



## Agency Priority Goal Action Plan

# Developing an Agency-Wide Partnerships Strategy

### **Goal Leaders:**

Graciela Narcho: Senior Advisor, Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering;

Nancy Sung: Science Policy Advisor, Office of Polar Programs, Directorate for Geosciences

Lee Zia: Deputy Division Director, Division of Undergraduate Education, Directorate for Education & Human Resources

### **Deputy Goal Leaders:**

Natalie Hengstebeck: AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellow, Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering

Elizabeth Webber: Science Education Analyst, Division of Graduate Education, Directorate for Education & Human Resources

# Overview

---

## Goal Statement

- Strategically engage in public and private partnerships to enhance the impact of NSF's investments and contribute to American economic competitiveness and security. To benefit the U.S. scientific and engineering research and education enterprise, by September 30, 2021, NSF will develop and pursue an agency-wide partnerships strategy, components of which include targeted outreach, implementation of process improvements, and improvement of internal and external communications.

## Challenge

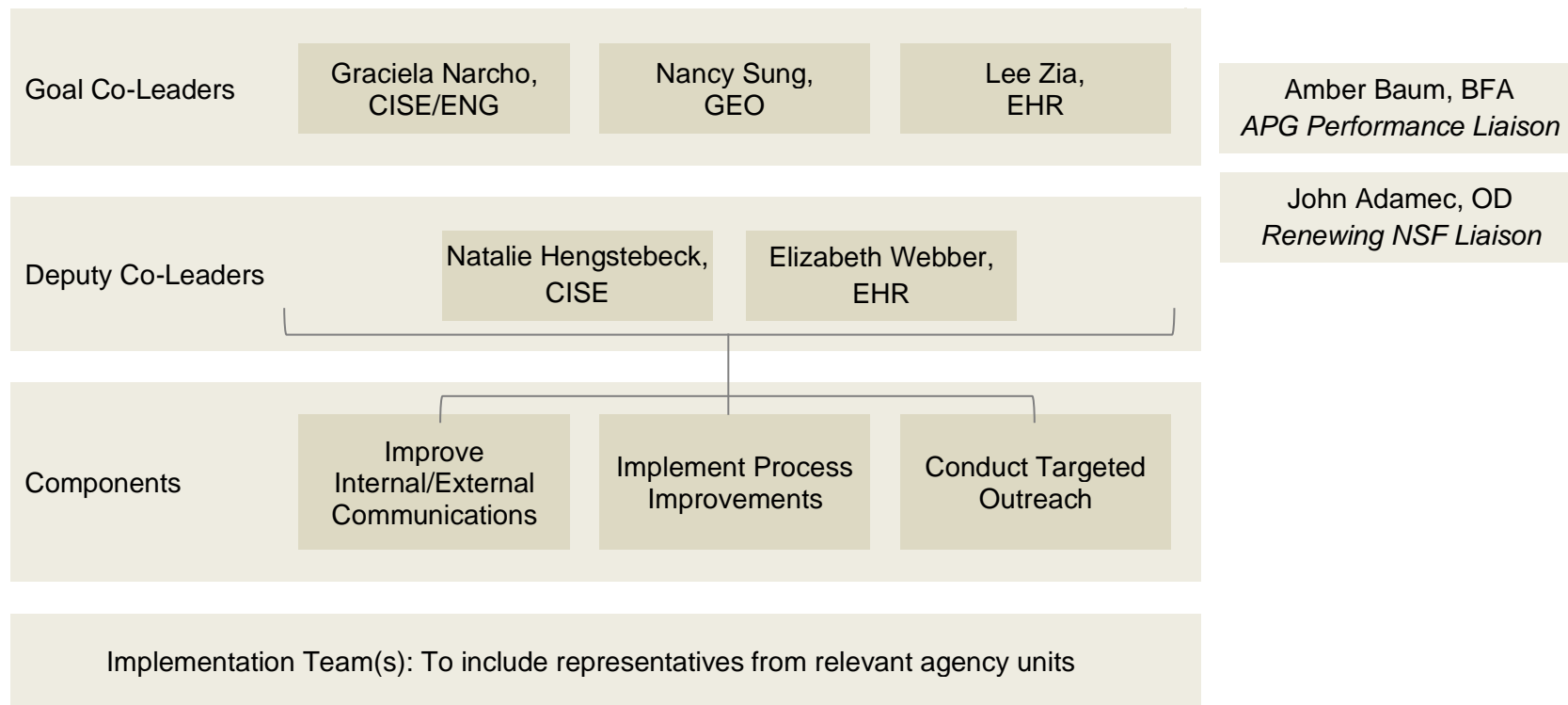
- NSF is a sought-after partner and the range of partnership opportunities present different needs, goals, and priorities. Developing partnerships requires significant time and intellectual capital, as well as strategic foresight.
- Assessing and prioritizing partnership opportunities often happens at the directorate/office level. Efficiencies could be better realized through greater harmonization across the agency.

## Opportunity

- Private industry, foundations, and non-profits, together with other federal agencies and international funding organizations, bring additional expertise, resources, and capacity to NSF-funded research. Consequently, pursuing partnership opportunities in a strategic and coordinated manner will allow NSF to accelerate discovery and translation of research to products and services, and enhances preparation of the future workforce to benefit society and grow the American economy.
- Developing a consistent agency-wide partnerships strategy and improving internal processes will result in partnerships that will allow NSF to maximize the scientific, economic, and societal impacts of its investments.

