



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

DE-SOL-0008246

Base: April 13, 2015
MOD 0002: April 20, 2022

**Input to the Office of Nuclear Energy's
Competitive Research and Development Funding
Opportunity Announcement for Universities**

Office of Nuclear Energy

Office of Nuclear Energy Technologies

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Requested Information.....	3
3	Cover Page.....	4
4	Funding Opportunity Announcement Recommendations.....	4
5	Research Areas Recommendations.....	4
6	Other Information.....	5
7	Participant Eligibility for Response to the RFI.....	5
8	Program Guidelines.....	5
9	Intellectual Property Rights.....	5
10	Communications Protocol.....	5
11	Schedule.....	6
	11.1 Submission Time and Date.....	6
12	Disclaimers.....	6

1 Introduction

The primary mission of the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Nuclear Energy (NE) is to advance nuclear energy science and technology to meet U.S. energy, environmental, and economic needs:

NE's program is guided by the three research objectives detailed in its Nuclear Energy Research and Development Roadmap:

1. Enhancing the long-term viability and competitiveness of the existing U.S. reactor fleet;
2. Developing an advanced reactor pipeline; and
3. Implementing and maintaining the national strategic fuel cycle and supply chain infrastructure.

NE strives to promote integrated and collaborative research conducted by national laboratory, university, industry, and international partners under the direction of DOE-NE's programs, and to deploy innovative nuclear energy technologies to the market in order to meet the strategic goals and optimize the benefits of nuclear energy.

DOE-NE funds research activities, through both competitive and direct mechanisms, as required to best meet the needs of DOE-NE. This approach ensures a balanced R&D portfolio and encourages new nuclear power deployment with creative solutions to the universe of nuclear energy challenges.

This RFI addresses the competitive portion of DOE-NE's R&D portfolio, as executed through the Nuclear Energy University Program (NEUP) and the Nuclear Science User Facilities (NSUF). NSUF provides access to material test reactors, beam lines, and post-irradiation examination facilities to researchers from U.S. universities, industry, and national laboratories by granting no-cost access to world-class nuclear research facilities.

For more information on the NE's programs, please visit the [Office of Nuclear Energy | Department of Energy](#) website.

2 Requested Information

The focus of this RFI is to obtain input to and identify potential new research areas for future Funding Opportunity Announcements in areas that support NE's mission.

DOE is seeking ideas, input, comments, feedback, and recommendations from interested parties for future competitive university-led research projects.

This input may lead to a more robust R&D program that reflects communities' ideas and could identify new creative, innovative, and transformative outcomes.

DOE also seeks input regarding the structure of the solicitation itself, including any examples of other solicitations that have been successful in utilizing university research.

Please note that the following topics are not a priority of DOE-NE: medical physics, nuclear fusion, nuclear forensics, or environmental management.

3 Cover Page

Responses shall include a cover page containing the following information:

- RFI title
- Names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses for the principal points of contact
- Company or affiliate name and address
- Date of submittal

4 Funding Opportunity Announcement Recommendations

DOE-NE is requesting that participants in this RFI provide their input by answering the following questions:

1. Does the current CINR work scope structure, which focuses on tying work scopes back to specific NE programs, provide enough flexibility for university creativity? If not, what changes could improve the FOA? What FOA structures would be more effective?
2. Are there examples of effective university research programs that utilize different application and review methodologies? What are the benefits and disadvantages of those approaches compared to the CINR FOA? Please share a link to any recommended applications and/or programs.
3. Are there partnership mechanisms that could make CINR funded university research more effective than it currently is? Please provide examples.
4. Are there ways to better integrate equity and justice considerations into the CINR FOA? Please describe.

5 Research Areas Recommendations

Clearly define any proposed research area recommendation and how it relates to any part of NE's mission as described in this RFI. Describe any defined goals in achieving the desired outcomes, along with appropriate metrics to assess how well those goals have been achieved. Current work scope examples can be found in the [FY 2022 CINR FOA](#).

Areas specifically not of interest include research, development, design or licensing of fusion energy and reactor technology primarily used for the purpose for producing industrial or medical isotopes or other medical applications.

DOE-NE is requesting that participants in this RFI provide their input by answering the following questions:

1. What technical areas should be considered in DOE-NE's funding opportunity announcement that would have the highest near or long-term impact to the DOE-NE's applied research mission?
2. What current nuclear energy-related technological needs/gaps could the university research community be most effective in solving?

General information for each recommendation should include the following:

- Description of R&D
- Project period length
- Budget range
- Justification for how it would support the DOE-NE mission (i.e., is it directly related to a specific DOE-NE program, is it a strategic need that doesn't fit within the current DOE-NE program structure, etc.)

RFI participants are encouraged to include all relevant work scope recommendations in one RFI submission.

6 Other Information

Provide any other relevant information that would help improve the solicitation process.

7 Participant Eligibility for Response to the RFI

Information is being sought from educational institutions, national laboratories, utilities, private industry, and any other interested party.

8 Program Guidelines

This market research request is done under the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Parts 10 – Market Research and FAR subpart 15.201(e) – Requests for Information.

9 Intellectual Property Rights

Participants are advised that RFI responses should be submitted without any restrictive markings. However, if restrictions are required to fully explain a response, the participant is responsible for marking the cover page and any and all submittal documents appropriately. Respondents are strongly discouraged from placing any restrictive markings on submissions as they may limit DOE's ability to use the submitted information.

10 Communications Protocol

Responses must be submitted through www.NEUP.gov to be considered. Applicants must create an account to access the submission site. Submit electronic submissions through the “Applications” function at www.NEUP.gov. If an applicant has problems completing the registration process or submitting a response, call 208-526-1602 or send an email to NEUP@inl.gov.

Replies to this request should follow the general guidelines provided above and information should be as succinct as possible. There is a three (3) page limit, not including the cover page, on each submittal. Respondents are encouraged to provide input on any areas of interest of this RFI and each individual idea should be submitted separately identifying the area of interest.

Participants are advised that any indication of interest, in the affirmative, is not meant to imply nor in any way impart an obligation on the part of the Government that an award will be forthcoming for the offered work or project.

11 Schedule

11.1 Submission Time and Date

DOE will continually accept responses to this RFI as long as it remains active. For submitted information to be considered for inclusion in the work scopes developed for grant opportunities, a response is required no later than **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time** as follows:

RFI RESPONSE DUE DATE	FOR FOA DEVELOPMENT YEAR
May 16, 2022	2023
May 15, 2023	2024
May 13, 2024	2025
May 12, 2025	2026
May 11, 2026	2027

This announcement does not impose any obligation on the United States Government, nor does it signify any intent for a contract or other form of award.

12 Disclaimers

- a. DOE does not plan to send individual acknowledgements or replies to respondents to the RFI. However, DOE may conduct one-on-one meetings with entities that respond to this request if clarification or additional information is required to improve DOE's understanding of the comments provided. If DOE decides to hold one-on-one meetings, applicable interested parties will be contacted. The decision to meet with an organization one-on-one has no bearing on the worthiness of its RFI submittal or on any future offerings.
- b. This is a request for information only. It has no direct relation to other DOE Funding Opportunity Announcements or solicitations. DOE does not presently intend to solicit or award any kind of contract or financial assistance award; this RFI is issued only with the intent of obtaining information.
- c. Any response to this RFI is voluntary and does not commit the Government to any expense or obligation. This request does not impose any obligation on the Government or signify a firm intention to enter into a contract. No costs associated with responding to this RFI or participating in any subsequent meetings will be borne by the Government.
- d. DOE does not intend to publish the results of the responses to this RFI.