**MULTI-PI PLAN – Example Template**

**Blue font:** Instructions, tips, or example text to replace with relevant information. Change the font color to black before submission.

**Page limit:** None. However, be careful not to use this plan to circumvent the Research Strategy page limit.

**Font and margins:** Should match other proposal documents and meet NIH formatting guidelines.

***Note:*** *This document is required only if your proposal includes more than one PD/PI.*

*Please note that this is just an example of a template and NIH does not prescribe a specific format. NIH provides tips* [***here***](https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/multiple-principal-investigators#Tips%20for%20Writing%20a%20Strong%20Multiple%20PI%20Leadership%20Plan)*and examples* [***here***](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/multi_pi/sample_leadership_plans.pdf) *for this document.*

*Your reviewers will factor in the quality of your plan when they score the investigators criterion and overall impact of your application. They will judge the plan’s scientific merit and whether it promotes enough coordination, communication, and conflict resolution among PIs.*

***NIH advises against copying other plans—or even your own team’s previous plan—too closely.*** *If you simply recycle a plan from a different application, you risk undermining reviewer confidence in your application. You can use the below template to help guide your writing process; however,* ***you should completely customize your plan to reflect your specific project, team, and team roles.*** *We also recommend customizing headers and organization, as appropriate for your project.*

**I. Rationale and justification for choosing the multiple PI approach**

This proposal has X Principal Investigators: **[name]** (institution, city/country if needed), the contact PI**; [name]** (institution, city/country if needed); **[name]** (institution, city/country if needed).

**Summary**

***Simply and briefly state why an MPI approach was chosen, that the MPIs have the requisite experience, and that they have experience working together. You will use the below sections to elaborate and provide examples and detail; this section can be shorter but should address the following:***

* ***Explain why your proposed research requires other PIs with distinct and complementary leadership and expertise.***
* ***Provide clear scientific rationale for the MPI approach. Without such, your reviewers will likely question why your project needs the other PIs. Each PI should have their own distinct and independent role in the project.***

Drs. X, Y, and Z chose the multi-PI approach because [Describe why the project requires a multi-PI approach. For example, you can address these questions: Is it multidisciplinary? Does it require expertise only found at other institutions? Does the MPI team have any complementary expertise and/or specialized resources that would benefit the project?] [Briefly describe how each PI will be involved, including the division of duties between each PI as appropriate. Each PI should ideally have specific and distinct scientific and administrative responsibilities for the project, yet still work closely together to guide and implement the project and ensure it reaches its goals and milestones in a timely manner.]

[Describe the frequency with which the MPI team has met in developing this proposal or generating preliminary data. For example, have they met regularly via Zoom for the past year, or past 6 months?] [Briefly explain that the team has the necessary expertise/experience to effectively run such a large or interdisciplinary team. For example: Do they function well together? (Are they effective, highly transparent, and/or successful collaborators?); Describe any challenges they have navigated/overcome together. (This can be in more general terms, such as “the challenges of multidisciplinary research.”); What level of experience do they have collectively for addressing diverse problems, concerns, or challenges?]

**Specific Roles and Responsibilities**

***Use this section to describe the division of duties per MPI, and briefly describe each MPI’s relevant qualifications (particularly leadership experience and scientific expertise), in order to illustrate the complementary nature of the MPI team’s expertise and experience.*** *Reviewers expect to see MPI Plans that clearly and specifically delineate the PIs' respective roles and responsibilities. Avoid stating that all PIs will take joint responsibility for everything — finances, project direction, and necessary scientific expertise. Reviewers usually view that idea as unrealistic since even the closest collaborators will disagree sometimes.*

***[name], PhD/other titles (Contact PI)***

***Note: You must indicate who will serve as the contact PD/PI. This PI must be affiliated with the institution submitting the application (UGA), coordinate communication among all PIs and NIH, and complete progress reports.***

*Scientific Roles and Responsibilities*

***You should customize this section’s text to fit your project. This PI should be the one to coordinate communication between team members and the PIs. You should provide a brief description of the PI’s relevant scientific expertise and experience leading large projects, and describe this PI’s scientific responsibilities (for example, leading Aim 1).***

As the contact PI, Dr. X will be responsible for [the overall design and implementation of this project], and … insert other scientific responsibilities]. Dr. X is a [insert position, e.g. Associate Professor] in the University of Georgia’s [department/center/institute name]. [Briefly describe any relevant or exemplary projects this PI has managed, in particular multi-PI or large ones]. Dr. X will organize regular [discussions/meetings between PIs and relevant team members] to [ensure feasibility, advance proposed plans and timelines, and …]

Dr. X will take the lead in scientifically strategizing with team members, including [multi-PIs, co-Is, collaborators, and other participants] to develop the best approaches for achieving project goals. Dr. X will play a lead role in [direction, analysis and management of the research goals of this project] at the University of Georgia and across the team.

