

Energy Regional Innovation Cluster (E-RIC) Q&A

03/02/10 – 05/05/10

MOST RECENT QUESTIONS

Please be advised, we have received a number of questions about EDA forms, attachments and page limits. Please note the following:

1. All parts of the EDA Application (whether standard forms, ED-900, attachments, appendices or narratives, or otherwise) are included in the overall Proposal page limit of 350 pages EXCEPT the CEDS, and articles of incorporation and bylaws, if applicable.
2. Please read the forms carefully, in certain circumstances they ask for attachments. For example, for construction projects, EDA requires an environmental narrative and engineering report. The environmental narrative may require certain attachments itself, these documents should be "attached" to the environmental narrative by inclusion on the CD with the Proposal and clearly marked as attachments to the environmental narrative. Per item #1, these items will count toward the page limit.
3. For any question in the ED-900, where an Applicant exceeds the permitted character count, the Applicant may include continuation pages on its CD Proposal (clearly marked as continuation pages to specific questions on the ED-900); however, per #1, these will count toward the page limit.
4. For very long reports, such as Environmental Site Assessments and the like, applicants may submit relevant excerpts from the reports rather than submitting the entire thing; however, please provide all information that is relevant for EDA consideration. For example, if a 500-page document contains a specific executive summary that contains the information EDA needs to evaluate the Application, then attaching the executive summary only is permitted.

Q:

On page 54, section e, the FOA says to "attach letters of commitment from these E-RIC partners." Should these letters of commitment be included directly in the Cluster Project narrative? Can we include them in a separate file as an appendix to the Cluster Project narrative? If we include these letters in an appendix, are they exempted from the page limits?

A:

Briefly describe "in the Cluster Project narrative" that these letters of commitment are included and attach them as an appendix. They will be exempted from the page limit.

Q:

Page 59, section l of the FOA requests applicants to "Attach resumes for each key personnel listed." Should these resumes be included directly in the Cluster Project narrative? Can we submit these resumes in a separate file as an appendix to the Cluster Project narrative? If we submit these resumes in an appendix, are they exempted from the page limit requirement?

A:

The resumes for key personnel will contain significant information. They should be included in the cluster narrative and be counted in the page count.

Q:

Should the Cluster Project Narrative be submitted as a separate file from the Hub Project Narrative? Should the EDA, NIST-MEP, and SBA Applications be submitted as separate files?

A: The Cluster Project Narrative should be submitted as a separate file from the Hub Project Narrative. The EDA, NIST-MEP, and SBA Applications should be submitted as separate files.

Q:

The FOA states that the DOE co-applicant lead organization must perform a greater percentage of effort than that of any other individual team member or subawardee. Does this need to be true for every year, or only on a cumulative basis? For example, can the lead organization perform more work than any other team member in aggregate over the five years, but in year 1, another team member performs more work than the lead organization?

A:

The role of the Co-applicant "lead organization" is very important since that organization receives the funding and has responsibility to manage the larger team over the life of the project. The description of the Team and how it will work should show how the Co-applicant will be managing the total project.

Q:

Our DOE Hub envisions budgeting \$10 million for a Translational Research Fund (TRF). The aim of the TRF is to support collaborative co-funded work that will help develop, demonstrate, and deploy technologies, policies and workforce development approaches. TRF projects would be competitively awarded to teams comprised of Hub members and E-RIC partners with a minimum 1:1 non-federal match. Does this arrangement violate any DOE rules?

A:

The proposal requires details about the organization, key personnel, etc. Deferring the decisions of key players and roles is not responsive to the FOA and will not be allowed.

Q:

Does the IP Management Plan have to be signed prior to the proposal submission by the DOE HUB members?

A:

The IP Management Plan must address all of the issues detailed in Appendix 3 and is included as part of the commitment of the Co-applicant and the DOE Hub Team. The plan should address how the DOE Team will handle title to inventions and other IP.

Q:

How, and in what form, will the application materials be distributed to the reviewers? Crucially, will they be distributed in print or electronically, and will they be in color or black and white?

A:

The reviewers will receive electronic copies of the proposals including colors.

Q:

Where do the E-RIC partner letters go - in Appendix 13 along with the organizational letters of commitment from the sub-awardees? Is the definition of a partner someone contributing in some way? For example cost share or agreeing to serve on a committee that meets regularly? Letters of funded organizations are one-page as stated in Appendix 13, but we have received cost share letters and commitment letters that are longer -I assume this is not an issue? It sometimes takes longer for the companies to clearly state their commitment.

A:

The E-RIC partner letters can go in Appendix 13. E-RIC Partners are entities other than the Co-applicants (or their sub-awardees and subcontractors) that will work with the Consortium to foster a vibrant E-RIC. There are no detailed cost share or committee participation requirements.

Q:

Could you please let us know where we should include the FFRDC sub-award budget in the R&R FedNonFed Budget form page? There is no separate section in the form for FFRDC budget unfortunately. As they are part of the total estimate cost in the hub proposal, should we include them as part of the federal \$\$?

A:

The cost should be included in the Total estimated cost and should show up in the sub-award or other category.

Q:

Section IV. Application and Submission Information" states that, for the DOE, EDA, NIST and SBA funding, the "application package PDF file should be copied to the Consortium Proposal CD". Are we correct that we are to include the dynamic, fillable PDF file on the CD or are we to print the application package out and create a standalone (non-fillable, non-dynamic) PDF that includes all forms and attachments?

A:

Please provide the standalone version.

Q:

Where multiple forms or attachments are required for a specific proposal, should they be copied to the CD as separate files? Or should they be combined into a single (non-fillable) PDF document?

A:

There are several mentions in the FOA requiring specific information to be saved as a separate file on the CD.

Q:

Does the SF424(R&R) mentioned on page 60 count towards the 350 page count?

A:

Yes

Q:

The Section IV instructions for the DOE application package PDF file states that the application package PDF file should be copied to the Consortium Proposal CD. The E. DOE Hub Application Forms and Narratives (page 60) instructions require that the appendices be a single file. Depending on the specific number of sub-awardees and subcontractors, Appendix 14 will include multiple completed sets of these forms (e.g., a set for the co-applicant plus a set for each sub-awardee and subcontractor). Are we correct that we should print each completed application package PDF files to a standalone PDF file and then create a single master appendix PDF file that includes all appendices (including all forms required in Appendix 14)?

A:

That would be the clearest way to provide what is required and have it easily identifiable.

Q:

Since the Consortium Letter of Commitment (as specified in the Overarching Proposal Requirements - b. (i)) is a letter of commitment to collaborate as a consortium, does it meet the definition of an E-RIC partner letter of commitment and thus is not included in the 350 page limit?

A:

No

Q: The FOA states that the application package PDF files should be copied to the Consortium Proposal CD. This does not allow for UMD or the Co-Applicants to electronically sign the SF424(s). Do the Organizational Letters of Commitments act as an endorsement of the full proposal(s) and required certifications?

A:

There is not any way to electronically sign and certify the CD that contains the proposal.

03/02/2010

Q:

I would like to inquire as to whether the webcast for the Energy Efficient Building Systems Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative will be posted on the DOE website. I am highly interested in seeing this information but was unaware of the webcast until after the fact.

A:

It is directly available at the following web link:

<http://mediasite.yorkcast.com/webcast/Viewer/?peid=ed4505a305ea4625af12419e524664ad>

The slide presentations from the February 22, 2010, Energy Efficient Building Systems Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative information session are also accessible through the "How to Apply" link at <http://www.energy.gov/hubs/eric.htm>. In the first column of the table is a blue highlighted link to the "Information Session I". That brings you to video of the webcast. If you click on the paperclip above the video window, that opens up a box labeled Presentation Links. Click on the words Download Presentations to access the PowerPoint presentations.

03/02/2010

Q:

I was just wondering about the status of my application: it says it's verified, but I have not heard an answer whether I was approved or denied

A:

As stated in the FOA, we will not be making an announcement until August or September.

03/02/2010

Q:

Has it been determined what region the Energy Regional Innovation Cluster is focused on?

A:

The region receiving the federal financial assistance described in this FOA will depend on which Consortium is selected. Please see Section V of the FOA for details on the selection procedures.

03/02/2010

Q:

We are a small alternative energy consultation firm and we have been trying to obtain Federal Grants to support our studies. Could you please shed some light as to whether grant # ERIC2010 is available to a

small business like ours?

