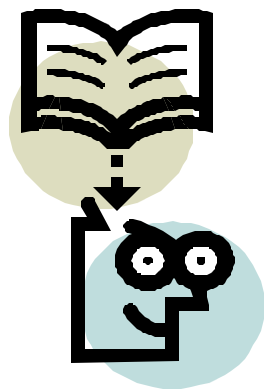


PROGRAM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS



Guiding Principle

Program Research and Development Announcements further the Department's pursuits of energy-related research and development through academic and private sector researchers.

Overview

This section discusses procedures for the submission, evaluation, and selection for award of proposals offered in response to Program Research and Development Announcements (PRDAs). PRDAs are issued by DOE to conduct research, development, and related activities in the energy field.

Background

PRDAs are competitive solicitations for research, development, and related projects in specified areas of interest. They differ from traditional research and development acquisition solicitations which seek the best technical/cost approach to a specific problem. Under PRDAs, it is contemplated that multiple awards will be made covering a variety of areas of interest with a diversity of dissimilar concepts, ideas, and approaches. Due to the expected wide divergence in proposals and the programmatic need to obtain the best overall mix of proposals, the use of a competitive range determination is not practical. Consequently, any proposal, independent of its individual technical merit, may be selected by the SSO for award.

The PRDA should not replace existing acquisition procedures where a requirement can be sufficiently defined for solicitation under standard acquisition procedures. Similarly, it should not inhibit or curtail the submission of unsolicited proposals. However, a proposal which is submitted as though it were unsolicited but is in fact germane to an existing PRDA should be treated as if it were submitted in response to the announcement or returned without action to the proposer, at the proposer's option.

Further, the PRDA is not used when it is appropriate to competitively obtain a study contract to obtain analysis and recommendations to be incorporated in a subsequent request for proposals.

Determination to Use

Before the PRDA is selected as the appropriate solicitation procedure, the Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA) expected to issue the announcement consults with the requiring program office to assure that the PRDA is the appropriate solicitation method. A written program determination is made to show that following conditions exist to support the conclusion that use of the PRDA procedure is both necessary and appropriate.

The following conditions are necessary to support the determination to use a PRDA solicitation technique:

1. Research and development is required in support of a specific project area within an energy program with the objective of advancing the general scientific and technological base, and this objective is best achieved through:
 - a. A diversity of possible approaches, within the current state of the art, available for solving the problems;
 - b. The involvement of a broad spectrum of organizations in seeking out solutions to the problems posed;
 - c. The application of the unique qualifications or specialized capabilities of many individual proposers which will enable them to perform portions of the research project (without necessarily possessing the qualifications to perform the entire project) so that the overall support may be broken into segments which cannot be ascertained in advance; and,
 - d. The fostering of new and creative solutions.
2. Consistent with paragraph 1.a of this section, it is anticipated that choices will have to be made among dissimilar concepts, ideas, or approaches; and
3. It is determined that a broad range of organizations exist that would be capable of contributing towards the overall research and development goals identified in paragraph 1 of this section.

The determination should be supported by specific facts and explanations.

Approval and Content

A PRDA may be originated at whatever level is consistent with the program objectives established by the senior program official. The determination to use a PRDA solicitation and its content are approved by the senior program official or designee after prior concurrence by counsel, and the procurement director of the office assigned to issue the PRDA. All PRDAs are issued by the HCA or designee.

Information to be Included

Each PRDA includes the following information:

1. A summary of the area(s) of program interest, expanded as appropriate, to include problems and objectives.
2. A time schedule for submission of, and action on, proposals.
3. Information to be provided in the proposals.
4. Evaluation criteria.
5. Program policy factors.
6. Other information, terms and conditions which apply to the particular PRDA.
7. Place for, and manner of, submission.
8. A statement notifying potential proposers that an announcement does not commit DOE to pay any proposal preparation costs and that DOE reserves the right to select for award any, all, or none of the proposals received in response to an announcement.
9. A late proposal provision (see FAR 15.208 and 52.215-1).

Information to be Provided in Proposals

Proposals are specific, concise, and include the following information, as appropriate:

1. Proposer identification and business submittal data, including certifications and representations.
2. Resumes of key personnel to be involved which include a description of relevant experience and associated dates.
3. An outline and narrative of the proposed effort which specifically address and reference the evaluation criteria and, to the extent possible, include:
 - a. Objectives of the proposed effort.
 - b. Detailed plan of approach (procedures, concepts, limitations, timetables of key milestones, and expected accomplishments or research results).
 - c. Internal management controls applicable to conduct of the work.
 - d. Scope and methods of management support.
 - e. Details concerning previous or ongoing work performed in the category(ies) of research proposed, or in related fields.
 - f. Form and amount of funding, or other contribution, if any, to be provided by the proposer.
 - g. Location where the work will be performed.
 - h. Cost schedule detailing estimated costs for manpower and other resources as described at FAR 15.403.
 - i. Projected date of completion of the proposed effort.