[Describe in one sentence how many years of experience this PI has in studying the project topic/conducting research in the relevant field. Be sure to briefly name the field or topic of research.] [Briefly describe in 1-2 sentences any scientific achievements the PI’s team has made that are particularly relevant to this project.] [Briefly describe in 1 sentence the PI’s relevant expertise.]

*Administrative Roles and Responsibilities*

***You should customize this section’s text to fit your project. You should ensure that this PI will at least coordinate communication between/among all PIs and NIH, as well as complete and submit progress reports and other reports to NIH. This PI will also likely be the one to oversee conflict resolution/ensure conflicts are resolved appropriately.***

Dr. X will [describe what the contact PI will oversee and be accountable for, administratively, such as: the overall management and cohesiveness of the project and timelines.] [Briefly mention whether this PI has the experience and expertise necessary for: administering large projects, coordinating the activities of many people, and managing numerous deliverables, milestones, and reporting responsibilities and timelines.] [Briefly mention whether this PI will oversee compliance needs, and provide examples, such as ensuring laboratories are compliant with relevant biosafety regulations and training.] Dr. X will coordinate project communication, including with all PIs and NIH, and [insert other relevant communications tasks, such as managing plans for internal/external meetings] Dr. X will ensure that conflicts are handled promptly and appropriately when recognized (discussed further below). Dr. X will also manage activities related to regular reporting to the NIH, including progress reports, and [insert other duties, such as handling hiring and budgetary matters either for this PI’s team or for the project as a whole].

***[name], PhD/other titles (MPI)***

*Scientific Roles and Responsibilities*

***You should customize this section’s text to fit your project. You should describe this MPI’s scientific roles (e.g. will this PI oversee Aim 2?), and provide a brief description of the PI’s relevant scientific expertise and any experience co-leading large projects.***

As an MPI, Dr. Y will lead [insert area/Aim of the project this MPI will lead or manage]. Dr. Y is a [insert position, e.g. Associate Professor] at [institution and department].

Dr. Y has X years of experience in [insert field/area of research and any relevant background information]. During that time, Dr. Y oversaw [insert relevant projects that were managed/overseen]. [Briefly describe other relevant scientific background].

*Administrative Roles and Responsibilities*

***You should customize this section’s text to fit your project. You should describe this MPI’s administrative roles; for example, will this MPI oversee administrative aspects associated with the Aim they will oversee?***

Dr. Y will [coordinate/manage/lead] the [insert Aim/area of project this MPI will lead/manage]. Dr. Y will [insert additional details about what managing that Aim/area will involve, specifically administratively; for example, will this PI administratively lead their lab, all aspects of a specific Aim, or be responsible for coordinating a specific administrative duty such as arranging for Material Transfer Agreements for the project?].

***[Copy the above entry for any additional MPIs]***

**II. Governance and organizational structure of the team**

**Use this section to convince your reviewers that your planned level of coordination and communication (among PIs and the team) will be sufficient to fully realize the collaborative aspects of the project. Describe your process for deciding scientific direction and communication procedures, such as regularly scheduled meetings of the PIs, and periodic evaluation of research progress and finances.**

**If your project is particularly large or complex, you can add a diagram or organizational chart to convey your organizational structure.**

Drs. X, Y, and Z have been collaborating on this project for X years. [Briefly describe any relevant collaborations, past or present, between any or all of the MPIs]. The leadership team for this project includes all MPIs.

**Communication and Lines of Authority**

[Describe the frequency and type of meetings and communications between the PIs and also between the PIs and other team members. For example, will the PIs meet at least monthly? Will they meet bi-weekly with the full project team? Will they meet primarily via Zoom or in-person, or hybrid? Will communications occur as needed via other means, such as email or ad-hoc phone calls? If the team is located at multiple institutions, how many times per year will the full team meet together in person? Will meetings be recorded and shared with team members when appropriate/necessary?]

[Briefly describe the lines authority/management style planned. For example, how will any Co-Is and collaborators be involved? Are there any intermediate managers, such as a project manager, lab manager, or postdoc, who graduate students for instance would report to before reporting to the MPIs? Will the whole research team be involved in discussions, or a sub-set of the team?]

**Project Direction and Resource Allocation**

[Discuss how you will allocate project resources, such as the budget. For example, did the MPIs plan to divide the budget up during the proposal development phase, or will they divide the budget up once awarded? What considerations will be made in determining how much of the budget/which resources each MPI receives?] [Discuss how you will address any changes in project directions or re-budgeting that may be needed during the course of the project? Will this be based on scientific progress, unexpected personnel changes, etc.? Will all MPIs discuss and come to a consensus on budgetary/project direction changes, or will it be by majority vote, or another method? Will other team members be consulted, such as Co-Is, collaborators, or other personnel?]

