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SOLICITATION DE-PS07-03ID14434

University Reactor Instrumentation (URI) Program

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AGENCY: Department of Energy, Idaho Operations Office.

ACTION: Solicitation for Financial Assistance: DE-PS07-03ID14434, University Reactor Instrumentation (URI) Program

SUMMARY:

DOE is seeking applications from U.S. universities and colleges with operating research reactors. The purpose of the URI program is to upgrade and improve the U.S. university nuclear research and training reactors and to contribute to strengthening the academic community's nuclear engineering infrastructure. Applications for URI should be directed to the upgrade, purchase or maintenance of equipment and instrumentation (1) related to the performance, control or operational capability of the reactor and/or facility, (2) for radiation detection and measurement in laboratories directly related to the reactor facility, (3) for security enhancements at the reactor facility. Applications for equipment and instrumentation that significantly improves or expands the research and training capabilities of the reactor facility will be considered.

Approximately \$800,000 in federal funds is expected to be available for the URI program in fiscal year (FY) 2003. Successful applicants will be required to submit a final report to DOE.

Project performance periods and the budget period will be 18 months. For planning purposes, an anticipated start date of June 1, 2003 may be used.

COST SHARE:

Cost share is not required.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

The URI program is restricted to U.S. colleges and universities having a duly licensed, operating nuclear research or training reactor that is not shutdown, in a standby condition, or in the decommissioning process. Non-university, state-operated research reactors are also eligible to apply.

Universities selected for Innovations in Nuclear Infrastructure and Education (INIE) funding are eligible for awards under the URI program, but preference will be given to non-INIE participants.

RESTRICTIONS:

In the event that a definitive vote to shutdown or decommission the university's reactor is made by university or state officials, DOE reserves the right to deobligate all unexpended funds immediately.

Only one URI proposal per institution will be accepted. The proposal should be prepared and/or coordinated with the university's reactor director.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

The statutory authority for this program is Section 2203 of the Energy Policy Act of 1992, 42 U.S.C. §13503.

CFDA NUMBER:

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number for this program is 81.114, "University Nuclear Science and Reactor Support" Program.

INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Questions should be submitted to Ms. Kathleen Stallman, Contract Specialist, by facsimile at 208-526-5548, e-mail: stallmkm@id.doe.gov, or by telephone at (208) 526-7038 no later than October 24, 2002. Questions and answers to the questions will be posted to the Industry Interactive Procurement System (IIPS) Website by November 7, 2002 as an amendment to this solicitation. The URL for this Website is as follows: <http://e-center.doe.gov>.

APPLICATION:

Required Forms/Certifications/Other Documents: The application shall consist of the following forms. Links to the SF-424 and SF-424A can be found at the end of the solicitation in Section XII.

- **Application Face Page (SF 424):** Prepare this for the complete project period. The project period is eighteen (18) months. For planning purposes, a start date of June 1, 2003 may be used.
- **Cost Element Detail Sheet for Equipment (an IIPS attachment):** A one-page budget sheet that lists the individual equipment costs for the 18-month project period. Each equipment item should be listed separately. Support should not be requested for travel, overhead, faculty salaries or facility operations costs. However, support can be requested for specific maintenance staff at a university to do installation, repairs, etc, if that work is bid by that entity of the university and it is common practice for one division to pay another division in the university to do that sort of work. Examples include electrical wiring or plumbing work, but not routine janitorial or routine maintenance work. Show amounts in U.S. dollars.

Supporting documentation (e.g., vendor quotations) should be included as an attachment to the budget and are required prior to any award being made. Vendor quotes are quite useful in the review process and are often a factor with the reviewers recommending items for funding.

- **Detailed Request:** A detailed description of the proposed project, including the objectives of the project and the equipment and/or services required to achieve them. This section is limited to a length of 6 double spaced pages and must begin with a page containing an overall summary of objectives, related equipment and/or services, and overall cost to achieve each objective. *The objectives must be in rank order of priority, beginning with the highest.* The remainder of the Detailed Request section should provide a more detailed statement of the objective for each upgrade, purchase or maintenance to be undertaken. Describe the equipment and/or services required to achieve the objective, and explain how it will improve the performance, quality, safety/security, or efficiency of the reactor facility or laboratory.
- **Facilities and Usage:** Brief information on the nuclear reactor and/or laboratory facilities and their usage. It should include the mission and role of the reactor facility within the framework of the universities and possibly other universities. It should include information on (1) the number of students and faculty using the facility per year over the past five years, (2) the number of BS, MS, and PhD degrees supported by the facility over the past five years, and (3) a synopsis of services actually provided to academic department, universities, industry, and the U.S. government. This section is limited to a length of 2 double spaced pages.