A:

This grant opportunity is not geared towards small businesses. Please see the full text of the FOA for more information about this grant.

You may wish to contact the Department of Energy directly to learn more about other programs they may have that may be better suited to your project. You might also want to consider contacting the Small Business Administration for some assistance. While this particular grant opportunity does not provide grants directly to small businesses such as yours, the SBA Small Business Development Centers (one of whom is likely to receive funds from this grant opportunity) may be able to assist you and/or find a way for you to get involved with one of the consortia that may submit a proposal.

03/03/2010

Q:

I would like to find out more about how MEP wants to participate in this opportunity.

A:

Refer to the Energy Regional Innovation Cluster (E-RIC) Funding Opportunity on the grants.gov website for the complete funding announcement:

Applicants: go to www.grants.gov,
Click on 'Find Grant Opportunities' in the red box on the left hand side, Click on the gray button 'basic search',
Type in 'ERIC2010' (without quotes) in the appropriate box, and
Click the 'Search' button.

To see what the application packages look like, you can start from www.grants.gov, Click on 'Apply for Grants' in the red box on the left hand side, Click on the 'Download an Application Package' link in the middle of the screen, and

Enter 'ERIC2010' (without quotes) as the funding opportunity number.

03/05/2010

Q:

Can funds awarded by any of the E-RIC agencies, other than ED and DOL, be used to support activities at colleges and schools, e.g., assisting with curriculum development, consulting, or providing other services? If so, please explain.

A:

The NIST MEP funding planned for the ERIC could be used in this way if the MEP center applying partners with the academic organizations and describes these planned activities in the narrative of their proposal. The Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program would expect these organizations to identify how these activities would benefit US manufacturers and the regional economy.

Please refer to the MEP website Partners page which demonstrates how the MEP program has partnered with other organizations in the past - <http://www.mep.nist.gov/partners/index.htm>

You might also find this summary report helpful:

<http://www.mep.nist.gov/documents/pdf/about-mep/reports-studies/ccsurvey.pdf>

During the summer and fall of 2005, the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness (CREC)—with support from the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)—surveyed the nation's 1,013 community colleges to better understand their role in regional economic development. More specifically, CREC sought to better understand community college efforts to provide courses and curricula designed specifically for individual firms or groups of firms.

03/03/2010

Q:

I'm inquiring as to the process for becoming a MEP Center. Would you please send me that information?

A:

The Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has an established national network of Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) centers. The NIST MEP center locator is available at

<http://www.mep.nist.gov/centers-near-you/index.htm>.

03/03/2010

Q:

We are working on a proposal for the DOE Energy Efficient Buildings Hub, which includes a separate MEP proposal to NIST. I had been discussing the possibility of including a federal laboratory as collaborators on the proposal, and was wondering whether that would be possible given the MEP connection. If you could provide any guidance I would appreciate it.

A:

The proposing consortium should identify in their proposal how they would team with a federal laboratory to utilize the research resources and potential tools to demonstrate how this partnership is responsive to the Energy Regional Innovation Cluster requirements. I suggest beginning a conversation with the NIST MEP centers. The NIST MEP center locator is available at <http://www.mep.nist.gov/centers-near-you/index.htm>.

03/04/2010

Q:

We are a small business, manufacturing a solar thermal collector to reduce emissions and make hot water for residential and commercial applications. We have partnerships with universities and other business entities. Would we be eligible to apply for the Energy Efficient Building Systems Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative?

A:

You may be eligible to apply as part of a Consortium if you fall into one of the categories of "eligible recipients" as described in Section

III of the Joint Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). Please take a very careful look at the full FOA in order to determine your eligibility. Based on your brief description, however, you would most likely only be eligible as a "DOE Co-Applicant" (as that term is defined in the FOA), assuming you have the requisite R&D and DD&D capabilities. As also described more fully in the FOA, in order to apply for funding, you must apply for DOE funds as part of a Consortium that also includes entities eligible for SBA, NIST and EDA funding. Only one Proposal (submitted by one Consortium) will be selected for funding.

03/05/2010

Q:

Do you see any tie-ins with the Energy Efficient Building Systems Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative for the community college system?

A:

Yes, the community college system has a very important role to play in the Regional Innovation Clusters. The funding announcement requires applicants to describe how they will bring in postsecondary training providers as a partner. Please refer to the recent information session, which has been archived to the web. You can play the entire-based presentation at the following URL:
<http://mediasite.yorkcast.com/webcast/Viewer/?peid=ed4505a305ea4625af12419e524664ad>.

03/10/2010

Q:

I am looking for a grant to fund the development of a building business complex, that proves the value of sustainable energy efficient design among interdisciplinary groups, business, medical, profit and non-profit. Can you assist?

A:

Thank you for your interest in the FY2010 Energy Efficient Building Systems Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative. This is a funding opportunity designed to support and foster a regional innovation cluster focused on energy efficient building systems design technologies. It is not specifically geared towards individual businesses; however, you may find that it is possible for you to be part of one of the teams that comprise the Consortium that will submit a Proposal under the Joint FOA. If you are interested in this particular grant opportunity, please see the full text of the FOA for more information about this grant and, specifically, Section III which discusses eligibility requirements. Alternatively, you may wish to search for a more suitable grant opportunity on Grants.gov and/or contact the Department of Energy directly to learn more about other programs they may have that may be better suited to your project. The Economic Development Administration, whose grant funds may be used for construction of necessary infrastructure in distressed areas, is restricted by law from making direct grants of public works or economic adjustment assistance funds to individuals or for-profit entities.

03/10/2010

Q:

The website listed in the Energy Efficient Building Systems Regional Innovation Cluster to find the locations for locating NIST/MEP Centers does not work. I listed the website below.

<http://patapsco.nist.gov/NIST/MEP/centers-near-you/index.htm>

Are there any centers located in my area or can you refer me to a website that works so I may check.

A:

Here is the updated NIST MEP Centers locator link. This week, the NIST and MEP information technology group changed our public website address to

<http://www.nist.gov/mep/>.

03/10/2010

Q:

I have a question regarding the FOA for the Building Design Energy Innovation Hub. Specifically, can an entity (such as a university) participate in more than one proposal for this program as a subcontractor?

A:

With respect to the NIST/MEP and SBA grant awards, the answer is that an eligible entity may be a sub-awardee or sub-recipient on more than one Proposal. With respect to DOE, an eligible entity may be a sub-awardee (or in certain circumstances a sub-contractor) on more than one Proposal. With respect to EDA, EDA generally does not have sub-awardees, but rather encourages entities to apply as co-applicants for EDA funding. Under the FOA, EDA has not restricted an eligible entity's ability to participate in more than one Consortium Proposal.

03/10/2010

Q:

Can you please advise whether a community college may apply for this grant opportunity? Or, are they only eligible if they are a Dept. of Commerce funded MEP grantee?

A:

The eligibility for available funding is outlined in Section III of the Funding Opportunity Announcement as follows:

- For Department of Energy (DOE) funding, all types of domestic entities are eligible to apply as lead organizations, except the following: other Federal agencies, non-DOE/NNSA Federally Funded Research and Development Center contractors, and non-profit organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that engaged in lobbying activities after December 31, 1996. Therefore, community colleges may be eligible for DOE funding under this FOA, and may also be part of the DOE application by teaming with the hub lead.
- For Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration funding, eligible applicants for, and eligible recipients of, Public Works and Economic Development Program investment assistance and Economic Adjustment Assistance include institutions of higher education or a consortium of institutions

of higher education. Institutions of higher education include community colleges.

- For Department of Commerce/National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST/MEP) funding, only existing NIST/MEP centers are eligible applicants. Therefore, only community colleges that are existing NIST/MEP centers are eligible.
- For Small Business Administration (SBA) funding, applicants must currently be accredited and funded by SBA as a Small Business Development Center. SBDCs may be located at a community college.

If you have additional questions on this matter, please contact the relevant agency or agencies listed above. For contact information, go to the E-RIC website at www.energy.gov/hubs/eric.htm .

The funding announcement also asks that the institutions that apply for funding identify partners within their region that can help support the objectives of the Energy Regional Innovation Cluster, including the development of a skilled workforce for the cluster. Community colleges are among the key education and workforce partners that are important to include in this partnership.

03/11/2010

Q:

I believe I am not understanding something about the page limits, and I hope that you can provide some clarification around this issue.

