

## Conservation Paleobiology Network - Working Group Pre-Proposal FAQ

### **What is this document?**

Since the initial working group pre-proposal announcement and call for submissions, we have received some questions related to budgets, participants, and logistics. Below are our clarifications and answers in the format of a FAQ. The information below comes from updated discussions with NSF and takes precedence over all previous communication. If you received an earlier communication from us that is inconsistent with information provided below, we apologize and ask you to defer to this FAQ. Please note that we realize that a detailed budget justification is not viable within the page limits of a pre-proposal, but PIs should consider the FAQ feedback provided below when designing the project. We will select successful pre-proposals based on key criteria listed in the original solicitation. If a successful pre-proposal includes potential budgetary issues, we will assist PIs in developing a viable funding plan.

Torrey Rick and Josh Miller, CPN Working Group panel co-chairs

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### **Frequently Asked Questions for Working Group Pre-proposal Submissions**

#### **1. Can a person participate in multiple working group pre-proposals?**

Yes. A person can participate in multiple pre-proposals and it will not adversely affect the competitiveness of those pre-proposals. However, be mindful that if both working groups are invited for a full proposal and subsequently funded, serving on multiple working groups might be a substantial time commitment.

#### **2. I'm interested in submitting a pre-proposal for a working group, but I would like to delay the start of the working group by a year. Should I submit my proposal now, or wait for a subsequent call for submissions?**

We recommend that you submit your pre-proposal now and indicate that you would intend to start later. If we receive a large number of fundable working group proposals this year, we might not call for new submissions in subsequent years.

#### **3. Can budgets include stipends or salaries (e.g. for graduate students, post-docs, etc.)?**

Although pre-proposal budgets can include stipends or salaries, we strongly discourage this, and a compelling rationale needs to be provided to justify such expenditures. The funding provided for working groups was identified to support Working Group participation. Participant support cost is not subject to waivers. This carries certain benefits, including no institutional overhead allowing us to budget all available

expenditures as direct costs are removed for these funds. Transferring some of these support costs towards stipends or salaries would incur significant financial penalties (~35% reduction of reclassified funds), ultimately reducing available salary support. Any reorganization towards salary support would also be subject to approval by NSF. Because of this, Working Group proposals with stipend or salary support requested will require careful justification and/or may be less competitive than those with budgets entirely for Working Group participation (travel, etc.).

**4. The funding for the CPN is based in the US (University of Florida), will international participants be considered?**

Yes. None of the working group participants need to be based in the US, and international collaborations are encouraged. However, NSF funding includes strict restrictions for international expenditures and certain types of expenses will not be allowed by NSF. For those reasons, a strategy that avoids certain types of international expenses or provides matching funds from other sources to cover those NSF-non-allowable costs is recommended. In general, working group meetings that are either hosted at a US institution (in the case of in-person meetings) or coordinated by a US institution (in the case of virtual or hybrid meetings) minimize those problems. Additional details are provided in points 5-8 below.

**5. Can funding cover food/transportation (taxis, trains)/lodging for a meeting outside of the US (i.e. expenses incurred in another country)?**

Yes, but only for those participants who are employees or students at institutions located in the United States.

**6. Can we pay for US workers to travel internationally?**

Yes. Travel for US-based workers to international destinations is allowed. For example, a proposal that proposes a non-US workshop venue can request funds to cover all expenses of US-based participants and cover other expenses using matching funds from other sources.

**7. Can we pay for purely international flights (e.g. Canada to UK)?**

Probably not. Only US-based workers would be allowed to incur such expenses provided that a justification can be provided for an entirely non-US itinerary for a US based worker, which is rare.

**8. Can we pay for non-US participants for attending workshops hosted at US institutions?**

We can pay for onsite expenses, including lodging and meals in the US, as well as incidental costs within the USA. However, we cannot pay for international travel to and from the USA. For example, an in-person working group in the US can cover all participant costs except for airfare for non-US based participants. This means that the majority of expenses can be covered by CPN funds, but matching funds will need to be identified and secured to cover airfare of international participants.

**9. Can funds be used to cover the cost of publication fees (e.g., open access)?**

Yes, we can cover publication fees.