

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Call or write Gail A. McHenry for a copy of the collection instrument and instructions at NSF Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd. Suite 245, Arlington, VA. 22230; call (703) 306-1125 x2010; or send email to gmchenry@nsf.gov. Please include OMB No. 3145-0101 with your communication.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Abstract. This survey collects information on the science and engineering (S&E) research facilities at the nation's higher education institution. These modifications to the approved 1998 questionnaire will make the data more useful to Federal agencies and policymakers. The OMB, Health Division, intends to use the aggregate data to establish benchmark guidelines for cost of construction and renovation. Indirect cost rate negotiators will also use these benchmarks for colleges and universities.

2. Proposed Modifications to the OMB-Approved 1998 Survey.

- *Sample size.* We are requesting that the 1998 survey sample be increased from 315 to 365. (This change is requested by NIH, NSF, and OMB.) Expanding the sample size with 50 additional institutions will allow for data to be reported by Carnegie classification, by minority serving institutions and institutions within the EPSCoR States, and to ensure that appropriate representation is made for each state.

- *Additional Information*

- Currently data are collected for the total net assignable square feet (NASF) of animal laboratories. NIH has requested that the survey collect the percent of total animal research NASF assigned to levels of restricted use laboratories. The information is readily available to the institutions and reporting it would be of minimal burden. This request would also serve the need of OMB to identify some of the driving forces behind high cost of some research facilities.

- For more usable data, OMB is requesting that data also be reported by gross square feet (GSF) of space in science and engineering disciplines. Institutions already have that data to calculate the NASF of that project

- *Clarifying Relationship of Data*

- OMB has requested that in addition to collecting the total repair/renovation or new construction costs (including non-fixed equipment over \$1 million), that we also collect the *proportion* of repair/renovation or new construction

project costs assignable to non-fixed equipment costing over \$1 million. These data are readily available to the institutions and reporting these data should add very little burden.

- OMB has requested that in addition to collecting the proportion of construction and repair/renovation cost attributable to institutional funds, that we collect the *percent of institutional funds made up by indirect costs recovered* from federal grants and/or contracts. The question will be posed in two parts: (1) Asking if the institution has ready access to these data; and (2) if data are available, asking the institution to supply that data. This way of posing the question assures minimal burden to the respondent.

- *Discontinuing* the collection of the status of institutions relative to the cap on tax-exempt bonds. This modification was requested by NIH as well as NSF.

3. Use of Information. The purpose of this study is to collect data about status of academic S&E research facilities. The information from this survey will be used by Federal policy makers, planners, and budget analysts in making policy decisions, as well as by academic officials, the S&E establishment, and State agencies that fund universities and colleges.

The NSF will publish a separate report of the findings for Congress; it will also prepare a special report for NIH on the Status of Biomedical Research Facilities and it will also include them in other NSF compilations such as National Patterns of R&D Resources and Science and Engineering Indicators. Special reports will be prepared for other Federal agencies on an as-needed basis. A public release file of collected data in aggregate form will be made available to researchers on the World Wide Web. The results of the survey will help policy makers in decision about the health of academic S&E research, funding, regulations, and reporting guidelines.

4. Expected Respondents. Not-for-Profit institutions, specifically, research organizations/hospitals and academic institutions.

5. Burden on the Public. Much of the proposed modification includes data that are readily available to the respondents; we expect that changes to the questionnaire will cause little or no change in burden hours. A substantial reduction in response burden over 1996 is expected with the improvements in the computer-aided survey: 60% of the institutions are expected to respond through this method in 1998, compared to 40% in 1986.

The Foundation estimates a total annual burden of 8,760 hours. The

calculation is $365 \text{ institutions} \times \text{total annual reporting and recordkeeping burden of } 24 \text{ hours per respondent}$.

Comments Requested

Date: NSF should receive written comments on or before September 29, 1997.

Address: Submit written comments to Mrs. McHenry through surface mail (NSF Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd. Suite 245, Arlington, VA 22230); email (gmchenry@nsf.gov); or fax (703-306-0201). Please include OMB No. 3145-0101 with your communication.

Special Areas for Review: NSF especially requests comments on:

(a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility;

(b) The accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information;

(c) Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(d) Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Dated: July 25, 1997.

Gail A. McHenry,

NSF Reports Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 97-20099 Filed 7-30-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7555-01-M

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Environmental Molecular Science Institutes (EMSI): Special Research Opportunity (NSF 97-135); Program Announcement

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Energy Research (ER) announce a one-time opportunity for support of Environmental Molecular Science Institutes (EMSI) aimed at increasing fundamental understanding of natural and industrial processes and their interaction at the molecular level. NSF and DOE encourage cohesive, interdisciplinary, university-industry group efforts in basic research on fundamental issues that underpin the amelioration of environmental problems caused by societal activities such as

manufacturing and utilization activities that are energy- and pollution-intensive.

