

Categories of Proposal Personnel

Categories of Proposal Personnel Every identified individual expected to have a role in the execution of the proposed effort shall be identified on the proposal cover page, using the most appropriate personnel role below. Prior to proposal submission via NSPIRES, every individual named on the proposal's electronic cover page form as a team member (even Collaborators) must be registered in NSPIRES and confirm their commitment to that role. Team members will receive an email from NSPIRES indicating that they have been added to the proposal and must log into NSPIRES to corroborate. Through this electronic confirmation process, the organization through which they are participating in the investigation is also identified to enable organizational conflict of interest checks that are required as part of the evaluation process. When submitting proposals through Grants.gov, statements of commitment must be included in the proposal (see section 2.17 of this Guide for more information on statements of commitment). Such confirmation of participation is not needed for unnamed participants (e.g., students and postdoctoral associates). Any organization requesting NASA funds through participation in the proposed project shall list each team member on the proposal cover page. Other than the category of Principal Investigator (PI), some NOFOs may explicitly disallow some or all of the below categories and/or may add other categories.

Principal Investigator (PI) – The PI is the individual whom an organization designates as having an appropriate level of authority and responsibility for the proper conduct of proposed work effort, including the appropriate use of funds and administrative requirements such as the submission of progress reports to the agency. Every proposal shall identify a PI who is responsible for the quality and direction of the proposed work effort and for the proper use of awarded funds regardless of whether the PI receives support through the award. The PI is the person with whom NASA will communicate and who will be responsible for relaying communications to other team members as needed. The proposing organization has the authority to designate the PI and to designate a replacement if that becomes necessary. After the proposal selection, the replacement of a PI requires NASA's prior written approval.

Co-Principal Investigator (CoPI) – CoPIs, together with the PI, share the responsibilities for and will work together to oversee the project. CoPIs are affiliated with U.S. organizations. Individuals affiliated with non-U.S. organizations may be designated "Co-I/CoPI [non-U.S. organization only]" in NSPIRES. While all CoPIs and the PI are jointly responsible for milestones, deliverables, appropriate use of funds, and administrative requirements, NASA will generally communicate with the PI. If a CoPI is not affiliated with the submitting organization, CoPI input on the use of funds will be subject to the corresponding subcontract/subaward, and clear responsibilities, actions, and deliverables for the CoPIs must be detailed in the roles and responsibilities narrative. NASA awards are generally made to the PI's organization. In some cases, NASA may elect to provide a separate award directly to the CoPI's organization. In such cases, the CoPI would serve as the "PI" for this separate award to their organization and would also retain their responsibilities as CoPI on the originating project, if mutually agreed upon. NASA strongly encourages PIs to specify only the most critically important personnel to aid in the execution of their proposed work efforts. Such personnel shall be designated as being in one of the following categories:

Co-Investigator (Co-I) – A Co-I is a member of the team who is a critical "partner" for the conduct of the investigation through the contribution of expertise and/or capabilities. A

Co-I will serve under the direction of the PI or a CoPI and generally will have a continuing role in the proposed investigation. The Co-I may or may not receive funding through the award. In NSPIRES, the PI may also designate one of the following roles for a Co-I who will carry additional responsibilities, as appropriate, for the following unique circumstances:

- One Co-I may be designated as the "Science PI" (i.e., Co-I/Science PI) if the proposing organization does not permit that individual, affiliated with that organization in NSPIRES, to formally serve as a PI as defined above (e.g., non-tenured faculty, postdoctoral personnel). In such a case, NASA understands that the Co-I/Science PI is to oversee the scientific direction of the proposed work, although the formally designated PI will still be responsible for the overall direction of the effort and use of funds.
- A Co-I at an organization other than that of the PI or CoPI institution(s) who is making a major contribution to the proposal (e.g., providing a significant piece of hardware or overseeing a single specific aim carried out in full at a partner institution) and who serves as the point of contact at that Co-I's organization, may also be designated as the "Institutional PI" (i.e., Co-I/Institutional PI) for that Co-I's organization. If stated explicitly in the NOFO, NASA may elect to provide a separate award directly to the organization of the Co-I. In this case, the Co-I will serve as the "PI" for this separate award for their organization. This role contrasts with the CoPI role due to the scope of responsibility. PIs and CoPIs have oversight and responsibility over the entire project, including administrative tasks. The role of Co-I/Institutional PI is for individuals overseeing significant efforts at their institution that are limited in scope.
- A Co-I from a non-U.S. organization may also be designated as a "Co-Principal Investigator" (i.e., Co-I/CoPI [non-U.S. organization only]) if such a designation is required to fulfill administrative requirements of that Co-I's organization and/or to enable the acceptance of funding by that Co-I from their sponsoring funding authority. Non-U.S. team members may not use the CoPI role in NSPIRES and must use the "Co-I/CoPI [non-U.S. organization only]" role instead, if such a role is desired.

Collaborator – A Collaborator is an individual who is not critical to the proposal but committed to providing a focused but unfunded contribution for a specific task. If funding support, including travel costs, is requested in the proposal, such individual shall be identified in one of the other categories. For a proposal submitted via Grants.gov, Collaborators shall be listed on the Project Role "Other" line of the Senior/Key Person portion of the SF 424 (R&R) form.

Postdoctoral Associate – A Postdoctoral Associate holds a Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree, is identified as a major contributor (but not explicitly as a Co-I) for the execution of the proposed work effort and receives funding through the proposal's budget. Such a Postdoctoral Associate shall be identified by name, if known, but may be identified only by their designated function in those cases where recruitment depends on the successful selection of the proposal. Postdoctoral Associates need not be named on the proposal cover page, but their effort(s) shall be included in the technical description of work assignments and the proposed budget.

Other Professional – This category is appropriate for an individual who supports a proposal in a critical manner, e.g., a key Project Engineer and/or Manager, but who is not

identified as a Co-I or Postdoctoral Associate. This individual's role in the proposal shall be described in the budget narrative.

Graduate and/or Undergraduate Students – A proposal may incorporate students working for graduate or undergraduate degrees who will be paid through the proposal's budget to help carry out the proposed work effort under the direction of the PI, a CoPI, or one of the designated Co-Is. Such students shall be identified by name, if known, but may be identified only by function in those cases where their recruitment depends on the successful selection of the proposal. These students need not be named on the proposal cover page, but their effort(s) shall be included in the technical description of work assignments and the proposed budget.

Consultant – A Consultant is an individual who possesses a special skill, receives a fee for their services, which may include travel to consult with the PI or another member of the team, and is not an officer or employee of the proposing organization. A consultant provides services that support the proposed activities but is not responsible for project oversight and completion. As compared to a Co-I who is actively engaged in the proposed activities, a consultant provides information, advice, engages in discussions, and serves as a resource—a person with whom the PI, CoPI (if applicable), and Co-Is confer. The proposal's budget shall include the identification, justification, and complete breakdown of all costs proposed for all consultants.

Participant/Trainee – This category is not an option in NSPIRES as a personnel category because these individuals are not employees. A participant or trainee conducts research, and/or receives research or other training, e.g., travel support and/or tuition as described in the funding opportunity. Depending on the funding opportunity or appropriation, this participant often may be enrolled in a degree program as undergraduate or graduate students; however, not all NOFOs require participants to be enrolled as higher education students. NASA may require graduate students to be named on the proposal's cover page.