



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) NO. NEUP-002-10

For R&D Proposals

**By Battelle Energy Alliance (BEA) on behalf of the Department of Energy's Office
of Nuclear Energy**

ISSUE DATE: January 6, 2010

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: February 16, 2010

BEA POINT-OF-CONTACT: Marsha Lambregts

TELEPHONE NO.: (208) 526-1336

FACSIMILE NO.: (208) 526-8076

E-MAIL: Marsha.Lambregts@inl.gov

1 INTRODUCTION

This solicitation is a Request for Proposals (RFP) for research and development (R&D) by the Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy (DOE-NE) Nuclear Energy University Programs (NEUP). This solicitation is open only to those selected to participate through the Request for Pre-Applications (NEUP-001-10-Rev 1) process. **If you did not receive an R&D pre-application acceptance letter from NEUP, then you are NOT eligible to respond to this RFP.**

The mission of the DOE-NE is to lead the DOE investment in the development and exploration of advanced nuclear science and technology. DOE-NE promotes nuclear energy as a resource capable of meeting the Nation's energy, environmental, and national security needs by resolving scientific, technical, and regulatory challenges through research, development, and demonstration.

NEUP's goal is to support outstanding, cutting-edge, and innovative research at U.S. universities through the following:

- ◆ Administering NEUP R&D awards to support NE's goal of integrating R&D at universities, national laboratories, and industry to revitalize nuclear education and support NE's programs
- ◆ Attracting the brightest students to the nuclear professions and supporting the Nation's intellectual capital in nuclear engineering and relevant nuclear science, such as Health Physics, Nuclear Materials Science, Radiochemistry, and Applied Nuclear Physics
- ◆ Improving university and college infrastructures for conducting R&D and educating students
- ◆ Supporting NE's goal of facilitating the transfer of knowledge from an aging nuclear workforce to next generation of workers

This RFP will include a set of mandatory requirements and evaluation criteria that will be used in the selection of successful proposals.

The primary point of contact for questions regarding this solicitation is [Dr. Marsha Lambregts](#) from the Nuclear Energy University Programs Integration Office. However, all technical scope questions need to be submitted through the question and answer feature on the RFP section of the website accessible via the NEUP home page located at www.ne-up.org.

In preparation for this R&D RFP, a NEUP workshop was held on August 13-14, 2009, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Outcomes of this workshop were captured as proceedings and are available at the www.ne-up.org website.

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This workshop product is an important source of background information on the R&D areas that will be included in this solicitation. Applicants are encouraged to read and familiarize themselves with these documents before responding to the solicitation or entering the proposal submittal system (online).

NOTE: All information and instructions required to respond to this RFP are accessible at www.ne-up.org. Applicants who participated in the NEUP R&D Pre-application stage of this process may use the same log-in credentials to enter the secure R&D RFP website beginning at 8 a.m. January 6, 2010 MST and ends at 5 p.m. on February 16, 2010. Offerors **MUST** submit their proposal(s) electronically through the R&D RFP website. **NO** hard copy proposals will be accepted.

2 ESTIMATED FUNDING

Approximately \$35 million is expected to be available in fiscal year 2010 for new R&D awards under this RFP pending final program determination. NEUP may issue awards in multiple phases throughout the fiscal year pending availability of funds. Up to 15 percent of the total funding is targeted for mission relevant investigator-initiated research. The actual level of funding in each research area depends on the fiscal year 2010 appropriation for the Department of Energy's NE R&D programs. An additional set aside may be made by NE leadership to facilitate Director's Choice awards.

3 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Any proposal submitted in response to this RFP must be submitted by a U.S. university or college. Collaborations (i.e. teaming partners) between universities, and between universities and industry or national laboratories, are permitted. A maximum of 20 percent of an award can go to industry and national laboratories. Partnering with minority serving institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities is encouraged. The following link provides the list of minority serving institutions:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html>.

Including early career researchers on proposal teams is encouraged. ("Early Career" would include principal investigators (PIs) within the first 10 years of their academic career as self-identified on the proposal.) Any scope performed by a non-university teaming partner or combination of non-university teaming partners cannot exceed more than 20% of the total award amount of any resulting contract. . Any number of Universities may team together on the proposal and share the funding at their discretion.

Funding is for professors at U.S. Universities only. While collaborations with foreign organizations are allowed given that their role is focused on fundamental research and that they are not a denied party or a party that requires an export license, these participants are not eligible for funding under this RFP.

