- Education and Human Resources

- 47.041 --- Engineering

- 47.050 --- Geosciences

- 47.049 --- Mathematical and Physical Sciences

- 47.078 --- Office of Polar Programs

- 47.075 --- Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

- **Organization Limit:** Proposals may be submitted by U.S. universities, organizations, or professional societies in support of individual investigators.

- **PI Eligibility:** See Section III, Eligibility Information

- **Host Site Eligibility:** See Section III

- **Limit on Number of Proposals:** Recipients of previous International Research Fellowship Awards are not eligible

AWARD INFORMATION

- **Anticipated Type of Award:** Fellowship

- **Estimated Number of Awards:** Approximately 20-30

- **Anticipated Funding Amount:** Approximately $1 Million will be available in 2002, pending availability of funds.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Guidelines

- *Proposal Preparation Instructions:* See the full program announcement for further information.

B. Budgetary Information

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Not required

- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:** Not Applicable

- **Other Budgetary Limitations:** Not Applicable

C. Deadline Dates

- **Letter of Intent:** None

- **Preproposal:** None

- **Full Proposal Deadline:** October 22, 2001(In future years, October 1, annually)

D. FastLane Requirements

- **FastLane Submission:** Applicants must submit electronically using the NSF FastLane Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Application at https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/d11/D11PostDocHome.htm

- **FastLane Contact(s):** Administrative Officer, Division of International Programs, Room 935, telephone: (703) 292-8708, e-mail: intfl@nsf.gov.

PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

- **Merit Review Criteria:** National Science Board approved criteria. Proposals are also

reveiwed for their mutual international benefits. See Section VI.A, NSF Review Process, for information on supplemental criteria.

AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

- **Award Conditions:** Standard NSF award conditions apply.

- **Reporting Requirements:** Standard NSF reporting requirements apply.

I. INTRODUCTION

The objective of the International Research Fellowship Program is to introduce scientists and engineers in the early stages of their careers to opportunities abroad, thereby furthering NSF's goal of establishing productive, mutually-beneficial relationships between U.S. and foreign science and engineering communities.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

These awards are available for research in any field of science and engineering research or education supported by NSF. Applicants are encouraged to consider any site that will afford them a unique and beneficial research experience.

Appropriate organizations include institutions of higher education, industrial research institutions/laboratories, government research institutes/laboratories/centers, nonprofit research organizations, and foreign sites or centers of excellence.

Eligible applicants, in addition to being citizens or permanent residents of the United States, must have earned a doctoral degree within six years before the date of application, or expect to receive the doctoral degree by the award date. Women, minorities, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Support may be requested for residence abroad of three to 24 months. The 24-month period may include one year (or some portion of the total duration) at the foreign site and one year (or duration equal to the foreign tenure) used as a "re-entry" year in the United States. Awardees are expected to work full time on their research projects. Support is not provided for teaching, writing textbooks, preparation of prior research results for publication, or similar activities.

Bioscience research with disease-related goals, including work on the etiology, diagnosis, or treatment of physical or mental diseases, abnormality, or malfunction in human beings or animals is normally not supported. Animal models of such conditions, or the development or testing of drugs or other procedures for their treatment also generally are not eligible for support. However, research in bioengineering with diagnosis or treatment-related goals, that applies engineering principles to problems in biology and medicine while advancing engineering knowledge is eligible for support. Bioengineering research to aid persons with disabilities is also eligible.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Applicants must:

    A. be U.S. citizens or permanent residents as of October 22, 2001 (In future years, October 1, annually).

    B. have been awarded a doctoral degree within six years before the date of the application or expect to receive the doctoral degree by the award date.

C. desire to conduct scientific research at appropriate academic, government or non-profit research institutions, which are located outside of the United States.

Limitations on the number of applications that may be submitted by an individual or organization:

Recipients of previous International Research Fellowship awards are not eligible.

Host Site Eligibility:

Appropriate host sites are foreign science or engineering centers in all geographical regions. Appropriate establishments include institutions of higher education, industrial research institutions/laboratories, government research institutes/laboratories/centers, and non-profit research organizations. (For those interested in research in Japan, contact Susan Parris for specific instructions.)

IV. AWARD INFORMATION

Total program support will be approximately $1 Million in FY2002, pending availablity of funds.

Anticipated date of awards: March annually.

Approximately 20-30 fellowships will be offered each year to U.S. investigators for research abroad.

Average award size: $60,000.

Tenure Limitations

- A Fellow will have a full-time tenure of from three to 24 months. Requests to divide tenure between two institutions should be clearly described in the application.

