



Atmospheric Science Program

Frequently Asked Questions, Part 2

March 5, 2004

1. What is the range of budgets suitable for a project within this Program?

A. The simple answer is that the budget should match the requirements of the research. As noted on the ASP website <http://www.atmos.anl.gov/ASP/ASPPreannouncementInfo.pdf> the total funding of the Program is limited:

"It is expected that approximately \$10m will be available to ASP in FY 2005 funding. It is expected that approximately \$6m will be available to proposals from DOE laboratories, and approximately \$4m will be available to applications from the private sector and non-DOE agencies."

Within the overall constraint of \$10m, we will fund as many highly-rated proposals as we can.

Further insight regarding the scope of individual projects may be gained from the breakdown of funding for the last two ASP funding cycles as presented in the following table. It should be noted that these amounts are not limits, and the reconfigured program may very well differ from this funding profile. It is anticipated that the fraction of total Program expenditures on infrastructure activities (for research aircraft and instrumentation deployment for field campaigns) will be somewhat higher than in the past, closer to 20% or more of the total funding.

ASP Funding Category	% of Funding	Science Team Awards (\$)		
		Smallest	Average	Largest
DOE Laboratories Infrastructure	14.2%			
DOE Laboratories Science I	31.7%	90k	160k	260k
DOE Laboratories Science II	22.6%	300k	390k	600k
Universities and Other Federal Agencies	31.5%	80k	140k	240k
Total	\$ 10 m			

Science I projects are typically small, single-PI-based projects, with larger awards for projects involving instrument development or laboratory measurements. Science II projects are typically more integrated projects involving multiple investigators and/or field measurements. While these have typically been at the DOE laboratories, the private sector and other federal agencies are not precluded from submitting larger, more integrated proposals.

2. What will be the breakdown of funding between DOE-Lab and non-DOE-Lab Projects?

A. It is required that proposals from DOE laboratories, other federal agencies, and the private sector be reviewed and competed separately. All science proposals received, that fall within the scope of the announcement, regardless of organization, will be subjected to the same rigorous peer review for scientific merit. The final allocation of funding will be determined after all three sets of proposals have been peer reviewed.

3. What fraction of proposals can be expected to be funded?

A. Clearly the answer to this depends on the number and caliber and mix of proposals received. In the last two ASP funding cycles, for atmospheric chemistry (ACP) and environmental meteorology (EMP), the selection rates were 26% and 17% respectively. The sum of these two funding cycles is probably representative of the program as a whole, with 163 proposals received, and 38 proposals funded, for a selection rate of 23%. Because ASP has a new scientific focus with broader community interest, we anticipate a larger number of proposals than in the past, and given that our budget is relatively flat, we therefore anticipate a smaller selection rate.

Additionally, it might be possible, subsequently, to fund some proposals received in response to the original announcement, which were recommended for funding but deferred due to budget limitations.

4. What is the expected duration of awards?

A. We anticipate that both peer-reviewed research awards and internally-reviewed infrastructure awards will be made for three years. If additional funds become available before the end of the first three-year cycle, then we would expect to publish an additional announcement and make additional three-year awards.

5. What is the expected mix of awards and program balance?

A. We expect to support a mix of small PI-based projects and larger, more integrated projects. Clearly we cannot fund a large number of large proposals, but we expect to fund as many highly-rated proposals of both types as we can. We also expect a balance of awards between the four

functional categories, i.e., laboratory measurements, field measurements, modeling studies, and instrument development.

6. What is the best way of submitting multiple-investigator proposals: as a set of related proposals or as one integrated proposal?

A. Larger projects can be submitted either as integrated proposals, or as a suite of smaller proposals that are closely related but submitted as separate proposals. These could be reviewed and considered for funding both separately and collectively. Proposers of such projects should indicate what other proposals are part of a given suite. The “collection” of closely-related proposals should offer value in addition to separate funding, but each such proposal should not depend on the others for its basic value.

7. What is the recommended route for collaborations between DOE labs and non DOE labs?

A. Unfortunately, we are not allowed to mix “collective” proposals from DOE labs with any from non-DOE organizations. However, we do encourage collaborative projects, either through formal or informal means. Formal collaborative proposals between DOE lab scientists and non-DOE lab scientists should be submitted from the organization requiring the larger amount of funding, and the budget sheets should include and explain any subcontracts. These proposals will be peer-reviewed in the category of the proposing organization (DOE labs, other federal agencies, or the private sector). Alternatively the proposers may cross-reference their proposed activities as indicated in the previous question.

8. Is it possible to propose two or more funding levels?

A. Proposals from scientists in the DOE laboratories (only) may have two funding levels for a given proposal, with the higher level having a more ambitious scope of work. This simply gives us more flexibility in selecting the best mix of highly-rated proposals. Due to the way grants are administered by the DOE Office of Science, only one funding level is allowed for proposals from universities and other federal agencies.

9. Is there a mechanism for negotiation of funding level?

A. Sometimes, if we do not have the resources to fully fund a highly-rated proposal, we may negotiate a reduction in funding with (potentially) a reduction in scope of effort. Historically, this occurs most often for DOE lab projects. We encourage all proposers to submit realistic budgets.

10. What is the mechanism for achieving program balance and assuring relevancy of projects in the Program?

A. We do not fund proposals that do not score well in the review for scientific merit. We generally fund the highest-rated proposals in each category, provided they also score well for relevancy and are consistent with our need for program balance. We rarely skip over highly rated proposals, but will do so if there is good reason, e.g., if there is an even higher-rated proposal to do similar research or if a proposal does not score well for relevancy.

11. Can you comment about the integrity of the review process?

A. We make every effort to assign competent and appropriate expert reviewers who do not have conflicts of interest. We carefully scrutinize reviews and where there are unusual (anomalous) scores we will usually conduct additional reviews. The process is not perfect, because people are not perfect, but it is as fair and as effective as we can possibly make it.

Programmatic questions may be addressed to the Program Director, while questions pertaining to scientific scope may be addressed to either the Program Director or the Chief Scientist. We will try to provide answers in future FAQ's so that they are available to all interested parties. For this reason email is probably the best way to submit questions.

peter.lunn@science.doe.gov

Peter Lunn
Program Director for Atmospheric Science
Climate Change Research Division
U.S. Department of Energy, SC-74
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington DC 20585-0002

Phone 301.903.4819 Fax 301.903.8519

ses@bnl.gov

Stephen E. Schwartz
Chief Scientist for the DOE Atmospheric Science Program
Atmospheric Sciences Division
Environmental Sciences Department
Brookhaven National Laboratory
Upton NY 11973

Phone 631.344.3100 Fax 631.344.2887