

## **Questions and Answers**

### ***Biomass RFP***

Since the posting of the solicitation on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003, some questions in particular have been asked numerous times in conversations between USDA/DOE personal and potential applicants. In an attempt to accommodate the most frequently asked questions, we are posting this addendum in a question and answer format for the convenience of potential applicants. Additional questions and answers may be added in the future if warranted.

**Question 1:** What is the solicitation number?

**Answer:** It is USDA-GRANTS-031803-001 and was originally posted on the <http://www.fedgrants.gov> website.

**Question 2:** How do the USDA and DOE websites differ in content from the fedgrants website?

**Answer:** The <http://www.fedgrants.gov> website is abbreviated somewhat for posting. The complete solicitation may be obtained from the following websites: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov> and <http://www.bioproducts-bioenergy.gov>. The official solicitation number was carried forward from the original posting to the USDA and DOE websites to assist respondents with their submission. Additional information regarding the administrative requirements for grants is available in 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 3015, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110.

**Question 3:** Who is eligible to submit a proposal?

**Answer:** Eligible applicants submitting proposals for this solicitation may include private sector entities, institutions of higher education, and others as listed on the solicitation. Consortia are encouraged in order to bring important capability together to best achieve the desired innovation on biomass projects. Institutions of higher education include accredited colleges and universities beyond the secondary education level. Private sector entities include companies, corporations, farms, ranches, cooperatives, and others that compete in the marketplace.

**Question 4:** Are companies and entities incorporated abroad eligible to submit proposals?

**Answer:** No. The primary applicant must be a United States incorporated company. Furthermore, if a United States incorporated company is owned by a foreign corporation, its eligibility is subject to review under the terms of Section 2306 of the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

**Question 5:** How are sharing of costs determined?

**Answer:** The controlling references for the non-Federal minimum cost share are cited on page 14 of the proposal. These include 7 CFR Part 3015 and OMB Circular A-110.

Applicants are encouraged to include a greater amount of non-Federal cost sharing over the stated minimum required. This will result in greater priority for project acceptance.

**Question 6:** What is the allowable rate for indirect costs under this RFP?

**Answer:** This solicitation is governed by standard Federal rules as well as rules of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) for the NRCS portion. These rules do not provide a specific allowable percentage for indirect costs. Applicants that have an approved overhead rate determined by Federal audit may use that approved rate. During review of the proposals, USDA will review indirect/overhead costs for reasonableness on a case-by-case basis.

**Question 7:** Are there differences in allowable rates for indirect costs between DOE and USDA in regard to this proposal?

**Answer:** In this proposal, both DOE and USDA are governed by similar rules.

**Question 8:** Do applicants need to identify the specific category in the solicitation that the proposed project attempts to address?

**Answer:** No. The proposal should address the technical rating criteria and respective evaluation factors listed in the solicitation.

**Question 9:** What are the priority projects that USDA and DOE would like to support?

**Answer:** We are looking for submissions that propose quality projects meeting the objectives outlined by the solicitation. Higher priorities will be given to projects that meet criteria outlined in six categories listed on the top of page 4. Program priorities for USDA and DOE are listed on page 8 of the solicitation. A greater priority for project acceptance will also occur with higher non-Federal contributions as noted on page 4 under the "Funding Restriction" heading.

**Question 10:** What can Federal research agencies do to achieve the required non-Federal cost share match for project funding?

**Answer:** A Federal agency alone, funded solely by existing Federal funds, will not be able to satisfy the non-Federal portion of funding requirements and therefore will not qualify under this solicitation. If a Federal research agency is participating in a consortium arrangement, non-Federal participation may be helpful for the consortium to achieve the required non-Federal cost share requirement. The solicitation encourages use of consortium arrangements where possible to better achieve the indicated purposes.