

Program Announcement To DOE National Laboratories

LAB 00-09

Carbon Sequestration Research Program

The Office of Biological and Environmental Research (OBER) of the Office of Science (SC), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), hereby announces its interest in receiving proposals for research on Carbon Sequestration in the Terrestrial Biosphere and the Oceans.

Predictions of global energy use in the next century suggest a continued increase in carbon emissions and rising concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere unless major changes are made in the way we produce and use energy – in particular, how we manage carbon.

One way to manage carbon is to use energy more efficiently to reduce our need for a major energy and carbon source – fossil fuel combustion. Another way is to increase our use of low-carbon and carbon-free fuels and technologies, such as nuclear power and renewable sources such as solar energy, wind power, and biomass fuels.

The third and newest way to manage carbon, capturing and securely storing carbon either from the global energy system or directly from the atmosphere, is relatively new. Although many options exist to capture and sequester carbon dioxide, the focus of this solicitation is fundamental research that would enable: a) the operation of the terrestrial biosphere in such a way to enhance the absorption and retention of atmospheric carbon; b) the operation of the ocean surface biota also to enhance the absorption and retention of atmospheric carbon; and c) the use of the deep ocean to store carbon dioxide that has been already separated, captured, and transported. The result of carbon retention by terrestrial and oceanic systems is commonly termed “carbon sequestration.”

Any viable system for sequestering carbon must have a number of characteristics. It must be effective and cost-competitive with alternative means, such as renewable energy. It must have environmentally benign consequences, at least compared to alternative solutions, including no action. It must be able to be monitored and verified, because contributions to carbon sequestration almost certainly need to be measured. Research sponsored by this program could contribute to any of these goals.

This solicitation invites proposals for individual projects on carbon sequestration in the terrestrial biosphere and in the oceans. The proposed research should be fundamental in nature. We are not accepting proposals that test demonstrations of engineered technologies. Principal Investigators may consider the two existing DOE carbon sequestration research centers, CSITE (Carbon Sequestration in Terrestrial Ecosystems), and DOCS (DOE Center for Research on Ocean Carbon Sequestration), and the ways in which their research can complement programs there in the Centers.

Technical Areas of Interest:

A. Sequestration in the Terrestrial Biosphere: Carbon pools in the natural biogeochemical cycle are immense and quantitative estimates of the natural sequestration of carbon in various locations of the terrestrial biosphere are improving in accuracy. The feasibility of various options for enhancing sequestration, however, is only beginning to be explored. The DOE “Carbon Sequestration Research and Development Report” (available at <http://www.sc.doe.gov/production/ober/carbseq.html>) identifies potential opportunities for sequestering carbon in many ecosystems using a variety of mechanisms. The scientific foundation of different potential approaches needs to be developed. In particular, better estimates of biological fixation and metabolism of carbon are needed, along with improved data on the quantities of carbon sequestered. The intent is to develop techniques that increase fixation and alter carbon metabolism to enhance sequestration. Advanced research is encouraged that will elucidate ways of modifying natural biological and physical processes in terrestrial ecosystems to enhance carbon sequestration rates and capacities.

In general, the research should consider mechanisms and processes that can be manipulated in terrestrial ecosystems to enhance net uptake and sequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Field tests are encouraged that consider feasibility and effectiveness of applying new approaches with managed and/or unmanaged terrestrial ecosystems, and which will focus on those processes or properties of ecosystems for which alteration or management will offer significant potential for enhancing the net sequestration of carbon.

The following examples are illustrative of technical areas relevant to carbon sequestration research involving the terrestrial biosphere:

1. Increasing the net fixation of atmospheric carbon dioxide by terrestrial plants with emphasis on physiology and rates of photosynthesis of vascular plants, retention of carbon by ecosystems and enhancing the translocation of carbon to soil. Research might focus on:

- intrinsic rates of carboxylation and changes in carbon balance of vascular plants.
- native plant species that exhibit rapid growth under a wide range of environmental conditions.
- ways that above- and below-ground partitioning of fixed carbon can generate long-lived sequestered products through the manipulation of nutrients, water and other environmental variables. This would include biotechnological approaches to increase the availability or supply of nutrients from natural sources that otherwise limit plant productivity.
- understanding root architecture for optimal below-ground productivity and transformation of plant biomass, including lignified materials, into soil organic matter.

