January 23, 2026

NIH Collaborative International Research Project program announced

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has recently issued the Program Announcement (PA-26-002) for the new PF5 mechanism to support collaborative international research projects. This mechanism supports funded research collaborations with foreign organizations that would previously been issued as foreign subawards.

As described in NIH's prior notice in September 2025, proposals for the PF5 mechanism will be structured as multi-component proposals, similar to P01, U19 and other multi-component award mechanisms. At the time of award, the foreign collaborations will be disaggregated from the PF5, will be assigned their own grant number (RF2 Linked International Research Project) and will be awarded directly to the foreign partner as independent foreign awards which are linked to the prime.

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) will be developing more detailed guidance to support proposal preparation in the coming weeks, but the following are important highlights from the PA.

Deadlines

The first available deadline for a PF5 proposal, for non-AIDS related proposals, is **May 25, 2026**. Future non-AIDS deadlines will then be September 25th, January 25th, and May 25th of each year.

The first available deadline for an AIDS-related PF5 proposal is **September 7, 2026**. Future AIDS deadlines will then be January 7, May 7, and September 7 or each year.

General Structure and Programs Supported

The basic structure is a multi-component structure with the following required main components:
- Overall Component (1 and only 1)
- Research Project Component (at least 1, more allowed based on nature of project)
- International Component (at least 1, more allowed based on number of foreign collaborating organizations)

The PF5 mechanism is designed to be flexible enough to support complex award structures similar to a P50 or K12 programs, and additional components such as Cores or Institutional Career Development and Training components are optional based on the type of program planned.

Registration Requirements

Because the International Component(s) will be disaggregated at the time of award, all foreign partners will need to establish and maintain registrations in the following systems:
- US System for Award Management (SAM), which further requires the foreign organization to obtain a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) Code.
- eRA Commons

Emory is fully registered in all required systems. It is important to note that the above registrations are ***not*** required for the collaborating foreign organizations at the time of proposal submission. However, they will be required at just-in-time and must be completed before an award can be made. It is recommended that foreign organizations begin these processes as soon as possible, if they do not already have such registrations, as NIH cautions that it can take as long as 6 weeks to fully establish all registrations.

Budgetary Considerations

All funding for the international collaborating organization(s) will be included in the respective International Component budget form. Foreign organizations may apply an 8% indirect cost rate to support the cost of compliance. Because the funds for the foreign collaborating organization(s) will be disaggregated into their own awards *no Emory indirect costs* will be applied to any portion of the budgets for foreign collaborators.

The Research Project Component may include subawards to other domestic organizations and Emory indirect costs would be applied to those subaward budgets in accordance with Emory's Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.

Other Submission Requirements

For each International Component, a letter of support must be provided and signed by an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR). This letter must clearly indicate that the AOR understands that, should the application be selected for funding, the foreign organization will take on the role of recipient organization for the disaggregated award, including fulfilling all registration requirements.

As noted above, OSP will be developing more detailed summaries of the application requirements to support proposal development for PF5 proposals. Until those are ready, the above information should help highlight the main requirements of the PF5 program to help investigators as they prepare for international collaborative projects.