

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the international solicitation

Q1: Can a team be composed of only universities, only industries, or only national labs or must multiple types of institutions be included on each team?

A1: The teams may be made up of any combination of institutions. What is important is the scientific and technical merit of the proposal, the appropriateness of the approach, the competence of the researchers involved in the proposal, etc. Because of the broad range of expertise needed to carry out a successful international collaboration, we anticipate that all applications will involve multiple institutions.

Q2: Must the Lead PI be an employee of a national lab, or can the Lead PI be from a university?

A2: The Lead Principal Investigator (PI) may be from any of the institutions involved in the team. The Lead Principal Investigator must be employed by the Lead institution and must serve as the primary contact responsible for communications with DOE Program Officials on behalf of all of the Principal Investigators in the team. The lead PI will also be responsible for seeing that administrative issues such as loan agreements and export control regulations are followed. One of the key questions that reviewers will be asked to evaluate is the following:

Do the Lead Principal Investigator and other Principal Investigators have proven records of success in managing diverse teams of scientific and technical experts and delivering results?

Q3: There is not a 1 to 1 correspondence between the topical areas mentioned in the summary and the topical area headings mentioned in the Supplementary Information Section. How should applicants refer to the topical areas in their proposals?

A3: The topical areas in the summary are meant to highlight only some of the key topical issues involved. The topics on pages 4 and 5 are more inclusive and detailed and are meant to be the primary division of topical areas. Applicants should use these headings when specifying which topical area(s) will be addressed by their proposal.

Q4: Which foreign tokamak facilities are included within the scope of this solicitation?

A4: Applicants should propose to use whatever major foreign facility is best suited to carry out the research in the topical area(s) that they are proposing to investigate. The case for using specific foreign facilities should be laid out in the proposal.

Q5: Is research on stellarators included within the scope of this solicitation?

A5: Research on stellarators is not specifically included in this solicitation but may be included if a comparison between tokamaks and stellarators is an important aspect of the topical area(s) being proposed. Research on achieving high performance core plasma regimes suitable for long pulse in stellarators will be included in a future solicitation.

Q6: The FOA states that 2-3 teams will be funded, but also states that up to 8 awards may be made. The Lab Notice states that 2-3 teams will be funded, but also states that up to 6 awards may be made. Can you clarify this?

A6: An award is a cooperative agreement or a contract with a single institution. Because each team may be made up of several institutions, there will likely be multiple awards per team.

Q7: In the notice published on www.grants.gov for this solicitation (DE-FOA-0000714), are the numbers for Award Ceiling (\$500K) and Award Floor (\$100K) binding?

A7: No, these numbers are only estimates, which are required by the system. The significant numbers are those given in the Funding Opportunity Announcement itself for the anticipated total funding per team. Any funding, of course, is still subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Q8: If an Institution participates in multiple teams and if these teams are selected for funding, will there be separate awards to this Institution for its participation in each team? In this case, will there be a conflict with the upper limits on the number of awards stated in the FOA and Lab Announcement?

A8: If an Institution participates in multiple teams, separate awards will be made to this Institution for its participation in each team. The stated upper limits on the number of awards in the FOA and Lab Announcement are for guidance only and are not binding.

Q9: The information on pre-applications mentions a one-page curriculum vitae for each Principal Investigator (PI), co-Principal Investigator (co-PI), and senior collaborator or consultant. Is it acceptable instead to provide the two-page biographical sketches that will be submitted with the proposal? Also, should biographical information be provided for all senior people even if their time commitment to the project is small?

A9: Submitting two-page biographical sketches instead of one-page CVs is acceptable. Because the biographical information will be used to begin to identify potential reviewers who do not have conflicts of interest, it is important to provide biographical information on PIs and all senior people who have a significant role in the proposed work, even if their time commitment is small. The Office of Science guidance on Collaborators and Co-editors is provided below.

“List in alphabetical order all persons, including their current organizational affiliation, who are, or who have been, collaborators or co-authors with you on a research project, book or book article, report, abstract, or paper during the 48 months preceding the submission of this application. For publications or collaborations with more than 10 authors or participants, only list those individuals in the core group with whom the Principal Investigator interacted on a regular basis while the research was being done. Also, list any individuals who are currently, or have been, co-editors with you on a special issue of a journal, compendium, or conference proceedings during the 24 months preceding the submission of this application. If there are no collaborators or co-editors to report, state “None.”

Q10: There are ongoing collaborations on overseas facilities. How will they be handled?

A10: The objective of the current Funding Opportunity Announcement and Program Announcement is to restructure and expand the international collaboration program. If an ongoing collaboration is of high scientific merit, it should be incorporated into a proposal. The proposal should make the case for the scientific merit and programmatic benefit of the existing collaborative research. If, based on the merit review, FES decides not to continue the ongoing program, FES will endeavor to provide for an orderly termination.

Q11: How will "generic" support costs common to all proposals, such as the cost of supporting efficient remote data access/transfer between U.S. sites and overseas experimental facilities, be handled?

A11: All proposals should be self contained, and such costs should be included in the topical proposals. Depending on which proposals are selected, there may be some redundancy in this area, and appropriate modifications to the award budgets will be made.