- A recipient of a fellowship must begin tenure within the award year. Any exceptions, such as a delay in completion of the Ph.D., will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Proposals submitted in response to this program announcement should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the NSF *Grant Proposal Guide* (GPG). The complete text of the GPG (including electronic forms) is available electronically on the NSF Web Site at: http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpg.

The complete application consists of:

- International Research Fellowship Program Application - Must be submitted electronically using Proposal Preparation on the NSF FastLane website. Specific

instructions can be found by clicking on **Postdoctoral Fellowships** on the FastLane website. Select **Applicant** under Who Are You?

- Cover Page - You must complete this form first. Check that your name and address show as both Awardee and Performing Organization. Select this program announcement from the list shown.

- Application Form - Basic information

- Application Form B - Language skills, dependent information, international experience

- Project Summary (450 words or less)- Include the title of your project, the host name and institution, a description of the research, the objective, technical approach and expected results. Tell why you want to go to a particular site and why you want to work with that person. Use terms understandable to a lay person. Do not use jargon.

- Project Description, not to exceed five single-spaced pages. An additional 2-3 pages may be used for forms, graphs and references cited, if necessary, as Supplementary Docs. The Project Description must contain the following items:

  1. Detailed project description

  2. Detailed justification for conducting the research abroad

  3. Identification of the collaborating scientist(s)

  4. Clear relationship between the proposed research and the current research efforts at the host institution

  5. Description of facilities and any other evidence of the suitablility of the foreign collaborator(s) and site.

  6. Explanation of the long-term career goals of the applicant and the role of the postdoctoral experience in achieving them, including future plans for collaborative activities.

- Applicant's Biographical Sketch and list of publications with full title and completed references. Please do not send reprints or abstracts.

- Host Scientist's Invitation/Sponsoring Scientist Statement - Applicant will attach the Letter of invitation from the prospective host scientist or engineer describing the proposed interaction between the applicant's research plan and ongoing research efforts at the foreign site, and his/her curriculum vita in English (limited to two pages). Use the Supplementary Docs form in FastLane to upload this letter.

- Three letters of reference - From three senior research colleagues familiar with the applicant's research work. References should not be sought from proposed foreign hosts or host institutions. One letter must be from the applicant's Ph.D advisor. Applicant will

list names of Letter of Reference writers within "Add/Delete Letter of Reference Writers" in FastLane Proposal Preparation. This must be done before your references can write their letters.

B. Budgetary Information

Allowable Expenses

- Round trip economy airfare and necessary ground transportation from the awardee's permanent residence or the place where the application was made to the host institution. Travel must be performed on a U.S. flag carrier if such service is available (see para. 761.2 and 761.3 of the Grant Policy Manual at http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpm

- Up to $300 of excess baggage allowance (per award, per person)

- In-country travel. Travel between countries may be included if justified in the proposal

- $2,500 a year relocation allowance

- Living allowance of $500 to $4,500 per month to be determined (at the time of award) on the basis of U.S. Government per diem rates for the host locality. Per diem rates can be viewed at http://www.state.gov/www/perdiems/index.html. The first 30 days of the tenure are calculated at the full per diem rate; the rate is reduced to 50% for all days thereafter

- Health insurance allowance costs at a fixed rate of $150 per month

- Support for materials, supplies and equipment, if justified by proposal

- Partial support for language training, if justified, with the amount determined on a case-by-case basis

- Up to $3,000 per award for a return professional visit(s). May be used for presentation of results at conferences, consultation with colleagues, job interviews, or attendance at professional conferences

- Round trip economy airfare, health insurance at a fixed rate of $50 per month, and a supplementary living allowance of $150 per month for each dependent accompanying the awardee for six months or more.

- Institutional allowance - up to 10 percent of award amount for the foreign portion. Expenses must be documented at time of award.

- Field expenses, if justified by the proposal.

C. Deadline Dates

October 22, 2001 (In future years, October 1, annually). The proposals must be submitted via FastLane by 5:00 PM, local time.

D. FastLane Requirements

Proposers are required to prepare and submit all proposals for this Program Announcement through the FastLane system. Select **Postdoctoral Fellowships** on the FastLane Home Page (https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.htm) for links to detailed information. All PDF files must be created using the detailed instructions found at https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/pdfcreat.htm. For FastLane user support, call 1-800-673-6188.

VI. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

A. NSF Proposal Review Process

Reviews of proposals submitted to NSF are solicited from peers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research or education project. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with the oversight of the review process. NSF invites the proposer to suggest at the time of submission, the names of appropriate or inappropriate reviewers. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts with the proposer. Special efforts are made to recruit reviewers from non-academic institutions, minority-serving institutions, or adjacent disciplines to that principally addressed in the proposal.

