TINY BLUE DOT FOUNDATION | Science of Perception Box™

Full Proposal Instructions

Preparing for External Review

All full proposals will undergo a rigorous external review. To help reviewers, we encourage applicants to focus their technical details in the Project Description section and to use lay language in the Executive Summary Section. However, if technical terms are introduced early on, you do not need to reintroduce them again later. Reviewers will see all the sections combined, so they do not have to be self-contained.

Changes After Submission

Please note, once you have submitted your proposal, you will not be able to make changes unless there are extenuating circumstances. To make changes, you would have to contact the TBD helpdesk. Proposals cannot be changed after the submission deadline.

If the proposal has been submitted by accident, then you may contact the helpdesk to have the submission reversed. You will not lose any data if you do this.

Guidance Webinars

This year we will host two guidance webinars. Registration details can be found below. We invite all applicant team members to join these webinars if possible. Recordings will be provided afterward for those who could not attend.

Tue, 6 Jan 26 0700 PT

Register HERE

Mon, 9 Feb 26 0900 PT

Register HERE

LOI vs Full Proposal:

Some of the Full Proposal fields are similar to those in the LOI form, but some subheadings have key differences. Please read all questions carefully and make sure the required information has been provided. We encourage you to use this as an opportunity to update your ideas in response to reviewer comments as appropriate.

Project Description

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
Project Title	Should be clear, concise, and easily understood by an educated non-specialist. A few tips for a strong project title are: (a) keep it short; (b) avoid generic words; (c) leave out unnecessary words; (d) use active verbs; and (e) focus on the outcome.
Executive Summary	The Executive Summary is a brief statement written for educated non-specialists. It should include a very brief overview with each of the following headings: (a) Background: The context/background information. (b) Justification: Why the project is needed. (c) Aims: The aims of the project. (d) Hypotheses: The hypotheses to be tested. (e) Novelty: The novelty of this project. (f) Methods: A brief description of the methods. (g) Outputs: Outputs to be produced by the project. (600 words max)
Fit with RFP Goals	What specific aspects of this project make it competitively well-suited for (a) Perception Box, (b) Tiny Blue Dot Foundation, and (c) a timely opportunity to invest in now? See the RFP web page for reference. (200 words max)
Aims and Hypotheses	List the aims of the project along with specific, concise, and testable hypotheses. Please state if the hypotheses are directional or non-directional. If directional, state the direction. A predicted effect is also appropriate here. If a specific interaction or moderation is important to your research, you can list that as a separate hypothesis. (300 words max)
Significance and Impact	What is the most significant problem or set of problems that you are trying to solve? Which group of individuals is affected by these problems and how? If the project is successful, what transformative impact can we expect to see? We are particularly interested in the significance and impact of this research over the next five to ten years for mental or physical health in either clinical or non-clinical populations within diverse community settings. How scalable is your intervention? (300 words max)

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
Background and Novelty	What is the current state of the field? What previous research is most pertinent to this application? What makes your project novel and distinctive compared to other projects in the field? Please include relevant literature citations. (500 words max)
Study Design	Describe your study design for each experiment that you will conduct. The key is to be as detailed as is necessary, given the specific parameters of the design. Include specific information to answer the following questions: **Background:** If you are able to share or mention any preliminary data, then please include it here. **Randomization:** Will test subjects be randomized? If so, how will this be done? **Blinding:** Will there be any blinding or double-blinding? Please pay particular attention to de-blinding and expectancy effects for psychedelic trials (Muthukumaraswamy, S. D., Forsyth, A., & Lumley, T. (2021). Blinding and expectancy confounds in psychedelic randomized controlled trials. Expert review of clinical pharmacology, 14(9), 1133-1152.) **Sample Size:** How many subjects will you include in the study? If you don't know exactly, then how will you decide when to stop collecting data? (Include your power calculations.) **Inclusion / Exclusion Criteria:** How will you decide which subjects to include or exclude in the study? **Variables:** What variables will you manipulate? How will they be manipulated? Outcome Measures: What are the outcome measures, predictors, and covariates? **Outcome Measures:** What are the outcome measures, predictors, and covariates? **Data Collection Procedure:** What key data will you collect? Who/what will you collect it from? How will you collect it? If you plan to use a well-established methodology, then you may simply name it rather than providing a description.