Proposers should be advised that if a proposal will contain proprietary data or privileged business information which a proposer intends to be used by the DOE for evaluation purposes only is to be marked on the cover sheet with the notice prescribed in FAR 15.609.

Cost Participation

Proposals submitted in response to PRDAs are expected to comply with any statutory or DOE policies for cost participation (see DEAR 917.70 and DOE Acquisition Guide Chapters 17.2, 26.1 and 26.2.).

Selection Panel

A panel appointed by the cognizant program office evaluates proposals submitted in response to a PRDA. The panel is composed of program office and other personnel, including representatives from procurement, counsel, and, as deemed appropriate by the appointing official, supplemented by personnel from other Government agencies. The counsel representative is an ex officio (nonvoting) member of the panel. The panel also assures that DOE conflict of interest and nondisclosure of information requirements are followed especially where management and operating contractor or other personnel outside the Government are used as advisors.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria are specified in the announcement along with a narrative description of their relative importance. The following items are illustrative of the elements which may be considered as evaluation criteria:

1. Overall technical feasibility of the proposed effort.
2. Adequacy and relevance of the proposed research plan, including validity tests as related to the proposed goals.
3. The capabilities, related experience, facilities, instrumentation, or techniques which the proposer possesses and offers, and which are considered to be integral factors for achieving the objective(s) of the proposal.
4. The qualifications, capabilities, experience, and availability of the proposed key personnel.
5. The ability of the proposer to furnish necessary financial support.
6. Project and financial plans for management of the activities including the adequacy of proposed arrangements among all participants.
7. Plans for involvement of the small business community.
8. Cost realism and probable cost to the Government.

Program Policy Factors

Program policy factors are those factors which, while not appropriate indicators of a proposal's individual merit (i.e., technical excellence, proposer's ability, cost, etc.) are relevant and essential to the process of choosing which of the proposals received will, taken together, best achieve the program objectives. All such factors are predetermined and specified in the announcement so as to notify proposers that factors which are essentially beyond their control will affect the selection process. The following are examples of PRDA program policy factors:

1. It is desirable, because of the nature of the energy source, the type of projects envisioned, or limitations of past efforts, to select for award a group of projects with a broad or specific geographic distribution.
2. It is desirable (for stated reasons) to select projects from a diversity of types and/or sizes of organizations.

3. It is desirable to select a group of projects which represent a diversity of methods, approaches, applications, or kinds of work.
4. It is desirable, due to the nature of certain projects or proposing organizations, to select for award duplicative or complementary efforts or projects.

Preliminary Review

Prior to making a comprehensive evaluation, the selection panel determines that a PRDA proposal:

1. Contains sufficient technical, cost, and other required information to enable comprehensive evaluation.
2. Has been signed by a person authorized to obligate the proposing organization.

For any proposal not meeting these requirements, the proposer is given prompt notification of the reasons for not being selected and a comprehensive evaluation is not made.

Comprehensive Evaluation

The basic task in the panel's evaluation of proposals is to assess relative merit to determine which of the proposals offer the greatest likelihood for meeting program objectives that were stated in the announcement. Technical quality, ability of the proposer, estimated cost, and other relevant factors are considered. The Source Selection Official (SSO) then selects proposals for award from the findings established by the panel. The SSO takes into account the relevant program policy factors in order to determine the mix of proposed projects which best furthers specific program goals. All findings and SSO selection statements are signed and maintained as part of the contract record.

Best Practices

The solicitation should clearly acknowledge the importance of the Program Selection factors and that DOE may accept for award all, none, or any number or part of the proposals submitted.

In addition to being announced in Fed Biz Opps and/or Grants.Gov/Find, a notice of availability of the PRDA solicitation or program announcement is circulated directly to interested parties. Notice to private and public entities and associations can expand the potential number of proposers.

As a result of a PRDA, a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement may be awarded. However, if prior to the release of a solicitation it is known that the intended relationship is expected to be primarily one of financial support or stimulation of a public purpose, the solicitation should be released as a financial assistance program announcement in accordance with DOE financial assistance regulations at 10 CFR Part 600.