

Theoretical Foundations (TF)

Program Solicitation

NSF 05-500

Replaces Document NSF 04-520



National Science Foundation

Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering

Division of Computing & Communication Foundations

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

January 5, 2005.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

General Information

Program Title:

Theoretical Foundations (TF)

Synopsis of Program:

The Theoretical Foundations (TF) cluster is the successor to the Formal and Mathematical Foundations cluster which was described in the solicitation, [NSF 04-520](#). Projects supported in the TF cluster seek to determine inherent limits of computation and communication, and to obtain optimal solutions within those limits. They address fundamental issues of information science and technology, both within computation and communications and at the interface between these and other disciplines. The cluster is broadly concerned with problems of information processing that fall within the extremes of purely theoretical studies and applications within disciplines. Research and education projects sponsored by the cluster bring advanced capabilities from computer science, scientific computing, communication theory, signal processing theory, mathematics, and application areas to bear on fundamental problems throughout science and engineering. The cluster also solicits proposals to produce innovative curricula or educational materials to help advance the training of new experts in theoretical foundations of computing and communication.

Cognizant Program Officer(s):

- John H. Cozzens, Program Director, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Division of Computing and Communication Foundations, 1115 N, telephone: (703) 292-8910, fax: (703) 292-9059, email: jcozzens@nsf.gov
- Ding-Zhu Du, Program Director, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Division of Computing and Communication Foundations, 1115 N, telephone: (703) 292-8910, fax: (703) 292-9059, email: ddu@nsf.gov
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Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):

- 47.070 --- Computer and Information Science and Engineering

Eligibility Information

- **Organization Limit:** None Specified.
- **PI Eligibility Limit:** In response to this solicitation, an investigator may participate as PI, co-PI or senior personnel in no more than two proposals, only one of which may be a single investigator proposal.
- **Limit on Number of Proposals:** None Specified.

Award Information

- **Anticipated Type of Award:** Standard or Continuing Grant
- **Estimated Number of Awards:** 90 to 120 - Average award of \$125,000 per year for 3 years
- **Anticipated Funding Amount:** \$42,000,000 in fiscal year 2005, pending the availability of funds

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

- **Full Proposal Preparation Instructions:** Standard GPG Guidelines apply.

B. Budgetary Information

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Cost Sharing is not required.
- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:** Not Applicable.
- **Other Budgetary Limitations:** Not Applicable.

C. Due Dates

- **Full Proposal Deadline Date(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

January 5, 2005.

Proposal Review Information

- **Merit Review Criteria:** National Science Board approved criteria apply.

Award Administration Information

- **Award Conditions:** Standard NSF award conditions apply.
- **Reporting Requirements:** Standard NSF reporting requirements apply.

Summary of Program Requirements

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I. INTRODUCTION

Projects supported in the Theoretical Foundations (TF) cluster seek to determine inherent limits of computation and communication, and to obtain optimal solutions within those limits. They address fundamental issues of information science and technology, both within computation and communications and at the interface between these and other disciplines. The cluster is broadly concerned with problems of information processing that fall within the extremes of purely theoretical studies and applications within disciplines. Research and education projects sponsored by the cluster bring advanced capabilities from computer science, scientific computing, communication theory, signal processing theory, mathematics, and application areas to bear on fundamental problems throughout science and engineering. The cluster also solicits proposals to produce innovative curricula or educational materials to help advance the training of new experts in theoretical foundations of computing and communication.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The cluster supports a broad range of activities that include but are not limited to: models for representing mathematical and scientific information; models of computation; parallel and distributed computation; algorithmic and computational approaches to mathematics; advanced scientific computing and large-scale, high-end application methodologies; advanced techniques

for communicating information on a variety of channels; advanced signal processing techniques for multiple media; centralized and ad hoc wireless networks; and distributed sensor systems and networks.

The TF cluster emphasizes integration of research and education in all areas of interest. Principal investigators range from faculty members beginning their careers to teams of senior investigators working on novel directions within a multi-disciplinary mode. Collaborations between computer scientists, engineers, mathematicians, statisticians, and other disciplinary scientists are welcomed because they have the potential to strengthen the foundations of computation and communications.

This cluster also supports projects that develop innovative curricular materials and that have the potential to greatly improve higher education in theoretical foundations of computing and communication. Such projects may be proposed in stand-alone proposals or as one component in broader research and education proposals. Curriculum development activities must include strong justification of the need for the new materials and must include plans for disseminating them to the community and for evaluating their effectiveness.

While each area described below deals with a set of specific topics internal to the subfield of interest, research issues inevitably spill over artificially imposed programmatic boundaries. The cluster encourages proposals that transcend the confines of each of the sub-areas elaborated.