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
Study Design Cont'd	**Data Storage:** How will you store and share your data? **Data Analysis:** How will you decide what data to be included in (or excluded from) the analysis? How will you process, transform, or center your data? **Statistics:** What statistical models will you use to test each hypothesis? What controls will you use? What criteria (e.g., p-values, Bayes factors, etc.) will you use to decide whether the data support your hypothesis? **Expectations, Pitfalls, and Solutions:** Identify the potential pitfalls or problems that might hinder progress, and highlight alternative approaches or solutions. (2500 words max)
Data Management	Use this section to outline the processes and tools that you will use to store, curate, and share your data. This can include data collection protocol, metadata, data analysis protocol, and code files. We expect all grantees to share their data according to the FAIR Principles. (500 words max)
Facilities and Equipment	Briefly describe what facilities and equipment will be used for each of the research methodologies used in this project. (Max 300 words)
References	Any references used in the fields above can be inserted here. APA style is preferred.
Appendices or Diagrams	Upload all appendices or diagrams in a single PDF or Word Doc document. Please include a one-page timeline that can be used to assess the progress of your project. The expected length of this document is 1–5 pages. Please avoid providing documents that exceed this length. Reviewers may ignore irrelevant information at their discretion if this document is considered too long.
Budget	Please download the spreadsheet from the link in the application portal, complete it following the instructions in the file, and upload it again in an .xls and .xlsx format. The budget instructions are in the next table, and are repeated in the spreadsheet for convenience.
Total Direct Costs	Use the automatic calculation in your budget spreadsheet to find this amount.

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
Total Overhead	Use the automatic calculation in your budget spreadsheet to find this amount. This is automatically calculated based on the total direct costs. This can be used to verify whether the Overhead cost amount is compliant. Should not exceed 15%.
Budget Justification	Provide a justification for all request amounts over $500,000. Past examples include clinical trials, neuroimaging, or tool-development expenses. Explain as clearly as you can why these costs are essential for the success of the project. (100 words max). This information can be copied from your LOI or updated if any key details have changed. TBD may reduce the request amount based on budgetary constraints or insufficient budget justification.
Project Start Date	Enter the ideal start date of your project. This date should be between June to October 2026. Successful applicants will be asked to finalize this date during the contracting stage.
Project Duration	How many months do you expect your project to last? The maximum time period is 36 months.

Budget Template

Please download the spreadsheet from the link in the application portal, complete it following the instructions in the file, and upload it again in an .xls and .xlsx format. The instructions below are also available in the budget spreadsheet for your convenience.

This spreadsheet contains two tabs for budget calculations. Use the Budget (Applicant Organization) tab for money paid directly through the Applicant Organization (that intends to enter into a contract with Tiny Blue Dot Foundation). This can include costs paid by the Applicant Organization to employees, consultants, and service providers. Use the Budget (Collaborating Organizations) tab for subawards or other collaborating organizations. This can include collaborating universities. All Collaborating Organization information can be combined into the one spreadsheet provided.

Enter all budget items in the relevant lines and the expected year that the costs would occur. We aspire to have costs spread evenly over the grant duration, but applicants may request more funds in some years than others if necessary. Expenses not incurred in any previous year may move over to the following year if the contract is still active.

Enter all costs to the nearest US dollar. Amounts entered with a decimal point will be automatically rounded up or down, depending on the amount: e.g. < .49 is rounded down and anything ≥ .50 is rounded up. Leave lines blank that do not apply to your project.

You may mention additional funding (funding not required from TBD) in the narrative section. This can include pro-bono contributions or in-kind support. Please do not include this funding in the number fields. The number and calculation fields should only include the budget requested from TBD.

Please note that the following costs are not allowed: advertising and public relations; construction, alterations, or renovations; artistic productions; intellectual property costs; rental or lease of facilities; website costs that are not crucial for the project, such as a general lab or institution website.

Please carefully consider all costs before completing your budget. Generally speaking, all budget variances need to be reported in the Financial Report. Variances of more than 20% of the total award require preapproval from TBD.

Principal Investigator and Co-Investigatore	Include Salary Request Amount for supporting the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator (if there is one). Include in the narrative the % of time each known team member will be dedicating to the project.