- **Statement of Administrative Support:** Letter(s) signed by a high-ranking university official demonstrating the university administration's support to continue operation of the nuclear reactor facility. Since the proposal is submitted electronically, the signed letter may be scanned and submitted, or the symbol "/s/" may be written above the university official's name to indicate that the document was signed. (An official, signed letter must be retained by the university for possible reference by the Department of Energy.)
- **Supplemental Documentation:** Those applicants that are selected for award must submit supplemental documentation as set forth in Section VI. This information must be submitted within 30 calendar days after award notification. The notification of selection will provide guidance on the preparation and submittal of the required supplemental information.

PREAPPLICATION REQUIREMENT:

None.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Completed applications are required to be submitted as an Adobe PDF file via the Industry Interactive Procurement System (IIPS) in accordance with the instructions outlined in this solicitation and the IIPS User Guide. The Guide can be obtained by going to the IIPS Homepage at: <http://e-center.doe.gov> and then clicking on the "Help" button. Individuals who have the authority to enter their institution into a legally binding contract/agreement and intend to submit proposals/applications via the IIPS system must register and receive confirmation that they are registered prior to being able to submit an application on the IIPS system. Once an applicant is registered with IIPS, a signature on the IIPS is the typed name of the applicant in Block 18 of the SF 424. Questions regarding the operation of IIPS may be e-mailed to the IIPS Help Desk at IIPS_HelpDesk@e-center.doe.gov or call the help desk at (800) 683-0751.

The only acceptable mode of application transmission is through IIPS. Applications submitted through the U.S. Postal Service, facsimile, telegraphically, courier companies, or hand-delivered hard copies will be considered non-responsive.

APPLICATION DUE DATES:

The SF-424, and the technical application must be submitted electronically through IIPS and have an IIPS transmission time stamp of not later than 5:00 p.m. EST on **Thursday, December 5, 2002.**

PROJECTED SOLICITATION MILESTONES:

Applications will be evaluated immediately after the technical application due date deadline. *Any applications received after applications are transmitted for merit review will not be evaluated.* Merit review and selection activities are expected to be completed by March 1, 2003. Award activities are expected to be completed by June 1, 2003. This timeframe includes time for submission by selected applicants of the non-technical supplemental documentation. Incomplete or inadequately supported applications will delay awards. Unsuccessful applications will not be returned.

SECTION I: Program Information:

A. Purpose

The purpose of the URI program is to upgrade and improve the U.S. university nuclear research and training reactors and to contribute to strengthening the academic community's nuclear engineering infrastructure.

B. Background/Objectives

The URI program was revitalized in fiscal year (FY) 1998 and seeks to improve the nuclear infrastructure at U.S. universities and colleges through reactor upgrades.

C. Areas of Interest/Funding Priorities

Applications for URI should be directed to the upgrade, purchase or maintenance of equipment and instrumentation (1) related to the performance, control or operational capability of the reactor and/or facility, or (2) for radiation detection and measurement in laboratories directly related to the reactor facility. Applications for equipment and instrumentation that significantly improve or expand the research and training capabilities of the reactor facility will be considered.

Travel expenses will not be approved under the URI program, unless specifically required for the purchase or installation of equipment.

Information on prior URI awards and annual reports are available at the URI web-site at <http://uri.ne.doe.gov>.

SECTION II: Application Evaluation

A. Merit Reviews

The DOE project manager will review applications for eligibility and completeness. Further, the DOE project manager will submit applications generally to three qualified reviewers for technical merit evaluation.

The technical merit reviewers will be selected from the directors of nuclear research reactors at universities, laboratories and/or industry. Reviewers will be required to complete Conflict of Interest and Non-Disclosure provisions. Reviewers must comply with the requirements of 10 CFR 1010.101(a) and 1010.302(a)(1) concerning conflict of interest and will be required to notify DOE immediately when a conflict of interest is known. Further, a university reviewer will not be allowed to review a proposal from his/her own university.

The technical merit reviewers are selected based upon their expertise and professional qualifications as they relate to research reactor operations. Each reviewer chosen to participate will be provided with a copy of the application, the evaluation criteria, and other programmatic information needed to conduct the review. Based upon his or her review of these documents, the reviewer is expected to provide the project manager with a written analysis and scores based on the above evaluation criteria and other program information for each application.

