

Question and Answer Log

Question No.	Date Submitted	Question	Answer
1	06/10/20	I'd like to watch the OIP information session June 11, but I have a faculty meeting at the same time. Will this conference call be recorded and available for others to watch after?	Yes, we are going to record it and will have a link to the recording on our website at https://www.ameslab.gov/cmi/cmi-oip .
2	06/11/20	You mentioned direct production of nickel as an example – battery grade nickel products* but nickel isn't in the critical materials of interest – can you clarify whether that is an acceptable concept paper?	Nickel is not acceptable.
3	06/11/20	Where can I download a copy of the presentation for further distribution?	This will be available online by Friday, June 11.
4	06/11/20	Will you consider innovative strategies to recover REE from waste fluorescent lamps as a proposal?	Yes, we have generally moved away from lighting as a target as part of our clean energy technologies. A previous project was to find replacement phosphors; not recovery. Encourage you to reach out to our Recycling and Reuse areas. Send an email to Tom Lograsso, and he can make an introduction. It would be acceptable under this Call.
5	06/11/20	Can you clarify if 50% cost share means 1:1 match of federal (CMI) funds or \$0.5 for \$1 federal funds?	It's 1-to-1.
6	06/11/20	Is there a way for companies to indicate their interest in joining a team?	Stacy Joiner will post a teaming request form on CMI's OIP webpage by Friday, June 11.
7	06/11/20	What kind of cost share is acceptable, cash or in-kind?	Only in-kind, as we have no way to accept cash. A limitation of the organizational structure of CMI will not allow us to accept cash or direct funds as cost share. All cost-share needs to be an in-kind contribution.
8	06/11/20	Would a proposal for a process that creates a value-added, but non-critical material containing output from a critical material separation/refining/recycling process be considered responsive? I.e., find a use for a non-critical material product that would otherwise be discarded as waste?	We would have to look at that on a case-by-case basis. If it improves the economics of recovery of the critical material by being able to extract something else of value, that would be considered. You would want to indicate how that value is enhanced.

9	06/11/20	Will you consider developing new synthesis route to reduce steps and cost of making lithium battery cathode materials?	Yes
10	06/11/20	Graphite is on the chart, how about Graphene?	If valuable as an alternative to graphite as anode, then yes.
11	06/11/20	Are there eligibility requirements for non-lead institutions? i.e. Do they also need to be domestic?	They do not need to be domestic, however, there is an approval process that needs to be met. That approval process is through DOE HQ, and so there can be some limitations , but CMI is aware of the approval application process, and upon award, CMI would assist in that process.
12	06/11/20	Can you elaborate on the "Team" - For example, each proposal includes: 1 Industrial Partner, 1 Academic Partner and CMI or would it be 1 industrial partner and CMI?	A team is defined as two or more institutions; one of which must be industry. CMI itself is not a partner. For this proposal only requirement is two or more institutions, one of which is an industry representative and that all members of team are eligible and willing to become a CMI Team Member.
13	06/11/20	Please clarify 50% or 50 cents on a dollar?	It is a 1-1 match, so if CMI is providing \$500,000 of support, then project total should be \$1 million
14	06/11/20	Would a proposal for a process ... separation..recycling...be responsive? For example find use for non critical product otherwise discarded as waste?	It depends...really about recovering the critical material so indicate how that value is enhanced.
15	06/11/20	Would a proposal to develop a new synthesis route of maybe li battery cathode be acceptable ?	Yes
16	06/11/20	Do you have a database of REE wastes or industries generating significant REE wastes?	We will check and post in the FAQs if we locate one.
17	06/11/20	Would recovery of pure REO or RE salts from scrap / spent ceramics (coatings), spent SOFC electrodes etc. be relevant to this call ?	Yes

