EPSCoR
Opportunities for Partnerships in Technology with Industry (OPT-IN)

Answers given by Board of Regents staff in response to questions in response to the Request for Proposals as of **April 4, 2011**.

Last Day to Answer Questions: April 11 2011

Proposals Due: April 18, 2011

Question:
What are the parameters concerning the industry cash match required for Category I proposals? Specifically, does this mean an actual transfer of cash to the University, or can it take the form of employee or technician or instrument time, characterization of samples, etc.

Answer:
Cash match is the actual transfer of cash. The other examples you cite are considered in-kind match. Cash match commitments require a letter from the industrial sponsor that clearly states the amount of cash match committed.

Question:
Is a contact or partnership with the technology sector required?

Answer:
Proposers are expected to identify and develop a proposal with an industry sponsor.

Question:
Our focus may be oriented to one specific topic. What are the "Proposal Topics" for this RFP?

Answer:
There are no specific topics identified for this RFP, as long as the proposed work involves a science and technology discipline supported by NSF.

Question:
I didn't find the current research disciplines supported by the NSF. Do we have to specify in the proposal what the respective code of the area is?

Answer:
The subject discipline(s) of the proposal must be one which is supported by NSF. Visit the URL provided in the RFP: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/aboutfunding.jsp. Click on "A-Z Index of Funding Opportunities." This provides an exhaustive listing of supported disciplines. A specific code need not be specified in the proposal.

Question:
What (if any) are the Intellectual Property (IP) terms for the Opportunities for Partnerships in Technology with Industry (OPT-IN) program?

Answer:
The RFP imposes no restrictions on or conditions to institutions regarding IP issues. University policies for such matters should be followed.

Question:
Are Co-PIs allowed on OPT-IN proposals, and if so, can the Co-PI be a graduate student?

Answer:
PIs and Co-PIs must be faculty members; therefore, graduate students cannot be listed as Co-PIs.

Question:
Can NSF or Industrial Match funds be used to support research scientist salaries?

Answer:
Neither the State of Louisiana portion of the funding nor the private sector funds can be used for research scientist salaries.

Question: The RFP states that a letter of support from the PI's department chair, college dean, or center director is required. Does this mean I need to get two letters from both our department chair and college dean to complete the proposal package?

Answer: Because the RFP requires a letter from the department chair, college dean **or** center director, only one letter is required.

Question: I understand that faculty and postdoctoral researcher salaries are not allowable expenses with the state funding portion; however, I wanted to clarify if faculty and postdoctoral researcher salaries could be shown in the Industrial Sponsor Cash Match? Also, can the Industrial Sponsor Cash Match be used for overload of 12-month faculty?

Answer: Faculty and Post-doctoral salaries can be paid from the industrial sponsor cash match. The provision of overload for twelve-month faculty is not prohibited by the RFP, but is subject to approval by the appropriate authorities at your institution.

Question: For the Category I (Research Focus) award, what is the format for the required cash match from the industry sponsor? Would a donation to a university foundation directed to the PI's project meet this requirement?

Answer: Industrial cash match must be routed through your institution's office of sponsored programs/research. This will assure that deliverables associated with the OPT-IN contract, if awarded, can be accounted for and reported accordingly.

Question: Would (Company X) constitute a Louisiana Industrial Sponsor? Or would (Company X) be Non-Louisiana?

Answer: To qualify as a Louisiana industry sponsor, the company must have a physical presence in Louisiana. Some examples of what constitutes a presence in the State were noted in the RFP as: branch office, laboratory, or production facility. The existence of company representatives residing and/or conducting business in Louisiana does not constitute a presence in the State for the purposes of this RFP. The determination of whether or not a company qualifies as a Louisiana industry sponsor will ultimately be determined by the information provided in the proposal. It is incumbent upon the proposer to provide appropriate evidence/documentation or discussion to substantiate a company's presence in Louisiana.

Question: The RFP states: "*The information to be protected must accompany the full proposal and each page of the information to be protected must be clearly and conspicuously identified and marked as confidential*." Should the pages be marked as confidential in the proposal or in separated document named "the information accompanying the proposal" or in both?

Answer: The information to be protected should be marked confidential within the text of the proposal. You do not need a separate document.

Question: The RFP states: "*The information to be protected and the letter described in II.B.10.a. and II.B.10.b. must be reviewed by the chief administrator of the applicant's university or his/her designee, and he/she must certify in writing that the information is of a confidential or proprietary nature which falls into a category described by R.S. 44:4(16). This signed certification must be included as an appendix to the proposal*." Can the head of the Department or the Dean sign such a document? Or does it need to be a higher level authority such as a Provost?

Answer: The Chief Administrator for this purpose will vary, depending upon the institution and the management structure; but a typical chain of authority might be: Vice Chancellor/Vice President for Research; Director of the Office of Intellectual Property; Dean; Department Chair. Who signs the document is ultimately up to the institution.

Question: Can a funded category I proposal start as early as July 1, 2011?

Answer: A start date of July 1 could likely be accommodated, dependent upon the completion of the review process.

Question: To whom should the cost sharing letter be addressed?

Answer: The letter can be addressed to Kerry Davidson, Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs, Michael Khonsari, Associate Commissioner for Sponsored Programs R&D, or Jim Gershey, Executive Director of Special Programs.