Reviewers shall not include anyone who performed or is likely to perform any of the following duties for any of the applications:

1. Providing substantial technical assistance to the applicant;
2. Approving/disapproving or having any decision-making role regarding the application;
3. Serving as the project manager or otherwise monitoring or evaluating the recipient's programmatic performance;
4. Serving as a contracting officer (signatory authority) or performing business management functions for the project; or
5. Auditing the recipient of the project.

The recommendations of all reviewers serving as advisors to the DOE project manager and the DOE selection official will not be binding. The reviewers will meet and resolve any significant discrepancies of their input and scoring to arrive at a final overall score for each application. All significant discrepancies in recommendations that are resolved by the reviewers will be addressed in writing by the project manager to the selection official and retained in the official file.

In order to enhance the validity of the evaluation, applications may be evaluated in comparison to each other.

B. Selection Criteria

1. (70%) Potential of the requested equipment, instrumentation, modification or service (including, but not limited to, relicensing efforts and training) to:
 - Enhance the performance, control or operational capability of reactor systems, or
 - Increase the quality, safety/security, or efficiency of the operation of the reactor facility, or
 - Improve or expand the research and training capabilities of the reactor facility;
2. (10%) Amount of student and faculty usage of the reactor facility, and the amount and variety of research and/or services actually provided by the reactor facility; and
3. (20%) Reasonableness of the proposed costs of the equipment or instrumentation to achieve the proposed objectives. (*Current vendor quotations for the specific equipment or service are highly useful in the evaluations and required prior to award.*)

C. Program Policy Factors

DOE shall also consider, as part of the evaluation, other available advice or information and cost considerations, as well as the need to ensure an appropriate program balance. In addition, consideration may be given to the following program policy factors:

- Evidence of the academic institution's commitment to the continued operation of the nuclear reactor program as demonstrated by letters of support from the university administration; *Due to university reactors announcing decommissioning plans, an updated letter signed by a high-ranking university official (i.e. Vice-President) is required in the FY-03 application.*
- DOE's interest in providing support to as many nuclear reactor facilities as possible with the available funds.
- Priority will be given to institutions seeking relicensing in the next two years.
- Priority will be given to non-INIE participants.

SECTION III: General Conditions:

A. Non-governmental Reviewers

As explained in Section A, DOE will utilize assistance and advice from non-Government personnel, primarily university reviewers. Applicants are therefore requested to state on the cover sheet of the applications if they do not consent to an evaluation by such non-Government personnel. The applicants are further advised that DOE may be unable to give full consideration to an application submitted without such consent.

B. Application Preparation Costs

DOE is under no obligation, and will not pay, for any costs associated with preparation or submission of applications.

C. Proprietary Application Information

Applications submitted in response to this solicitation may contain trade secrets and/or privileged or confidential commercial or financial information which the applicant does not want used or disclosed for any purpose other than evaluation of the application. The use and disclosure of such data may be restricted, provided the applicant marks the cover sheet of the application with the following legend and specifies the pages of the application which are to be restricted in accordance with the conditions of the legend:

"The data contained in pages ___ of this application have been submitted in confidence and contain trade secrets or proprietary information, and such data shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes, provided that if this applicant receives an award as a result of or in connection with the submission of this application, DOE shall have the right to use or disclose the data herein to the extent provided in the award. This restriction does not limit the government's right to use or disclose data obtained without restriction from any source, including the applicant."

Further, to protect such data, each page containing such data must be specifically identified and marked, including each line or paragraph containing the data to be protected with a legend similar to the following:

"Use or disclosure of the data set forth above is subject to the restriction on the cover page of this application."

It should be noted, however, that data bearing the aforementioned legend may be subject to release under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), if DOE or a court determines that the material so marked is not exempt under the FOIA. The Government assumes no liability for disclosure or use of unmarked data and may use or disclose such data for any purpose. Applicants are hereby notified that DOE intends to make all applications submitted available to non-Government personnel for the sole purpose of assisting the DOE in its evaluation of the applications. These individuals will be required to protect the confidentiality of any specifically identified information obtained as a result of their participation in the evaluation.

SECTION IV: Notices to Applicants:

A. False Statements

Applications must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this solicitation. The penalty for making false statements is prescribed in 18 U.S.C. 1001.

B. Application Clarification

DOE reserves the right to require applications to be clarified or supplemented to the extent considered necessary either through additional written submissions or oral presentations.

