



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
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Dear Colleague Letter: Belmont Forum - G8 Multilateral International Opportunities Fund Initiative

April 30, 2012

The Directorate for Geosciences and the Office of International and Integrative Activities announce a new Multilateral Research Funding Initiative between the Belmont Forum¹ and the G8 Heads of Research Councils (G8HORCs)². Through this partnership, the multilateral funding process developed by G8HORCs will be taken forward to provide international collaborative research opportunities that address the Belmont Challenge: "To deliver knowledge needed for action to mitigate and adapt to detrimental environmental change and extreme hazardous³ events". This call of the *International Opportunities Fund* will focus on addressing issues of "Freshwater Security" and "Coastal Vulnerability" that are best addressed through a coupled interdisciplinary and multinational approach.

The Belmont Forum and G8-HORCs will support on a competitive basis, collaborative, research projects co-designed by teams of researchers from at least three participating countries. These interdisciplinary teams will bring together natural scientists, social/economic scientists and research users, such as policy makers, regulators, NGOs and industry. Proposals will be jointly reviewed by the participating funding organizations and successful projects are expected to demonstrate added value through multilateral collaboration. Support for U.S.-based researchers will be provided through awards made by the National Science Foundation.

Proposals may address only one scientific theme, either Freshwater Security or Coastal Vulnerability. All proposals for this call will be submitted to the central International Opportunities Fund website found at [Belmont Forum International Opportunities Fund](#).

The National Science Foundation of the USA will serve as the Theme Program Office for the Freshwater Security theme and will maintain the official webpage at [Freshwater Security Theme](#). Information specific to U.S. researchers will be posted at [U.S. National Annex](#).

The Natural Environment Research Council of the United Kingdom will serve as the Theme Program Office for the Coastal Vulnerability theme and will maintain the official webpage at [Coastal Vulnerability Theme](#). Information specific to U.S. researchers will be posted at [U.S. National Annex](#).

SCHEDULE

Pre-Proposal Due Date to the Theme Program Office: July 20, 2012³

Notification for Submission of Full Proposals: September 20, 2012³

Full Proposal Due Date to Theme Program Office and NSF (through FASTLANE): December 20, 2012³

Official Funding Decisions/Awards Anticipated: May-June 2013

ELIGIBILITY

Each consortium must include at least three partner countries with at least one academic Principal Investigator (PI) from each country in the consortium. Each PI/Co-PI must be from one of the Belmont Forum or G8 countries. Each consortium must show clear links through to users and include collaboration between natural and social/economic sciences, and other sciences where relevant.

Researchers from countries not represented by any of the partner-countries can participate in the research project at their own expense. Consortium partners should identify a Leading Principal Investigator (LPI) for each proposal for application, management and communication purposes. The LPI is officially responsible for all communications with the Theme Program Office, including the submission of the Preliminary Proposal and, if invited to do so, submission of the Full Proposal.

A Panel of Experts will review the pre-proposals based on the [selection criteria](#), and invite a pool high-quality applications to submit Full Proposals. The Full proposals will be reviewed based on the [selection criteria](#) by both *ad hoc* peer review and a Panel of Experts.

FUNDING PRINCIPLES

Within each selected consortium, funding of the participating researchers is provided by their respective national funding organization in accordance with their standard award terms and conditions. Funding is meant for collaborative research, which may include clearly justified travel and workshops, but not merely for networking, mobility or communication.

The total budget for this call is approximately 18 million (Euro) over three years. Funding can be provided for projects lasting for two or three years. NSF anticipates that 10-20 research consortia will be funded in this call at a level of approximately \$150,000 to 200,000 per award per year, pending the availability of funds. It is anticipated that awards will be made in May-June 2013.

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¹ The Belmont Forum is a high level group of the world's major and emerging funders of global environmental change research and international science councils. It aims to accelerate delivery of the international environmental research most urgently needed to remove critical barriers to sustainability by aligning and mobilizing international resources. Current members of the Belmont Forum are: Australia, Department of Climate Change; Austria, Ministry for Education, Science and Research; Brazil, FAPESP; Canada, NSERC and CFCAS; France, ANR; European Commission, DG Research; Germany, BMBF and DFG; Japan, MEXT; India, MoES; Norway, The Research Council of Norway; South Africa, NRF; UK, NERC; USA, NSF; International Council for Science (ICSU); and International Social Sciences Council (ISSC).

² At the G8 Heads of Research Councils (HORCs) meeting in Kyoto, Japan in May 2008, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the French National Research Agency (ANR), the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR), the Research Councils of the United Kingdom (RCUK), and the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) developed a framework to pilot a new modality for conducting international research to support projects that can address global challenges that are beyond the capacity of national or bilateral activities. Following two successful calls the G8 Research Council Initiative on Multilateral Research Funding is now embarking on its third and final call in conjunction with the Belmont Forum.

³ All closing dates will be midnight Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or 7:00PM EST.