

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A-02030025

Page 1 of 2

We received an allegation that the subject,<sup>1</sup> after receiving the complainant's<sup>2</sup> NSF proposal<sup>3</sup> to review, stole ideas from it, using them in her own proposal to another federal agency.<sup>4</sup> The complainant submitted the NSF proposal 1 week after he completed his postdoctoral research appointment under the subject's supervision. The subject, who had received the complainant's NSF proposal to review, declared a COI and did not review the proposal.

The subject submitted a proposal to another federal agency a few months after she had received the complainant's NSF proposal to review. We compared the two proposals and observed that, although they were similar, they were not identical. As part of our review of this case we learned the following additional information:

1. The complainant and the subject co-authored several publications both during and after the complainant's post doctoral appointment on the same topic as their proposals;
2. The subject wrote a letter of support for the complainant's proposal, which was included in his NSF proposal. The letter gave the complainant permission to use any unpublished data generated while he was a postdoctoral researcher in her laboratory. The letter also stated that the subject planned to submit a proposal based on these same data in the near future;
3. *Ad hoc* reviewers of the complainant's NSF proposal stated that the complainant and the subject had been involved in specific discoveries together while he worked in her laboratory and that the subject's future proposal, mentioned in her letter of support for the complainant, would likely overlap with the complainant's proposal;
4. The complainant provided copies of email exchanges with the subject after he had finished his postdoctoral appointment with the subject. The emails showed that the original collaborative relationship had failed.

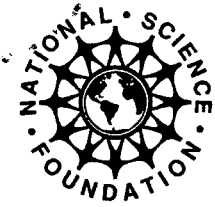
<sup>1</sup> [REDACTED] (the subject) is a faculty member in the [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED]

<sup>2</sup> [REDACTED] is a faculty member in the [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED]

<sup>3</sup> NSF proposal [REDACTED], entitled "[REDACTED]" submitted by [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]

<sup>4</sup> USDA proposal [REDACTED], entitled "[REDACTED]" submitted by the subject and signed on [REDACTED]

	Agent	Attorney	Supervisor	AIGI
Sign / date				



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Page 2 of 2

There is no substance to the allegation that the subject used some of the complainant's ideas in her other agency proposal, but rather each used shared information to continue research that had been jointly shared. This case is closed and no further action will be taken.