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4 BASIS FOR AWARD

4.1 SELECTION METHOD

NEUP will utilize a **best-value** selection process whereby all relevant evaluation factors will be assessed, including cost considerations, to select the successful candidates. The evaluation process will be based solely upon the written information, references and independent pre-award assessment actions as outlined within this solicitation. The best-value selection process will be conducted as follows:

Written Proposals - Offeror shall provide a written proposal, fully compliant with the electronic submittal requirements specified on the R&D RFP website. NEUP will make a determination as to the responsiveness of each proposal to the solicitation requirements.

Cost Considerations - To assess the cost component of the proposal, NEUP will perform a review of the detailed cost proposal (Section 5.7) to determine reasonableness of the labor and non-labor costs for performing the proposed work.

NEUP may solicit from available sources, including references and past clients identified by the Offeror, experience and past performance information on an Offeror or key personnel, and consider such information in its evaluation. Offerors are reminded to submit their best initial proposal as NEUP may award without further discussions.

If NEUP determines that revised proposals or best and final offers are necessary, NEUP may solicit them from only those Offerors deemed by NEUP (based upon evaluation of the current proposals) to have a reasonable chance to be selected for award, i.e., the competitive range.

4.2 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Within the submission form, Offeror shall identify nuclear energy related federal funding sources by source, project name, monetary amount and length of term received by the Principal Investigator or collaborators currently in place or received within the past three years.

Within the written proposal, Offeror shall address the mandatory (Go/No-go) requirements. Only proposals deemed fully compliant with the mandatory requirements shall be eligible for continued evaluation. **All mandatory requirements committed to within the Request for Pre-Application (RPA) continue to apply throughout the RFP process.**

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If an Offeror cannot meet, or does not address compliance with the following mandatory (Go/No-go) requirements, its proposal will be considered nonresponsive and will not be evaluated further. Each Offeror (i.e. U.S. University submitting a proposal) is responsible for obtaining the commitment of each of their teaming partners to the mandatory requirements; their submittal of a response to this RFP is indicative of each teaming partner's acceptance of the mandatory requirements. The Offeror is not required to submit formal letters of commitment of their partners as part of their proposal. However, prior to award of any resultant contract, the Offeror must demonstrate that the proposed team has been formed and all teaming partner agreements are finalized. All go/no go criteria from the RPA are also included as mandatory requirements within this RFP.

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DOE NEUP R&D RFP Mandatory Requirements

No.	Requirement	Description	Evaluation
1	Commitment to reporting and budget requirements	Commitment to quarterly billing. Commitment to quarterly reporting to National campaign director and reports approved by Campaign director; Annual Report. The quarterly report will provide status and progress information on R&D, deliverables, milestones, schedule and budget. The annual report is due each year within one month of the anniversary of the contract award date and will provide the same type of information as the quarterly reports, but with more detail including a section describing the future outlook of the R&D.	Go/No-go
2	10 CFR 851 Worker Safety and Health Program	If offeror proposes work scope to be conducted at a DOE facility, the work performed at DOE facilities shall be conducted in accordance with 10 CFR 851, Worker Safety and Health Program requirements.	Go/No-go
3	Export Control	Each offeror to the RFP and their partners are responsible for their own compliance with all US Export Control regulations in the performance of any work that is funded through the NEUP program. Offerors and partners who are selected to perform work in accordance with this RFP agree to have in place a documented export control process by the time a contract is awarded. Offerors and partners can contact the U.S. Departments of Commerce, State, Energy and Treasury for guidance as to applicable licensing requirements and other restrictions. By participating in this RFP, offerors and partners acknowledge that the work proposed will be subject to all export control regulations that may prohibit or restrict (i) transactions with certain persons, and (ii) the type and level of technologies and services that may be exported. These regulations include, without limitation, the Arms Export Control Act, the Export Administration Act, the International Economic Emergency Powers Act, the Atomic Energy Act and regulations issued pursuant to these including the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) (15 CFR Parts 730-774), the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) (22 CFR Parts 120-130), and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Department of Energy export regulations (10 CFR Parts 110 and 810). Offerors and partners acknowledge that export control	Go/No-go

