NIH Resources for PF5 Grants (revised 5/2/26)

***This document was prepared by a staff member at NIAID in response to questions submitted by MGB researchers**

PA-26-002 NIH Collaborative International Research Project (Parent PF5 Clinical Trial Optional)

NOT-OD-25-155 New Application Structure for NIH-Funded International Collaborations

NOT-OD-25-104 Updated NIH Policy on Foreign Subawards

FAQs Foreign Subaward Policy

Collaborative International Research Project (PF5)

Announcing New Application and Award Structure for NIH-Funded International Collaborations (Replacing Foreign Subawards)

A new video, Introduction to the NIH Collaborative International Research Project (PF5) Application and Award Structure was posted to the NIH Funding YouTube

NOT-OD-26-057 Publication of the Revised NIH Grants Policy Statement (Rev. March 2026) for Fiscal Year 2026

NIH Grants Policy website. Multiple changes including some that are specific for the PF5

Direct your general questions to NIH at grantsinfo@nih.gov

Direct questions about peer review to may be directed to CSR Division of Receipt and Referral at csrdrr@mail.nih.govcsrdrr@mail.nih.gov

---

Questions and Answers

1. **Who can answer general questions about the PF5?**
   Direct your question to NIH at grantsinfo@nih.gov

2. **A general overview of what is known about the mechanism would be very helpful. Even comments on aspects that are still unknown would be appreciated by the group.**

From the PA 26-002: This opportunity specifically implements an award structure of prime domestic awards with independent foreign awards that are linked to the prime. This structure provides NIH with oversight capacity for international collaborations, and allows NIH to track international funding, as identified in NOT-OD-25-104. This funding opportunity is specifically designed for NIH to support funded international collaborations between a domestic prime organization and foreign organizations. This NOFO should not be used for foreign consultants, purchasing unique equipment or supplies from foreign vendors, foreign collaborations that do not involve NIH funding, or any other foreign component that would not result in a foreign subaward. The application will be evaluated as a whole, and the international subproject(s) will be evaluated on whether the project presents special opportunities for furthering research programs through the use of unusual talent, resources, populations, or environmental conditions in other countries that are not readily available in the United States or that augment existing United States resources, and whether the proposed project has specific relevance to the mission and objectives of the ICO and has the potential for significantly advancing the health sciences in the United States.

3. **Is this more like a P01 mechanism, where multiple projects are envisioned? Or can it be a single project (like an R01) that has a foreign and domestic component (e.g. where data collection is in the foreign site, but analysis and dissemination is in both domestic and foreign site?**

   Yes and no**.** At least one domestic and one international project is required in a PF5 application. No specific information has been provided regarding multiple domestic or multiple international projects in a single PF5 (UF5) application. Cores may be included. For the PF5 application, while a Core may support activities from all international collaborative partners, the Core itself must be based at a domestic organization and only request funds for domestic sites. *Foreign organizations serving functions similar to cores should use the International Project component type instead.*

   The Nexus article says

   > *Applications: Will use a new comprehensive **multi-project** funding opportunity, will identify distinct principal investigators for the domestic applicant and at least one per international organization, and the foreign*

organizations must submit a letter of support saying they will fill the role of recipient organization for the disaggregated award. **NOTE**: This will require the foreign institution to meet all the requirements needed to serve as the sponsoring institution for an NIH grant (see PA for details)

The PF5 Parent announcement has a link to new NIH multiproject instructions

Multi-Project Instructions for NIH and Other PHS Agencies

4. **Will PF5s be reviewed by standing CSR study sections?**

   and

5. **Will PF5 grants be scored in like investigators R01 applications or will they have their own rubric and criteria? How will study sections be guided to review these grants? For example, will the Overall component and International Project sections be reviewed and scored by the study section, or just the Research Project component**

   - PF5 applications will be reviewed at the Center for Scientific Review (CSR).
   - Since the first receipt date has not passed, we have no history about how the peer review will be conducted.
   - CSR has not provided any specifics about the peer review.
   - From PA-26-002 The application will be evaluated as a whole, and the international subproject(s) will be evaluated on whether the project presents special opportunities for furthering research programs through the use of unusual talent, resources, populations, or environmental conditions in other countries that are not readily available in the United States or that augment existing United States resources, and whether the proposed project has specific relevance to the mission and objectives of the ICO and has the potential for significantly advancing the health sciences in the United States.
   - The Nexus article (5th resource bullet above) says:
     Peer Review:

