NSF Proposal Submission Modernization (PSM) Initiative
PI/SPO Survey

Dear Colleague,

You have been selected to participate in a National Science Foundation (NSF) survey that seeks user feedback on proposal preparation and submission functionality via FastLane. The survey is part of NSF's Proposal Submission Modernization (PSM) initiative, a multi-year effort to modernize proposal submission via FastLane and migrate it to Research.gov. Your input will help NSF better understand the experience that researchers and Sponsored Projects Office (SPO) staff have in preparing and submitting proposals, while also helping the Foundation identify improvement opportunities.

We greatly appreciate your feedback, which will be actively used to guide modernization efforts. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the PSM team at: modernizeproposals@nsf.gov. *Please be assured that your answers will remain anonymous and reported in aggregate form only.*

Thank you for your input.

Best Regards,
The PSM Team at the National Science Foundation

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 3145-0157. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes 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, Office of the General Counsel, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA 22230.

1	On a scale of 1-4, please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: • FastLane is an easy system to learn to use • Once learned, FastLane is an easy system to use • FastLane webpage layout is intuitive • FastLane webpages are readable • When I use FastLane, I am able to efficiently find and complete my intended work • Overall, FastLane meets my expectations	For each selection, choose: 1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Agree 4 – Strongly Agree
2	Compared to other federal agency proposal systems that you have used, do you find proposal submission via FastLane easier, about the same, or more difficult?	Select one of the following: A - Easier B - About the Same C - More Difficult D - I am not familiar with other federal grant proposal systems

3	FastLane Help is the online user manual available within FastLane that includes a list of FAQs, a FastLane user manual, A. and links to NSF proposal-related policy documents. B. C. Regarding your experience with FastLane proposal preparation, how often do you utilize FastLane Help to clarify requirements or otherwise complete the submission process?	Select one of the following: A - Never / Rarely B - Sometimes C - Often [If answer "A" or "B", proceed to 4. If answer "C", proceed to 5.]
4	If you answered "never/rarely" or "sometimes", what are the reasons you do not use FastLane Help? (check all that apply)	Check all that apply: • I am already familiar with FastLane proposal requirements • FastLane Help is difficult to use • I access the Grant Proposal Guidance (GPG) for proposal guidance • I rely on NSF's IT Help Central at 1 800 673-6188 to answer my questions • I rely on NSF program staff to answer my questions • I utilize the FastLane demonstration site to ensure I understand how to use FastLane • I rely on my colleagues to answer questions • I have never heard of FastLane Help • OTHER (please explain)
5	How helpful or unhelpful would the following resources be to assist you in preparing and submitting proposals via FastLane? • Developing system-integrated help functionality (e.g. hyperlinks or "roll over" instructions within the proposal system) • Enabling a LiveChat feature within FastLane • Updating the existing FastLane demonstration site • Other (please specify)	For each selection, choose: 1 – Not Helpful 2 – Less Helpful 3 – No Opinion or Neutral 4 – Helpful 5 – Very Helpful
6	In general, do current NSF proposal requirements and systems (i.e., required proposal components, FastLane) place a reasonable or unreasonable level of administrative burden on you?	Select one of the following: A - Unreasonable B - No Opinion or Neutral C - Reasonable [If answer "A", proceed to 7. If answer "B" or "C", proceed to 8.]

7	NSF is interested in reducing the unreasonable administrative burden associated with proposal preparation. Of the following NSF proposal sections, please select up to three that place an unreasonable administrative burden on you during the proposal preparation process. • Proposal Cover Sheet • References Cited • Budgets • Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources • Project Summary • Project Description • Biographical Sketches • Current and Pending Support • Data Management Plan • Mentoring Plan • Other Supplementary Documents • Deviation Authorization • List of Suggested Reviewers • Additional Single Copy Documents • Add/Delete Non Co-PI Senior Personnel • Change PI • Link Collaborative Proposals	Please select up to three proposal sections.
8	In general, how helpful or unhelpful would the following efforts be in reducing the administrative burden that you experience when preparing and submitting NSF proposals? • Revising the format of NSF solicitations to clarify the difference between solicitation-specific requirements and standard proposal requirements • Prepopulating proposals with existing data • Ensuring NSF systems have a consistent look and feel • Allowing certain documents or approvals (e.g. data management plan, detailed budgets, Institutional Review Board) to be submitted after proposal • Employing preliminary proposals more broadly • Developing and utilizing a common federal government-wide Biographical Sketch format • Publishing and enforcing a NSF-wide list of proposal compliance requirements • Tailoring the proposal interface to reflect the requirements of a given funding opportunity • Providing additional help functionality (e.g. LiveChat functionality) • Other (please specify)	Please select and rank the top five most helpful options (1=most helpful)

