Request for Proposals

Wanger Institute for Sustainable Energy Research (WISER)
2015 Interdisciplinary Seed Funding Grants (ISFG)
[Posted 12/16/14]

The objective of the WISER Interdisciplinary Seed Funding Grants (ISFG) program is to provide seed funding to initiate innovative programs that will use the results obtained during the project period to develop major proposals seeking external funding in areas of national interest related to energy and sustainability. Proposals based on new and innovative multidisciplinary research concepts that are expected to be promising in attracting major external funding in the area of energy and sustainability are solicited. The proposals should be focused in either: 1) new areas of interdisciplinary research of national interest, or 2) areas that enhance ongoing WISER research activities including clean coal technology, renewable energy and energy storage, smart grid, water/energy nexus, climate change, sustainable built environment, materials in sustainable energy, natural gas production and storage, biofuels, energy for the next generation of vehicles, and energy efficiency. Proposals that are only marginally related to the energy and sustainability area will be rejected without review.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

Only IIT tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to serve as Principal Investigator (PI). In order to promote interdisciplinary activities, both within IIT and with other institutions, the proposal must be submitted by the IIT PI and at least one other (internal or external) co-PI who must hold an appointment or position in a different discipline. The maximum funding amount is $25,000. Applicants are encouraged to use the format outlined below for their proposal submissions. Each grant will be funded for a maximum of one year.

Recipients are required to submit a progress report at the end of the first half of the project period. Continuation of the second half of the allocated funding will depend on satisfactory demonstration of progress. A final technical report is required 3 months after completion of the project. The funds awarded will be released at the beginning of the project period (June 1, 2015).

Proposals must be submitted via e-mail as a pdf file to the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs (osrp@iit.edu) by close of business (5:00 pm) on Monday, March 2, 2015. Proposals not meeting the formatting requirements or received after the deadline will not be accepted.

All PIs must complete the online IIT Request for Review and Approval of Proposal routing form located at (http://www.iit.edu/research/services/sponsored_research/).

The sponsor name on the routing sheet should be listed as WISER. Please do not use any other variations for the sponsor name.

Questions should be directed to Margaret Murphy, Assistant Director, WISER (murphym@iit.edu, 312.567.6881).
PROPOSAL FORMAT

Typeface, Size, and Page Formatting
Each proposal is limited to five pages including figures, tables, and appendices (excluding budget, budget justification, current and pending support, and curriculum vitae). Proposals should be submitted in either Times New Roman or Arial typeface using no smaller than size 11 font, with one-inch margins. The proposals must include a section (“Plans for Seeking External Funding”) that clearly identifies how the authors will use the results of this proposed work to prepare a multi-investigator interdisciplinary proposal, the agency/agencies and division(s) within the agencies to which the authors are planning to submit the proposal, the expected total funding request, the timeframe for the submission, and an assessment of the potential success of the proposal.

The title of the proposal should read as follows: OSRP#, WISER: Title of Project, PI Name and Department (i.e., OSRP# 1234, WISER: Sustainable Research Project, PI: B. A. Researcher, ECEE).

Note: the OSRP number is generated from the routing sheet.

Objectives
List the broad long-term objectives and identify the specific intended accomplishments of the proposed research. Indicate how the work will enhance the interdisciplinary activities of the faculty involved and the specific plan for preparation and submission of interdisciplinary proposals based on the results of the proposed work.

Background and Significance
Briefly sketch the background leading to the proposed work, critically evaluate existing knowledge, and specifically identify the gaps that the project is intended to fill. State concisely the importance and relevance of the proposed work by relating the specific aims to the broad long-term objectives.

Preliminary Studies/Progress Report (if any)

Research Design and Methods
Describe the research design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims. As part of this section, provide a tentative timetable for the project. Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and the precautions to be exercised. Any proposals that include human or animal subjects must have the appropriate institutional approvals prior to the issuance of any award.

Resources, Facilities, and Collaborations
Identify the office and/or laboratory space and specify the facilities to be used for the conduct of the proposed research. Describe capabilities, support services, and important equipment items. List individuals involved in the development or execution of the project and their qualifications.

Plans for Seeking External Funding
Describe the proposal(s) that will be developed after the conclusion of the ISFG project; list the funding agencies and/or industries targeted; provide an estimate of the expected funding level and the potential for funding. State how the resources requested from the ISFG will enable the development of these external proposals. Proposals that do not include detailed plans for seeking external funding at the conclusion of the ISFG will be rejected without review.
Budget and Budget Justification
Include a budget that does not exceed $25,000. An explanation (budget justification) of how the expenditure of the ISFG funds would lead to results for developing strong proposals for external funding agencies must also be included. The budget should not include faculty time and salary. Indirect costs are not allowable. Graduate student support must be used only for IIT students.

A budget template can be found on the OSRP website at: http://iit.edu/research/services/sponsored_research/OSRP_Budgets.shtml

Other Support
Include a list of current and pending support for all investigators.

Appendix
Include a two-page (maximum) curriculum vitae for each investigator.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The following general review criteria will be used for the evaluation of the proposals.

Significance of the Proposed Work
Does this study address a significant problem in the sustainable energy and/or sustainability area? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge be advanced? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts or methods that drive this field?

External Funding Plan and Potential
Is the plan for seeking external funding appropriate and clearly defined? How is the proposal’s potential to successfully attract external funding assessed?

Innovation and Technical Merit
Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches, or methods in the sustainable energy and/or sustainability area? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?

Interdisciplinary Nature of the Project
Is this an interdisciplinary collaboration in which all investigators are contributing significantly to the proposed research in the sustainable energy and/or sustainability area?

Budget
Is the budget appropriate to carry out the work proposed? Are matching funds being used to enhance the proposed budget by the investigators or the department(s) of the investigators? Matching funds can be in the form of partial student support, faculty release time, or equipment purchase. If you are using matching funds, please mark the appropriate box on the routing sheet. All matching funds are subject to the approval of the Dean of the PI’s college.