



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-20-0060-O

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For an NSF collaborative proposal, a peer reviewer alleged text material was plagiarized from a publication that was included as a cited reference. Our inquiry identified additional copied text material from another publication that was included as a cited reference, in addition to six figures copied from six other cited references.

We contacted both PIs of the NSF collaborative proposal, PI-1 and PI-2, regarding the identified plagiarism. Based on their responses and our further review, we determined that the PIs did not clearly signify that the identified text and embedded references were copied directly from the two cited references. Regarding the six figures, although the appropriate reference was cited in the figure legend within the NSF proposal, it did not explicitly include the identity of the figure numbers it was copied from, which was a deviation from the accepted citation practices of the PIs' research community. Our analysis of the PIs' other NSF proposals did not reveal any substantial plagiarism. We concluded no further inquiry was warranted, and the PIs' failure to appropriately cite text and figures did not rise to the level of research misconduct. We sent questionable research practice letters to both PI-1 and PI-2 letter reminding them about the importance of appropriate citation practices.

Accordingly, this case is closed with no further action.