Scientific foundations for computing

This sub-area is concerned with the theoretical underpinnings of computer science and the mathematical and algorithmic techniques for modeling and computation. Topics of interest include:

- *core theory*, including models of computation, computational complexity, quantum complexity and algorithms, cryptography, interactive computation, statistical and computational learning theory, parallel and distributed computation, computation on random data, online computation, and reasoning about knowledge.
- *fundamental algorithms*, including the development of combinatorial, approximate, parallel, random, and online, algorithms that transcend application domains; algorithmic and computational approaches to algebra, logic, geometry, topology, graph theory, and other branches of mathematics; computational optimization; and algorithms for computational science and engineering, including parallel computational and experimental algorithms that seek to advance the state-of-the-art in high-end computing.
- *application-specific theory*, including models, techniques, and theory for solving problems that arise in areas of science and engineering such as computational biology, computer and communication system security, and computational linguistics.

Experimental studies are encouraged when they contribute to a deeper understanding of the fundamental ideas being pursued. Also of interest are interdisciplinary projects, particularly at the interface between computing foundations and other CISE clusters, other CISE Divisions, and other scientific disciplines when new perspectives can contribute to computer science foundations.

Scientific foundations for communication

This sub-area seeks advances in theory and techniques, as well as supporting software and hardware, for the acquisition and processing of digital and analog information, and for the efficient representation, transmission and reception of digital and analog information over a variety of channels (e.g. wireline, mobile multiantenna wireless, optical, and biological channels.) Topics of interest include:

- *core theory*, including information theory; detection and estimation; statistical signal and array processing; source and channel coding; image and multi-dimensional digital signal processing; collaborative signal processing; and cryptography.
- *fundamental algorithms*, including signal compression for reduced data rates, scalable/progressive/multiresolution approaches in signal decomposition; compression, and other signal processing techniques to support content analysis; modern modulation and coding techniques exploiting the time, frequency and spatial dimensions of channels; efficient transceiver design; and communication algorithms working across network layers.
- *applications*, including multimedia signal processing; wireless communications, specifically cellular telephony, personal communications systems, wireless local area networks and ad hoc networks; optical communications; information hiding and steganography; and distributed sensor systems and networks.

Also of interest are interdisciplinary projects, particularly at the interface between communication foundations and other CISE clusters, other CISE Divisions, and other scientific disciplines when new perspectives can contribute to the scientific foundations of communications.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The categories of proposers identified in the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) are eligible to submit proposals under this program announcement/solicitation.

In response to this solicitation, an investigator may participate as PI, co-PI or senior personnel in no more than two proposals, only one of which may be a single investigator proposal.

IV. AWARD INFORMATION

Estimated program budget, number of awards and average award size/duration are subject to the availability of funds.

- **Anticipated Type of Award:** Standard or Continuing Grant
- **Estimated Number of Awards:** 90 to 120 - Average award of \$125,000 per year for 3 years
- **Anticipated Funding Amount:** \$42,000,000 in fiscal year 2005, pending the availability of funds

V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Full Proposal Instructions:

Proposals submitted in response to this program announcement/solicitation 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 is available electronically on the NSF Website at: <http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpg>. Paper copies of the GPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from pubs@nsf.gov.

Proposers are reminded to identify the program announcement/solicitation number (05-500) in the program announcement/solicitation block on the NSF *Cover Sheet For Proposal to the National Science Foundation*. Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay

processing.

B. Budgetary Information

Cost Sharing:

Cost sharing is not required in proposals submitted under this Program Solicitation.

C. Due Dates

Proposals must be submitted by the following date(s):

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

January 5, 2005.

D. FastLane Requirements

Proposers are required to prepare and submit all proposals for this announcement/solicitation through the FastLane system. Detailed instructions for proposal preparation and submission via FastLane are available at: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/newstan.htm>. For FastLane user support, call the FastLane Help Desk at 1-800-673-6188 or e-mail fastlane@nsf.gov. The FastLane Help Desk answers general technical questions related to the use of the FastLane system. Specific questions related to this program announcement/solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this announcement/solicitation.

Submission of Electronically Signed Cover Sheets. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must electronically sign the proposal Cover Sheet to submit the required proposal certifications (see Chapter II, Section C of the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) for a listing of the certifications). The AOR must provide the required electronic certifications within five working days following the electronic submission of the proposal. Proposers are no longer required to provide a paper copy of the signed Proposal Cover Sheet to NSF. Further instructions regarding this process are available on the FastLane Website at: <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>

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.