The FOA states that the 350-page limit is for the complete application (excluding a few very specific items such as the cover page, table of contents, DOE Hub appendices, the CEDS, and the organizational documents for the EDA Co-Applicant). However, in my review of the required forms for all the applications, it appears to me that after taking into account the mandatory forms, there are relatively few pages remaining for any sort of narrative for the non-DOE portions of the applications. Do all the forms count towards the 350 page limit?

A:

The Interagency Taskforce believes that 30-80 pages are sufficient for the Overarching Regional Innovation Clusters Project Narrative and re-affirms that the page limits (and the exclusions) listed in the FOA are correct. Text boxes on all forms, including the ED-900, are expandable and should display all text entered when printed out. However, please note that Proposals are not to be submitted in hardcopy format but rather on CD, as specified in the FOA.

03/10/2010

Q:

Missing FOA text? Words/sentences appear to be missing on pages 12, 28, 29, 57, 61, 91

A:

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. A corrected version of the FOA is now on the E-RIC website.

03/10/2010

Q:

We would like to request more time to prepare and submit this important proposal.

A:

Regrettably, because the awards must be made no later than September 30, 2010, and because the review, selection, and negotiation process may be lengthy, the Participating Agencies cannot permit an extension. Proposals are still due May 6, 2010.

03/10/2010

Q:

Priority of FOA objectives: Are the six FOA objectives listed on p. 19 shown in the priority order intended by the Interagency Task Force?

A:

No, the order is not meant to indicate importance.

03/10/2010

Q:

National v. regional impacts: Please clarify the FOA's intent regarding the priority of attaining national strategic objectives with respect to technology development/commercialization, best practices and competitiveness v. the priority of realizing regional economic impacts targeted within the E-RIC.

A:

The evaluation and selection procedures contained in the FOA highlight the importance of both. A project that is not technically excellent from a DOE merit review standpoint (e.g. is not considered Top-Tier by DOE merit reviewers) will not be referred to the interagency panel for further consideration. However, of those Proposals deemed Top-Tier, the one that best exemplifies the RIC evaluation criteria will be selected, provided that the policy factors do not justify selecting a Proposal out of rank order.

03/10/2010

Q:

Could you elaborate on the scoring and weighting of individual co-applicant proposals and of full proposal package?

A:

Weights will only be assigned when specifically cited in the FOA. No part of the Proposal has more weight than another. The selection process is exactly as stated in Section V of the FOA. There is no weight assigned to the RIC package. Weights are only assigned to evaluation criteria, not to individual portions of the Proposal. Weights are only assigned to evaluation criteria as specified in the FOA. As stated in the FOA, any Proposal deemed 'unsatisfactory' for funding by any Granting Agency on the basis of its agency-specific evaluation will be eliminated from further consideration.

The SBA, NIST, and EDA technical merit reviews of their respective Applications contained within the Proposals are essentially pass-fail. However, in nearly all cases, an SBA, NIST, or EDA Application that is 'satisfactory' but weak, will negatively affect the Proposal's rating on the RIC evaluation criteria, as a weakness in any of these areas will likely be correlated with a weakness on such RIC evaluation criteria as Demonstration of RIC Best Practices and Long-Term Economic

Benefit. We refer you to pages 72-79 of the FOA which indicate the forms and information required for the SBA, NIST/MEP and EDA applications. It is essential that all Co-applicants' information be complete and fully responsive with respect to the required forms and information.

03/10/2010

Q:

What is the expectation of the Interagency Task Force regarding the source of funds to support the costs of the Consortium and the E-RIC over five years?

A:

These activities may either be funded by the Co-applicants themselves, or the Consortium may apply for EDA Economic Adjustment funds. As stated in Section I.C. of the FOA, among the many possible uses of EA funds, they may be used to "fund a strategic planning/coordinating body to ensure coordination of E-RIC initiatives related to workforce development, education, infrastructure, regional planning, business development and expansion, business networking, technological research and commercialization, and marketing." The period of performance for an EA award may be as long as 5 years.

03/10/2010

Q:

What is the Interagency Task Force's guidance regarding sustaining the activities of the NIST and SBA co-applicants, as well as the Consortium and E-RIC over time? What assumptions should be made regarding future federal funding 1) for consortium partners outside the DOE hub and 2) from the partnering federal agencies?

A:

The Interagency Taskforce intends for the E-RIC selected for funding under this FOA to demonstrate the capacity for long-term growth and resilience, even in the absence of significant future infusions of federal dollars. No assumptions of funding beyond the timeframe specified in the FOA should be made. Under the current terms of the FOA, SBA and NIST funding for their respective grant awards is not available for the full five-year period; nevertheless, the expectation is that the Consortia members will continue to coordinate their activities and contribute to the E-RIC for at least the 5 year period covered by the Consortium MOU.

For example, as indicated on page 33 of the ERIC FOA, NIST/MEP seeks to award one cooperative agreement to an existing NIST/MEP Center to enable that center to develop and operate a Regional Innovation Partnership program. This program will support the additional coordination, planning, and implementation of the cross-functional activities required to support the formation and expansion of firms in the E-RIC. This funding will support meetings with, and outreach to, other economic development organizations, as well as manufacturing, technology, and other supporting businesses. This funding will also leverage mechanisms to assist firms with developing and marketing energy efficient products, as well as integrating energy efficient processes into their operations.

The activities of the SBA and NIST/MEP Co-applicants under the ERIC FOA are not limited to the final "outcomes of the RD&D activities of the buildings hub to regional consortium activities". It is anticipated that the SBA and NIST/MEP Co-applicants could disseminate information related to, provide input to, or implement preliminary and intermediate results of the RD&D activities. It is anticipated that many overlapping and parallel paths of research, development and deployment could be realized from the beginning of the E-RIC award by the Consortium and its E-RIC Partners.

03/11/2010

Q:

Just read your announcement and wanted to inquire about who is the consortia for our region.

A:

A Workforce Investment Board can reach out to organizations in the region to pull together a Consortium and partners to apply for the FOA. However, the Consortium, consisting of the four co-applicants, would actually need to submit the proposal. Application and submission information is outlined in Section IV of the FOA.

Consortia applying for the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) will consist of the four entities applying for the funding available for award from the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration (EDA), Department of Commerce/ National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST/MEP), and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Consortia will form at the regional level and work as an integrated group to submit a single proposal. No Federal agency has a list of existing consortia across the country, and no federal agency will know the consortia for a given region until the consortia has submitted an application. Potential applicants are not precluded from forming new consortia to respond to the FOA.

The following may be useful in identifying consortia in your region applying for the FOA:

For DOE funding, examples of eligible applicants include national energy labs, university, and private industry labs.

For EDA funding, examples of eligible applicants include state and local governments, universities, regional government coalitions, nonprofits working with local governments, and tribes.

For NIST/MEP funding, only existing NIST/MEP centers are eligible applicants. A NIST/MEP center locator is available at <http://www.mep.nist.gov/centers-near-you/index.htm>.

For SBA funding, applicants must currently be accredited and funded by SBA as a Small Business Development Center (SBDC). A SBDC locator is available at http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/sbdc/sbdclocator/SBDC_LOCATOR.html.

03/11/2010

Q:

A general question about participation: We are a DOD laboratory engaged in a regional economic & technology development consortium. This consortium appears to have the properties of the structures described on your webpage. We are interested in more information in order to determine if there is a collaborative potential for our initiatives through your program?

A:

Please carefully read the section of the FOA titled Eligibility and Cost Sharing Information, starting on page 39. It specifically mentions other Federal agencies are not eligible to be the lead organization for the DOE Co-Applicant. Other than that, the document addresses the mix of potential participants and the scope of issues to be covered from basic research to commercialization. The illustration on page 11 shows the need to have individual co-applicants for each of the Federal Granting Agencies.

Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with both the eligibility requirements and the entire scope of the desired E-RIC Cluster outcomes.

03/18/2010

Q:

We would like to schedule a meeting with the agency in which you represent to discuss Regional Innovation Cluster programs.

A:

We appreciate your interest in this project. However, we cannot meet with any prospective applicant/Consortium, as we do not wish to create the appearance of preferential treatment towards any Consortium applying for the funding. We invite you to submit any specific questions you have to this website and we will endeavor to answer your questions promptly. You may also wish to participate in the teleconference to be held in April; the exact date, time, and call-in details will be posted on the E-RIC website in the next couple of weeks.

03/18/2010

Q:

Can you tell me the approximate number of institutions/consortium's which have expressed serious interest in forwarding an application?

A:

We do not have an indication of the number of Consortia intending to apply.