[Discuss plans for the MPIs to meet with other team members (Co-Is, collaborators, and other personnel) to establish and implement policies for project planning, evaluating progress, expediting communications, and addressing various project needs that arise. Will you meet monthly, biweekly, or weekly, and in person or remotely?] [Briefly describe plans for day-to-day oversight of each lab; for example, each Co-I/MPI may oversee their own lab, working closely with their own lab members to direct their area of work and address needs within their lab.]

[Briefly describe other aspects of the project that the MPIs will track and/or manage, such as: project progress, prioritization of effort/tasks, project priorities, financial status of the project, project needs such as tools, staff and resources, shared IT or lab resources, data security and backups, storage space limitations, presentations of project work, progress reports, manuscripts and publications, etc.]

**III. Approach to fiscal management**

[Describe your approach to fiscal management. If this is a project with multiple institutions involved, state which institution is lead and will be responsible for the fiscal management of the project. Provide a statement about that institution’s background with managing similarly large projects. You should also provide a statement about any grants management provided at the subaward institutions. Additionally, describe which PI will be responsible for financial monitoring/reporting for the project as a whole.]

Example text for projects with subawards to other institutions: The University of Georgia is the lead institution and is very experienced with the fiscal management of Federal research grants and contracts, and UGA’s Sponsored Projects Administration provides both pre- and post-award grants management. The University of Georgia will execute the main award and all financial communication with NIH. Each of the MPIs have grants and contracts offices to assist with pre- and post-award management.

Example text for projects without subawards: The University of Georgia is very experienced with the fiscal management of Federal research grants and contracts. The University’s Sponsored Projects Administration will oversee fiscal management of this project, with the [insert department/unit] providing day-to-day pre- and post-award support.

**IV. Data sharing and intellectual property**

**This section can be used to go above and beyond standard MPI requirements. You may want to address additional potential issues such as: data sharing among PIs, collaborative publication policies, and contingency plans in case one PI changes institutions.**

**Data Sharing**

**Because a more in-depth discussion of data sharing is required in the Data Management and Sharing Plan document, you do not need to provide much detail in this section. However, briefly mentioning plans for data sharing among team members may further illustrate team comradery and collaboration.**

[Describe any data sharing that is planned between MPIs, collaborators, Co-Is, and other project personnel. For example, will all data be immediately accessible online to all team members? If so, how will the data be available (through a project website, through UGA servers, through OneDrive, etc.)?] [Briefly describe any measures to be taken to ensure data security. For example, will project members undergo security training? Will you use any form of backup to prevent data loss?] [You may also want to mention any plans for a separate sharing system/platform for MPIs to share more sensitive data, such as project budgets.]

**Publications**

[Briefly describe your plans for collaborative publications. For example, you may want to address the following:

* + What publication rules will you use? How will these be communicated to team members?
  + How will you determine the first author? (For abstracts associate with presentations or for manuscripts.)
  + How will you determine co-authors?
  + Who will be involved in the manuscript development and review process?
  + How will any disagreements regarding authorship be resolved? (Will the authors consult with the MPIs, or with an impartial party in one of the MPIs’ departments, for example?)

**Proprietary and Confidential Information**

[Describe any plans to handle proprietary or confidential information, and/or intellectual property. Even if your project does not involve any proprietary or confidential information, MPIs may still have access to information that may be considered confidential, such as salaries; it could therefore be a good idea to mention plans to maintain confidentiality of such information.]

**V. Procedures for Resolving Conflicts**

**Your team agreed to work together because you assume it will go well, so it’s easy to overlook or minimize how you will handle disputes. Be sure to plan a thorough process for resolving conflicts and disputes. What provisions can you make ahead of time to avoid potential disagreements?**

[Describe your plans to handle conflict, among MPIs and/or other team members. Even if you don’t anticipate any conflict, reviewers like to see a carefully considered conflict resolution plan including involvement of well-respected individuals outside of the project to mediate if the MPIs cannot resolve the issue. Questions to consider include:

* **If you can't come to an agreement, how will you handle the disagreement?**
  + Will you consult senior colleagues in your field? Will you bring the problem to a Dean or VP at one of your institutions for advice? Will you bring in an arbitration committee? (If so, who and how many people will be on it? Will you set a timeframe to resolve the conflict?)
  + Will you involve the full project team, by voting or discussion for instance?
* **What areas might team members disagree (e.g. prioritization, major scientific item, etc.)?**
* **How quickly will conflicts be addressed (not necessarily resolved)?**

[Describe what steps you plan to take to minimize conflict in the first place. For example, will frequent meetings help ensure that the group can discuss issues as they arise, rather than letting the issues become severe? Will you encourage open and transparent communication among team members?]

**VI. Contingency plans in case one PI changes institutions**

[Briefly describe your contingency plans in case one MPI moves to a new institution, retires, etc. For instance, will you recruit a suitable replacement PI at one of the institutions, or would you re-divide duties between two other MPIs?] This is another section that can help push your MPI above and beyond a standard MPI plan.