

## Webinar FAQ's

The following are the questions and answers from the webinar presented on Thursday, February 18, 2010.

Q: What are allowable time periods for CDPs?

A: CDPs are typically completed within one to three years, however that is a project-specific detail that you can work out with the assigned CS and PO.

Q: When is the Pre-award Recipient Financial Management Information Sheet due?

A: There is no specific due date, but you should get it back to us ASAP. Concentrate on submitting the technical summary within the specified time frame. The Pre-award Recipient Financial Management Information Sheet should be turned in shortly thereafter.

Q: Do we use the 424A or 424C form for a construction project?

A: Use the 424A. Just because your project includes construction, does not necessarily make it a construction project. Construction projects for grants purposes would be a project where the only thing you are doing is building or constructing a new facility and nothing more. Construction costs should be listed as a construction or contractual line item on the 424A. Your Contract Specialist will let you know if you need to fill out a 424C instead of a 424A, but almost always the 424A is the appropriate form.

Q: Are pre-award costs eligible for inclusion in the total project costs?

A: Yes, some pre-award costs may be recognized with the prior approval of DOE. However, they can only be recognized back to the date the appropriations bill was passed. You need to work this out with your CS and PO once assigned.

Q: Is there a "Buy American" requirement?

A: There is a standard Buy American provision included in all of our awards that encourages you to buy American products. Projects funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act are required to buy American, but that is not the case here. These projects are funded through annual appropriations, not ARRA. We encourage you to buy American, but do not have the statutory accord to impose it.

**Caveat:** If you have received ARRA funds in addition to the appropriations funding for a project, then you must be careful to separate the work being performed using both types of funds. Remember, you can NOT use Federal Funds from another award as part of your cost share requirement, and work performed using ARRA funds would be subject to Buy American and Davis Bacon.

Q: Are Davis-Bacon wages required?

A: Davis-Bacon has not been imposed on annual appropriations, so Davis-Bacon wage requirements are not imposed on these awards. *See Caveat Above.*

Q: Can cost share be applied retroactively to 2009 or 2010?

A: There are boundaries around what can be considered cost share and where it can be considered. Some things may be allowable in-kind cost share, but this is a project-specific detail that you need to work out with your CS and PO.

Q: Our member request offered a 5% cost match, however the FETL first letter indicated that it could be anywhere from 20 to 50%. How do we reconcile these?

A: The cost share percentage will be based on the project technical summary. As soon as we determine the nature of the project the required cost share will be determined.

Q: How is the cost share percentage determined?

A: DOE has specific regulations that require cost share and determine the percentage based on the scope of work. Demonstration and commercial projects require a 50% cost share, and research and development require 20%. The determination of the project type is based on the technical summary.

Q: If the project is part of a larger project, how do I determine what to include in the summary?

A: The CDP funds may be for a particular portion of a larger, ongoing project. The DOE funds are specifically related to energy efficiency or energy activities, so you need to think in those terms when developing the project summary. Identify the project activities and associated cost to the energy portion of the project to differentiate it from the larger project that has a different purpose.

Q: Are there any restrictions on citizenship status for graduate research assistants?

A: No.

Q: What is the Cognizant Federal Agency on the application form?

A: If you don't have any other awards with the Federal Government, then it is the Department of Energy. If you have other awards, then it is the agency that provides the highest TOTAL dollar amount of funds. For example, if you have seven awards with the Dept. of Labor totaling \$7 million and you have one award with the Dept. of Energy totaling \$12 million, then the Dept. of Energy is your Cognizant Federal Agency.

Q: What are the reporting requirements for the project?

A: Quarterly reporting.

Q: What are the project maturity categories?

A: Research and development, demonstration, commercialization, outreach and education, and fundamental science. The maturity level is determined from the scope in the one-page technical summary. Definitions can be found on the CDP/Financial Assistance Resources Page.

Q: Does the DOE require a detailed Statement of Project Objectives (SOPO)?

A: Yes, it is required with the full application package. The details will be worked out between the Recipients and their Project Officers before the award is finalized.