9	NSF applies compliance rules on proposals. Proposal compliance rules include specification of font size, page counts and the inclusion of specific document uploads within a proposal, among other things. On a scale of 1-5, how clear or confusing are the NSF compliance rules required for successful proposal submission and review?	Select one of the following: 1 – Very Confusing 2 – Confusing 3 – No Opinion or Neutral 4 – Clear 5 – Very Clear 6- I was not aware that NSF had compliance rules
10	Of the following options, please rank which potential efforts could help you submit compliant proposals to NSF?	Please rank the following options from 1-6, with 1=most helpful and 6=least helpful • Clarification of the compliance rules required for successful proposal submission • Streamlined proposal requirements (e.g. simplified budgets, phased submission of proposal components as they are needed for NSF's merit review process) • Additional/improved compliance warnings or error notifications • Enhanced FastLane help functionality • More interaction with NSF program staff • Other (please specify)
11	NSF is considering expansion of automated proposal compliance checking, which would highlight areas of proposal non-compliance before submission. NSF anticipates that this would help ensure more consistent proposal administration during the merit review process. How valuable would expanded compliance checking be to you?	Select one of the following: 1 - Not Valuable 2 - Less Valuable 3 - No Opinion or Neutral 4 - Valuable 5 - Very Valuable
12	If you answered "not valuable" or "less valuable" to the above question, why?	

13	The Biographical Sketch is a proposal document that is required for each individual identified as senior personnel. The Biographical Sketch may be used by NSF to identify conflicts of interest in order to find reviewers. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "The Biographical Sketch enables researchers to fully disclose those individuals with whom they have a conflict of interest (COI)"	Select one of the following: 1 - Strongly Disagree 2 - Disagree 3 -Agree 4 - Strongly Agree [If answer 1 or 2, proceed to #14. If answer 3 or 4, proceed to #15.]
14	If you answered "strongly disagree" or "disagree" to the above question, why?	Check all that apply: • I was not aware that the Biographical Sketch was used to identify conflicts of interest (COI) • The Biographical Sketch's two page limit precludes me from fully providing COI information • The Biographical Sketch's format does not allow for me to adequately disclose my COI • Other (please explain)
15	The Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae (SciENcv) is an NIH-led researcher profile system for individuals who apply for, receive, or are associated with federal research investments. SciENcv is a system that helps researchers compile information on expertise, employment, education and professional accomplishments and can thus be used to develop and store multiple Biographical Sketch versions for a given researcher. How interested are you in using SciENcv to develop your NSF Biographical Sketch?	Select one of the following: 1 - Completely uninterested 2 - Somewhat uninterested 3 - Neutral or No Opinion 4 - Interested 5 - Very interested [If answer "Completely uninterested" or "Somewhat uninterested", proceed to #16, otherwise proceed to #17]
16	If you answered "completely uninterested" or "somewhat uninterested" to the question above, why?	Open ended response
17	Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) is an open, non-profit effort to create a registry of unique researcher identifiers and a transparent method of linking research activities and outputs to these identifiers. How interested are you to sign up and use an ORCID profile to help keep track of your research profile and publications and enable you to tie you to your work for use across the grants, scientific and research communities?	Select one of the following: 1 - Completely uninterested 2 - Somewhat uninterested 3 - Neutral or No Opinion 4 - Interested 5 - Very interested
18	If you answered "completely uninterested" or "somewhat uninterested" to the question above, why?	Open ended response

19	NSF currently supports system-to system proposal submission, which enables institutions to leverage their respective institutional systems to submit proposals to NSF. NSF is considering expanding support to this capability. How valuable would expansion of system-to-system proposal submission be to you?	For each selection, choose: 1 - Less Helpful 2 - No Opinion or Neutral 3 - More Helpful 4 - I am not familiar with system to system proposal submission
20	In general, what do you like about FastLane?	Open ended question
21	What do you wish you could change about FastLane?	Open ended question
22	Please feel free to use this space to make other suggestions for improvement of FastLane's proposal preparation and submission functionality.	Open ended question

Respondent and Institution Profile		
#	**Question**	**Answers**
23	If your interaction with NSF has primarily been as a researcher, for how many projects have you served as a PI, Co-PI, or other Senior Personnel?	A - 0 B -1-10 C - 11-20 D - 21+ E - Not Applicable
24	If your interaction has primarily been as a researcher, with which NSF directorates do you primarily interact?	Select all that apply: A - Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) B - Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering (CISE) C - Directorate for Education & Human Resources (EHR) D - Directorate for Engineering (ENG) E - Directorate for Geosciences (GEO) F - Directorate for Mathematical & Physical Sciences (MPS) Directorate for Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences (SBE) G - Office of International & Integrative Activities (IIA)
25	If your interaction with NSF during the proposal preparation and submission process has primarily been as an administrative staff person, how many years of experience have you had using FastLane?	A - Less than 1 year B - 1-5 years C - 6-10 years D - 11+ years

26	What best describes your home institution?	Select all that apply: A - Doctoral degree-granting college/ university B - Master's degree-granting college/university or Predominantly Undergraduate Institution (PUI) C - Minority Serving Institution (Historically Black College or University, Hispanic Serving Institution, Tribal College or University) D - Other institution of higher education (e.g. community college, specialty institution) E - K-12 educational institution F – Other non-profit organization G - For profit company H - Independent researcher I - Other (please specify)