

Scope of RFA

Is it possible to send the proposal idea concept note (1-2 page) and get feedback on project idea?

Yes, this is encouraged. Please send to Heather Henry (henryh@niehs.nih.gov). As program administrators, we can tell you if your application is within scope. We cannot give substantive advice or input into the direction of the application.

Could you elaborate on the Research Translation Plan in translating findings to end-users? Translate how? Who is an end-user? Does this mean the project has to come up with an end-product or device? Are we evaluated on its practicality?

For ideas on research translation plan, the RFA lists a few bullet points. Researchers should think about what are the most practical ways that their research can be applied. This RFA relates to remediation technologies it also has implications with regard to risk and bioavailability. We encourage working with field practitioners – if you have a hazardous substance you will be focusing on you might find a site with that issue. If you are working with someone on a site, they might be considered an end-user. There may be some projects for which development of a product or device would be a logical outcome, but it is not a requirement in this RFA that researchers develop a product or device. Work from this RFA is likely to have translatable findings for risk or exposure assessment and for remediation. Developing best practices for field practitioners related to the remediation activity – e.g. how to best manipulate the biogeochemical environment to ensure that the remediation technology is operating most effectively.

During the review, reviewers will provide comment on the Research Translation Plan and will classify the plan as acceptable or not acceptable. This will not affect final score. Reviewers may also make comments or suggestions about the Research Translation Plan that may need to be addressed before an award is made.

What does "application in mind" mean in terms of outcomes? Is identifying a new process enough or do we have to come up with ways to apply them?

Essentially, this refers to SRP's strategic goal to address "Application-oriented basic research." For this RFA, you would therefore seek to focus your work on the science of fundamental processes but you want to make sure that your research is rooted in and/or solving problems that exist in the "real-world".

You are not expected to apply the research in the field as part of your proposal. We just want for your research to be oriented towards an application e.g. having a good sense of how the outcomes of your research can be used in a practical way.

If we have identified potential end-users, can we attach a letter of support or letter of collaboration from this person?

Yes, this is a good idea. In the electronic submission process, there is a "letters of support" section where you upload the whole batch of letters. Make sure this is done before you submit the application to NIH as letters cannot be accepted after an application deadline. Reviewers want to see that the

collaboration is in existence.

If we are focusing on a contaminated site in collaboration with site managers, does it have to be a NPL site?

No. Working on a Superfund site is not a requirement in this RFA. There may be excellent opportunities to work on non-Superfund sites, such as RCRA, brownfields, DOD, sites. Research does need to be relevant to (applicable) to Superfund.

How critical is the direct connection to human health? Is it essential that co-PI or team member be an expert in human health or exposure?

It is not a requirement to have an expert in human health or exposure as part of the research team. Bioavailability is key to this RFA and is integral to knowing whether in situ remediation has been effective in protecting human health by reducing exposure or toxicity of hazardous substances in the environment. Another point to consider is whether laboratory-based studies are investigating levels of contaminants that are both environmentally relevant and that translate to relevant human exposures levels. You may ask yourself: does the research focus on a problem that poses a risk to human health? Investigators may choose to collaborate with risk modelers to strengthen the connection to human health exposures, etc.

Review

In the "Review Criteria", can you further explain what is meant by "Environment" and how it is reviewed?

The environment is both the "intellectual" environment as well as the actual facilities and equipment available for the project. So we ask the reviewers to comment as to whether it is adequate to support the goals of the project. Reviewers will look at your one page on facilities and see what equipment is there. They will also look to see what you have in place to ensure that you have an intellectual environment to support the research.

How much do educational (human resource development) outcomes count in the evaluation?

There is not an educational (human resources development) outcome requirement in this RFA. However, if educational outcomes are a part of the research translation plan, we note that the research translation plan will be judged on its adequacy and will not factor into the final score.

Are applications from junior faculty/new investigators looked upon favorably or would the proposal be strengthened by including a senior PI as a collaborator?