     - *Applications reviewed as a whole consistent with existing procedures.*
     - *Provides the project's Overall Impact score (per this section of the NIH Grants Policy Statement).*

- *Includes comments on the specific review criteria for each individual component.*

6. **What is the new submission schedule for HIV-related PF5 applications, including the earliest submission date? Would it be May 25, 2026 or Sept 25, 2026?**

   The AIDS receipt dates have been discontinued for all types of applications. The timeline for all AIDS applications will now be the same as the "standard" 9 months from receipt date to council instead of the previous 6 months.

> ⚠ **AIDS and AIDS-Related Applications**
> Beginning with applications for Advisory Council Review in January 2027 (i.e., application due dates on or after May 25, 2026), NIH will no longer accept applications submitted on dedicated AIDS application due dates. (NOT-OD-26-029)

Standard Application Due Dates (when applicable)			Review and Award Cycles		
New	Renewal, Resubmission, Revision as Allowed	AIDS and AIDS Related Grant Applications	Scientific Merit Review	Advisory Council Review	Earliest Start Date
January 25	January 25	May 7	June - July	August or October	September or December
May 25	May 25	September 7	October - November	January	April
September 25	September 25	January 7	February - March	May	July

7. **What specific grant types are included under this mechanism? For example, K awards, R21, R34?**

   PF5 is an activity code. Currently if you want to submit an application that involves a foreign subaward, the only activity code available is a PF5. (Soon there will be a cooperative agreement version, UF5). There are still a few RFAs and PARs that allow direct foreign awards, but these will not allow subawards under the foreign parent grant. So, if you are considering an R01, or R21, or P01 application that requires a subaward to a foreign institution your only option is a PF5.

8. **We have heard that the PF5 mechanism is not available for K23 awards. Is that something that may be permitted in the future?**

   K23 grants are training awards. I think it is extremely unlikely that training awards will fall under the PF5 activity code because of two longstanding eligibility requirements (unchanged):

   - Citizenship: Applicants must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals, or permanent residents.
   - A full-time faculty appointment at a domestic research-intensive institution is required.

9. **Will other grant mechanisms for which the PF5 is not appropriate (e.g. K awards, CFAR development awards) have a comparable mechanism coming down the pipeline to permit projects with foreign components?**

   The PF5 and UF5 are introduced to allow increased accountability for funds distributed to support foreign activities. I do not anticipate additional NOFOs or options for domestic prime institution to support foreign subawards.

10. **Will there be special NOFOs affiliated with PF5s?**

    We anticipate that there will be targeted NOFOs (RFA or PAR) that use the PF5 or UF5 activity code. None has been forecasted or published in Grants.gov to date.

11. **Once funded, how will the foreign site contracts work?**

- At award the international project will be disaggregated from the PF5 and supported as an RF2. The international organization will function as a recipient organization for the disaggregated award(s).
- The PF5 and the RK2 international project(s) each has distinct grant numbers available in NIH RePORTER (PF5 or UF5 for domestic and RF2 or UL2 for foreign organizations.
- Each award follows the standard terms and conditions of award outlined in the NIH Grants Policy Statement.
- For Reporting purposes expect
    - Coordination between partners to demonstrate progress towards meeting the project's scientific aims.
    - Instructions aimed at streamlining and reducing the associated time, effort, and possible duplication with annual progress reporting.

12. **Will carry forward and NCEs be allowed on domestic and foreign components?**

    unknown

13. **Will applications that involve South Africa be accepted?**

    unknown

14. **Would foreign institutions submitting as a prime recipient institution use the traditional mechanisms? With a US sub-award? With a sub-award to another foreign institution?**

A foreign institution may not submit a PF5 application as prime recipient.

Yes, a foreign institution may respond to a NOFO IF Section III of the NOFO (Eligible Applicants) include:

> Non-domestic (non-U.S.) Entities (Foreign Organization) are eligible to apply.
> Non-domestic (non-U.S.) components of U.S. Organizations are eligible to apply.