C. Amendments

Any amendments to this solicitation will be posted on the Industry Interactive Procurement System (IIPS) Website at the following URL: <http://e-center.doe.gov>. Only the Contracting Officer may amend this solicitation. Any data, information, or instructions coming from any other source are not official.

D. Applicant's Past Performance

DOE reserves the right to solicit from available sources relevant information concerning an applicant's past performance and may consider such information in its evaluation.

E. Commitment of Public Funds

The Contracting Officer is the only individual who can legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds in connection with the proposed award. Any other commitment, either explicit or implied, is invalid.

F. Effective Period of Application

All applications must remain in effect for at least 180 days from the application due date.

G. Availability of Funds

The actual amount of funds to be obligated in each fiscal year will be subject to availability of funds appropriated by Congress. DOE reserves the right to fund any, some, or none of the applications submitted in response to this solicitation.

H. Assurances and Certifications

DOE requires the submission of pre-award assurances of compliance and certifications, which are mandated by law or regulations. These submissions must be completed and provided when requested by the DOE Program Manager or contract specialist.

I. Pre-award Costs

The government is not liable for any costs incurred in preparation of an application. Awardees may incur pre-award costs up to ninety (90) days prior to the effective date of award. Specific written authorization from the Contracting Officer is required before pre-award costs are incurred if the authorization is needed for more than 90 calendar days or if the project is a non-research project. Should the awardee take such action, it is done so at the awardee's risk and does not impose any obligation on the DOE to issue an award (10 CFR 600.125). Pre-award cost authorizations will not be made retroactively.

J. Patents, Data, and Copyrights

Applicants are advised that patents, data, and copyrights will be treated in accordance with 10 CFR 600.27. *Assistance Regulations*, 10 CFR 600, can be located at the following URL: <http://www.pr.doe.gov/f600toc.html>.

K. Environmental Impact

DOE requires the submission of an applicant environmental checklist before award. Award will not be made until any and all environmental requirements are completed. This submission must be completed when requested.

L. DOE Minority Economic Impact Loan

DOE Minority Economic Impact loans are not available for this solicitation.

M. Buy American Act

NOTICE REGARDING THE PURCHASE OF AMERICAN-MADE EQUIPMENT AND PRODUCTS --
SENSE OF CONGRESS

It is the sense of the Congress that, to the greatest extent practicable, all equipment and products purchased with funds made available under this award should be American-made.

COMPLIANCE WITH BUY AMERICAN ACT

In accepting this award, the recipient agrees to comply with sections 2 through 4 of the Act of March 3, 1933 (41 U.S.C. 10a - 10c, popularly known as the "Buy American Act"). The recipient should review the provisions of the Act to ensure that expenditures made under this award are in accordance with it.

N. Simpson-Craig Amendment

Applicant organizations which are described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and engage in lobbying activities after December 31, 1995, will not be eligible for the receipt of federal funds constituting an award, grant, or loan.

O. Lobbying Restriction

The contractor or awardee agrees that none of the funds obligated in this award shall be made available for any activity or the publication or distribution of literature that in any way tends to promote public support or opposition to any legislative proposal on which Congressional action is not complete. This restriction is in addition to those prescribed elsewhere in statute and regulation.

Q. Terms and Conditions Applicable to Awards

Awardees will be required to comply with the standard terms and conditions listed at the following URL: <http://www.id.doe.gov/doiid/PSD/proc-div.html> (Click on "Federal Assistance Application and Administration Forms," located on the lefthand side of the screen, and then scroll down.).

R. Equal Opportunity Employer

The Department of Energy is an Equal Opportunity Employer and these standards apply to this solicitation. "Selection in response to this solicitation will be made without regard to political, religious, or labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, marital status, race, color, sex, national origin, non-disqualifying handicapping condition or age of the principal investigator(s)."

SECTION V: Supplemental Documentation:

A. Who Must Submit Supplemental Documentation

If an applicant is selected for an award under this solicitation, the applicant MUST furnish the supplemental documentation identified in this section. All of the supplemental documentation must be furnished within 30 calendar days after the applicant receives notification of selection for negotiations and award. Failure to furnish the supplemental documentation will result in delays or may negate the selection.

Supplemental documentation will include pre-award certifications and assurances, detailed cost information, point of contact sheet, and an environmental checklist. Additional information on the Supplemental documentation will be sent in the letter of selection in early Spring 2003.

(End of Solicitation)