Other Known Team Members

Include the cost of all known team members other than the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator employed by the applicant organization. Include in the narrative the % of time each known team member will be dedicating to the project. You may list all members, but to make the process efficient, we only require that member be included in the budget narrative if they commit more than 5% of their time to the project. Consultants can be included in this line.

Roles to be Filled

Include the cost of all other roles other than the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator that have not yet been filled. Include in the narrative the % of time each role to be filled will be dedicated to the project.

Personnel Benefits

This includes all equipment, IT costs, software licenses, or maintenance that will be purchased for the primary purpose of your project's activities. Please itemize the costs for items that exceed $5,000 and have a life expectancy of more than five years.

Data Collection, Analysis & Open Access Publishing Fees

Include all costs related to collecting and analyzing data and open access publishing fees. For example, materials and supplies costs, scanner time, costs associated with fielding a survey, costs associated with outsourced preparation or analysis of data. Transport costs, prizes, technical services, and payments to participants or subjects in research studies can also be included here.

Equipment / IT / Software

This includes all equipment, IT costs, software licenses, or maintenance that will be purchased for the primary purpose of your project's activities. Please itemize the costs for items that exceed $5,000 and have a life expectancy of more than five years.

Travel Meals, and Lodging

Includes all reasonable and customary air or rail fares and auto allowances and approved overnight accommodations required for Project Personnel. Includes food and beverage expenses for the research-related activities for all individuals. Please provide a basic breakdown in the Budget Justification Section.

All applicants are required to include funds for airfare and ground transportation for three annual trips to Santa Monica (CA) for the PI and one optional additional team member. This will be for the TBD Grantee Annual Meeting. Meals and lodging will be provided.

Other	Include costs for any expenses not so far described, such as a website, translation services, or storage. Please note that we will only cover website costs that are essential to the success of a project.
Overhead	The Foundation will approve an added component for overhead within the budget, which is no more than (fifteen) 15%. Overhead costs are general overhead and administrative expenses that support the entire operations of a grantee and are incurred for common or joint objectives. Expenses that would be incurred regardless of whether the grant is funded are often indicative of overhead costs. This additional component can be applied to all direct costs. Any overheads which are a part of sub-contracts should be included in the Overhead section of the budget. The Foundation welcomes proposals that request a lower percentage for overhead costs.

Deliverables

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
Category of Deliverable	Select from categories provided.
Quantity	How many of these deliverables will you produce in total? This can be a number of physical products or digital files.
Description	Explain what will be delivered as proof of completion and how it relates to the goal of the project. (150 words max)
Open Access?	Indicate whether this output will be freely accessible in the public domain. We encourage applicants to make all outputs open access wherever possible.

Team Members

Please Note: Not all fields apply to each role. Depending upon the role selected, you may not see all of these fields in the form. Each field's conditional logic is explained in italics below.

There can only be one PI. There is no limit to the number of people included in the project team.

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
Role	*Applies to all entries.* Please select the appropriate role for the team member being entered. Although there is no limit to the number of entries in this form, only one Team Member should be entered under the "Principal Investigator" role. During the full proposal stage, please include all known roles for people who commit more than 5% of their time to the project. This is a minimum requirement, but you may also include important team members who will commit less than 5% of their time. If a team member or contractor will be paid through another organization that is not the Applicant Organization, then you will be asked in another section to add the information of their employer as a Collaboration Organization. If they are not employed by the Applicant organization, but paid directly, then they should be treated as a consultant.
Team Member Identified?	*Applies to all entries.* Indicate whether this person has been identified. This determines how much further information will be required.
Prefix	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes.*
First Name	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes.*
Last Name	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes.*

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
ORCID	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes.* This is a free persistent identifier available by registering at https://orcid.org Please include this ID if available. It will help reviewers better understand this person's track record in the field.
Google Scholar ID	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes.* This is the URL shown when you visit your Google Scholar Profile. Please include this ID if available. It will help reviewers better understand this person's track record in the field.
Time Commitment Percentage	*Applies to all except Role = Consultant.* Indicate how much time on average this person is expected to commit to the project. This should be based on a normal working week. For example, one day a week would be 20% or four months a year would be 25%.
Time Commitment Hours	*Applies only if Role = Consultant.* For a consultant role, you will be asked to estimate the number of hours that this person will commit to the project.
Core Activities	*Applies to all entries.* Outline briefly what core activities this person will work on (200 words max). Please make sure their CV, Resume, or Biosketch (attached below) demonstrates sufficient experience to complete these tasks successfully.
Job Title	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes.* Choose from the dropdown which job category is most accurate.