.

The in a PF5 International Project budget must not include any subawards/consortium/contractual costs identified for other foreign (non-U.S.) organizations. International Projects Subaward budgets to domestic (U.S.-based) organizations are allowed.

15. **Are you able to discuss more about the optional Institutional Career Development and Training (ICDT) component**?

    The ICDT component should only be used for applicants who are proposing biomedical research career and professional development training activities that support cohorts of scholars or trainees in connection with the research activities described in the Overall, Research Project, and International Project components. Similar programs for domestic-only applications include the K12, R25, or T15 activity codes, as well as career development cores on complex centers (e.g., CTSAs). The PF5 mechanism must NOT be used for National Research Service Award (NRSA) institutional training programs.

    For the PF5 application, the ICDT component should support domestic activities, which may include *domestic scholars* (funded through their domestic institutions) engaging in research training activities with international partners, or *domestic training activities* (e.g., summer short courses) hosted at domestic institutions for international partners to attend. *Career development and training activities intended to be supported through collaborating foreign institutions should be supported through the International Project component type.*

    All instructions in the How to Apply - Application Guide must be followed, with the following additional instructions, as noted. The ICDT component is both a multi-project mechanism and an institutional training mechanism. For form pages specific to institutional training (i.e., PHS 398 Training Program Plan Form), applicants are encouraged to refer to the Institutional Training (T) and Multi-project (M) special instructions in the Application Guide.

16. **How should the Research Plan sections be different in the Overall, Research Project, and International Project sections?**

Overall Research Strategy: Within the Significance section, the relevance of the overall project to both domestic (U.S.) and global audiences should be identified. The applicant may choose to reference the Foreign Justification provided in the Research & Related Other Project Information form to highlight the unique resources, expertise, populations, and environments available through the international collaborations, and how they uniquely position the team to address the specific research questions posed.

Within the Approach section, the rationale and implementation of an international collaborative approach should be explained. Applicants are encouraged to address how this implementation aligns with NIH's Plan for Promoting Gold Standard Science, such as promoting the tenets of reproducibility (e.g., incorporating best practices for harmonizing data collection across all international sites) and collaboration (e.g., incorporating team science best practices). This section must include a clearly labeled dispute resolution plan.

Given the broad range of scientific areas covered by this Parent PF5 NOFO, it is anticipated that the size and scope of the international collaboration may vary considerably between applications. While the Research Strategy of the Overall section should provide sufficient details for reviewers to understand the purpose and general approach taken by the research team, the applicant may refer to the Research Strategy of the Research Project component(s) for technical details of specific experimental approaches proposed. For straightforward collaborative arrangements, it is anticipated that applicants may not need all 12 pages to describe their Overall Research Strateg**y.**

Research Project Strategy: All instructions in the How to Apply - Application Guide must be followed, with the following additional instructions:

It is anticipated that the scope of the Research Project will include both domestic and international efforts. The Research Strategy should provide a comprehensive description of the Research Project's Significance, Innovation, and Approach, regardless of the location where the research is conducted. Where relevant, the applicant should identify the site(s) performing the proposed activities and clearly articulate how these activities come together to rigorously address the proposed hypotheses.

International Project Research Strategy All instructions in the How to Apply - Application Guide must be followed, with the following additional instructions:

The Significance section should address the significance of the contribution of the foreign organization to the overall collaborative team effort for this project.

The Approach section should address the research approach taken by the foreign organization to address the scope of work described in the component's Specific Aims. The applicant should clearly articulate how the experimental and technical approaches undertaken by the foreign organization integrate with the overall goals of the PF5 project.

17. **For awards that previously would have been eligible for competitive renewal applications, is it correct that these will now need to be submitted as a NEW PF5 submission with no reference to the previous award?**

    All applications submitted to the PF5 announcement(s) will be “new”. At the end of the PF5 project period, the follow-on application would be a renewal application if the activity code stays a PF5.

18. **How is a foreign component defined?**

    NIH defines a foreign component as the performance of any significant scientific element or segment of a project outside of the United States, either by the recipient or by a researcher employed by a foreign organization, whether or not grant funds are expended.