03/25/2010

Q. I tried to enter the funding opportunity number ERIC2010 and click register, and I was unable to register. What is the correct funding number for this specific grant?

A. As stated in the FOA, Consortia applying for this opportunity are directed to download the application packages from Grants.gov but to submit the packages on a CD rather than via Grants.gov. Since Grants.gov does not require applicants to register in order to download an application package, registration with Grants.gov is not required in order to apply.

03/25/2010

Q. Can you find out if the CCS innovation hub has been released from the Feds?

A. The Funding Opportunity Announcement for the Energy Regional Innovation Cluster including the DOE Energy Efficient Building Systems Design Hub was announced on February 8, 2010. You can find the document at

http://www.energy.gov/hubs/documents/ERIC_FOA.pdf

Proposals are due by May 6, 2010.

03/25/2010

Q. Is a direct connection with a national DOE lab required? Does the FOA response need to focus solely on these building system elements, or is there room to incorporate renewable energy generation systems? Does the FOA response need to respond to all four of the categories listed above, or can our Hub focus on just one or two?

A. (1) A direct connection with a national DOE lab is not a requirement. (2) The FOA describes the intent of the Hub fairly clearly. The best area to understand the answers to your questions is probably the Proposal Review Information section starting on page 82 of the FOA.

03/25/2010

Q. I am interested in becoming a member of the E-ric 2010 grant. I am writing to get a contact person and a phone number of someone I can talk with. Also, I am looking to now of how often does this program run.

A. In order to qualify for this grant, you must be a member of a Consortium who is an eligible recipient for one of the federal grants that was announced in the FOA. Please review the eligibility requirements carefully as you consider your eligibility. You may

want to contact your local/regional council of governments to see if there is a way for you to participate in any Consortia that may be forming in your region.

03/25/2010

Q. In reviewing the ERIC2010 FOA, I am confused about where to present: Co-applicants within any Consortium must demonstrate in their Proposal that they have entered into a written agreement to operate as a Consortium for at least as long a period as the term of the longest award made under this FOA (see Section IV for further details). I am not seeing directions pertaining to this item in Section IV. What is requested seems to pertain specifically to the partners participating in the DoE application?

A. The Participating Agencies expect the DOE Co-applicant, NIST Co-applicant, EDA Co-applicant, and SBA Co-applicant to enter into a written agreement amongst themselves -- as the members of the Consortium -- that reflects their agreement to function as a Consortium for a time period equal to the longest term of the 4 grant awards made under the FOA (which we currently expect will be 5 years). The Consortium shall provide to the Participating Agencies (by including within the Proposal) a copy of that agreement as evidence of the formal arrangement among the four Co-applicants.

03/25/2010

Q. The Cost-Sharing section of the Hub call (FOA p.41) describes cost share requirements for R&D and D&D; it also describes cost-share requirements for 'for profit' entities and 'non-Federal' entities, but is silent on cost sharing requirements for federally-funded entities, including Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs). The FOA states that federal funds may not be used for cost-sharing, and FFRDCs are constrained from providing cost share directly. Are FFRDCs therefore exempt from cost sharing requirements? If not, what cost-sharing vehicles would DOE expect FFRDCs to utilize?

A. The required cost share is as follows:

- (1) No cost share is required for basic research, applied research, and technology development (R&D) activities performed by a not-for-profit entity.
- (2) 20% cost share is required for R&D activities performed by a for-profit entity, with the cost share amount based on the portion of the R&D budget executed by that entity, not on the total project cost.
- (3) 20% cost share is required for any demonstration and deployment activities.

(4) All cost shared funding must come from non-Federal sources unless otherwise permitted by law. Should a FFRDC propose to conduct D&D activities, 20% cost share must be provided for those activities and that cost share must come from non-Federal sources.

03/25/2010

Q. I am currently unemployed. I understand that grants are available for people to go into business by getting training and equipment to start a business. Here is my idea I want to know if this fit into the parameters for a grant.

I am a construction estimator. I would like to become Leed Certified. I also would like to do custom construction estimates. There is software available to import plans and spec's from architects to my local computer. I can do on screen material takeoff. Then build an estimate and email it to potential clients in return for a fee. It would be completely green because no paper plans would be required. It all could be done electronically in my home. The software costs \$ 8,000.00 with training. I have a potential client but he requires On screen Takeoff and Quick Bid for me to do the work. Does this fit into the parameters? Or is there another grant that might fit. Please let me know.

A. Unfortunately, the proposal you describe does not appear to fit within the parameters of the FOA. However, I will send your email to the Small Business Administration and the Department of Labor to ask them whether they could look at your proposal and determine whether they have any grant or technical assistance programs that might be able to assist you.

03/25/2010

Q. We have partnered with the local Workforce Investment Board to –1) Create and retain jobs, 2) Provide ‘earn and learn’ opportunities, 3) Promote innovative science and technology solutions and skills in these roles, 4) Enhanced sustainable practices through use of new technologies and reduced carbon footprint.

While the program is not specifically a building systems technology it meets all of the other ERIC criteria. Is there ERIC potential sponsor in the Dept. of Labor for these programs we can be in touch with?

A. The Department of Labor is not offering additional workforce development resources pursuant to the joint Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for the E-RIC. However, the Department is encouraging appropriate workforce development entities to participate as partners in applications for the E-RIC FOA, and to reach out to Consortia in the region that will be submitting applications.

Consortia applying for the FOA will consist of the four entities applying for the funding available for award from the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of

Commerce/Economic Development Administration (EDA), Department of Commerce/National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST/MEP), and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

The following may be useful in identifying consortia in your region applying for the FOA:

- For DOE funding, examples of eligible applicants include national energy labs, university, and private industry labs.
- For EDA funding, examples of eligible applicants include state and local governments, universities, regional government coalitions, nonprofits working with local governments, and tribes.
- For NIST/MEP funding, only existing NIST/MEP centers are eligible applicants. A NIST/MEP center locator is available at <http://www.mep.nist.gov/centers-near-you/index.htm>.
- For SBA funding, applicants must currently be accredited and funded by SBA as a Small Business Development Center (SBDC). A SBDC locator is available at http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/sbdc/sbdclocator/SBDC_LOCATOR.html.

More information on the E-RIC initiative and the FOA is available on the E-RIC website at www.energy.gov/hubs/eric.htm .

03/26/2010

Q. The [a community college & an association], is also a client of mine. They train green construction workers and various energy technology installers. They also work closely with the WIBs who have also been my clients. Is a consortia like this eligible to apply for funds? Could [an association] be the applicant along with [colleges] and WIBs, working through its city redevelopment agency members and local colleges and WIBS to partner to establish an Energy Regional Innovation Cluster?

A. Please look very closely at the eligibility requirements in the FOA. The FOA only allows Consortia to apply if they have an eligible DOE Co-applicant, SBA Co-applicant, EDA Co-applicant, and NIST Co-applicant.

You have described what sounds like a very promising set of strategic partnerships in what could become a vibrant E-RIC, with some entities that may be eligible as one or more of the Co-applicants. But you must have all 4 eligible Co-applicants in any Consortium that applies.

03/26/2010

Q. Is the FOA only covering the residential and commercial buildings environment or does it cover industrial as well.

A. The FOA focuses on residential and commercial buildings. On page 26 of the FOA, there is a section titled "d. Research Focus: Energy Efficient Building System Design" that includes the statement "However, the development and deployment of energy efficient technology in buildings lags behind that of the transportation and industrial sectors." This initiative is being overseen by the Building Technologies Program within the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. DOE has a separate Industrial Technologies Program that addresses industrial processes and industrial buildings.

03/26/2010

Q. My organization is interested in the E-RIC FOA. We have a question about the definition of a "region" in this context. It appears that the definition in the FOA is intentionally open-ended to allow for many possibilities, but is there any preference or guidance on the size of a desired region? i.e. about the size of several counties, about the size of several states, etc?

A. There is no pre-determined preference for the size of a desired region. The key consideration in determining regional boundaries should be the kind of evidence and justification you have for the region you choose to delineate. Please consider looking closely at the Regional Innovation Cluster information page on the EDA website (www.eda.gov) and the morning sections of the information conference that was held in Washington D.C. on February 22, 2010 (which is posted on the E-RIC website at www.energy.gov/hubs/eric.htm).

03/26/2010

Q. Please clarify in regard to the page limits for this ERIC proposal: do the forms contained in the NIST, EDA and SBA applications count towards the overall page count of 350 pages?