Proposals will be reviewed against the following general review criteria established by the National Science Board. Following each criterion are potential considerations that the reviewer may employ in the evaluation. These are suggestions and not all will apply to any given proposal. Each reviewer will be asked to address only those that are relevant to the proposal and for which he/she is qualified to make judgements.

What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?

How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of the prior work.) To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative and original concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation,

networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

Principal Investigators should address the following elements in their proposal to provide reviewers with the information necessary to respond fully to both of the above-described NSF merit review criteria. NSF staff will give these elements careful consideration in making funding decisions.

Integration of Research and Education

One of the principal strategies in support of NSF's goals is to foster integration of research and education through the programs, projects, and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions provide abundant opportunities where individuals may concurrently assume responsibilities as researchers, educators, and students and where all can engage in joint efforts that infuse education with the excitement of discovery and enrich research through the diversity of learning perspectives.

Integrating Diversity into NSF Programs, Projects, and Activities

Broadening opportunities and enabling the participation of all citizens - women and men, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities - is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

Additional Review Criteria

In addition to the above mentioned review criteria, for this program, the reviewers are asked to consider the following International Science and Engineering criteria:

- Prospective benefits to the applicant, the scientific discipline and the United States

- Qualifications of proposed host and host institution and complementarity

- Qualifications of applicant, including applicant's potential for continued growth

- Merit of the proposed international collaboration

- Expected mutual benefit to be derived from the contribution of the scientists and engineers in each country

A summary rating and accompanying narrative will be completed and signed by each reviewer. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers, are mailed to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Director. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

B. Review Protocol and Associated Customer Service Standard

Most proposals submitted to NSF are reviewed by mail review, panel review, or some combination of mail and panel review. Proposals submitted in response to this announcement will be reviewed by mail and/or panel review.

All proposals are carefully reviewed by at least three other persons outside NSF who are experts in the particular field represented by the proposal. Reviewers will be asked to formulate a recommendation to either support or decline each proposal. The Program Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation. In most cases, proposers will be contacted by the Program Officer after his/her recommendation to award or decline funding has been approved by his/her supervisor, the Division Director. This informal notification is not a guarantee of an eventual award.

NSF will be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months for 95 percent of proposals. The time interval begins on the proposal deadline or target date or from the date of receipt, if deadlines or target dates are not used by the program. The interval ends when the Division Director accepts the Program Officer's recommendation.

In all cases, after programmatic approval has been obtained, the proposals recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Division of Grants and Agreements for review of business, financial, and policy implications and the processing and issuance of a grant or other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants and Agreements Officer may make commitments, obligations or awards on behalf of NSF or authorize the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of NSF should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with a NSF Program Officer. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants and Agreements Officer does so at its own risk.

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Notification of the Award

Notification of the award is made to *the submitting organization* by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program Division administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Principal Investigator. (See section VI. A, for additional information on the review process.)

B. Grant Award Conditions

An NSF award consists of: (1) the award letter, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the proposal

referenced in the award letter; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (NSF-GC-1)* or Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Terms and Conditions * and (5) any NSF brochure, program guide, announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter. Cooperative agreement awards also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions (CA-1). Electronic mail notification is the preferred way to transmit NSF awards to organizations that have electronic mail capabilities and have requested such notification from the Division of Grants and Agreements.

*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's web site at http://www.nsf.gov/home/grants/grants_gac.htm. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (301) 947-2722 or by e-mail from pubs@nsf.gov.

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions is contained in the NSF *Grant Policy Manual* (GPM) Chapter II, (NSF 95-26) available electronically on the NSF web site at http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpm. The GPM is also for sale through the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office (GPO), Washington, DC 20402. The telephone number at GPO for subscription information is (202) 512-1800. The GPM may be ordered through the GPO web site at http://www.gpo.gov.

C. Reporting Requirements

For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the PI must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer at least 90 days before the end of the current budget period.

Within 90 days after the expiration of an award, the PI also is required to submit a final project report. Approximately 30 days before expiration, NSF will send a notice to remind the PI of the requirement to file the final project report. Failure to provide final technical reports delays NSF review and processing of pending proposals for that PI. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

NSF has implemented an electronic project reporting system, available through FastLane. This system permits electronic submission and updating of project reports, including information on: project participants (individual and organizational); activities and findings; publications; and other specific products and contributions. PIs will not be required to re-enter information previously provided, either with a proposal or in earlier updates using the electronic system.