This funding opportunity will establish one to three Environmental Molecular Science Institutes. Five year requests in the range of \$0.5 million to \$2 million per year are appropriate. Up to \$2.0 million per year from NSF will be made available beginning in FY98, subject to availability of funds. In addition, approximately \$2.0 million from DOE in FY98, subject to availability of funds, will support specific activities within Institutes appropriate to DOE interests, such as elaborated in the supplementary information section below. This announcement is being made jointly by DOE and NSF to ensure that the strongest possible programs are supported with the limited funds available, to minimize multiple submissions to the two agencies, and to concentrate resources to realize measurable progress in focused research areas.

An Institute should serve as a national model and resource for excellence in collaborative environmental research and in dissemination of results for solution of amelioration of environmental problems. To strengthen the probability that the proposed basic research focus will contribute in the future to improved technologies and processes, it is expected that proposals will include working collaborations with appropriate and relevant industries. Understanding the molecular behavior of complex, dynamic environmental systems is expected to require interdisciplinary approaches involving scientists from multiple departments. An Institute must have a focused research theme and specific goals. The organization and management structure must be designed to enable these goals to be met. An Institute should not be a collection of existing projects. Rather proposers are invited to take a fresh look at environmental challenges to develop a unified activity.

Examples of appropriate research areas include, but are not limited to: chemical and materials synthesis or processing for pollution prevention; integrated understanding of speciation, sorption, transport, and bioavailability in a specified environment; response of a specific environment to chemical perturbations caused by human activities. The proposed activities, as an ancillary benefit, should help to integrate research and education and provide broadened experience to students. Strong institutional support for programmatic reinforcement of the

educational activities will be considered positively.

Proposal Submission

Eligibility is limited to colleges, universities, and other not-for-profit institutions in the U.S. and its territories, as described in detail in the Grant Proposal Guide (NSF 95-27). Potential applicants are required to submit a brief preliminary proposal. All preliminary applications must reference this document (NSF 97-135) and five copies must be received by October 15, 1997. The preliminary proposal should include a project summary; a three-page project description that outlines goals, research plans, and roles of collaborators; biographical sketches limited to two pages per investigator; one budget page for the total funding requested (institutional signature is not required). Other general guidance and forms are provided in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (NSF 9527). Proposals must be sent to: EMSI (NSF 97-135), NSF—Room P60—PPU, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22230.

Preliminary proposals will be evaluated by NSF and DOE staff from relevant disciplines in order to advise Principal Investigators on responsiveness to goals and priorities described above and on the likelihood of successful competition with other proposals in the merit review process. Those submitting will be informed of the result of this review by November 15, 1997.

Full proposals (15 copies including the original, prepared in accordance with the NSF Grant Proposal Guide) must be received by February 1, 1998. These will be evaluated by appropriate mechanisms, which may include ad hoc mail review, panel review, or site visits. In addition to the published new NSF criteria, other factors will be considered, such as the potential for significant contributions to environmental chemistry, the strength of the collaborations planned, the value to education, and the potential for national leadership among the constituency interested in the research theme. Proposals involving industrial collaboration will receive preference over those of equal scientific merit that lack such collaboration. Activities considered for funding by DOE will be reviewed for excellence of the science and relevance to the mission of the Department and its technology programs. Below is Additional Information on scope, format, and review criteria.

Grants awarded as a result of this announcement will be administered in accordance with the terms and

conditions of NSF GC-1 (10/95) or FDP-III (u/1/96), Grant General Conditions. Copies of these documents are available on www.nsf.gov under "Grants and Awards." NSF encourages, but does not require, organizations responding to this announcement to contribute to the costs of the project beyond the minimum one-percent statutory cost-sharing requirement. However, any additional cost-sharing specified in the proposal will be referenced and included as a condition of any award resulting from this announcement.

Janet G. Osteryoung, Director, Division of Chemistry, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22230, josteryo@nsf.gov, 703-306-1845
Robert S. Marianelli, Director, Chemical Sciences Division, Office of Basic Energy Sciences, Office of Energy Research, U.S. Department of Energy, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874-1290, robert.marianelli@mailgw.er.doe.gov, (301) 903-5808

Additional Information on Scope of Institutes and Full Proposal Format

This letter broadly describes the nature and scope of an institute and is not intended to be unnecessarily prescriptive. There are many models and variations that may be considered, including the traditional understanding of an institute at a specific location, as well as regional or more widely distributed institutes. Proposal should include information that defines the institute, describes the planning process, defines mission and goals, describes how the desired goals will be achieved and how it will be determined that these goals have been accomplished. The proposing groups are encouraged to construct the appropriate organization and structure that will maximize the effectiveness and impact of their strengths and resources.