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		requirements may change and that the export of goods, technical data or services from the U.S. without an export license or other governmental authorization may result in both civil and criminal liability.	
4	Standard Research Subcontract	Offeror must agree to the terms and conditions of a Standard Research Subcontract (available on the RFP website), without exceptions. If the lead institution has a current Blanket Agreement in place with BEA and is awarded a R&D contract in response to this RFP, then the NEUP R&D award will be added to the existing Blanket (i.e. Release or Task Order). If no current Blanket exists, the action will be awarded under a stand-alone Standard Research Subcontract.	Go/No-go
5	Quality Assurance	Each offeror to the RFP and their partners need to implement QA requirements based on a specific scope of work and associated deliverables. Work scope has been reviewed by the TIOs to insure the integrity of R&D products and their usability by NE. In accordance with this review, QA requirements were identified on the QA Requirements Form. Offerors and partners who are selected to perform work in accordance with this RFP agree to adhere to the specified QA requirements through use of university procedures or procedures/templates/guidance provided by NEUP. Offerors shall document acceptance to the QA requirements in the RFP.	Go/No-go
6	Commitment to prepare additional contract elements	Depending on the nature and terms of agreements already in place with BEA, offerors should be prepared to provide the following: University Contract Office Approval, Current Negotiated Rate Agreement, University Travel Policy, Resumes for other degreed individuals, faculty members, and administrators, Forecast of monthly accrual based on best estimate of costs incurred.	Go/No-go

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4.3 WRITTEN PROPOSAL

4.3.1 Technical Proposal

Offeror shall provide a written narrative addressing its strategy to execute R&D that supports the specified Technical Work Scope. The documentation provided shall include the items specified below:

- Proposal Title
- Technical Work Scope Identification: From the Technical Work Scope Table, as indicated on the original pre-application
- Proposed Scope Description
- Logical path to accomplishing scope including descriptions of tasks
- Milestones and Deliverables
- Type/description of facilities that will be used to execute the scope (N/A is acceptable)
- Schedule: Define timelines for executing the specified work scope
- The roles and responsibilities of each partnering organization in the execution of the work scope
- Unique challenges to accomplishing the work and innovations expected to mitigate such challenges
- Information, data, plans, or drawings necessary to explain the details of Offeror's proposal
- Quality Assurance: Describe the applicable QA requirements and how they will be met.

The R&D written narrative shall NOT include:

- Cost and pricing information
- Identification, by individual name or name of institution, any teaming partner.

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- Official name or title of facilities used to execute scope. Describe the facility by function and/or technical attributes such as an accelerator, a test reactor, etc.

4.3.2 Capabilities

Infrastructure Requirements: In a separate document, Offeror shall identify the infrastructure (e.g., facilities, equipment, and instrumentation) required to execute the proposed scope of work. Describe the non-labor (e.g., facilities, equipment, and instrumentation) resources available and accessible to the Offeror and are required to execute the scope of work. Describe any unique equipment and facilities that are needed, are accessible, and will be used to execute the scope of work. Discuss the adequacy of these resources and identify any gaps. See the electronic proposal submission form for document guidance.

This call allows for the Offeror to propose the purchase of any needed equipment to conduct the proposed work. Any property acquired under subcontracts resulting from this RFP will be subject to the terms and conditions of the BEA standard research subcontract. This document is available via the NEUP website: www.ne-up.org.

4.3.3 Technical Expertise and Qualifications:

Offer shall name all teaming partners by name and organization and their proposed roles and responsibilities. For the principle investigator and collaborators, the Offeror shall provide a brief vita that lists:

- Contact information;
- Academic and professional credentials;
- Relevant professional history;
- Five recent relevant publications or commensurate professional experiences.
- See the electronic proposal submission form for document guidance.

Technical expertise and qualifications are to be provided for a maximum of four individuals. Submitted individuals (and/or their recipient institutions) must receive at least \$50,000 over the life of the subcontract, (i.e. to be considered a collaborator). Minor contributors—anyone not expected to materially participate in the proposal, such as consultants or national laboratory personnel who are not to be paid more than \$50,000 to participate in the project—should not be listed.

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4.3.4 Balanced Opportunity

Minority serving institutions: A goal is to award 10% of the total dollars awarded under this solicitation to minority serving institutions that submit competitive proposals. Proposals submitted with minority serving institutions with partners will receive an additional 5 points added to the overall proposal score (with a total score not to exceed 100 points).

Geographical balance: When scoring based on evaluation criteria does not clearly distinguish a set of proposals, a geographical balance criterion will be applied during the final selection process.

4.3.5 Pricing

The Offeror shall use the spreadsheet, "RFP Budget Form example.xls" to provide all pricing information for execution of the proposed scope of work. Note that the required information is for the lead University, as well as for each partner.

Additional pricing information beyond that requested may be provided, but will be used at the discretion of NEUP. The budget form is available on the RFP website.

Proposals shall not propose costs of more than \$500,000/year and/or \$1,500,000/contract.

A maximum of 20 percent of an award can go to industry and national laboratories.

Budget worksheets shall contain one worksheet for each institution including national laboratories and a role up worksheet.

Provide name, phone number, and email address for a single point of contact from the university grants and contracting department or equivalent entity.