2. Reducing the emission of CO₂ from soils due to heterotrophic oxidation of soil organic carbon. Research might focus on:

- defining and producing optimal mix of organisms and substrates for slowing oxidation of plant residues in soil.
- isolating and defining the environmental and biochemical factors that control the oxidation rate of soil carbon and how these factors could be modified to slow the rate.

3. Developing and demonstrating new, novel techniques for measuring changes of the quantity of carbon in biomass and soil of terrestrial ecosystems. Research might focus on:

- non-invasive methods that can measure carbon changes over time. The desired resolution would imply the ability to measure changes during a three year period of as little as 50g per square meter (0.5 tonnes per hectare) for biomass or 100g per square meter (1.0 tonnes per hectare) for soil.
- in situ devices for producing time series measurements for a given location, where detection is the same resolution as above.
- remote measurement devices for detecting relative changes of carbon source or sink strength of terrestrial ecosystems at same resolution as stated above.

4. Assessing the beneficial and adverse side effects of enhancing sequestration in the natural terrestrial biosphere. Research might focus on:

- certain management practices, such as low tillage agriculture, may enhance carbon sequestration. What secondary impacts affect the soil and runoff as a consequence of these practices, such as soil fertility, erosion control, and possible increased use of pesticides?
- how would altering the carbon cycle affect the biogeochemical cycling of other elements?
- what might be the impact of enhancing the carbon content of soils on the structure and function of ecosystems including biodiversity?

B. Sequestration in the Oceans: The ocean represents a large current sink for the sequestration of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions as well as a large potential for further enhancement. Two strategies for enhancing carbon sequestration in the ocean have been proposed. One strategy is the enhancement of the net oceanic uptake from the atmosphere by fertilization of phytoplankton with micro- or macronutrients. A second strategy is the direct injection of a relatively pure CO₂ stream to ocean depths greater than 1000 m. Sources of CO₂ might include power plants, industries or other sources. The long term effectiveness and potential environmental consequences of ocean sequestration by either strategy, however, are as yet unknown.

Examples of relevant research areas to the issue of enhanced carbon sequestration by the oceans.

1. Environmental consequences of long term ocean fertilization. Research might focus on:

- examining changes in structure and function of marine ecosystems including community structure of phytoplankton and zooplankton, ocean food webs and trophodynamics, resulting from ocean fertilization.
- examining changes in natural oceanic biogeochemical cycles (carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, silicon, and sulfur) resulting from carbon sequestration.

2. Effectiveness of ocean fertilization on a large scale. Research might focus on:

- understanding the biological pumping of carbon to deep waters, the export of particulate organic carbon and particulate inorganic carbon to the deep sea, and mineralization or dissolution of all forms at depth.
- determining how micronutrients (such as iron) and macronutrients (such as nitrogen and phosphorus) regulate the biological pump in the ocean.
- determining to what extent increased carbon fixation in surface waters will result in an increase in carbon sequestered in the deep ocean, and how long it will remain sequestered. One approach might be the use of coupled physical, chemical and biological models.

3. Environmental consequences of direct injection of CO₂ into the ocean in midwater or deep sea habitats. Research might focus on:

- understanding the effects of sustained release of concentrated CO₂ on biogeochemistry and ecosystem structure and function.
- determining the effects of changes in pH and CO₂ on organisms from midwater and deep sea habitats.
- understanding the longer-term fate of carbon, which is added to the ocean including the carbonate chemistry of mid- and deep-ocean water.

4. Effectiveness of direct injection of CO₂ for carbon sequestration. Research might focus on:

- addressing weaknesses in Ocean General Circulation Models (OGCMs), specifically western boundary currents, ocean bottom currents and sub-grid scale processes, and test models using natural or experimental tracers.
- coupling near-field with far-field effects of CO₂ injection, for example, couple plume modeling with basin and global scale ocean circulation models.

Collaboration

Proposers are encouraged to collaborate with researchers in other institutions, such as: universities, industry, non-profit organizations, federal laboratories and Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), including the DOE National Laboratories, where appropriate, and to include cost sharing and/or consortia wherever feasible. Additional information on collaboration is available in the Application Guide for the Office of Science Financial Assistance Program that is available via the Internet at: <http://www.sc.doe.gov/production/grants/Colab.html>.