Q: Does NETL or DOE charge and administration fee?

A: No, there are no fees charged to administer the awards.

Q: If a project involves multiple organizations, should all of them be reported on the technical summary, or just the lead?

A: This refers to subcontractors or subrecipients. If you know them, they should be listed, otherwise indicate in the summary that you will be working with other partners/subs. This will be finalized during the negotiation process.

Q: If I have registered for FedConnect or CCR in the past, do I need to do it again for this award?

A: If you are already registered for FedConnect or CCR, you do not need to reregister. You will use the same user ID. However, you will need to ensure your CCR registration is current.

Q: Is the summary limited to one page?

A: One page is a guideline not a requirement. We say one page to give you an idea of how much detail is needed so you don't get bogged down providing more than necessary. If you need more space to describe your project we would prefer that you add another page rather than making the font size smaller.

Q: Can a project get CDP funds when it has already been given money through the Smart Grid program (or another program)?

A: The projects must be clearly segregated and defined. Activities in the scope of this project must not be duplicative of activities in other projects that have already received an award. Work with your PO to make sure that the scope and activities do not overlap.

Q: Will funding be based on reimbursement? Do we have to front-fund our project?

A: This depends on several things. Different types of organizations have different payment methods. Advance payment is typically the default for educational and non-profit institutions. For-profit institutions typically default to a reimbursement method. The payment method also depends on the nature of the work and the history DOE may have with an organization. You'll have to work with your CS and PO to determine the method for your project.

Q: What if a project doesn't fit into any specific project maturity category?

A: Once we receive the one-page technical summary, the CS and PO can help identify the correct maturity level.

Q: When does the second Webinar occur?

A: March 18, 2010

Q: Are the funds provided as a grant or as a Cooperative Agreement?

A: They are typically grants, although it does vary by project. There may be some Cooperative Agreements. The funding mechanism will have to be worked out with your CS and PO on a project by project basis.

Q: What Cognizant Federal Agency should be put on the DOE form if we are already working with a different agency? I understand that we can only have one CFA at a time.

A: Put the CFA you have been working with for your negotiated F&A amounts on the form. DOE is the default if you are not already working with another agency.

Q: Is there a template available for the technical summary?

A: No, there is not a specific format required because the technical summary is narrative in nature. The key points that need to be included were listed in the first letter.

Q: Are there standard task numbers and titles that need to be used for the technical summary?

A: No, you need to define your own task numbers and titles for the initial summary. During negotiation we may suggest changes in the numbering, titles, or organization of the summary, but there are no standard titles or numbering systems used.

Q: What sort of budget information needs to be included in the project summary?

A: None. We don't ask for budget information up front. That will come after we've determined your cost share. We'll give guidance on the budget information in the second letter.

Q: When will we be informed about who our Project Officer is? If this is a continuation project, will we be assigned the same PO we currently have, or will we be assigned a new one?

A: Our expectation is that continuations will have the same PO. Assignments for new projects are being made, and you'll be notified soon about who your PO is.

Q: Can a percentage of the award be used to cover administration costs to run the program?

A: Yes, using the indirect F&A rate. If you already have a Cognizant Federal Agency, your indirect rate has already been negotiated. If you don't already have a negotiated rate, go to the NETL Website referenced in the first letter to see a sample indirect rate agreement which you can use to come up with your rate agreement. Work with your CS to determine the acceptable rate.

Q: If you are unable to meet cost share requirements is there a possibility of scaling down the project to reach a cost share that is affordable for the agency?

A: We would need to look at your project scope. The cost share is based on the maturity level, so you can't really just scale down the project to change the maturity level and lower the cost share. We can look at what you are planning to do, and if there are aspects that are centered on education or outreach, then you may want to concentrate on that piece of the project for the use of the Federal funds. It is difficult to change the nature of the project between research and development, or demonstration and commercialization. Work with your CS and PO to determine the scope if it needs to be changed.

Q: We are the prime contractors for a project to be awarded to a city, and are already registered with FedConnect and CCR. Does the city need to register for these systems as well?