The National Science Board approved revised criteria for evaluating proposals at its meeting on March 28, 1997 ([NSB 97-72](#)). All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two merit review criteria. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

On July 8, 2002, the NSF Director issued [Important Notice 127](#), Implementation of new Grant Proposal Guide Requirements Related to the Broader Impacts Criterion. This Important Notice reinforces the importance of addressing both criteria in the preparation and review of all proposals submitted to NSF. NSF continues to strengthen its internal processes to ensure that both of the merit review criteria are addressed when making funding decisions.

In an effort to increase compliance with these requirements, the January 2002 issuance of the GPG incorporated revised proposal preparation guidelines relating to the development of the Project Summary and Project Description. Chapter II of the GPG specifies that Principal Investigators (PIs) must address both merit review criteria in separate statements within the one-page Project Summary. This chapter also reiterates that broader impacts resulting from the proposed project must be addressed in the Project Description and described as an integral part of the narrative.

Effective October 1, 2002, NSF will return without review proposals that do not separately address both merit review criteria within the Project Summary. It is believed that these changes to NSF proposal preparation and processing guidelines will more clearly articulate the importance of broader impacts to NSF-funded projects.

The two National Science Board approved merit review criteria are listed below (see the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) Chapter III.A for further information). The criteria include considerations that help define them. These considerations are suggestions and not all will apply to any given proposal. While proposers must address both merit review criteria, reviewers will be asked to address only those considerations that are relevant to the proposal being considered and for which he/she is qualified to make judgments.

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?

NSF staff will give careful consideration to the following 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.

B. Review Protocol and Associated Customer Service Standard

All proposals are carefully reviewed by at least three other persons outside NSF who are experts in the particular field represented by the proposal. Proposals submitted in response to this announcement/solicitation will be reviewed by Ad Hoc and/or panel review.

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.

A summary rating and accompanying narrative will be completed and submitted by each reviewer. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers, are sent 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.

NSF is striving to be able to tell proposers whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. The time interval begins on the closing date of an announcement/solicitation, or the date of proposal receipt, whichever is later. 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 their 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. 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 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 Website at http://www.nsf.gov/home/grants/grants_gac.htm. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 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, available electronically on the NSF Website 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 Website 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. Failure to provide final technical reports delays NSF review and processing of pending proposals for the PI and all Co-PIs. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

PIs are required to use NSF's electronic project reporting system, available through FastLane, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. 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.

VIII. CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- John H. Cozzens, Program Director, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Division of Computing and Communication Foundations, 1115 N, telephone: (703) 292-8910, fax: (703) 292-9059, email: jcozzens@nsf.gov
- Ding-Zhu Du, Program Director, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Division of Computing and Communication Foundations, 1115 N, telephone: (703) 292-8910, fax: (703) 292-9059, email: ddu@nsf.gov
- Robert B. Grafton, Program Director, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Division of Computing and Communication Foundations, 1115 N, telephone: (703) 292-8910, fax: (703) 292-9059, email: rgrafton@nsf.gov
- Haesun Park, Program Director, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Division of Computing and Communication Foundations, 1115 N, telephone: (703) 292-8910, fax: (703) 292-9059, email: hpark@nsf.gov
- Venugopal Veeravalli, Program Director, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Division of Computing and Communication Foundations, 1110 N, telephone: (703) 292-4763, fax: (703) 292-9059, email: vveerava@nsf.gov

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact:

- Tracey M. Wilkinson, Senior Program Assistant, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Division of Computing and Communication Foundations, 1115 N, telephone: (703) 292-8910, fax: (703) 292-9059, email: twilkins@nsf.gov
- Lori Allen, Program Assistant, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering, Division of Computing and Communication Foundations, 1115 N, telephone: (703) 292-8910, fax: (703) 292-9059, email: lallen@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. 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 Website 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, although some programs may have special requirements that limit eligibility.

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED) 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 GPG Chapter II, Section D.2 for instructions regarding preparation of these types of proposals.

The National Science Foundation promotes and advances scientific progress in the United States by competitively awarding grants and cooperative agreements for research and education in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

To get the latest information about program deadlines, to download copies of NSF publications, and to access abstracts of awards, visit the NSF Website at <http://www.nsf.gov>

- **Location:** 4201 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22230

- **For General Information** (NSF Information Center): (703) 292-5111

- **TDD (for the hearing-impaired):** (703) 292-5090

- **To Order Publications or Forms:**
 - Send an e-mail to: pubs@nsf.gov

 - or telephone: (703) 292-7827

- **To Locate NSF Employees:** (703) 292-5111

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.

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 3145-0058. 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.

OMB control number: 3145-0058.

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