4.3.6 Scoring

NEUP will evaluate and score each Offeror's proposal based on the information submitted in response to this RFP. Points for the technical score will be calculated as follows:

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Criterion	Description	Weight (Percent)
Technical Proposal		
Scientific and Technical Merit	Advances the state of the knowledge in the relevant program element(s); practicality of scope with respect to specified funding range for work scope and period of performance.	20
Research Plan	Logical path to work accomplishment.	35
Capabilities		
R&D Resources and Capabilities	Demonstrate that labor and non-labor resources are adequate to accomplish the proposed work scope. Costs delineated on the budget worksheet will be considered within this section.	10
Team Qualifications	Relevant credentials, publications, experience, and past accomplishments of principal investigator and collaborators.	15
	<i>Mission Relevance (not part of the peer review)</i>	
<i>Mission-relevance¹</i>	<i>Alignment with the mission specific program relevant technical objectives or in the case of the Mission Relevant Investigator Initiated Research, the judgment will be based upon the overall Office of Nuclear Energy mission relevance, not the specific program element.</i>	20
	Score	0-100
Minority Serving Institution Credit		
Minority Serving Institution Bonus	Proposals submitted with minority serving institutions as partners will receive an additional 5 points added to the overall proposal score (with a total score not to exceed 100 points)	5
<p>1. Mission Relevance: This element will be scored by the Federal Program Offices and TIO/TDO offices, not by peer review.</p>		

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4.3.6.1 Scoring Balanced Opportunity

Three peers will independently employ a semi-blind process to evaluate and score the proposals. This peer evaluation process will produce a ranked list of proposals for each work scope. NEUP IO will facilitate a process in which TIO Directors, NE Program Managers and senior leadership will select from the ranked proposals a final set of proposals to fund. The selection process will be guided by the balanced opportunity criteria within the total available dollars.

The selections made will always be governed by proposal rankings within a specified scope of work. The rules that will be applied are:

When no balanced opportunity criteria are applied, the highest ranked proposal will be funded.

4.3.7 Competitive Range

If NEUP determines that revised proposals or best and final offers are necessary, NEUP may solicit them from only those Offerors deemed by NEUP (based upon evaluation of the current proposals) to have a reasonable chance to be selected for award, i.e., the competitive range.

5 PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 PROPOSAL DUE DATE:

The proposal is due by 5:00 p.m. MST February 16, 2010. Applicants **MUST** submit their responses through the R&D RFP website on the electronic proposal submission form.

5.2 RFP SCHEDULE

Issue RFP	January 6, 2010
R&D Full Proposals Due	February 16, 2010
R&D Selection Review Completed and Awards Announced	May 4, 2010
Awards Issued	August 31, 2010

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5.3 LATE PROPOSALS

Proposals received after the designated date and time, i.e. late, may be retained without opening, with the Offeror notified of this decision. Extension of the proposal due date shall be at the sole discretion of NEUP on behalf of its sponsor, the Department.

5.4 PROPOSAL PACKAGING

Responses must be submitted as specified on the R&D RFP website to allow technical, pricing, and capabilities to be evaluated separately. The files shall be named as specified on the R&D RFP website.

5.5 FORMAT AND CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

The following must be completed and submitted to NEUP using the R&D RFP website (Note: Specified forms are provided at the website).

5.5.1 Technical Proposal

See the electronic proposal submission form for document guidance.

5.6 FULLY EXECUTED ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST CERTIFICATION, FORM PROC-3204 (AVAILABLE ON THE RFP WEBSITE).

The Offeror must provide, for itself and all partners, full disclosure of all previous current and planned contract activities where the Offeror is providing assistance on the same or similar matters to any other organization.

5.7 PRICING:

Submit core information using the budget spreadsheet and associated guidance provided on the R&D RFP website. The budget spreadsheet shall be submitted with the file name 10-ID# budget form.xls (example: 10-000 budget form.xls). A copy of the spreadsheet is provided on the RFP website as RFP Budget Form example.xls.

Provide the following types of supporting documents with the budget spreadsheet: published fee schedules for laboratory equipment use, vendor quotes for equipment purchases, catalog prices for materials and supplies, details of the basis of estimate for the proposals budget, indirect rate agreement.

(Applies only to academic partners). Offeror shall submit a cost proposal on the basis of fully burdened hourly labor rates for each of the labor categories proposed.