Program Funding

It is anticipated that up to a total of \$2,000,000 will be available for awards in this area during FY 2000, contingent upon availability of appropriated funds. Multiple year funding of awards is expected, and is also contingent upon availability of funds, progress of the research, and continuing program need.

Preproposals

A brief preproposal may be submitted. The preproposal should identify on the cover sheet the institution, Principal Investigator name, address, telephone, fax and E-mail address, title of the project, proposed collaborators, and the technical area of scientific research (i.e. A. Sequestration in the Terrestrial Biosphere or B. Sequestration in the Oceans). The preproposal should consist of a two to three page narrative describing the research project objectives and methods of accomplishment. These will be reviewed relative to the scope and research needs of the Carbon Sequestration Research Program.

DATES: Proposers are encouraged (but not required) to submit a brief preproposal for programmatic review. Early submission of preproposals is encouraged to allow time for meaningful dialog.

The deadline for receipt of formal proposals is 4:30 p.m., E.S.T., March 2, 2000, to be accepted for merit review and to permit timely consideration for award in Fiscal Year 2000 and early Fiscal Year 2001.

ADDRESSES: Preproposals, referencing Program Announcement LAB00-09, for Section A on Terrestrial Biosphere should be sent E-mail to roger.dahlman@science.doe.gov and for Section B on the Oceans to anna.palmisano@science.doe.gov.

Formal proposals, referencing Program Announcement LAB00-09, should be sent to: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Science, Environmental Sciences Division, SC-74, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874-1290, ATTN: Program Announcement LAB00-09. This address must also be used when submitting proposals by U.S. Postal Service Express Mail or any other commercial overnight delivery service, or when hand-carried by the proposer.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. John Houghton, Environmental Sciences Division, SC-74, Office of Biological and Environmental Research, Office of Science, U.S. Department of Energy, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874-1290, telephone: (301) 903-8288, E-mail: john.houghton@science.doe.gov, fax: (301) 903-8519.

Preproposals are strongly encouraged but not required prior to submission of a full proposal. Please note that notification of a successful preproposal is not an indication that an award will be made in response to the formal proposal.

The research project description must be 15 pages or less, exclusive of attachments and must contain an abstract or summary of the proposed research. Attachments include curriculum vitae, a listing of all current and pending federal support, and letters of intent when collaborations are part of the proposed research. Curriculum vitae should be submitted in a form similar to that of NIH or NSF (two to three pages), see for example: <http://www.nsf.gov:80/bfa/cpo/gpg/fkit.htm#forms-9>.

The instructions and format described below should be followed. Reference Program Announcement LAB00-09 on all submissions and inquiries about this program.

**OFFICE OF SCIENCE
GUIDE FOR PREPARATION OF SCIENTIFIC/TECHNICAL PROPOSALS
TO BE SUBMITTED BY NATIONAL LABORATORIES**

Proposals from National Laboratories submitted to the Office of Science (SC) as a result of this program announcement will follow the Department of Energy Field Work Proposal process with additional information requested to allow for scientific/technical merit review. The following guidelines for content and format are intended to facilitate an understanding of the requirements necessary for SC to conduct a merit review of a proposal. Please follow the guidelines carefully, as deviations could be cause for declination of a proposal without merit review.

1. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be subjected to formal merit review (peer review) and will be evaluated against the following criteria which are listed in descending order of importance:

Scientific and/or technical merit of the project

Appropriateness of the proposed method or approach

Competency of the personnel and adequacy of the proposed resources

Reasonableness and appropriateness of the proposed budget

The evaluation will include program policy factors such as the relevance of the proposed research to the terms of the announcement, the uniqueness of the proposer's capabilities, and demonstrated usefulness of the research for proposals in other DOE Program Offices as evidenced by a history of programmatic support directly related to the proposed work.

2. Summary of Proposal Contents

Field Work Proposal (FWP) Format (Reference DOE Order 5700.7C) (DOE ONLY)

Proposal Cover Page

Table of Contents

Abstract

Narrative

Literature Cited

Budget and Budget Explanation

Other support of investigators

Biographical Sketches

Description of facilities and resources

Appendix

2.1 Number of Copies to Submit

An original and seven copies of the formal proposal/FWP must be submitted.

3. Detailed Contents of the Proposal

Proposals must be readily legible, when photocopied, and must conform to the following three requirements: the height of the letters must be no smaller than 10 point with at least 2 points of spacing between lines (leading); the type density must average no more than 17 characters per inch; the margins must be at least one-half inch on all sides. Figures, charts, tables, figure legends, etc., may include type smaller than these requirements so long as they are still fully legible.