18	06/11/20	Please define domestic entity. 40% of the world's mining companies are listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Yet, many own deposits in the U.S.	A domestic entity is clearly registered in U.S. An attribute of an entity that is favorable is whether foreign or domestic is entities have domestic manufacturing sites or mining sites that are within the United States. This is a difficult question. We certainly utilize taxpayer dollars, so our commitment to taxpayers is to commit to use for U.S. manufacturing. I don't think there is a hard definition. <Stacy Joiner stated that DOE states a Foreign Entity is defined as 1) A foreign government or foreign government agency; 2) Any form of business enterprise organized under the laws of any country other than the United States or its possessions; 3) Any form of business enterprise organized or incorporated under the laws of the United States, or a State or other jurisdiction within the United States, which is owned, controlled, or influenced by a foreign government, agency, firm, corporation or person; or 4) Any person who is not a U.S. citizen.>
19	06/11/20	What are the differences on this CMI request versus the recent DOE/EERE Topic 2 request? Is it meant to overlap or be fundamentally different?	It is meant to be overlapped, although topic 2 for DOE EERE solicitation several weeks ago is more narrowly focused on rare earth separations and Li separations. We take a broader approach, in terms of CMI's areas of interest. Not fundamentally different, but some overlap.
20	06/11/20	Does the process feedstock have to be unconventional? For example, can spodumene mineral or PA Mercer clay be considered as feedstock for a novel process for Li extraction?	It might be in the eye of the beholder. Spodumene maybe considered a unconventional source for Li, as the current primary sources are brines. so yes, would consider falling within this call.
21	06/11/20	Does the critical material source have to be domestic?	Our experience in with working with DOE is that they are very concerned about manufacturing being done domestically on U.S. soil. For example, separations plant operating domestically but sourcing from a foreign souce may be acceptable.
22	06/11/20	What's the difference or relationship of the CMI call to the newly released AMO critical materials FOA?	We require award recipients to join CMI as full Team Members; the AMO call does not. AMO encourages participation with CMI, but it's not necessary to join CMI (if you receive an Award directly from AMO).
23	06/11/20	Is lanthanum recovery from NiMH of interest?	We have not focused on NiMH batteries when we project out in the mid-term growth models for clean energy and therefore are not in consideration for this call for proposals

24	06/11/20	Is the conversion of coal to graphite considered "responsive"?	Yes. Criteria is battery-grade graphite as the outcome. Coal may be a viable source.
25	06/11/20	What is the cost to become a CMI Team Member for industry?	No cost for full membership (Team Membership).
26	06/11/20	Lead institutions are limited to one submission. That means industry, right? But can National labs, for example, as a sub-recipient participate in multiple submissions?	Correct – a lead institution can only submit one application/concept paper no matter the character of that entity. All entities are eligible to participate as a sub-recipients in multiple concept papers. There is no limit to participate as a subparticipant.
27	06/11/20	Does the lead institute need to perform a greater percentage of the effort than each of the other member(s)?	There is no requirement on the Lead's institution percentage. There is an expectation that the Lead Institution will have substantive participation in the work.
28	06/11/20	What about the waste from coal industry as a feedstock, such as fly ash? Would those be responsive?	There is a separate program in the DOE through fossil energy program that is geared toward recovery of materials from coal and coal byproducts. Concepts papers on this topic are not of interest and will be considered non-responsive
29	06/11/20	For developing substitutes NOT being of interest (for permanent magnets), is that related to substituting for elements within existing composition (e.g. NdFeB) or developing alternatives for existing magnets (e.g. FeNi replacing NdFeB) or both?	Substitutions for RE permanent magnets is not of interest for this call because there is significant R&D already supported by CMI in this area.
30	06/11/20	What are the range of TRLs you're looking for?	Scope of R&D portfolio is 2-4, fundamental at lab through lab demonstration of technology TRL 4.
31	06/11/20	If a mine is located in the U.S. but a company is located in Canada--clarify if that is OK?	Yes I believe that is acceptable because mine and mining operations are domestically sited as long as the company that is located in Canada is able to meet the requirements to become a Team Member, which does depend on DOE.
32	06/11/20	This may be a repeat question but will the slides be posted? Where?	At https://www.ameslab.gov/cmi/cmi-oip
33	06/11/20	Is there a place we could go to find other CMI partners to connect with? I'm looking to join a team if possible.	Watch for a list at https://www.ameslab.gov/cmi/cmi-oip

