Internal Selection Procedures for Partnership for International Research and Education (PIRE) (NSF 11-564)

Summary: The primary goal of PIRE is to support high quality projects in which advances in research and education could not occur without international collaboration. PIRE seeks to catalyze a higher level of international engagement in the U.S. science and engineering community.

International partnerships are essential to addressing critical science and engineering problems. In the global context, U.S. researchers and educators must be able to operate effectively in teams with partners from different nations and cultural backgrounds. PIRE promotes excellence in science and engineering through international collaboration and facilitates development of a diverse, globally-engaged, U.S. science and engineering workforce.

This PIRE competition will focus exclusively on the NSF-wide investment area of Science, Engineering, and Education for Sustainability (SEES). The SEES effort focuses on interdisciplinary topics that will advance sustainability science, engineering and education as an integrative approach to the challenges of adapting to environmental, social and cultural changes associated with growth and development of human populations, and attaining a sustainable energy future.

PIRE partners share an ambitious research vision that integrates research and education. The project theme may involve any area of research that falls within the broad scope of the SEES initiative. PIRE projects may vary in size and exhibit diverse forms of organization, collaboration, and operation suited to their individual needs. PIRE projects must include collaboration with foreign research partners and international research experiences for students to promote a diverse internationally competitive science and engineering workforce.

Proposal Limitations: A single organization may submit one preliminary proposal as the lead institution. Full proposals will be accepted by invitation only. There is no limit on the number of proposals on which an institution can participate as a partner. There are no PI/Co-PI limitations specified. We will utilize the following procedures for an internal Notice of Intent (NOI) process to select the project that will be submitted on behalf of the University.

Selection Process: Should more than one NOI be received from across the University, they will be reviewed by a process established by the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) in consultation with the Provost. The OVPR will notify each applicant whether or not their proposal has been selected to move forward and represent the University.

Proposal Schedule: Internal NOI due to OSP on 6 September 2011, 5:00 p.m. CDT
OVPR Notification of NOI selected to move forward by 13 September
Preliminary Proposal due to OSP on 17 October 2011, 5:00 p.m. CDT
Preliminary Proposal due to NSF on 19 October 2011, 5:00 p.m. CDT

Direct any questions about the internal NOI preparation or process to your OSP Contract Administrator.
NOI Format and Content:

Proposal pages should have at least 1” margins all around, and use no smaller than an 11-point font for the text. Tables and figures are exempt from the 11-point font requirement, but must be clearly legible.

Number of copies: Original and 5 copies

NOI Contents:

1. Cover Page:
   a. Include “NSF 11-550 PIRE”
   b. Project title begins with PIRE and should convey the primary purpose of the proposal.
   c. Names, departments/centers, campus address and email address for each PI, Co-I, and key personnel proposed.
   d. List of other partnering institutions and entities.

2. Project Summary: (Limit: 2 pages double-spaced) Describe the concept of the proposed PIRE project, including why the international partnership is critical to the project success. Include a description of the Intellectual Merit of the proposal within a subsection entitled “Intellectual Merit,” and a description of the Broader Impacts in a subsection entitled “Broader Impacts.”

3. Project Description¹: (Limit: 6 pages, double-spaced) Please include in this section the following information, each in its own subsection with the following headings:
   a. Administrative Summary
      a. Indicate length of study (maximum 5 years)
      b. Estimated total budget
      c. If the proposal is to be considered for an Additional Funding Opportunity as described in Section II.D., explicitly name the funding partner agency.
   b. Research Summary: Summarize the main ideas and essence of the proposed research. Describe issue/topic the proposed research is trying to address within the context of SEES, the overall goal, approaches, expected outcomes, and the synergy that each participant brings to the project.
   c. Education Summary: Describe the goals of the proposed education activities, and how the integration of research and education will advance the proposed PIRE project in a way that other funding mechanisms cannot.

The Project Description should be written such that it addresses the Additional Review Criteria given in Section VI.A of the solicitation (NSF 11-564).

4. One to two-page bio for each PI, Co-I and key personnel proposed.

¹ Based on NSF 11-564, Section V.4 Project Description