A. Section IV.C. of the FOA discusses the page limitations of the Proposal. All materials are covered by the page limitation except those expressly mentioned on p.51 of the FOA. The required forms are included within the page limitation.

03/30/2010

Q. I am having a hard time downloading the full announcement and application for the grant if you could send me the file I would greatly appreciate it. We are interested in doing a new way of producing energy that will leave hardly an imprint on the earth. Thank you for sending this information.

A. Section IV Subsection A of the E-RIC FOA states that all forms must be downloaded from <http://www.grants.gov>

Please note the Granting Agencies strongly recommend that Co-applicants use Adobe Acrobat version 8.1.3 to complete the Applications, as the use of other versions may result in errors.

03/30/2010

Q. Is the May 6th deadline a firm and final deadline?

A. We are not planning to extend the deadline, and applicants must proceed on the understanding the deadline is May 6th, 2010.

03/31/2010

Q. We have an interest in working with the various coalitions preparing bids for this FOA. Is it possible to identify all the coalition leaders that are currently preparing bid packages?

A. Consortia applying for the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) will consist of the four entities applying for the funding available for award from the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration (EDA), Department of Commerce/ National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST/MEP), and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Consortia will form at the regional level and work as an integrated group to submit a single proposal. No Federal agency has a list of existing consortia across the country, and no federal agency will know the consortia for a given region until the consortia has submitted an application. Potential applicants are not precluded from forming new consortia to respond to the FOA.

The following may be useful in identifying consortia in your region applying for the FOA:

For DOE funding, examples of eligible applicants include national energy labs, university, and private industry labs.

For EDA funding, examples of eligible applicants include state and local governments, universities, regional government coalitions, nonprofits working with local governments, and tribes.

For NIST/MEP funding, only existing NIST/MEP centers are eligible applicants. A NIST/MEP center locator is available at: <http://www.mep.nist.gov/centers-near-you/index.htm>.

For SBA funding, applicants must currently be accredited and funded by SBA as a Small Business Development Center (SBDC). A SBDC locator is available at:
<http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/sbdc/sbdclocator/index.html>

04/01/2010

Q. Could you please send (email) an attendees list for the February workshop?

A. The list of attendees for the February Information Session is available at:

http://www.yorkmedia.com/DOE/final_attendee_list.xls

It can also be accessed by clicking on the paperclip symbol on top of the video window at:

<http://mediasite.yorkcast.com/webcast/Viewer/?peid=ed4505a305ea4625af12419e524664ad>

04/01/2010

Q. During the February webcast, it was stated that a list of webcast participants would be posted to the website along with the presentations, but I don't see it. Will that still be made available?

A. The list of attendees for the February Information Session is available at:

http://www.yorkmedia.com/DOE/final_attendee_list.xls

It can also be accessed by clicking on the paperclip symbol on top of the video window at:

<http://mediasite.yorkcast.com/webcast/Viewer/?peid=ed4505a305ea4625af12419e524664ad>

04/02/2010

Q. I am project director on the [university]. Two groups have approached us about participating in their Hub Buildings grants .I cannot tell from the FOA whether or not we can participate in both (text on p. 59 is confusing).

A. As only one grant is being awarded, your university would be eligible to be a co-applicant with more than one consortium. The DoE co-applicant is a *single entity* who will function as the lead organization for the Hub Team -- this is because only the lead entity will formally apply to DoE for the DoE funding (hence, the DoE Co-Applicant).

An entity cannot be a DoE Co-Applicant on more than one proposal because it cannot be lead on more than one DoE application. An entity can be a non-lead component of a Hub Team on more than one proposal because those entities function as subawardees and subcontractors to the DoE Co-Applicant. An entity can also be DoE Co-Applicant (a Hub lead) and a non-lead component of a Hub Team on another proposal.

04/01/2010

Q. Will there be an info session held on April? I saw this mentioned in the FAQ's, but couldn't find any further info about it on the website. Please let me know details and how to register

A. The second E-ERIC Information Session will be a webinar held on April 14, 2010 from 1:30 to 3:30 pm (Eastern Time).

To register for the webinar, please go to the following link:

<http://www.workforce3one.org/view/5001008860876004249/info>

04/01/2010

Q. I have a question in regards to the current E-ERIC proposal effort. Does all the supporting required documentation for the proposal effort count towards the total 350 page limit (i.e. Budgetary documents (R&R), environmental questionnaires, and etc.) or is the page limit only in referenced to the co-applicant narratives and appendices?

A. Section IV.C of the FOA discusses the page limitations of the Proposal. All materials are covered by the page limitation except those expressly mentioned on page 51 of the FOA. The required forms and their appendices are included within the page limitation of 350 pages. The Interagency Taskforce believes that 30-80 pages are sufficient for the Overarching Regional Innovation Clusters Project Narrative and reaffirms that the page limits (and the exclusions) listed in the FOA are correct. Text boxes on all forms, including the ED-900, are expandable and should display all text entered when printed out. However, please note that Proposals are not to be submitted in hardcopy format but rather on CD, as specified in the FOA.

04/01/2010

Q. What is the ideal or recommended size of the DOE Co-Applicant Team and E-ERIC partners? Is the size of the DOE Co-Applicant Team in the range of 5-10 entities or more in 10-50 range? Are number of E-ERIC partners are in the range of 20-50 or in the range of 50-200?

A. The FOA does not specify a size constraint or recommendation, and it is not part of the evaluation criteria of the application as described in Section V pages 82-83.

04/02/2010

Q. I am now filling in the grants.gov application for the EDA portion of the E-RIC Proposal. The forms seems to not allow me to do both the Public Works & Econ. Devel (11.300) and the Economic Assistance (11.307) sections on the same form. Does that mean that I will have to do two EDA applications?

A. In the application review process, EDA will consider the nature of the contribution (cash or in-kind) and the amount of the matching share funds. EDA will give preference to applications that include cash contributions (over in-kind contributions) as the matching share. While cash contributions are preferred, in-kind contributions, consisting of contributions of space, equipment, or services, or forgiveness or assumptions of debt, may provide the required non-federal share of the total project cost. The applicant must show that the matching share is committed to the project for the project period, will be available as needed (i.e. at the time of grant award—pledges are insufficient) and is not conditioned or encumbered in any way that precludes its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance.

04/05/2010

Q. For the DOE HUB Team Members “A single organizational letter of commitment is required from each entity” , but for the E-RIC Partners the FOA refers to “Attach letters of commitment from these E-RIC Partners”. Does this also means single organizational letter of commitment for each entity?

A. Members of the DoE Hub Team need to submit a letter of commitment from each participating organization -and- each E-RIC Partner needs to submit a letter of commitment as well.

04/05/2010

Q. We seek clarification with regards to the FOA and forms related to the EDA co-applicant. Much of the verbiage and request for information such as p42-p45 refers to a single location for construction related projects. Would a proposal to conduct multiple projects in differing locations, all of which meet EDA investment criteria, be acceptable?

A. Yes, if all the projects meet eligibility and investment criteria, and are designed to meet the evaluation criteria.

04/05/2010

Q. How would we do we find and connect with Consortiums that are pursuing our firm's interests?

A. A few organizations have asked us how to find other organizations and consortia to connect with. While we do not keep a list of interested parties, you can download a list of attendees to the last E-RIC Information Session I (click on the paperclip icon):

<http://mediasite.yorkcast.com/webcast/Viewer/?peid=ed4505a305ea4625af12419e524664ad>

In addition, you might consider registering for the next E-RIC Information Session II (a webinar), which is scheduled for April 14th 1:30-3:30pm EDT. The information and registration link is on the main E-RIC site at:

<http://www.energy.gov/hubs/eric.htm>

04/05/2010

Q. Part of definition 14 and all of definitions 21 through 24 (page 15) appear to be missing in the revised FOA document currently posted at energy.gov/hubs.

A. We will add the missing definitions and post the updated FOA on the E-RIC website.

04/05/2010

Q. Where should the materials responding to sections f. through l. (f. Hub Research and Related Budget (TOTAL FED + NON-FED) through l. Environmental Evaluation Notification Form) be located within the Hub proposal? Should that material be included as part of Appendix 14: Other Information? (Pages 69-72 of the FOA).

