

ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTION AND ANSWER LOG

DE-FOA-0003077- Regional Scale Collaboration to Facilitate a Domestic Critical Minerals Future: Carbon Ore, Rare Earth, and Critical Minerals (CORE-CM) Initiative

| Question | Answer |
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| I see that the FOA says feedstocks may include waste sources like coal waste and acid mine drainage, but there is no mention of conventional mining processes. Would a material coming from a mining operation be excluded from applying if it is not considered a waste byproduct? | Existing mine products would be allowable for characterization. Waste and mine byproducts are the material of interest. |
| We see that page 38 of the CORE-CM FOA states that, "Applicants may submit more than one Full Application to this FOA. Each application must describe a unique, scientifically distinct project, and they must be in different AOI's." Does the limit of one application per AOI apply only to applications on which an institution is the prime recipient, or does it also apply to applications on which an institution is a subrecipient? For instance, can an institution be the prime recipient on an application for AOI-1 AND participate as a subrecipient on another, separate application for AOI-1? | One Full application per AOI is only for prime recipients. This does not include subrecipients. Subrecipients may be a part of more than one application in the same AOI. |
| What geographically delineates AOI region #5 from AOI region #6? The Rio Grande Rift system which is associated with well-known REE and other CM reservoirs/ deposits. However, the Rio Grand Rift isn't mentioned in the FOA and it actually crosscuts both AOI region 5 and 6. | The regions or AOI's were chosen to split up and include the entire country. If there is a area of interest that is between two, please choose your prime region of interest or AOI and include in the project narrative the work you plan to do in the are of interest that is in between regions or AOI's. |
| On page 14, Figure 1, there are series of eight regions/areas of interest within the United States. Ohio has been placed in AOI-3 – Regional study of the Upper Midwest and Illinois Basin. I am curious, can someone explain why? | The regions or AOI's were chosen to split up and include the entire country. |
| Could you please confirm, for the below solicitation, would a proposal for Arizona be in Region 7? The map leads us to believe it would be but the written narrative seems to potentially contradict that. | Yes, Arizona is a part of Region 7. The work for this DE-FOA-0003077 has to encompass the entire region of interest to be considered responsive. |
| Does DE-FOA-0003077 allow proposals that seek funding to develop new technologies to explore for and discover critical minerals ore deposits? | No, this is not an area of interest for DE-FOA-0003077. |

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| Does FECM consider the downstream use of any products as a potentially important consideration for resource characterization? For example, it is possible that one region could conclude that a particular resource is a viable feedstock because of industry demand for certain products in that region while other regions without these demand centers do not characterize that resource as a viable feedstock. | Within our program we do have an interest in downstream products that vary by location/region. If secondary/downstream products exist in the region that have CM/REE, it would be of interest to include in resource characterization in this FOA. |
| Is the Applicant required to be physically located in the geographical region of the Area of Interest? If not, will location within the region be a favorable consideration in the Merit Review vs. an Applicant that is located near but physically outside the region? | No, the applicant is not required to be physically located in the geographical region of the Area of Interest. Applicant location is not a consideration on the Merit Review criteria. |
| Can provide the list of participants who were accepted for DE-FOA- 2364. | This is publicly available information and can be found here: https://netl.doe.gov/resource-sustainability/critical-minerals-and-materials/core-cm |
| Would a US based company that is exploring deposits in another country be eligible for funding under DE-FOA-0003077? | No, this funding opportunity DE-FOA-0003077 is specifically based on US regions. |
| Is a proposal only considered competitive if it includes all states in the shaded region from the "FOA Figure 1: Nationwide map of CORE-CM Regions" which cover areas of Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Utah? Or is a proposal considered competitive if it includes a majority of the region 7 states of Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Utah? | The proposal is only considered compliant if it includes all areas within the region, including all states and territories shaded (each AOI). |
| What states are in the regions? We could identity many states from the map, but want to make sure. | The goal of the AOI is to determine regional areas for the effort. State boundaries are useful for alignment with state geological surveys and other state resources. But the regional/AOI effort does require crossing state boundaries to address the regional and national goals of the program. |

