

## **Sustainability Performance Office Funding Opportunity Announcement (SPOFOA) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

1. Has the SPOFOA Financial Assistance Notice been updated since the launch of the program?

***Yes. The SPOFOA [Financial Assistance Notice](#) was updated and re-issued on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015. In response to applicant feedback, considerable flexibility was added to the "Section (II. E) Payments" provision to optimize co-funding and project implementation. Please download and review the revised document as this update may significantly impact the portfolio of project applications your site may wish to submit.***

2. We are organizing our contractors to come up with project applications for this funding. With limited budgets, most contractors may only be able to afford to do one project, but would like to submit more than one application to increase chances of being chosen. If multiple applications from the same company are selected, are they under any obligation to complete all those projects, or can they choose which project they would like to undertake and decline the award for the others?

***DOE-owned sites may submit multiple applications, provided that a single application is submitted for each project. If SPO selects more than one project submitted by a DOE-owned site, the site is not obligated to pursue all SPO-selected projects and may work with SPO during the negotiation phase to select the projects they would like to complete. Once projects have been selected and awarded SPO-funding, they must be completed within the 24-month performance period unless prior authorization has been granted by SPO.***

3. When would the period of performance of up to 24 months begin?

***The 24-month period of performance will begin immediately after award negotiations are complete and SPO sends a final project acceptance notification.***

4. Is there a specific timeframe in which a project must start? For example, could a 3-6 month project be delayed until the next fiscal year when more funding is available, as long as it is completed within the 24-month period?

***SPO recognizes the challenge of obtaining the necessary co-funding and is willing to be flexible on project start dates, provided that the 24-month Period of Performance, which begins when negotiations are complete and awards are granted, is not exceeded, unless prior authorization has been granted by SPO.***

5. Are projects that are currently in progress eligible to receive funding?

***SPO has a preference for new projects as the goal of the SPO funding opportunity is to become more proactively involved in the enhancement of DOE sustainability by providing financial assistance to support projects that will move the Department toward meeting its goals. However, SPO will review and consider all projects that meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the [Financial Assistance Notice](#).***

6. The SPOFOA Financial Assistance Notice states that applications focused primarily on research and development activities are not of interest. If an application is deploying and demonstrating a new technology that contributes to DOE goals by reducing consumption (i.e. energy, water, petroleum), are they of interest?

***Selection of a project deploying a new technology is possible, as all applications will be evaluated on a case by case basis. However, the technology should be sufficiently developed to provide a very high probability that the projected impact on sustainability targets will be achieved.***

***Per Section I.B of the SPOFOA [Financial Assistance Notice](#), SPO prefers projects that will have the greatest impact on improving site performance in accordance with the OMB Sustainability & Energy Scorecard and that have strong returns on investment, from both a financial and an energy/environmental aspect. Therefore, an application deploying and demonstrating a new technology must demonstrate that these criteria can be met.***

7. Are there any limits or preferences for laboratories partnering up and collaborating?

***SPO encourages collaboration across DOE labs and sites. Only one application including a list of all participants and site locations involved should be submitted for each individual collaborative project.***

8. The application instructions state that one or more of the OMB Sustainability Goals must be supported by the project. Does this offering exclude other goals, such as reduction of non-potable water use? Would improvements to buildings not currently meeting HPSB goals count?

***SPOFOA will consider all projects that impact any of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Sustainability & Energy Scorecard goals, including those areas not specifically listed in the "PROJECT IMPACT" section of the [SPOFOA Project Application Template](#). Both HPSB and reduction of non-potable water use are areas in which we are eager to improve Departmental efficiency. Applications focusing on improvements to HPSB in any capacity are eligible and will be reviewed by SPO.***

9. During negotiations, milestones are set up, with criteria for completion of the project put in place. Is the full award only payable when the entire project is complete? Is the contractor required to have 100% of the funding available to complete the project, and then get reimbursed?

***In response to applicant feedback, SPOFOA has added considerable flexibility to the "Section (II. E) Payments" provisions of the SPOFOA [Financial Assistance Notice](#) that was re-issued on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015:***

***The funding schedule will include an initial payment of 50% of the cost at the initiation of the project, with the remainder of the funds to be allocated per negotiated terms relative to critical milestones. The actual milestones and the associated distribution of funds will be determined between the Recipient and SPO during award negotiations. If milestones are not reached, SPO reserves the right to withhold funding or cancel the payment altogether. This will be determined solely by SPO. In extraordinary circumstances SPO may consider releasing an initial payment of 100%. SPO will not make any payments to Recipients until cost-share funding has been secured and documented in writing to the SPO.***

10. Can federally funded research & development centers (FFRDC) use their overhead funds for cost leveraging (co-funding) of both facility upgrade/improvement projects and repair/maintenance projects? Or would the FFRDC co-funding need to be from General Plant Project (GPP) funds for a facility upgrade/improvement project?

***Per "Section III b. Cost Leveraging" on p. 6 of the Financial Assistance Notice, SPO makes no restrictions as to the type of funding that can be used for co-funding beyond the stipulation that any existing funding provided by SPO cannot be used. However, to determine if there may be internal financial controls at your site/lab which may impact how you utilize overhead and/or general plant project funds, you will need to consult the appropriate site/lab contacts.***

11. Our site plans on applying for incentive money from a utility, but this money would not be available until project completion. The contractor will provide funding for all costs not covered by the award up front, and be reimbursed by the utility later. Is it enough to put in the application that we will apply for the funding from the utility as part of our co-funding, and how much we expect to receive from this source, even though that money will come so much later?

***Please note that the SPOFOA [Financial Assistance Notice](#) "Section (II. E) Payments" states:***

***"SPO will not make any payments to Recipients until cost-share funding has been secured and documented in writing to the SPO."***

***Therefore, neither contractor reimbursement arrangements nor an application for co-funding constitutes sufficient proof of co-funding. SPO requires formal documentation confirming that the co-funding is guaranteed. The funding schedule of SPO payments can be negotiated, but all co-funding cited in the SPO application must be guaranteed.***

12. The guidance states that projects that move the Department towards sustainability goal achievement will be given the greatest consideration, and indicates that improving the HPSB portfolio is desired. In response we are considering HPSB of an existing building, however, it may span several months to complete. Our initial estimates indicate that completion will not be FY2015 to meet the current HPSB goal deadline. Does the SPO view accomplishing HPSB even after the goal deadline as a highly desirable?

***SPO will consider any type of project that has the potential to move the site and DOE toward achieving sustainability goals, but has an overarching goal and preferential interest in advancing DOE facilities toward achieving High Performance Sustainable Buildings (HPSB) compliant status, irrespective of the current FY2015 HPSB target goal deadline. It is not required for projects to be completed prior to goal specific deadlines as all federally mandated goals stemming from Executive Orders are currently under review and will likely be extended through 2020 with revised, more aggressive, targets.***