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
Employment	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes, unless Role = Consultant.* Choose from the dropdown which category most accurately indicates this person's relationship with the organization intended to receive the grant funds.
Collaborating Organization	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes.*
Email Address	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes.*
Street Address	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes, and Employment = Collaborating Organization.* Should ideally be the address at the place of employment.
City	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes, and Employment = Collaborating Organization.*
Region	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes, and Employment = Collaborating Organization.*
Country	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes, and Employment = Collaborating Organization.*
Post Code	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes, and Employment = Collaborating Organization.* If post codes are not used in your country, please enter "00000".
CV, Resume, or Biosketch	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes.* Upload relevant files as a single PDF. For the Principal Investigator, this document should confirm that they have a PhD, MDPhD or equally valid degree. CVs should be a maximum of two pages and should feature all the relevant experience and publication record of the team member. This may include the following:

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
CV, Resume or Biosketch Cont'd	Key qualifications relevant to this project, including degree title, institution, and year of graduation. Most relevant experiences, including your position, the name of the organization, and the start and end dates of that position. Most relevant grants you have been involved in as a key contributor. This could include grants on similar topics or high-impact grants to demonstrate your track record. Include the start and end dates, your role in the grant, the name of the grantor, and the amount awarded. Most relevant articles you have authored in this space. Ideally, use the APA reference style.
Letter of Support	*Applies if Team Member Identified = Yes, and Employment = Collaborating Organization, unless Role = Consultant.* Upload relevant files in PDF form. This is required if the known team member is not employed by the applicant organization, or if a letter is otherwise requested by foundation staff.

Organizations

Please note: the fields below do not apply to each organization. Depending upon the role selected, you may not see all of these fields in the form.

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
Role	There should be only one Applicant Organization. This is the organization that intends to enter into a contract with Tiny Blue Dot Foundation. Other organizations, or subcontractors, are categorized as Collaborating Organizations. Please note, we do not need the applicant to enter any organizations for team members listed as Consultants.
Legal Name of the Organization	The name must match the governing documents of the organization. This is the name that will be used in contracts or subcontracts with this organization if your proposal is successful.
Other names	If the Organization operates under any other names, please list them here.
Street Address	
City	
Region	
Country	Applications will be considered from any country except for those on the US's Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctions list. For more information, see: https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/office-of-foreign-assets-control-sanctions-programs-and-information
Post Code	If post codes are not used in your country, please enter "00000".

QUESTION	INSTRUCTION TEXT
Website	
Organization Structure	Select from the dropdown menu which category is most accurate. The value selected here must match that of the Tax ID that will be listed below.
Tax ID	This is your organization's tax identification number. For example, in the United States, this is the organization's EIN. If this question does not apply in your jurisdiction, please enter "00000".
Registration Number	Distinct from a "Tax ID", this is your organization's legal registration number. It is normally provided when the organization is registered within its local jurisdiction. If you are unsure, then please enter your organization's UEI or ask a senior administrator at your organization. If this does not apply in your jurisdiction, please submit a D-U-N-S Number or enter "00000".
Parent Organization	If the organization is owned by a parent organization, then enter its name here.
Confirmation of Status	Use this box to include any information that can confirm the veracity of the organization or add valuable information not included elsewhere. Accredited Colleges and Universities with a public profile typically require no additional documentation. If any documents are requested by TBD later in the application process, you may upload them here. We reserve the right to request additional documents to satisfy our due diligence requirements. This may include Memorandum and Articles of Association, or Equivalent or other documents to confirm Evidence of Charitable Status.
Confirmation of Status Upload	Use this feature to upload any PDF files that may be required.

Changes After Submission

Please note, once you have submitted your Full Proposal, you will not be able to make changes unless there are extenuating circumstances. To make changes, you would have to contact the TBD helpdesk. Proposals cannot be changed after the submission deadline.

If the proposal has been submitted by accident, then you may contact the helpdesk to have the submission reversed. You will not lose any data if you do this.