34	06/16/20	Will you consider developing new synthesis route to reduce steps and cost of making lithium battery cathode materials? Does the same apply to permanent magnets? Will a new synthesis route for existing magnet composition be acceptable?	If the concept main idea is to process existing composition in new and novel ways, then no this would not be considered. If the main idea is to convert raw material into a form more suitable for magnet processing then yes this would be with scope.
35	06/16/20	Would you consider a project that takes our recycling waste as a feedstock? The need is with respect to the size and distribution of the Fe-oxide that result from the recycling which can be more applicable for a company's product compared to commercially available products. For our recycling, this converts waste disposal cost to revenue.	A concept that address increasing the value proposition for a critical material through innovations related to coproducts/byproducts processing would be considered in scope if the impact on the critical material processing is clearly described.
36	06/17/20	When submitting a concept paper and/or proposal, is there a way to mark business sensitive or proprietary information?	The header and footer of every page that contains confidential, proprietary, or privileged information should be marked as follows: "Contains Confidential, Proprietary, or Privileged Information Exempt from Public Disclosure." In addition, every line and paragraph containing proprietary, privileged, or trade secret information should be clearly marked with double brackets or highlighting.
37	6/18/2020	The main focus of our proposal would be on the extraction of critical minerals from oil/gas wastewater using novel separation methodologies. According to the Call and webinar, I believe this topic would be considered responsive. We also have resources and capabilities in our team to investigate the possibility of increasing critical mineral concentration in wastewater through the molecular dynamic simulation of reservoirs. I was wondering whether adding this tasks alongside separation tasks would make our proposal not responsive?	The extraction of critical minerals from oil/gas wastewater would be considered responsive. The concept paper will be evaluated on the overall technical plan needed to meet the goals/objective of the project. The individual tasks to successfully develop this source is left up to the applicant to define.
38	6/24/2020	We are in the process of shortlisting some of our partners for our proposed research. However, I am concerned we might not be able to finalize by July 1. What would be the best path forward? Could we submit the paper without partner members listed? Or perhaps with non-final partner members listed?	You may submit your entire list of confirmed and unconfirmed partners in your Concept paper. For those partners that are not confirmed, list "anticipated" in parentheses after those affiliations.
39	6/29/2020	Can an industry partner submit two letters of support for two different projects?	Yes, an industry partner may submit letters of support for more than one project.

40	6/29/2020	If funded, how often will costshare be collected and what qualifies as allowable costshare?	Actual costshare will be collected on a quarterly basis. All expenditures must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable in accordance with the applicable Federal cost principles. An entity may not use Federal funds for cost-sharing obligations.
41	7/27/2020	We are preparing our full proposal and wonder could the cost-share be in the form of a combination of in-kind personnel time and testing services?	Yes, in-kind contributions may be in the form of in-kind personnel time, supplies, or other goods and services directly benefiting and specifically designated to the OIP project. For more information regarding allowable cost share, please see 2 CFR § 200.306 - Cost sharing or matching.

42	8/5/2020	<p>At what point during the awarding process can the proposer decline the award? What is the point of contractual obligation? (What if CMI doesn't offer enough funds to make it meaningful for the respondent to do the work? What if the respondent decides to "go it alone" and conduct the research with their own (non-governmental) funds?)</p>	<p>If a proposal team receives notification that their proposal has been selected for award negotiation, the team will have approximately four weeks to review the CMI Master NDA and the CMI's IP Management Plan. At the end of the four-week period, the proposal team member institutions will either execute both documents, individually, or choose to decline the Award. Concurrently, there will be negotiations around funding levels, statement of work, and the establishment of subcontracts with any of the proposal team institutions receiving funds and the Ames Laboratory, the parent organization of the Critical Materials Institute. At any point during this process any Party could choose to withdraw and end negotiations. If a respondent decides to "go it alone" and conduct the research with their own (non-governmental) funds, then they will be responsible for communicating this to their proposal team members. If one of the proposers on the team is a DOE National Laboratory, there is a mechanism available known as a Strategic Partnership Project (SPP) that addresses contractual terms and conditions required for working with a national laboratory. These agreements are executed with the individual laboratory and CMI does not have a role in these negotiations. Information on SPPs can be found at https://www.labpartnering.org/partnering.</p>
43	8/5/2020	<p>Is this form used to ensure individuals are not over allocated to government projects? And/or are current/pending/submitting status & amounts by reviewers used to influence if funds (& how much) will be provided to responders?</p>	<p>The Current and Pending Support Form assists in identifying potential scientific, budgetary or commitment overlap in financial assistance awards. If you're being funded to do the proposed work for someone else, we do not want to duplicate that support.</p>