Offeror's rates shall include only those labor costs required by law and may

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not unfairly burden NEUP or the Government with overhead, profit and other factors already accounted for in standard labor rates. Offeror's fully burdened rates shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Offeror's overhead, e.g., the cost of maintaining places of business, fringe benefits, statutory benefits, other direct and indirect costs (Indirect rate agreement)
- Costs of owning, renting, leasing, operating, and maintaining equipment and services typically required in the staffing support business, e.g., telephones (fixed and mobile), pagers, faxes, office machines (computers, copiers, fax machines, filming equipment, plotters, printers, servers, networks, data ports for customer electronic access, data storage and retrieval systems, filing systems, furniture, developing and maintaining Offeror's standards/guides and procedures.
- Costs of normal and customary human resource and department manager functions, e.g., staff oversight, employee performance assessments, awards, promotions, transfers, disciplinary actions, and terminations.
- Costs for routine business mail and express delivery (for delivery within three business days).
- Costs for routine printing jobs.

(Applies only to nonacademic partners). A fully executed Proposal/Certification Form PROC-2120 (available on the RFP website).

Capabilities: Submit all capabilities information in accordance with the guidance provided on the R&D RFP website. The required capabilities information and associated guidance is provided on the electronic proposal submission form.

Commitment that the Offeror will comply with the mandatory (go/no-go) requirements identified in Paragraph 4.2.1, Basis for Award and evidence that Offeror has the capabilities to meet the requirements set forth in the RFP. The commitment is made by checking the Terms and Conditions box located on the electronic proposal submission form available on the R&D RFP website.

Foreign Ownership Control or Influence over Contractor Representation, Form PROC 2113 (Questionnaire, Certification, Consultant Certification, List of Owners, or Change of Company Name forms), as applicable. Form available on the RFP website.

Failure to submit any of the foregoing, at NEUP's discretion, could result in the Offeror being determined non-responsive.

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6 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM:

Offeror is hereby notified that protests relative to this solicitation shall be resolved through BEA's Ombudsman Program (Phone: (208) 526-4513).

7 PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

7.1 INTERPRETATIONS AND EXCEPTIONS

Offerors shall submit proposals on the basis of compliance with the RFP requirements. Any interpretation of the requirements by the Offeror may be considered an exception and treated accordingly, i.e., establish the proposal as non-responsive. Offeror must obtain from NEUP concurrence/clarification regarding its interpretation to classify its proposal as compliant with, or exception to, the RFP requirements. Any exception must be documented as part of the proposal and priced as an alternative.

If Offeror takes exception to any RFP requirement, either technical or administrative, it shall be so stated in the proposal and formatted as follows: technical exceptions shall be numbered and attached to the technical proposal in a single document; administrative exceptions shall be numbered and attached to the price proposal; and each exception shall be clearly and completely defined.

7.2 RIGHTS RESERVED BY NEUP

NEUP reserves the following rights:

- To accept or reject any proposal with or without prior discussion with the Offeror and to disregard minor irregularities in proposals received.
- To conduct any necessary pre-award survey and analysis to evaluate an Offeror's capabilities to comply with the requirements of this RFP.
- To conduct a pricing audit to facilitate a determination of the reasonableness of proposed pricing.

Offerors are advised that although negotiations and a request for best and final may follow receipt of proposals, award may be made without discussions on proposals received. Thus, proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms of price, technical compliance, and completeness.

7.3 PROPOSAL VALIDITY PERIOD

A proposal shall remain firm for 180 days after the proposal due date, unless otherwise specified by the Offeror.

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7.4 PROPRIETARY INFORMATION:

If you can provide a proposal without proprietary information, NEUP prefers this approach. If proprietary data/information is essential to an effective presentation of your proposal, please adhere to the following:

- If it is possible to do so without destroying the effectiveness of your presentation, place all proprietary data in a separate document as an attachment or appendix to the appropriate proposal volume.
- Each page containing proprietary data must be marked with the following legend, an alternative legend that NEUP specifically agrees to accept, or a statement that the documents are submitted pursuant to a specifically identified written agreement between you and NEUP defining the duties and obligations of the parties relative to the proprietary data: ***"This contains 'proprietary data', furnished under BEA Request for Proposal No. xxx which may be duplicated and used by BEA with the express limitations that the 'proprietary data' may not be disclosed outside BEA and the U. S. Government."*** Contact the Procurement Agent if the legend furnished by BEA is not considered appropriate, must be revised, or should be replaced by a written agreement controlling submittal of proprietary data.

7.5 DISCREPANCIES IN THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Should an Offeror find discrepancies in, or omissions from, the RFP, its attachments or related documents, or should Offeror be in doubt as to the meaning of any requirements, Offeror shall notify NEUP and obtain correction or clarification prior to submitting its proposal.