

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 **May 8, 2014**, which was the last day to answer questions about this RFP.

Proposals Due: May 22, 2014

Question:

Can a single PI (or Co-PI) submit multiple OPT-IN proposals?

Answer:

There is no restriction in the current RFP that limits a PI or Co-PI to submitting more than one proposal.

Question:

Considering the OPT-IN Category II (Commercialization Focus) Award and prototype development resulting in the commercialization of a product, the product in our project/proposal is patent-pending. What are the concerns and considerations regarding the 'patent aspect' of the patent-pending product involved in the OPT-IN program and how will the patent-pending aspect of the prototype development project affect the scoring of the proposal?

Answer:

The reviewers will look at the commercial potential of the product; among the factors the reviewers will consider is the patent status of the product.

Question:

Considering the OPT-IN Category II and considering a university research team composed of a tenured Chemistry Professor, a tenured Marketing Professor, and a Research Director and Sole Patent Inventor (for the patent-pending product), would this be considered an appropriate team for the OPT-IN program and how might this be viewed in scoring the project and proposal? Note: The team will also include the quote-already-generated LA-based manufacturer performing research during the Engineering Design phase of the prototype development.

Answer:

Board staff are not allowed to make suggestions or assist proposers regarding the suitability or appropriateness of the themes and scope of proposed projects.

Question:

Considering the OPT-IN Category II, can a small business (considered a start-up business) presently working with the university on the research and marketing (for the product for which the prototype will be developed) be considered a spin-off company for the project?

Answer:

A company that already exists cannot be considered to have been spun off as a new business for a project that has not yet been funded.

Question:

What are the review criteria for the OPT-IN Category II proposals and how will the proposals be scored?

Answer:

See attached document with review criteria.

Question:

Several staff members are interested in submitting a proposal to the OPT-IN program. However, I am seeking further information as to whether these individuals would be eligible to apply to this program as a Research Professor. Their current appointment designation with the University is as a full time Research Scientist. I am currently thinking that they would be eligible to apply and should indicate on the Cover Sheet that they are a Not Tenure-track Research Professor but wanted to make sure I understand this properly.

Answer:

The RFP does state that full-time research professors are eligible. And, since they are non-tenure-track, that is the box they should check.

Question:

Does applying for an extension to our existing Category II grant preclude our group from being able to reapply for a Category I grant in this competition?

Answer:

The RFP specifically states that current or prior OPT-IN recipients are eligible to submit proposals; applying for an extension would not negatively affect your eligibility to apply for an OPT-IN grant.

Question:

Are there budgetary restrictions such as a cap on expenditure on permanent equipment (or travel, subcontracts, etc)?

Answer:

Section I.C. of the RFP, "Financial Considerations," does list certain expenditures that are not allowable (e.g, tuition charges, indirect costs on the EPSCoR portion, and faculty salaries on the EPSCoR portion), but does not place a cap on other allowable expenditures.

Question:

Is the money put forth via our company routed through the university as part of the grant? Or do we need to spend it separately? Also, is our money under the same standards as state money (i.e. if the grant says that only 10% of money can be spent on permanent equipment, is the sponsor's contribution under the same rule)?

Answer:

It is expected that the funds provided by the sponsor will be made available as cash match to be expended by the principal investigator at the university. Sponsor contributions are under the same restrictions as EPSCoR funds except where indicated in Section I.C., e.g., faculty salaries and indirect costs are not allowable for EPSCoR funds, but are allowable for the sponsor funds.

Question:

At what date is the cash match from the industry sponsor to be submitted?

Answer:

It is expected that the cash match will be available at the time the contract between the Board of Regents and the university is executed.

Previous Award Data

	proposals submitted	Number of Category I	Number of Category II	Proposals funded	Category I funded	Category II funded	% success rate overall	% success rate Category I	% success rate Category II	average Category I award	average Category II award
OPT-IN Competitions											
Round 1 (proposals due 4/18/11)	16	12	4	8	5	3	50.0%	41.7%	75.0%	45,000	19,994
Round 2 (proposals due 12/15/11)	7	4	3	6	3	3	85.7%	75.0%	100.0%	32,738	17,139
Round 3 (proposals due 5/15/12)	4	3	1	4	3	1	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	29,477	20,000
Round 4 (proposals due 12/3/12)	8	6	2	5	3	2	62.5%	50.0%	100.0%	43,333	19,925
Round 5 (proposals due 5/3/13)	17	8	9	8	3	5	47.1%	37.5%	55.6%	26,405	20,000
Round 6 (proposals due 12/3/12)	8	5	3	5	4	1	62.5%	80.0%	33.3%	40,165	19,875

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

Category One

1. What is the scientific and technical merit of the project relative to research in its general field? Are the research plan, timeline, and expected outcomes realistic? Do the qualifications and accomplishments of the investigator(s) suggest high potential for success? **(40%)**
2. Will the project result in a long-term partnership with industry (rather than solving a short-term or one-time problem), that will sustain the project after the funding period has expired? **(40%)**
3. Will the project provide opportunities for student training, workforce development, job creation/retention, increased competitiveness and economic development in Louisiana? **(10%)**
4. How well does the project align with the State's Science and Technology Plan (FIRST Louisiana). The FIRST Louisiana plan is available at: <http://goo.gl/SSo2w7> **(10%)**

Category Two

1. Will the project develop a prototype that can be commercialized? Do the qualifications and accomplishments of the investigator(s) suggest high potential for success? **(60%)**
2. Is there a realistic plan for sustaining the project after the funding period has expired? What is the potential for commercialization or for a spin-off business to be formed? **(20%)**
3. Will the project provide opportunities for student training, workforce development, job creation/retention, increased competitiveness and economic development in Louisiana? **(10%)**
4. How well does the project align with the State's Science and Technology Plan (FIRST Louisiana). The FIRST Louisiana plan is available at : <http://goo.gl/SSo2w7>. **(10%)**