A. Yes, the materials responding to sections f through l should be included as part of Appendix 14.

04/05/2010

Q. Does the SF424 (R&R) count toward the 100 page count of the Hub Proposal Project Narrative and/or the 350 page overall page count? (Page 60 of the FOA). Does the material required for sections f. through l. of the Hub proposal requirements (f. Hub Research and Related Budget (TOTAL FED + NON-FED) through l. Environmental Evaluation Notification Form,) count toward the 100 page count of the Hub Proposal Project Narrative and/or the 350 page overall page count? (Pages 69-72 of the FOA).

A. The page limitation -excludes- the appendices in the count, both in the 100 page and the 350 page limitations. The DoE 100 page limitation should -include- the applicant's SF 424, the project summary, the detailed project narrative and if possible a

summary discussion about the material in the appendices. All other information including detailed cost information for the applicant and SF 424s for subcontractors should be in the appendices to the project narrative.

04/05/2010

Q. Do the forms required for the EDA, NIST/MEP and SBDC proposals count towards the 350 page overall page count? (EDA - pages 72-77; NIST/MEP – page 77; SBDC – page 78 of FOA). Do letters of support, E-RIC Partner letters of commitment and commitment letters from third parties contributing to cost sharing for the Hub (and/or for the E-RIC in general) count towards the 350 page overall page count? Can appendices with supporting data and other information relating to the overarching, EDA, NIST/MEP or SBDC proposals be provided as part of the corresponding proposal? If so, do these appendices count toward the 350 page overall page count?

A. Section IV.C of the FOA discusses the page limitations of the Proposal. All materials are covered by the page limitation except those expressly mentioned on page 51 of the FOA. The required forms are included within the page limitation of 350 pages. The Interagency Taskforce believes that 30-80 pages are sufficient for the Overarching Regional Innovation Clusters Project Narrative and reaffirms that the page limits (and the exclusions) listed in the FOA are correct. Text boxes on all forms, including the ED-900, are expandable and should display all text entered when printed out. However, please note that Proposals are not to be submitted in hardcopy format but rather on CD, as specified in the FOA.

04/05/2010

Q. When and where will the Q&A responses from the February 22nd Webcast and independently submitted Q&A's be posted on the energy.gov/hubs website?

A. All E-RIC questions and answers are posted at http://www.energy.gov/hubs/eric_qanda.htm.

04/07/2010

Q. "Page 69 of the FY 2010 Energy Efficient Building Systems Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative FOA says that the Conflict of Interest requirements apply to "...the DOE Co-applicant, its team members, and senior/key personnel named in the Application." Does the Conflict of Interest requirement apply to the EDA Co-Applicant, the NIST Co-Applicant, and the SBA Co-Applicant?"

A. The abovementioned Conflict of Interest requirement is DoE specific. Please refer to the FOA or agency regulations for Conflict of Interest policies.

04/07/2010

Q. On page 45, could you please explain the meaning, perhaps using a numeric example, of this sentence, "Projects may receive an additional amount that shall not exceed 30 percent, based on the relative needs of the region in which the project will be located (when compared with other distressed regions around the country) as determined by EDA?" Also could you please explain how one demonstrates the need? The cited references do not provide any more guidance than the FOA. Considering the dollar amount involved, co-applicants need to fully understand the required commitment.

A. As noted in the FOA, most EDA recipients are required to provide a 50 percent match. However, in some cases, EDA may be able to provide up to an additional 30 percent (i.e. a total of 80 percent of project funds). For projects that qualify for EDA assistance based on unemployment or per capita income, the maximum EDA allowable grant rate is shown in Table 1 below (which is from EDA's regulations):

Table 1 Projects located in regions in which:	Maximum allowable investment rates(percentage)
(A) The twenty-four (24) month unemployment rate is at least 225% of the national average; or	80
(B) The per capita income is not more than 50% of the national average	80
(C) The twenty-four (24) month unemployment rate is at least 200% of the national average; or	70
(D) The per capita income is not more than 60% of the national average	70
(E) The twenty-four (24) month unemployment rate is at least 175% of the national average; or	60
(F) The per capita income is not more than 65% of the national average	60
(G) The twenty-four (24) month unemployment rate is at least 1 percentage point greater than the national average; or	50
(H) The per capita income is not more than 80% of the national average	50

As stated in the FOA, EDA may also determine that a project qualifies for funding based on a special need (see the detailed explanation of special need in the FOA). EDA's regulations state that EDA shall determine the maximum allowable grant rate for project subject to a special need based on the actual or threatened overall economic situation of the Region in which the Project is located. However the maximum allowable Investment Rate for any Project subject to a Special Need shall be 80 percent, except as specifically provided otherwise in 13 C.F.R. 301.4(b)(ii)(2), which we do not anticipate will be applicable here).

For a Public Works or an Economic Adjustment investment, EDA reviews project eligibility at the time a complete application is received. For economic distress levels based upon per capita income requirements, EDA will base its determination upon the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) published by the U.S. Census Bureau for either: the region where the Project is located or the geographic area where substantial direct project-related benefits will occur. If a recent ACS is not available to determine project eligibility or if project availability is based on the unemployment rate, EDA will base its decision on the most recent federal data from other sources (e.g., data available from the Census Bureau and the Bureaus of Economic Analysis, Labor Statistics, Indian Affairs). If no federal data are available, an applicant must submit to EDA the most recent data available through the government of the State in which the region is located (i.e., conducted by or at the direction of the State government). See section 301 of PWEDA (42 U.S.C. § 3161) and 13 C.F.R. § 301.3. The project must be eligible on the date EDA receives the application

04/07/2010

Q. If more than one consortium application team is located within a single MEP center area, what is the MEP's ability/obligation (if any) to participate on both applications? If the MEP chooses to participate on one qualifying consortium's application but declines to participate on the other consortium's application, what alternative does this potential consortium applicant have for meeting the MEP applicant requirement?

A. While each MEP center is a non-profit, university-based, or state agency-based independent organization, NIST MEP encourages all MEP Centers to participate as partners in all Energy RIC consortiums in their service region. The goal of the Energy RIC multi-agency funding opportunity is to leverage the federal government and other investments in a region. The NIST MEP funding for the Energy RIC must be awarded to an existing MEP center as indicated in the America's Competes Act.

04/07/2010

Q. Who can I contact for more info on the new funding/cluster funding for energy improvement projects?

A. This is a funding opportunity designed to support and foster a regional innovation cluster focused on energy efficient building systems design technologies. It is not

specifically geared towards individual businesses; however, you may find that it is possible for you to be part of one of the teams that comprise the Consortium that will submit a Proposal under the Joint FOA. If you are interested in this particular grant opportunity, please see the full text of the FOA for more information about this grant and, specifically, Section III which discusses eligibility requirements. You may consider registering for the next E-RIC Information Session II (a webinar), which is scheduled for April 14th 1:30-3:30pm EDT. Details about the webinar and the registration link is on the main E-RIC site at: <http://www.energy.gov/hubs/eric.htm>

Alternatively, you may wish to search for a more suitable grant opportunity on Grants.gov and/or contact the Department of Energy directly to learn more about other programs they may have that may be better suited to your project. The Economic Development Administration, whose grant funds may be used for construction of necessary infrastructure in distressed areas, is restricted by law from making direct grants of public works or economic adjustment assistance funds to individuals or for-profit entities.

04/07/2010

Q. I am not able to find the 'eligibility requirements'. Can you cut and paste that for me?

A. The FOA, which contains detailed instructions and eligibility requirements, is available for download at E-RIC's main website at:

http://www.energy.gov/hubs/documents/ERIC_FOA.pdf

In the event you decide to join a Consortium, Section IV Subsection A of the E-RIC FOA states that all forms must be downloaded from <http://www.grants.gov>

Please note the Granting Agencies strongly recommend that Co-applicants use Adobe Acrobat version 8.1.3 to complete the Applications, as the use of other versions may result in errors.

04/07/2010

Q. Is there a targeted number of ERICs which will be funded through this program?

A. The E-RIC is a pilot initiative designed to spur regional economic growth while developing innovative energy efficient building technologies, designs, and systems. Only one Consortium will be funded under this FOA.

04/07/2010

Q. For DOE National Laboratory contractors, must the DOE Field Work Proposal be signed by the DOE Field Element Official as well as the Contractor Work Proposal Manager (fields 14 and 15) when the proposal is submitted?

A. Yes, the instructions in the FOA specifically state the information requested in blocks 1-15 and 17-19 of the sample FWP (which is referenced earlier in this clause) must be furnished with this application. This instruction is on page 70 of the FOA.