44	8/5/2020	Does "pending" mean acknowledgement had been received that funds are coming to the respondent from the government? (not just if an application has been submitted to some other body)	"Pending" means any proposal that has been submitted by you (or your proposal partners) to an agency/organization that you are awaiting a final decision on (awarded/not awarded).
45	8/5/2020	For comparison, if we were filling this form out for some other agency, how would we describe our status regarding CMI OIP? (my take: not "pending" (no funding decisions have been made), maybe "submission planned in near future" (we are working on the full application)).	For example, once this proposal is submitted to CMI, it's status would be "pending" until you receive notice that it's been awarded or denied.
46	8/5/2020	'Other agencies' would include the Department of Energy?	Yes, "other agencies" would include the Department of Energy. Even though the CMI is made up of several DOE National Laboratories, we are not privy to their "pending proposal" information.
47	8/6/2020	I have a question regarding the bibliography in the full CMI-OIP proposal. Can it be added as an appendix (Appendix E)? or this should be part of the 5-page technical narrative?	Adding a bibliography as an Appendix E to the proposal is acceptable.
48	8/11/2020	Our proposal will take approximately two years to complete. Should tasks be proposed based on a two-year period?	Yes
49	8/11/2020	Our proposal will take approximately two years to complete. Should the budget be based on a one or two-year performance period?	Budgets should be based on an annual basis for each of the two years.
50	8/11/2020	Does the 5-page Technical Narrative page limit include the "Workplan" and "Project Management"?	Yes. The "Workplan" and "Project Management" (along with "Background and Significance") are a part of the 5-page Technical Narrative. The cover page, one-page project overview, and the appendices do not count against the five page limit.

51	8/11/2020	How does the money flow? Does the industrial partner receive the money and then, for example, contracts with the National Laboratory?	Ames Lab will establish contracts with each partner.
52	8/11/2020	Under Appendix A (<i>budget</i>), what is the difference between personnel and contractual (if some of the research will be subcontracted)?	If you subcontract with another entity to do work for your part of the proposal, then the subcontract costs should go in the contractual field only. Do not account for this type of work elsewhere in the budget template.
53	8/11/2020	If we subcontract an organization such as another National Laboratory or university to investigate something, are they personnel or contractual?	If you are subcontracting with another organization, then those costs would go in the contractual field only. Do not account for this type of work elsewhere in the budget template.
54	8/11/2020	Under Appendix C (<i>current and pending support</i>), are all planned personnel investigators?	Yes, please provide for each principal investigator.
55	8/11/2020	Are currently funded CMI projects considered "current" under Support and is this proposal for the CMI OIP considered "Pending"?	Yes, currently funded CMI projects are considered "current." Once this OIP proposal is submitted to CMI, it is considered "pending" until you receive notice that it has been awarded or denied.
56	8/12/2020	Is the purchasing of capital equipment to be used for the research determined in the proposal allowed on this OIP?	Capital equipment (as defined by DOE) is equipment (including research equipment) with a service life >2 years and in excess of \$500,000. Capital equipment requests are unallowable and will not be considered under the OIP award.

57	8/12/2020	What is your direct definition of capital equipment? Is it strictly related to buildings/infrastructure or broader?	See above answer. For equipment/property not deemed as capital equipment, supporting documentation for all acquired or fabricated property with an acquisition cost of \$10,000 or greater will need to be provided in the budget request and justification. All property acquired as a direct cost under the OIP subcontract, regardless of value, is considered government property and must be returned to Ames Laboratory at the completion of the work, unless other arrangements are made prior to the end of the project. These details will be confirmed during the contracting stage of the OIP award.
58	8/17/2020	Should the appendices be added to the end of the main proposal or be separate files?	Please create one file for your entire application.
59	8/17/2020	Can you (will you) provide written confirmation that the information we submit will not be shared with others, including any partners in industry, universities, etc.?	Each proposal will be reviewed by 4 independent reviewers who have signed a confidentiality agreement to participate in the review process. In addition, Question #36 of the FAQs addresses how confidential information in your proposal should be marked and addressed.