D. New Awardee Information

If the submitting organization has never received an NSF award, it is recommended that the organization's appropriate administrative officials become familiar with the policies and procedures in the NSF *Grant Policy Manual* which are applicable to most NSF awards. The *Prospective New Awardee Guide* (NSF 97-00) includes information on: Administration and Managment Information; Accounting System Requirements and Auditing Information; and Payments to Organizations with Awards. This information will assist an organization in preparing documents that NSF requires to conduct administrative and financial reviews of an

organization. The guide also serves as a means of highlighting the accountability requirments associated with Federal awards. This document is available electronically on NSF's Web site at: http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpm.

VIII. CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General inquiries should be made to the International Research Fellowship Program, Susan Parris, Division of International Programs, Room 935, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA 22230, telephone (703)292-7225, email:sparris@nsf.gov.

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact the INT Administrative Officer, telephone: (703) 292-8708, e-mail:intfl@nsf.gov or the FastLane Help Desk, telephone: (800) 673-6188, e-mail: fastlane@nsf.gov.

IX. OTHER PROGRAMS OF INTEREST

The NSF Guide to Programs is a compilation of funding for research and education in science, mathematics, and engineering. The NSF Guide to Programs is available electronically at http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gp. General descriptions of NSF programs, research areas, and eligibility information for proposal submission are provided in each chapter.

Many NSF programs offer announcements or solicitations concerning specific proposal requirements. To obtain additional information about these requirements, contact the appropriate NSF program offices listed in Appendix A of the GPG. Any changes in NSF's fiscal year programs occurring after press time for the Guide to Programs will be announced in the NSF E-Bulletin, which is updated daily on the NSF web site at http://www.nsf.gov/home/ebulletin, and in individual program announcements/solicitations. Subscribers can also sign up for NSF's Custom News Service (http://www.nsf.gov/home/cns/start.htm) to be notified of new funding opportunities that become available.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. Awardees are wholly responsible for conducting their project activities and preparing the results for publication. Thus, the Foundation does not assume responsibility for such findings or their interpretation.

NSF welcomes proposals from all qualified scientists, engineers and educators. The Foundation strongly encourages women, minorities and persons with disabilities to compete fully in its programs. In accordance with Federal statutes, regulations and NSF policies, no person on

grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin or disability shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving financial assistance from NSF (unless otherwise specified in the eligibility requirements for a particular program).

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASED) provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities (investigators and other staff, including student research assistants) to work on NSF-supported projects. See the program announcement/solicitation or contact the program coordinator at (703) 292-8636.

The National Science Foundation has Telephonic Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing impairments to communicate with the Foundation about NSF programs, employment or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-5090, FIRS at 1-800-877-8339.

The National Science Foundation is committed to making all of the information we publish easy to understand. If you have a suggestion about how to improve the clarity of this document or other NSF-published materials, please contact us at plainlanguage@nsf.gov.

PRIVACY ACT AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENTS

The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the proposal review process; to applicant institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies needing information as part of the review process or in order to coordinate programs; and to another Federal agency, court or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See Systems of Records, NSF-50, "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," 63 Federal Register 267 (January 5, 1998), and NSF-51, "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records," 63 Federal Register 268 (January 5, 1998). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

Pursuant to 5 CFR 1320.5(b), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to an information collection unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0023. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding this burden estimate and any other aspect of

this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Suzanne Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, Division of Administrative Services, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA 22230, or to Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of OMB, Attention: Desk Officer for National Science Foundation (3145-0023), 725 - 17th Street, N.W. Room 10235, Washington, D.C. 20503.

OMB clearance number: OMB 3145-0023.

APPENDIX A

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT

THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

1. **Am I eligible to apply for this program?**

   Yes, if you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident within six years of your Ph.D. You do not have to have your degree to apply, but if you are recommended for an award, you must prove you have obtained the degree to receive funds.

2. **What is the deadline, and how strict is it?**

   The deadline is October 22, 2001 (In future years, October 1, annually). All applications must be sent electronically by 5 pm local time, October 22, 2001 (In future years, October 1, annually).

3. **What countries can be considered hosts?**

   All countries are included in this program. Applications may be for research in any country in the world , although travel restrictions by the State Department to certain countries, such as Cuba, may impose an additional level of review.