A: The award is made to the city, not the contractor, and so the funds go to the city who pays the contractor. So yes, the city does need to register for FedConnect and CCR.

Q: How long will it take to receive funding for my project?

A: The first letter outlines the timeline. Negotiation takes about 90 days from the time that we receive an acceptable and complete application package.

Q: Are these projects being funded by the American Reinvestment and Recover Act (ARRA) or other stimulus funds?

A: No, the funding for these projects comes from the 2010 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, not ARRA.

Q: Are in-kind services allowed to meet cost share requirements?

A: This subject is well addressed in the FAQs, so look at the FAQ section of the Website. Examples of in-kind contributions include property, donated equipment, supplies, and personnel costs incurred as part of the project scope.

Q: Is there documentation to clarify that DOE CDPs are not subject to the Davis-Bacon Act?

A: The Davis-Bacon Act applies to construction projects and ARRA projects. Since CDPs come from annual appropriations and are not ARRA or construction projects, Davis-Bacon rates do not apply.

Q: Are there samples of completed forms available to use for reference?

A: There will be a presentation available on the Website referred to in the initial letter. The presentation will walk you through the forms step by step.

Q: How can we accelerate the award?

A: Respond immediately to all requests for information from the CS or PO.

Q: Can other Federal funds be used towards cost share requirements?

A: No.

Q: Where does the cost share requirement come from?

A: The Energy Policy Act (EPA) of 2005 sets the cost share requirement. Section 988, Cost Sharing, states that "the Secretary shall require not less than 20 percent of the cost of a research or development activity" and "not less than 50 percent of the cost of a demonstration or commercial application activity." Minimum amounts for education and outreach, and fundamental science projects are not specified.

Q: Can the money be used by an educational institution to produce an alternative energy exhibit?

A: It sounds like it would be an education and outreach component, but discuss it with your CS and PO.

Q: What qualifies as cost share?

A: If a cost is allowable under your type of organization and is tied to the project, it will be eligible for reimbursement. 10 CFR 600 describes what is allowable. Subpart 123 applies to education, hospitals, and non-profit institutions, subpart 224 applies to State and Local governments, and subpart 313 applies to for-profit organizations. Take a look at these documents and also the FAQs for more details.

Q: What is the difference between fundamental science and research and development?

A: This is described in the FAQs. Work with your CS and PO for more information.

Q: If we receive engineering assistance from a state agency, can that be applied to cost sharing?

A: If the engineering assistance is required for the project, then it may be considered as an in-kind contribution. Work with your CS and PO to further determine whether or not it is acceptable.

Q: We are supposed to begin working on the project in the spring, but it sounds as if the funding won't be available until much later. Can we start the project on schedule and request reimbursement once the award is made?

A: Costs can only be reimbursed if they were incurred after the date that the appropriations act was enacted. In addition, the Recipient is working at their own risk if the project starts before the award is made. DOE is under no obligation to reimburse costs if for any reason the award is not made or is less than was anticipated, or if the negotiated scope of the project does not include the activities that have been done prior to award. There is also an issue with NEPA clearance and ensuring that the work meets NEPA guidelines.

Q: Is it recommended that Recipients review their technical summaries with their Project Officer prior to submitting it?

A: The PO is not assigned to the project until after the technical summary is received. This allows us to match up the project with a PO who has the appropriate technical background. Since the assignment is based on the summary, it is not possible to assign the PO prior to receipt of the summary.

Q: Is cost share restricted to the minimum amounts described in EPACT 2005?

A: Those amounts are minimums only, and so there are cases where the actual cost share is higher. This includes costs share for education and outreach or fundamental science projects. Just because there is no minimum it does not necessarily mean that there will be no cost share component. Some programs historically require cost share on these projects depending on who stands to benefit from the activity.

Q: What money is excluded as cost share?

A: Federal funds cannot be offered up as cost share.

Q: Is there a standard length for the projects?

A: The length is typically one year, but some projects can go as long as three or more years.