

Frequently Asked Questions
FY 2017 DOE Office of Science Fusion Energy Sciences Plasma Science Facilities
(FOA: DE-FOA-0001713 and Lab Announcement: LAB 17-1713)
Last Updated April 24, 2017

Q1: Does the host institution commitment letter required for both existing facility and new construction?

Yes, each proposal must be accompanied by this letter.

Q2: Is the proposal narrative page limit is 35 pages for both the FOA and Lab Announcement?

Yes. There is a typo which may show 10-page limit in some place on the Lab Notice (LAB 17-1713), please disregard this.

Q3: Where should the host institution commitment letter or the letters of partnership should go?

The PI can put the host institution commitment letter (and others) at the end of the project narrative (or before Appendix 1). These will not count in the project narrative page limitation.

Q4: Can the external user community include overseas users (or collaborators)?

There are no limitations on the external users (for more information, please see the FOA) and the definition of an SC user facility:

<https://science.energy.gov/user-facilities/policies-and-processes/definition/>

Q5: Is DOE expecting the PI to provide names and letter of intent to use the facility on the proposal?

Allocation of run time and other facility resource should be done by peer review, which will be conducted by the host institution (once a facility award is made) as per definition of a SC facility (for more information, please see the FOA, also here <https://science.energy.gov/user-facilities/policies-and-processes/definition/>)

Q6: Is there any FES guidance on the appropriate balance between facility use by the host institution researchers, and researchers from other institutions?

Each PI should suggest a balance that he/she believes to be appropriate.

Q7: We have a current project that is funded through another solicitation. If we apply in response to this FOA, would this be considered “new” or “renewal” application?

Your proposed activity may be considered “new” under the current Plasma Science Facilities FOA. However, it may be helpful to identify in your new proposal those parts of the scope of work that are to be supported through other grants in FY 2018 and beyond.

Q8. We have already used a small portion of our NSF/DOE Partnership funding to support external users on our current project. Can we propose a specific annual budget line of the Plasma Science Facilities funds to expand and support collaborations and external users?

For an existing facility, you may request support only for host institution scientific research and operation costs. For details, please see page 2 of the FOA or Lab Notice: Program Objective under SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION. Collaborators and external users should seek funding through other opportunities (e.g., NSF/DOE Partnership, DOE Lab Announcement in Basic Plasma Science, etc.)

Q9. How should the interaction be between NSF/DOE Partnership funds and this opportunity?

In response to the current Plasma Science Facilities FOA, only the support for host institution scientific research plus the operation costs of an existing user facility (or the construction and operation costs of a new facility) will be considered. External individual user research support is not to be considered here – other opportunities (e.g., NSF/DOE Partnership, DOE Lab Announcement in Basic Plasma Science, etc.) may be more appropriate.

Q10. What is the rough estimate of the amount of funding anticipated under this FOA?

No more than \$24,000,000 total (approximately \$4,800,000 per fiscal year) will be available to support all years (maximum of five fiscal years) of all financial assistance (cooperative agreement) awards made under this FOA. Note that there is a separate companion DOE National Laboratory Announcement (LAB 17-1713).

Q11. For existing facilities, what if a group outside of a host institution wants to build a new diagnostic for the proposed user facility? Is this option available?

FES expects the host institution to be the lead and be fully responsible for the overall management of the operation and the proper and efficient functioning of the user facility. If the host institution can't build the new diagnostic efficiently and/or cost-effectively, then the task may be sub-awarded through the host institution to another institution.

Q12. Is it possible for an existing facility proposal to have sub-awards to other national labs or universities for collaborative work?

No. Research collaborations on existing facilities are outside the scope of the current solicitation. External individual user research support should be sought through other opportunities (e.g., NSF/DOE Partnership, DOE Lab Announcement in Basic Plasma Science, etc.).

Q13. Since there are parallel solicitations for universities and national labs, would it be allowable for a new construction proposal to have a partnership between a national lab and university?

Yes. New Construction partnerships are allowed. Please see page 4 of the FOA or Lab Announcement: Construction Partnership section under SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION. However, FES expects the host institution to house the facility on its campus, be the lead and be fully responsible for the overall management of the construction, operation, proper and efficient functioning of the user facility.

Q14. For new construction, does the inclusion of a partner institution on a host institution's proposal counts against the two-proposal-limit for the partner institution?

Since construction partnership is allowed and some tasks may be sub-awarded through the host institution to another institution, the inclusion of a partner institution on a host institution's proposal will not count against the two-proposal-limit for the partner institution.

Q15. Can theory and simulation support be sought through this solicitation?

Support for theory and simulation to validate experimental results is outside the scope of the current FOA and Lab Announcement. This support should be sought through other opportunities (e.g., NSF/DOE Partnership, DOE Lab Announcement in Basic Plasma Science, etc.).

Q16. Are there any limitations on how a PI lists potential users for the User Facility in the proposal?

There are no limitations but realistic information (close to the actual anticipated numbers of external users) would be useful.