04/08/2010

Q. If a lead organization for the DOE Co-applicant has sub-awardees, are all of the sub-awardees required to sign the MOU in conjunction with the other three co-applications (i.e. EDA, NIST, and SBA) or is the lead organization of the DOE co-applicant the only one required to sign the MOU for the DOE application?

A. Only the official "co-applicants" sign the MOU, which are the lead organizations as defined in the FOA.

04/09/2010

Q. A question has come up whether the DOE HUB sub awardees can include private sector businesses, including vendors?

A. Yes, the DOE (Hub) Co-Applicant may include private sector businesses as sub-awardees. As indicated in the FOA, the Hub is expected to collaborate with industry to accelerate technological innovation and reduce the barriers to movement of new technologies to the marketplace.

04/13/2010

Q. From the FOA it looks like the EDA proposal is only the EDA forms, is this correct?

A. Correct, the EDA proposal is all of the forms listed. There is no separate narrative.

04/13/2010

Q. Will there be any allowances for turning in environmental, engineering reports, or historic documents on a construction project after May 6th?

A. No. Everything required at the time of application, as specified in the FOA, is required at the time of application.

04/13/2010

Q. Our project consists of applications for both the Economic Adjustment as well as Public Works grant programs. Can our [city] apply on the main form and have the dollars flow directly to a sub-recipient for a revolving loan fund and through the same application co-apply with another partner on the Public Works Grant and receive the dollars to administer to the Public Works project partner? Should this be one application or two separate Section A's to apply if the above flow of dollars is the desired effect?

A. EDA is only expecting to fund one award as part of this FOA, so a single EDA application package should be submitted. However, both a construction and a non-construction budget should be completed to cover both sets of activities. In addition, both the construction and the non-construction assurances must be completed.

04/13/2010

Q. For the Economic Adjustment application the form will not allow you to attach section L. Further it asks that you complete by hand in black ink. Is this correct?

A. The completed Proposal package containing all 4 (SBA, NIST, EDA, and DOE) applications is to be submitted on CD. The EDA Co-applicant can save an additional ED-900 file to the CD with only Section L completed. (However, due to the embedded logic of the form, the only way to do this without completing all of the other sections is to print a copy of the ED-900, fill out Section L using black ink or a typewriter, upload it to your computer, and then save it to the CD. The ED-900 form itself, without the attached

budget and other forms, is available at
http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/ED_900-V1.0.pdf.)

04/13/2010

Q. If we have a service area that covers [a region] for the Economic Adjustment grant do we have to pull all of the CEDS for all the planning districts covered or may we pull our own CEDS for the requirements of A.3 of the application?

A. The CEDS submitted should cover the area benefitted from the project; this may require submitting multiple CEDS if a single CEDS does not cover the entire geographic area.

04/13/2010

Q. I'm writing to try to find a way to have my invention considered for an e-ric grant.

I am an individual and would like my idea (attached) to be considered.

I also have other ideas for submission that are not patented yet, but from what I can gather I need one or more partners to submit any ideas.

Can you recommend me to others applying or can you refer me to them? Or is there any other way to have my invention(s) considered?

A. Thank you for your interest in the FY2010 Energy Efficient Building Systems Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative.

This is a funding opportunity designed to support and foster a regional innovation cluster focused on energy efficient building systems design technologies. It is not specifically geared towards individual businesses; however, you may find that it is possible for you to be part of one of the teams that comprise the Consortium that will submit a Proposal under the Joint FOA. If you are interested in this particular grant opportunity, please see the full text of the FOA for more information about this grant and, specifically, Section III which discusses eligibility requirements:

<http://www.energy.gov/hubs/eric.htm>

You may consider registering for the next E-RIC Information Session II (a webinar), which is scheduled for April 14th 1:30-3:30pm EDT. Details about the webinar and the registration link are also on the main E-RIC site.

Alternatively, you may wish to search for a more suitable grant opportunity on Grants.gov and/or contact the Department of Energy directly to learn more about other programs they may have that may be better suited to your project. The Economic Development Administration, whose grant funds may be used for construction of necessary infrastructure in distressed areas, is restricted by law from making direct grants of public works or economic adjustment assistance funds to individuals or for-profit entities.

04/16/2010

Q. On the Public works grant we are going to match the value of the grant with a portion of the value of a middle school that is seeking improvements and has participated as the demonstration site for our region. Do we need an appraisal of the school if is and 11 acre site easily over \$3M? The turnaround time on an appraisal will be prohibitive.

A. In-kind contributions must be in the form of personnel or facilities used as part of the EDA grant. It is unclear what role a middle school building would play in support the scope of work for an EDA Public Works or Economic Adjustment project. In general, EDA strongly prefers cash to in-kind match.

04/16/2010

Q. A previous answer with respect to the 350 page limit included a note that said where a particular issue, question, or piece of information has been requested more than once by the FOIA a Consortium may cross reference the material in other parts of the proposal provided the cross reference was to a specific page and section reference within the proposal.

1. We assume this permits cross referencing within an individual application. Is this a correct assumption?

A. Yes, this assumption is correct.

2. Does this permit cross-referencing among the EDA, NIST, SBA, and DOE Hub Proposals and to the Overarching Narrative?

A. Yes, cross-referencing is allowed.

04/19/2010

Q. I am hoping you can provide some clarification for several portions of the EDA co-applicant portion of the ERIC proposal. On page 75 of the FOA there are several requirements including:

Q. "Comments from the metropolitan area review/clearinghouse agency." Can you please clarify the nature of the comments EDA is suggesting? An annual report/letter of support? Also can you please provide direction in locating the local review and/or clearinghouse agency?

A. Metropolitan area review/clearinghouse: The comments are any comments that the metropolitan area review/clearinghouse agency would have regarding the project. In the ED-900, an applicant can include Metropolitan Area Review comments for projects involving the development of hospitals, airports, libraries, water supply and distribution facilities, sewage and wastewater treatment works, highways, transportation facilities, water development, or land conservation within a metropolitan statistical area (MSA). If the project does not involve any of these items, then the applicant does not have to obtain such comments.

As far as who to contact, some metropolitan areas have metropolitan area planning agencies that the applicant could contact. For metropolitan areas that do not have such an agency, the applicant should just contact the governmental entity associated with the metropolitan area in which the project is located to find out who to contact specifically.

Q. "A legal opinion and other documentation, as necessary, verifying the applicant's answer to questions regarding project ownership, operation, maintenance, and management." Does this documentation need to be project specific? Would the title to the property listing the co-applicant as owner be sufficient to satisfy this requirement?

A. Yes, the information needs to be project specific. We would typically require an attorney's opinion for any title issues. The opinion would have to be for the entire project property that would be funded with EDA assistance. If the property is owned by the recipient but will be operated, managed or maintained by another entity, EDA must review the operation and maintenance agreement to ensure that title remains with the recipient.

Q. "Comments from a general purpose government entity" - For Construction projects only - Is EDA looking for a Letter of Support from the City that the construction activities falls within their zoning/development laws? Can this be combined with the item listed above "Resolution acknowledging that the organization is acting in cooperation with officials of that subdivision"?

A. EDA is requesting any comments that the local governmental authority has with respect to a project. This requirement comes from EDA's regulations at 13 CFR 302.9(a) (Intergovernmental review of projects) requiring that non-governmental applicants provide the local government entity at least 15 days to review and comment on certain projects.

As far as the issue of combining the comments with the required Resolution document from the governmental entity, combining these items may not make sense in all instances. We suggest keeping them separate. For example, a governmental entity would not put its comments about a project in the body of its official Resolution.

04/19/2010

Q. The middle school has been an on-going partner as the deployment and demonstration site. It would augment that role as a site for the region. It is envisioned that the structure would end up in the hands of the non-profit supporting the Mayor's sustainability plan. It supports the cluster as a demonstration site. Do we need an appraisal of the school if it is an 11 acre site easily over \$3M?

A. For EDA cost-sharing or matching requirements, you should refer to 15 CFR 14.23 (for governmental entities) in addition to 13 CFR 301.5. For buildings and real property, an appraisal is required (and it must be relatively recent in order to show the current value of the property pledged as match). It is not entirely clear from your email who owns the middle school, whether it is an operating middle school, whether it would be donated by a third party or is owned by the city, and what "portion" of the middle school would be pledged (and how that portion would be partitioned). We continue to wonder, if it is an operating middle school, then how would its use relate to your public works grant proposal?