4. **Is there any particular host country I should apply for, to increase my chances of obtaining an award?**

   Competition is very strong for applicants who want to travel to Western Europe and, in general, to the more developed countries. All proposals are ranked based on scientific merit. However, given two equally ranked proposals, priority will be given to the proposal with an underrepresented country in the program. In addition, for heavily subscribed countries, we may limit the number of awards for that country in the interest of widening the geographical scope of the program. If you are confident that your project and qualifications are strong, do not let country considerations deter you from applying.

5. **May I apply to more than one country?**

   You may. If you have a project that involves several hosts and countries, make sure that it is very clear on what will be done where and when. If you want to apply to two different countries merely to increase your chances of receiving an award, we would caution you against it. In the past, our panelists have looked negatively on that practice.

6. **What is the average size of an award?**

    An average award is about $60,000, but the elements are so varied that it is difficult to say. The size of an award depends on how expensive airfare is to each location, if the applicant is alone or with his/her family, if the project requires materials or equipment, and how long the project will take.

7. **If I have had international experience, or other postdoctoral awards, will I still be able to apply?**

    Applicants who have had previous international experience or other postdoctoral awards may be at a SLIGHT disadvantage because priority **may** be given to applicants without previous international experience or funding in the event of two equally merit-ranked proposals.

8. **Will it help to get my application in much earlier than October 22, 2001 (October 1 in future years)?**

    No. Please do not submit applications before October 1 (September 15 in future years).

9. **How much should I request for living allowance?**

    The living allowance (stipend) is computed using a formula based on the existing U.S. government per diem rate for the locale you are visiting. The per diem rate information, regularly updated by the Department of State, may be useful to you in planning your visit (http://www.state.gov/www/perdiems/index.html). The rate is calculated at the full per diem rate for the first 30 days; and 50 percent of that rate for the remaining time, but cannot exceed $4,500 per month. You may also consult with your host to determine a fair allotment. It will not be held against you to ask for the maximum rate.

10. **When is the earliest date I can start my fellowship?**

    We suggest April 1 as the earliest starting date. If an earlier start date is required, please consult the IRFP Program Manager. Decisions are announced in March, but it takes time to process the paperwork. We make every effort to get awards processed quickly, but there are many variables that cannot be controlled.

11. **Can I apply to other postdoctoral award programs at the same time as I apply for this one?**

    From the point of view of the IRFP program, we have no objections for you to do so. Please be aware, however, that other postdoctoral programs have limitations on multiple applications and it is recommended that you consult with them. The Foundation does not encourage submission of duplicate applications to different programs, but you may apply to different programs with different projects. Keep in mind, that if you are recommended for support by more than one postdoctoral program, you may have to chose one or the other.

12. **How competitive is this program?**

   The success rate for proposals in this program is about 30 percent. The number of applications in the past has ranged from 74 to 130 each year.

13. **What if I am not affiliated with an institution?**

   We prefer that you be affiliated with a U.S. institution from an administrative standpoint, but at least 50 percent of our applicants do not have such an affiliation. Proposals without an institutional affiliation are treated the same way as those with one for the purpose of funding.

14. **What fields are supported?**

   Generally, fields in the areas of the basic sciences and engineering are eligible for support by this program. NSF does not support research in the clinical-medical or disease related fields and, therefore, proposals in those fields are not eligible for support. If in doubt, please call the IRFP program manager.

15. **Does my host have to submit a counterpart proposal?**

   No counterpart proposal is required by the host. The only requirement on their part is to send a letter of invitation and their cv (limited to 2 pages, in English). Their letter of invitation should describe the proposed interaction between your research and the ongoing research efforts at the foreign site. The reviewer will want to see evidence of the proposed collaboration.

16. **Do the five pages for the project description have to include the bibliographic references and/or any graphs or drawings?**

   No, we will allow up to three additional pages for those as Supplemental Docs.

17. **Who should the host be? Would it be the head of the institute that I am going to or the person that I will work with?**

   It should be the person you will collaborate with. The review process takes into account the contribution that your host may make to the collaboration.

18. **What do the reviewers look at in reviewing proposals for the program?**

   In addition to the criteria described in announcement Section VI.A, NSF Proposal Review Process, past reviewers have been most influenced by strong publication records, enthusiastic reference letters, and clear and well written proposals. It also helps if your host provides as much detail as possible about what part they will have in your research collaboration.

   Because your proposal will be read by reviewers from all fields represented by the competition, your proposal should be clearly written and understandable by both those within your specific field and those outside it. As this program includes all countries and

all fields supported by NSF, besides technical merit, the program must consider geographic and field distribution in the final ranking. In addition, the program is interested in supporting fellowships for those who will most benefit at this stage in their career.