# Leadership & Implementation Team

## Goal Structure and Strategies



The 2020-2021 APG is aligned to and will be achieved through integration with NSF's focus on expanding and deepening public and private partnerships under the broader agency-wide Renewing NSF effort. A Partnerships Goal Team was formed in 2020 Q1 and charged to execute all elements of the APG. The Goal Team provides coordination across the three key components, overseeing activation of smaller implementation teams, as needed, that are tasked and empowered with developing the deliverables identified as key milestones. Components include improving internal and external communication, implementing process improvements, and conducting strategic outreach.

# Summary of Progress – FY 2020 Q1 and Q2

---

- *Component 1, communications:* Catalogued and conducted initial assessment of partnerships documents and materials from across the agency.
- *Component 2, process improvements:* The Renewing NSF Goal Team merged with the FY 2018-2019 Partnerships APG Team. Smaller implementation teams are engaged in completing an MOU-builder resource, creating a guiding principles document, and developing documentation of the “counting” process from the FY 2018-2019 Partnerships APG.
- *Component 3, outreach:* Presentation on NSF’s approach to partnerships at FC-STEM (interagency) Collaborators’ Convening Meeting, December 4, 2019. Completed outline and approach to Landscape Study.

# Key Milestones

## Component 1. Improve Internal and External Communications

To increase awareness about NSF’s public and private partnerships, NSF will improve communication with NSF staff and with the public.

These efforts to engage NSF staff, agency advisory committees, and other stakeholders will increase awareness about NSF’s partnership strategy, policy, and resources. Additional efforts are likely to include the development of resources to inform federal agencies, industry, and non-profits about how to partner with NSF; and an updated public-facing partnerships website to inform the public about NSF’s partnership activities, including the value proposition for such activities.

Milestones of support for Component 1 include:

Milestone Summary					
Milestone	Deadline	Status	Change from previous quarter	Owner	Notes
Develop an internal website which harmonizes all current internal documents related to partnerships	FY 2021 Q1	On track	Cataloguing effort begun in late Q1 of FY 2020; completed in Q2 of FY 2020. Website design process has begun.	APG Goal Leaders	Catalogued and conducted initial assessment of partnerships documents and materials from across the agency.
Create a suite of new training resources related to partnerships for NSF staff	FY 2021 Q2	Not started		APG Goal Leaders	
Redesign the public-facing partnerships website and establish a process for keeping these resources up to date	FY 2021 Q2	On track	Website design consultations begun in Q2 of FY 2020.	OLPA	Discussions underway about audience, content, and format.
Provide briefings to Directorate ACs and the NSB as requested	FY 2021 Q4	On track		APG Goal Leaders	Rescheduling underway in wake of COVID-19.
Develop materials for use by program directors during outreach activities.	FY 2021 Q3	Not started		OLPA	

# Key Milestones

## Component 2. Implement Process Improvements

To improve efficiency in initiating and maintaining partnerships, NSF will improve internal processes.

This is expected to include the creation of a suite of tools and/or documents that establish replicable procedures to identify partnerships, centralize responsibility for tracking partnerships, and streamline creation of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between NSF and partnering entities.

Milestones of support for Component 2 include:

Milestone Summary					
Milestone	Deadline	Status	Change from previous quarter	Owner	Notes
Complete MOU Builder	FY 2020 Q4	On track		DIS	Intra-agency funding secured, acquisition underway.
Create guiding principles document for internal use	FY 2020 Q4	On track	Initial version drafted in late Q1 of FY 2020; internal review by Goal Team in final stages at end of Q2 of FY 2020.	APG Goal Leaders	Document is drafted and undergoing internal review.
Create guiding questions document for external use	FY 2021 Q1	On track		APG Goal Leaders	Begun in Q2.
Develop agency-wide standard approach for counting partnerships	FY 2020 Q4	On track	Begun in late Q1 of FY 2020; work continuing in Q2 of FY 2020.	APG Goal Leaders	Goal Team has begun drafting a guide to codify the process used by 2018-2019 APG team.
Establish a community of practice around partnerships	FY 2021 Q1	On track		APG Goal Leaders	Initial organization underway in Q2.

# Key Milestones

---

## Component 3. Conduct Strategic Outreach

To increase potential partners' awareness about partnerships with NSF, NSF will conduct outreach in a strategic way.

Milestones of support for Component 3 include:

Milestone Summary					
Milestone	Deadline	Status	Change from previous quarter	Owner	Notes
Complete landscape study of existing partnership activities and opportunities	FY 2020 Q3	On track	Begun in late Q1; work continuing in Q2.	APG Goal Leaders	Outline and approach to landscape study completed; working team formed.
Publish official issuances from NSF about potential partnership opportunities	FY 2021 Q2	Not started		OLPA	
Organize or participate in interagency and/or industry convenings about NSF partnership interests	FY 2021 Q2	On track		APG Goal Leaders	Presentation on NSF's approach to partnerships at FC-STEM (interagency) Collaborator's Convening Meeting, December 4, 2019.
Engage in other activities that increase awareness of NSF's partnership interests in a sector, field, or community	FY 2021 Q3	Not started		APG Goal Leaders	