The leadership of an institute should be provided by a small group, including a director and, as appropriate for the size of the institute, an associate director and an external advisory committee. The director of an institute should be a respected scientist with demonstrated organizational, managerial, and leadership ability. An institute's scientific guidance should be provided by a committee of scientists from the participating institutions. Although a multi-institutional consortium may be involved, a single entity must accept overall management responsibility in dealing with NSF.

The NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG), NSF 95-27, describes the format required for proposals. The Project

Description in the full proposal will be subject to the page limitations for each section described below.

Proposals not adhering to these limits will be returned without review.

- *Detailed description of the intellectual focus and rationale for the institute, its overall goals, and expected impact (3 pages, maximum);
- *Planned scientific activities, including a five-year plan for phasing activities in or out, and the roles of the various partners (15 pages, maximum);
- *Plans for human resource development, including involvement of undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral students and members of under-represented groups (2 pages, maximum);
- *Description of planned outreach activities and dissemination (2 pages, maximum);
- *Description of goals and outcomes expected and how the impact will be demonstrated and evaluated (2 pages, maximum);
- *Description of the organizational structure of the institute, clearly outlining the proposed management structure, mechanisms for focusing institute activities, methods for selecting and integrating research emphases, criteria for selection of participants, allocating funds and equipment, and managing the involvement of other groups (4 pages, maximum).

Each biographical sketch, limited to two pages, should include a brief summary of results of prior NSF support. Please note that letters describing collaborative arrangements significant to the proposals should be included under "supplementary documentation." Only letters of commitment are permitted; "endorsement" letters may not be included. No appendices are permitted. Additional sources of financial support for the institute should be identified.

Merit Review Process

Proposals submitted in response to this announcement will be subject to the NEW merit review criteria approved by the National Science Board on March 28, 1997 (NSB9772). Additional information on NSF's new merit review criteria is available in the Merit Review Task Force Final Report at www.nsf.gov/cgibin/getpub?nsbmr975. The new merit review criteria are:

What is the Intellectual Merit and Quality of the Proposed Activity?

The following are suggested questions that the reviewer will consider in assessing how well the proposal meets

this criterion. Each reviewer will address only those questions which he/she considers relevant to the proposal and for which he/she is qualified to make judgments.

How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field and across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of prior work.) To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative and original concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

What Are the Broader Impacts of the Proposed Activity?

The following are suggested questions that the reviewer will consider in assessing how well the proposal meets this criterion. Each reviewer will address only those questions which he/she considers relevant to the proposal and for which he/she is qualified to make judgments.

How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

Additional Criteria Specific to This Activity

In addition to these generic review criteria, reviewers will be asked to use the following additional criteria when reviewing proposals that respond to this announcement. These criteria are as follows:

- * Quality of the scientific activities and their potential for leadership and impact on environmental chemistry and solutions to environmental problems;
- * Extent of interdisciplinarity and the extent to which communication and interaction with other areas of science and engineering are fostered by linkages and partnerships among university research groups, industry, national laboratories, etc.;
- * Capabilities of the institute leadership, including managerial and

organizational ability of the director and of the proposed leadership team;

- * Quality and anticipated effectiveness of the management plan, including plans for interaction among institute staff and institutional partners and for operation of the institute, including selection of activities and participants;

- * Quality of the institute's education and training components, especially plans to attract, involve and mentor students and under-represented groups;
- * Quality and effectiveness of proposed outreach activities and dissemination of results;
- * Clarity of mission and goals and quality of the evaluation plan;
- * Level and quality of the commitment to the institute by the lead institution and its partners.

A summary rating and accompanying narrative will be completed and signed by each reviewer. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers, are mailed to the proposer by the Program Director. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

Supplementary Information on Topical Workshops Sponsored by NSF and DOE

NSF and DOE have co-sponsored two interdisciplinary workshops to help define priorities for research in two areas that have been identified as activities responsible for complex and intransigent environmental problems.

These are: (1) Vehicular Transportation and (2) Reducing Energy Consumption and Pollution from Energy and Pollution Intensive Processes.