3.1 Field Work Proposal Format (Reference DOE Order 5700.7C) (DOE ONLY)

The Field Work Proposal (FWP) is to be prepared and submitted consistent with policies of the investigator's laboratory and the local DOE Operations Office. Additional information is also requested to allow for scientific/technical merit review.

Laboratories may submit proposals directly to the SC Program office listed above. A copy should also be provided to the appropriate DOE operations office.

3.2 Proposal Cover Page

The following proposal cover page information may be placed on plain paper. No form is required.

Title of proposed project
SC Program announcement title
Name of laboratory
Name of principal investigator (PI)
Position title of PI
Mailing address of PI
Telephone of PI
Fax number of PI
Electronic mail address of PI
Name of official signing for laboratory*
Title of official
Fax number of official
Telephone of official
Electronic mail address of official
Requested funding for each year; total request
Use of human subjects in proposed project:
 If activities involving human subjects are not planned at any time during the proposed project period, state "No"; otherwise state "Yes", provide the IRB Approval date and Assurance of Compliance Number and include all necessary information with the proposal should human subjects be involved.
Use of vertebrate animals in proposed project:

If activities involving vertebrate animals are not planned at any time during this project, state "No"; otherwise state "Yes" and provide the IACUC Approval date and Animal Welfare Assurance number from NIH and include all necessary information with the proposal.

Signature of PI, date of signature

Signature of official, date of signature*

*The signature certifies that personnel and facilities are available as stated in the proposal, if the project is funded.

3.3 Table of Contents

Provide the initial page number for each of the sections of the proposal. Number pages consecutively at the bottom of each page throughout the proposal. Start each major section at the top of a new page. Do not use unnumbered pages and do not use suffices, such as 5a, 5b.

3.4 Abstract

Provide an abstract of no more than 250 words. Give the broad, long-term objectives and what the specific research proposed is intended to accomplish. State the hypotheses to be tested. Indicate how the proposed research addresses the SC scientific/technical area specifically described in this announcement.

3.5 Narrative

The narrative comprises the research plan for the project and is limited to 25 pages. It should contain the following subsections:

Background and Significance: Briefly sketch the background leading to the present proposal, critically evaluate existing knowledge, and specifically identify the gaps which the project is intended to fill. State concisely the importance of the research described in the proposal. Explain the relevance of the project to the research needs identified by the Office of Science. Include references to relevant published literature, both to work of the investigators and to work done by other researchers.

Preliminary Studies: Use this section to provide an account of any preliminary studies that may be pertinent to the proposal. Include any other information that will help to establish the experience and competence of the investigators to pursue the proposed project. References to appropriate publications and manuscripts submitted or accepted for publication may be included.

Research Design and Methods: Describe the research design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Describe new techniques and methodologies and explain the advantages over existing techniques and methodologies. As part of this section, provide a tentative sequence or timetable for the project.

Subcontract or Consortium Arrangements: If any portion of the project described under "Research Design and Methods" is to be done in collaboration with another institution, provide information on the institution and why it is to do the specific component of the project. Further information on any such arrangements is to be given in the sections "Budget and Budget Explanation", "Biographical Sketches", and "Description of Facilities and Resources".

3.6 Literature Cited

List all references cited in the narrative. Limit citations to current literature relevant to the proposed research. Information about each reference should be sufficient for it to be located by a reviewer of the proposal.

3.7 Budget and Budget Explanation

A detailed budget is required for the entire project period, which normally will be three years, and for each fiscal year. It is preferred that DOE's budget page, Form 4620.1 be used for providing budget information*. Modifications of categories are permissible to comply with institutional practices, for example with regard to overhead costs.

A written justification of each budget item is to follow the budget pages. For personnel this should take the form of a one-sentence statement of the role of the person in the project. Provide a detailed justification of the need for each item of permanent equipment. Explain each of the other direct costs in sufficient detail for reviewers to be able to judge the appropriateness of the amount requested.

Further instructions regarding the budget are given in section 4 of this guide.