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| The Funding Opportunity Announcement states: "Resource Characterization and assessment should include, but not be limited to: Coal and sedimentary rock associated with coal beds, Sedimentary hosted minerals, coal ash (ponded materials; combustion by products), Refuse, preparation plant, or mining waste (coal; other ores), Acid mine drainage (coal; other ores), Oil and Gas produced water, including petroleum industry by-products, carbon storage produced brines, or other waters, and Other region-specific resources that could enhance supply and economics that may include but not be limited to gasifier char materials, drill cuttings, and the like" Does that mean that the project should cover all these resources in our assessment? | Yes, if the resources are present or considered to be prevalent in the region. |
| Is there a way to join an already existing coalition team for the project? Is there a way to find connections? | As this is a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) there are no existing known coalition teams. There is a Teaming Partner list that you can input your information and expertise on listed with the FOA that is available to anyone that would want to look at it for partnering. That list for FOA-DE-0003077 can be found here: https://netl-exchange.energy.gov/TeamingPartners.aspx |
| If a foreign company has properties/operations in the U.S. who wants to participate in the proposal and is willing to provide in-kind support as cost share but not taking federal fund, would it be still required to fill the foreign waiver? Would the DOE accept cost share from such a situation? | Any foreign company that is not based in the US participating in the project proposal will have to be reported. See Section VIII. Other Information U. Foreign Collaboration Considerations, page 105 of DE-FOA-0003077. |
| Is it DOE's intention to disallow applicants from designing systems for CMM separation and purification as a part of DE-FOA-0003077? | Yes, DOE is NOT interested in applications to design systems for CMM separation and purification as a part of DE-FOA-0003077. Please see page 29 Section D "Applications specifically not of interest". |
| Does DE-FOA-0003077 allow proposals that seek funding to design, engineer and demonstrate innovative technology at a pilot scale (TRL 6-7) to extract critical materials and rare earth elements? | DE-FOA-0003077 does NOT seek proposals to design, engineer, and demonstration technology at a pilot scale. Please see DE-FOA-0003077 page 29 Section D "Applications specifically not of interest". |

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| Must the SOPO be double spaced along with the rest of the Project Narrative? | The SOPO is part of the project narrative, and all parts of the project narrative must be double spaced. Please see page 46 of DE-FOA-0003077. |
| Is the R&D Community Benefits Plan 5 page single or double spaced? | The R&D Community Benefits Plan is a total of 5 pages and can be either double or single spaced. |
| If a company donates previously drilled core to the project, with an estimated drill cost of \$1 Million, does this count as cost share? | Any cost share submitted will be subject to review and approval if the project is selected. |
| If a company provides access to cores, with an estimated previously drilled cost of \$1 Million, does this count as cost share? | Any cost share submitted will be subject to review and approval if the project is selected. |
| DE-FOA-3077 page 40 indicates that references (whether footnotes or endnotes) are included in the page limit, but p 46 indicates that the bibliography is excluded from the page count. Can you please clarify this discrepancy? | Endnotes and footnotes in narrative text are included in the page limit while the bibliography is not included in the page limit. |
| Is the regional plan for Task 5 (Stakeholder Outreach and Education) different from the R&D CBP? | Stakeholder Outreach and Education could have overlapping tasks with the R&D CBP. |
| Page 32 lists two budget periods (BP1 and BP2), and BP1 goes from 18-21, while BP2 goes from 15-18 months. Many of the deliverables are “due 90 days prior to the end of the BP 1 at go/no-go decision point. How do we plan for this? | This information is meant to be a guide to split up the 36 months of the project into 2 Budget Periods (BP). So long as the proposed work falls within the range of time, the applicant can propose when that is, and the deliverables due 90 days prior to the end of that BP, for example, would be based on the proposed schedule. |
| Will the CBP need a separate CBP justification? | The CBP plan is a separate plan but may have overlapping tasks within the project plan (eg stakeholder outreach and education). |
| What is the planned schedule of funds release? Is it half of full award for BP1 and the remainder for BP2? | Funds will be released as available. The amount of funding in each budget period will be dependent on the proposed work and budget in the application. |
| Is deliverable “2.X Technology Assessment and Field Development Plan” (p. 123) supposed to be included in Task 2 or Task 3? | Deliverable 2.X Technology Assessment and Field Development Plan was originally planned for task 2, but could fit in either task 2 or 3 of your final plan. |