A critical issue identified for the 21st Century is the balancing of industrial activity and environmental stewardship; more knowledge is needed to make choices to achieve that balance. There are seven industries that consume 80 percent of the energy and produce over 90 percent of the wastes in the manufacturing sector. These seven industries are chemicals, petroleum refining, forest products, steel, aluminum, glass, and metal casting. Those aspects of the workshop reports that deal with fundamental molecular science and the crosscutting issues identified in the reports are particularly relevant to proposals in response to this announcement.

Copies of the workshop reports entitled "Basic Research Needs for Environmentally Responsive Technologies of the Future" and "Basic Research Needs for Vehicles of the Future" can be obtained from Princeton

Materials Institute, Bowen Hall, Princeton University, 70 Prospect Avenue, Princeton, New Jersey 08544-522.

The reports can also be found on the World Wide Webb at <http://pmi.princeton.edu>.

The Foundation provides awards for research and education in the sciences and engineering. The awardee is wholly responsible for the conduct of such research and preparation of the results for publication. The Foundation, therefore, does not assume responsibility for the research findings or their interpretation.

The Foundation welcomes proposals from all qualified scientists and engineers and strongly encourages women, minorities, and persons with disabilities to compete fully in any of the research and education related programs described here. In accordance with federal statutes, regulations, and NSF policies, no person on grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving financial assistance from the National Science Foundation.

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disability (FASSED) provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities (investigators and other staff, including student research assistants) to work on NSF projects. See the program announcement or contact the program coordinator at (703) 306-1636.

Privacy Act. The information requested on proposal forms in solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. It will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals and may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the review process; to applicant institutions/grantees; to provide or obtain data regarding the application review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers, and researchers as necessary to complete assigned work; and to other government agencies in order to coordinate programs. See Systems of Records, NSF 50, Principal Investigators/Proposal File and Associated Records, and NSF-51, 60 FR 4449 (January 23, 1995). Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records, 59 FR 8031 (February 17, 1994).

Public Burden. Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information,

however, may reduce the possibility of your receiving an award.

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Gail A. McHenry, Reports Clearance Officer, Information Dissemination Branch, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 245, Arlington, VA 22230.

The National Science Foundation has TDD (Telephonic Device for the Deaf) capability, which enables individuals with hearing impairment to communicate with the Foundation about NSF programs, employment, or general information. To access NSF TDD, dial (703) 306-0090; for FIRS, 1-800-877-8339.

Dated: July 25, 1997.

Janet G. Osteryoung,

Director, Chemistry Division.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Documents Containing Reporting or Recordkeeping Requirements: Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Review

AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

ACTION: Notice of the OMB review of information collection and solicitation of public comment.

SUMMARY: The NRC has recently submitted to OMB for review the following for the collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

1. *Type of submission:* Reinstatement.
2. *The title of the information collection:* Applicant Self-Assessment Form.
3. *The form number if applicable:* NRC Form 563.
4. *How often is the collection required:* On occasion.
5. *Who will be required or asked to report:* Basically qualified external applicants applying for engineering and scientific positions with the NRC.
6. *An estimated of the number of responses:* 1,500.
7. *The estimated number of annual respondents:* 1,500.
8. *An estimate of the total number of hours needed annually to complete the*

requirement or request: 125 hours (five minutes per response).

9. *An indication of whether Section 3507(d), Pub. Law 104-13 applies:* Not Applicable.

10. *Abstract:* The Applicant Self-Assessment will be used to collect uniform information from external applicants as to which technical specialties they possess that are unique to the needs of the NRC. This information will be reviewed by Office of Personnel staff and used to match applicants' technical specialties with those required by selecting officials when an engineering or scientific vacancy position is to be filled.

Submit, by September 2, 1997, comments that address the following questions:

1. Is the proposed collection of information necessary for the NRC to properly perform its functions? Does the information have practical utility?
2. Is the burden estimate accurate?
3. Is there a way to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected?
4. How can the burden of the information collection be minimized, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology?

A copy of the draft supporting statement may be viewed free of charge at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW, (lower level), Washington, DC. Members of the public who are in the Washington, DC, area can access this document via modem on the Public Document Room Bulletin Board (NRC's Advanced Copy Document Library). Members of the public who are located outside of the Washington, DC, area can dial FedWorld, 1-800-303-9672, or use the FedWorld Internet address: fedworld.gov (Telnet). The document will be available on the bulletin board for 30 days after the signature date of the notice. If assistance is needed in accessing the document, please contact the FedWorld help desk at 703-487-4608.

Comments and questions should be directed to the OMB reviewer by September 2, 1997: Edward Michlovich, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (3150-0177), NEOB-10202, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503.

Comments can also be submitted by telephone at (202) 395-7318.

The NRC Clearance Officer is Brenda Jo Shelton, (301) 415-7233.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 23rd day of July, 1997.