The simple answer to your question is "yes" -- you must provide an appraisal if you plan to submit property as in-kind cost share (see previous email). But you may want to submit a few more details so that we can help you determine whether the value of the middle school would be accepted as in-kind match even with an appraisal.

04/19/2010

Q. Under section A4 EDA Applicant must demonstrate how proposed investment satisfies EDA investment policy guidelines under 13 CFR section 301.8 as well as EDA funding priorities. Must Applicant discuss under each section of section 301.8?

A. No, the applicant does not have to demonstrate section 301.8 compliance. The items for EDA requested in the FOA and the EDA funding priorities provided in the FOA supersede section 301.8. Please see the attached Federal Register notice that explains in more detail the relationship between the FOA and pre-existing EDA regulations.

Q. EDA Funding Priorities: Collaborative Regional innovation; Public Private Partnerships; National Strategic Priorities; Global competitiveness; Environmentally Sustainable Development; and Economically Distressed and Underserved Communities? Can you please confirm that these are the funding priorities scope needs to key to?

A. Yes, as stated in the FOA, these are the EDA funding priorities that need to be addressed by the applicant.

04/19/2010

Q. With respect to EDA, EDA states that generally “does not have sub- awardees, but rather encourages entities to apply as co-applicants for EDA funding.” If there is already an existing non-profit organization that works with many EDOs and local governments, can that organization receive the funding and subcontract to the EDOs?

A. EDA would be concerned if an EDA Co-applicant applies with contractors already selected or working because our regulations require the grant recipient to maximize the use of competitive procurement to obtain contractors/vendors under the grant, and the competitive procurement bid process may not have been followed. Sole source justification must be provided (see 15 CFR 24.36 and 14.43/14.44) if competitive procurement has not been used. Subrecipients (or subawardees) must comply with all terms and conditions of the award, and so there does not appear to be a benefit to applying with subawardees rather than as co-applicants. It is also not common practice for EDA to administer awards with subawardees rather than co-recipients. You may submit more detail on your particular circumstances if you believe you have a compelling case for applying as a single EDA Co-applicant with subawardees.

04/19/2010

Q. Under the special instructions for completing Form ED-900 all additional materials (CEDS, letter of commitment, USGS Map, project beneficiary letters, engineering reports, environmental narrative among others). The CEDS alone will approach 100pps. Will all of these materials count towards the overall page count for the application, or can they be attached as appendices?

A. Only the CEDS is excluded from the materials that count towards the overall page count (or multiple CEDS).

04/19/2010

Q. Our [city] is partnering with [partner city] and a [Regional Technology Alliance] on the application with [city] as the lead for the E-RIC. [City] just updated its Economic Development Strategy in 2010, and [partner city] has an ED Strategy as does the area represented by the regional technology alliance. I am hoping you can advise on how to proceed for the purpose of Section A.3 as we are identifying our region (with common economic development needs and conditions)?

A. We applaud the region for including multiple jurisdictions in its proposal. On question A.3. of the ED-900, please select 'yes' and then list all 3 documents as the source. All three documents should be saved to the CD (but none will count towards the 350-page limit).

04/19/2010

Q. If [city] is the Lead EDA Applicant and will be making application for construction assistance money and the [partner] and [Regional Technology Alliance] a non-profit will be EDA Co-Applicants are applying for \$2M in economic adjustment assistance under the FOA do we need to include documents requested in section "For non-profit applicants only:" on the bottom of pp.75 in the FOA?

A. Yes, unless they will be making subawards to the other two. If multiple entities are applying to complete a single EDA scope of work, they must each submit the SF-424, the assurances (either the SF-424B or SF-424D depending on whether it is construction or non-construction), and the additional assurances embedded within the ED-900 (either Exhibit C or D of the ED-900). For the rest of the forms, they just submit one form. EDA strongly discourages subawards and would rather than all members of the EDA Co-applicant team appear on the EDA Application.

04/19/2010

Q. From this week's E-RIC info session, it was clear that if more than one organization is performing the work funded by EDA, each organization needs to be an EDA co-applicant. Does each organization need to separately complete all the EDA forms describing only their activities? Or is there a way to complete one set of EDA forms listing both organizations as co-applicants. It was not clear to me how to list a 2nd (or 3rd) co-applicant on the EDA forms.

A. Yes unless they will be making subawards to the other two organizations--but EDA strongly discourages subawards and would rather have all members of the EDA Co-applicant team appear on the EDA Application. If multiple entities are applying to complete a single EDA scope of work, they must each submit the SF-424, the assurances (either the SF-424B or SF-424D depending on whether it is construction or non-construction), and the additional assurances embedded within the ED-900 (either Exhibit C or D of the ED-900). For the rest of the forms, they just submit one form.

04/19/2010

Q. Has this program already received a waiver advance from the Secretary of DOE?

A. No, an advance waiver has not been issued. After the E-RIC Consortium is selected, DOE may consider issuing a class waiver for the Agreement awarded by DOE through this FOA.

Q. Is there a cost share minimum needed to achieve favorable support for a waiver?

A. Yes, at least 20% cost share is required for a waiver, as well as agreement to substantially manufacture new technology created under the Hub award resulting from this FOA in the U.S., or provide other economic benefits to the U.S.

If DOE does not issue a class waiver or if Hub members do not meet the criteria of the class waiver, applicants may request an advance waiver of all or any part of the rights of the U.S. in inventions conceived or first actually reduced to practice in performance of a DOE agreement resulting from this FOA, in advance of or within 30 days after the effective date of the award. Any patent waiver that may be granted is subject to certain terms and conditions in 10 CFR 784

<http://www.gc.doe.gov/documents/patwaivclau.pdf><http://www.gc.doe.gov/documents/patwaivclau.pdf>. Domestic small businesses and domestic nonprofit organizations will receive a patent rights clause that permits them to retain title to subject inventions. Therefore, small businesses and nonprofit organizations do not need to request a waiver.

04/19/2010

Q. Is it allowable to have 2 different definitions of a region within the proposal, for example a smaller subset for the EDA region and a broader, yet contiguous region for the hub proposal?

A. A region is not defined by Agency or program, but by the area the ERIC Co-applicants intend to serve.

04/20/2010

Q. Is a letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service required from the EDA co-applicant?

A. For construction projects, EDA will require a letter from U.S. Fish and Wildlife (and any other appropriate agencies as required under NEPA and EDA's environmental narrative) prior to award if the project affects wetlands or endangered species. This requirement is part of the environmental narrative (see ED-900) to ensure that the project does not threaten endangered species or sensitive habitats. The applicant is supposed to contact USFW if they will be building near wetlands (or for other, related reasons), and the applicant is supposed to request comments re the project impact on endangered species. But the environmental narrative doesn't request that the comments be attached. The applicant must show that it/they notified U.S. Fish and Wildlife about the proposed

project and its effects on or before the May 6th submission deadline, and then must provide USFW response prior to award.

04/20/2010

Q. Can any of the \$3 million in Public Works be used for administrating the public works projects? Can any of the \$3 million in public works be used for non-construction EDA purposes?

A. Public Works funding is to be used for construction purposes, which, for the Public Works and Economic Development Program, can include: administration, legal expenses, land acquisition, purchase of equipment (Items over \$5,000), and A/E expenses. The costs of administration are expected to be a small percentage of overall costs.

04/20/2010

Q. What is the maximum allowance for administrative costs that may be applied against the awarded funds?

A. There is no maximum set by regulation. However, projects with unduly high administrative costs will be judged less competitive, particularly if disproportionate administrative expenses take away from program delivery.

04/20/2010

Q. Can any of the public works funds include administrative costs for managing that construction project?

A. Yes. Normally, EDA projects are coordinated via a construction manager. These costs would be treated separately from the overall budget line item for administration.

04/20/2010

Q. Can the EDA Co-applicant apply as a single entity and subcontract its scope of work to other EDOs?

A. EDA would be concerned if an EDA Co-applicant applies with contractors already selected or working because our regulations require the grant recipient to maximize the use of competitive procurement to obtain contractors/vendors under the grant, and the competitive procurement bid process may not have been followed. Sole source justification must be provided (see 15 CFR 24.36 and 14.43/14.44) if competitive procurement has not been used. Subrecipients (or subawardees) must comply with all terms and conditions of the award, and so there does not appear to be a benefit to

applying with subawardees rather than as co-applicants. It is also not common practice for EDA to administer awards with subawardees rather than co-recipients.