We encourage reviewers to take into account the stage of the investigator in terms of their expectations of a proposal. We always encourage new investigators/junior faculty to submit to our RFAs. We tell reviewers to expect less of a track record, to accept that there will be less preliminary data, etc. We

think it is a good idea for junior faculty/new investigators to demonstrate they have connections with a more senior PI who is more experienced – perhaps as a consultant for the project or as a collaborator. But, it is not a requirement to have a senior investigator on the project as a PI or collaborator because ultimately the application is reviewed for its scientific merit and the potential quality of the work (and grantsmanship of the proposal).

Early stage investigators are not clustered together during a review (as is done in a standing study section).

Application and Budget Details

Can we have foreign members of the team? Are foreign collaborators allowable?

The applicant must be from a US Institution of Higher Education, but you can have foreign members on the team or as collaborators. See NOT ES-13-011.

What types of support for foreign collaborators is allowed?

You can have a foreign subcontract, and any of the budget categories can be used. Applicants are asked to consider the spirit of the SRP mandates which specify that the SRP research program is US university based.

Is there a mechanism for two universities to submit a collaborative proposal (one project) without use of a subcontract (which can be costly in terms of indirect costs)?

When appropriate (e.g. for team science approaches), a Multiple-PI model can be proposed and is allowed under this RFA. Information about how to apply as Multiple-PIs is sprinkled throughout the SF 424 instructions: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/#inst>. Applicants considering this model should visit the following webpage: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/multi_pi/index.htm.

For multi-PI proposals does each institution have separate budgets (no double overhead) or does one institute still have a subcontract?

Multi-PI award goes to the lead institution. The lead institution subcontracts out to other institutions.

Can we have multiple PIs from the same institution?

Yes.

Can a subaward be allocated to peers and colleagues at national laboratories?

If the laboratory is non-Federal, the answer is “yes”, subawards may go to such peers/colleagues. If

these are Federal laboratories, special rules and restrictions apply. In general, collaborations between a grantee and a Federal Laboratory or staff are possible if money/funds are not exchanged (e.g. the federal partner contributes in-kind collaboration, but does not request resources from the grant). That is by far the easiest and most straight-forward approach. Only certain Federal Facilities/National Laboratories have the ability to accept funds that originate from a federal granting office. Please contact Lisa Edwards and cc: Heather Henry if you have specific questions about this.

What font size and spacing are required for the 12 page limit of the main text of the proposal?

See "Section 2.6 Format Specifications for Text (PDF) Attachments" in SF424 Instructions details.
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/SF424_RR_Guide_General_Adobe_VerC.pdf

Font

- *Use an Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. (A Symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters; the font size requirement still applies.)*
- *Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch.*
- *Type may be no more than six lines per inch.*
- *Paper Size and Page Margins*
- *Use standard paper size (8 ½" x 11).*
- *Use at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. No information should appear in the margins, including the PI's name and page numbers.*

Is the \$150K annual cap on costs a cap on direct costs or total costs?

Direct costs.

How many awards do you expect to make with this RFA? Do you envision funding more than one project or just one project?

The RFA states up to 6 to 8 awards will be made, but this is dependent on the budget allocated by Congress. We intend to fund more than one project (ideally, up to 6 to 8 awards will be made).

The minimum timeframe is one year, correct?

Technically there is not a minimum timeframe; however the RFA limits the number of years to four.

Is there a list of approved principal investigators at universities that is available?

Institutions make the decision as to who can be a principal investigator. We award to the institution. A question we often get is whether postdocs, non-tenured faculty, etc. can be considered the PI. The answer is as long as the institution says the person can submit for a grant, then they are eligible for an

NIH grant.

Can we submit an application if we have a current Superfund Research Program at our university? If so, what do we need to do to keep the complimentary research separate?

Yes, this RFA is open to all US Universities to apply. Applicants will need to list other support in their application (for existing grants and pending applications), describing what the work entails and identifying any potential budgetary or scientific overlap. If an application ends up being considered for funding, then the agency will contact the PI to address/manage potential overlap before an award is made.

Is affiliation with an existing SRP center preferred?

No, these applications will be reviewed independently of one another and being associated with an existing SRP will not help nor hurt you.

Are you allowed to include Private Companies personnel in the proposal as Co-PIs?

Yes. There are no restrictions on that; however applicants are advised that private companies often have high F&A rates. Also, per SRP mandates, it is expected that a majority of the work is done at the university.