* Form 4620.1 is available at web site: <http://www.sc.doe.gov/production/grants/forms.html>

3.8 Other Support of Investigators

Other support is defined as all financial resources, whether Federal, non-Federal, commercial or institutional, available in direct support of an individual's research endeavors. Information on active and pending other support is required for all senior personnel, including investigators at collaborating institutions to be funded by a subcontract. For each item of other support, give the organization or agency, inclusive dates of the project or proposed project, annual funding, and level of effort devoted to the project.

3.9 Biographical Sketches

This information is required for senior personnel at the laboratory submitting the proposal and at all subcontracting institutions. The biographical sketch is limited to a maximum of two pages for each investigator.

3.10 Description of Facilities and Resources

Describe briefly the facilities to be used for the conduct of the proposed research. Indicate the performance sites and describe pertinent capabilities, including support facilities (such as machine shops) that will be used during the project. List the most important equipment items already available for the project and their pertinent capabilities. Include this information for each subcontracting institution, if any.

3.11 Appendix

Include collated sets of all appendix materials with each copy of the proposal. Do not use the appendix to circumvent the page limitations of the proposal. Information should be included that may not be easily accessible to a reviewer.

Reviewers are not required to consider information in the Appendix, only that in the body of the proposal. Reviewers may not have time to read extensive appendix materials with the same care as they will read the proposal proper.

The appendix may contain the following items: up to five publications, manuscripts (accepted for publication), abstracts, patents, or other printed materials directly relevant to this project, but not generally available to the scientific community; and letters from investigators at other institutions stating their agreement to participate in the project (do not include letters of endorsement of the project).

4. Detailed Instructions for the Budget

(DOE Form 4620.1 "Budget Page" may be used)

4.1 Salaries and Wages

List the names of the principal investigator and other key personnel and the estimated number of person-months for which DOE funding is requested. Proposers should list the number of postdoctoral associates and other professional positions included in the proposal and indicate the number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) person-months and rate of pay (hourly, monthly or annually). For graduate and undergraduate students and all other personnel categories such as secretarial, clerical, technical, etc., show the total number of people needed in each job title and total salaries needed. Salaries requested must be consistent with the institution's regular practices. The budget explanation should define concisely the role of each position in the overall project.

4.2 Equipment

DOE defines equipment as "an item of tangible personal property that has a useful life of more than two years and an acquisition cost of \$5000 or more." Special purpose equipment means equipment which is used only for research, scientific or other technical activities. Items of needed equipment should be individually listed by description and estimated cost, including tax, and adequately justified. Allowable items ordinarily will be limited to scientific equipment that is not already available for the conduct of the work. General purpose office equipment normally will not be considered eligible for support.

4.3 Domestic Travel

The type and extent of travel and its relation to the research should be specified. Funds may be requested for attendance at meetings and conferences, other travel associated with the work and subsistence. In order to qualify for support, attendance at meetings or conferences must enhance the investigator's capability to perform the research, plan extensions of it, or disseminate its results. Consultant's travel costs also may be requested.

4.4 Foreign Travel

Foreign travel is any travel outside Canada and the United States and its territories and possessions. Foreign travel may be approved only if it is directly related to project objectives.

4.5 Other Direct Costs

The budget should itemize other anticipated direct costs not included under the headings above, including materials and supplies, publication costs, computer services, and consultant services (which are discussed below). Other examples are: aircraft rental, space rental at research establishments away from the institution, minor building alterations, service charges, and fabrication of equipment or systems not available off-the-shelf. Reference books and periodicals may be charged to the project only if they are specifically related to the research.

a. Materials and Supplies

The budget should indicate in general terms the type of required expendable materials and supplies with their estimated costs. The breakdown should be more detailed when the cost is substantial.

b. Publication Costs/Page Charges

The budget may request funds for the costs of preparing and publishing the results of research, including costs of reports, reprints page charges, or other journal costs (except costs for prior or early publication), and necessary illustrations.

c. Consultant Services

Anticipated consultant services should be justified and information furnished on each individual's expertise, primary organizational affiliation, daily compensation rate and number of days expected service. Consultant's travel costs should be listed separately under travel in the budget.

d. Computer Services

The cost of computer services, including computer-based retrieval of scientific and technical information, may be requested. A justification based on the established computer service rates should be included.

e. Subcontracts

Subcontracts should be listed so that they can be properly evaluated. There should be an anticipated cost and an explanation of that cost for each subcontract. The total amount of each subcontract should also appear as a budget item.

4.6 Indirect Costs

Explain the basis for each overhead and indirect cost. Include the current rates.