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| Would BIL funds (federal fund passed through other state agencies) be available as cost share under DE-FOA-0003077? | Funds from other federal sources are generally not eligible to be used as cost share. Questions about the eligibility of specific funds for use as cost share for an award should be submitted to the Grants and Agreements Officer for a determination if the project is selected. Please see DE-FOA-0003077 Appendix A - Cost Share Information, pages 106-110. |
| Is there a GIS shape file or detailed map available for Figure 1 in DE-FOA-0003077 to identify boundaries? | A GIS shape file or detailed map file is currently not available, but will be available to awardees. |
| Are letters of support /collaboration from industry and state-level organizations allowed to be included in applications for DE-FOA-0003077. If so, what part of the application are these included in? | Letters of support or endorsement for the project from entities that do not have a substantive role in the project will not be accepted. |
| If the proposal will work across dozens of field sites across the region of interest, is an Environmental Questionnaire (EQ) needed for each site or can all the sites be listed on a single EQ? Can the lead PI/institution submit a single EQ covering the entire team of researchers? | Each site/entity where work is being done must have an EQ and should be submitted for any known site/entity at application. DE-FOA-0003077 is a project that you may not know all the work sites during application, additional EQ's (possibly consolidated by state with FPM/NEPA approval) for sampling can be completed and submitted to your Federal Project Manager for approval before working on these additional sites if awarded. |
| Is it preferred for the applicant to use the Community Benefits Plan template provided in the appendices? | Templates are provided for ease and consistency. Applicants can use the format that is best suited for their application. |
| Is copper a reasonable target to be included in CORE-CM? | Yes, copper is one of the critical minerals for energy on the 2024 DOE Critical Materials List. https://www.iea.org/policies/17976-2023-doe-critical-materials-list |
| Is it allowable to single space the deliverable table in the SOPO? | Tables in the narrative may be single spaced. |
| Would recovery of REE from E-waste be of interest? | Recovery of E-waste is not of interest. |
| Who should initiate the application in NETL eXCHANGE, AOR or professor? | DOE does not have a policy on who initiates the application in eXCHANGE. |
| Can the Current and Pending Support (CPS) common form be used as the letter of commitment? | The CPS is a mandatory form and the letters of commitment are a non mandatory form. |

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| Is the question asking if any foreign business entity, offshore entity, or entity outside of the United States related to the proposed recipient or subrecipient wanting to know if a foreign entity will be assisting the applicant in this funding opportunity or is the request asking if any of the applicant researchers involved have any interest in a foreign business entity? | The question is asking if the applicant (both proposed recipient and sub-recipient) and researchers involved have any interest (including business, research, and employment etc.) in a foreign business entity. |
| We did not find a template for the R&D Community Benefits Plan in the FOA. We want to first confirm that there is no template for the R&D Community Benefits Plan? Does the R&D Community Benefits Plan need to just have the 3 sections outlined in the FOA 1) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA); 2) Energy Equity; and 3) Workforce Implications? Are CBP templates available on other DOE sites? | Yes, there is no posted template for the Community Benefits Plan (CBP) in the DE-FOA-0003077 eXCHANGE site. The R&D CBP would include three sections 1) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility; 2) Energy Equity; and 3) Workforce Implications. The R&D CDP template available on https://www.energy.gov/infrastructure/about-community-benefits-plans is an acceptable template. |
| Should the go/no go point be a deliverable in a task? | The deliverable at the go/no go decision point is an interim report to move into BP2, along with any other milestones or deliverables deemed necessary by the project team. Additional deliverables are due with the interim report or as part on the interim report, please see DE-FOA-0003077 deliverable table, page 123-125. |
| Is there a preferred citation style for the project narrative? | There is no preferred citation style for the project narrative. |
| Can you clarify if the references section counts towards the 30-page limit and does this need to be double spaced? Do references have to appear at the end of the document and as footnotes/endnotes? | References in the text and if there needs to be footnotes or endnotes are included in the narrative page count. The references bibliography section is not included in the page count. |
| Budget period lengths are uneven in the proposal, however the costing profile is broken down by each fiscal year. Are we required to break this out by year rather than budget period? | The budget proposal needs to be broken down by both fiscal year and budget period. |