

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE USE OF STEEL SLAG IN CEMENT AND CONCRETE

APPLICATION QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

During the open competition period, this document will be updated on an ongoing basis with new questions and answers as they arise.

Last updated: 03/20/2024

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OVERARCHING QUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible that the lead university partner with other institution(s) of higher education?

Yes, however there can only be one lead University. Partnership among multiple research institutions is allowed to meet the goals and objectives of the NOFO.

2. What is the duration of the NOFO and its funding level?

The duration of the NOFO is up to five years with an anticipated Federal funding in the amount of \$5M.

3. Do I have to address all the Focus Areas (FAs) stated in the NOFO?

The FAs are key areas to achieve the goals stated in the NOFO. Your proposed approach in meeting the goals of the NOFO shall include all the key FAs stated in the NOFO.

4. Should the proposal consider both “Steel Slag” and “Blast Furnace Slag”?

Yes, the proposal should consider both steel Slag and blast Furnace Slag

5. Can international universities of higher education participate in this initiative?

No, international universities of higher education may not lead the partnership and must be vetted before they qualify as a member, or a partner associated this initiative.

6. Will the anticipated award date be extended?

Yes, the anticipated award will be extended on or May 20, 2024.

7. How do you upload the application proposal and additional supporting documentation?

You can attach the proposal and additional supporting documentation on the SF424 cover page in field 15. Click on field 15 and it will allow you to upload attachments.

8. Is the application deadline March 27, 2024, or March 29, 2024?

Yes, the application deadline is [March 27, 2024](#). Your application/proposal must be submitted before or on March 27, 2024. There are no exceptions.

9. What is the agreement funding amount and the cost share?

The expected one-time cooperative agreement funding amount is \$5,000,000. There is a 50% cost share that must be met. Applicants must provide a non-federal match of no less than \$2.5 million.

Cost sharing or matching means the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds (unless otherwise authorized by Federal statute). For a more complete definition, please see the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR Part 200, including section 200.306 on Cost Sharing or matching. Other Federal funds using their appropriate matching share may be leveraged for the deployment but cannot be considered as part of the recipient's matching funds, unless otherwise supported by statute. Applicants should refer to section D.2 of this opportunity for more information about submission requirements.

10. How should applicants demonstrate cost share commitments in the proposal?

Proposer is expected to illustrate all cost estimated, including cost share match amount in the proposal and budget summary documents; these may be refined at the time of development and establishment of the agreement documents stage.

11. Is a foreign privately owned business allowed to as an industry partner to the research team?

All international partners must be vetted before they qualify as a member, or a partner associated this initiative during the application evaluation and not prior to the submission deadline.

12. May toll credits be used as a match for this agreement?

No. Typically, only federal-aid- funding initiatives are permitted to use "toll Funds" as credit as this funding source is not from Federal-aid-program.

13. The NOFO calls for 5-year estimated budget but the SF424 form will only allow 4-year budget submission. How can we submit the additional year?

You can submit the fifth budget cost estimate as an attachment. You may need to download an additional SF2424 form or attach an excel spread that includes 5-year budget cost estimate.

14. What is the legislative authority that directs the funding for this initiative?

The funding for this cooperative agreement as set forth in House Appropriations Committee Report #117-402 accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (H.R. 2617, P. L. 117-328), stipulates:

“Concrete Research -- The agreement includes \$5,000,000 for an accredited research university of higher education, in partnership with a producer of steel in the United States, to conduct research on the properties of steel slag materials for use in cement and concrete, furthering previous research under the Federal Highway Administration’s [FHWA] highway research and development.”

15. Can construction cost for a new facility be used as a cost share match?

No. Construction cost for a new facility cannot be used a match.