



EPSCoR in Idaho

Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research

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MEMORANDUM

To: The Faculties of the University of Idaho, Boise State University, and Idaho State University

From: Dr. Jean'ne M. Shreeve, Idaho EPSCoR/IDeA Project Director

Date: May 22, 2007

RE: **Open call for NSF EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) project white papers and proposal development schedule**

Idaho must determine one, or at most two, research themes for its next National Science Foundation (NSF) EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) project. Therefore Idaho EPSCoR will accept white papers to be considered in the development of Idaho's RII research theme.

NSF EPSCoR Overview

EPSCoR goals are: a) to provide strategic programs and opportunities for EPSCoR participants that stimulate sustainable improvements in their R&D capacity and competitiveness; b) to advance science and engineering capabilities in EPSCoR jurisdictions (Idaho) for discovery, innovation and overall knowledge-based prosperity; and c) to build the state-wide plan that prioritizes and guides the development of science and technology in Idaho over the next five years.

The RII grant must add significant and measurable value to research capability in S&T areas of high institutional and jurisdictional priority and contribute to a well defined strength-based strategy for future research and innovation. The RII proposal must explain the relationship of the proposed academic infrastructure investments and activities to the State's science and technology plans. The RII Grant supports lasting infrastructure improvements in research areas selected as having the best potential to improve Idaho's future R&D competitiveness.



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Call for White Papers for RII Theme Development

Idaho EPSCoR invites faculty members of Idaho's public universities to submit brief white papers that identify imaginative and high quality hypothesis-driven research areas in which to focus EPSCoR RII investments.

White papers are due (electronically) at Idaho EPSCoR (epscor@uidaho.edu) on June 15, 2007. These white papers should focus on "big ideas" and the reasons that they fit NSF EPSCoR. No budgets will be accepted at this stage, but the necessary infrastructure investments should be described. White papers shall be limited to 3 pages of text, plus one additional page of references, and 2-page biographical sketches (including 5-year history of grant funding or current and pending support) for the Principal Investigator and all Co-Investigators.

The proposed activities can be carried out by single researchers or teams of researchers (either intra or inter-university). The number of the former will eventually be limited in order to ensure movement toward at least one center of excellence for Idaho of sufficient breadth and depth that sustainability will be ensured. Successful white papers must lend themselves to subsequent adaptation and development as a component of Idaho's NSF RII proposal, due in October 2007.

The eventual research infrastructure investments of the RII grant will support hypothesis driven research (science and/or engineering) to address one or more NSF-eligible areas tied to NSF, state, and institutional priorities. The eventual selection of components for the RII proposal will be based on external merit review as well as broader impacts, including:

- *The intrinsic merit of the proposed scientific and technical focus area and the proposed research group's prior productivity;
- *The relative potential for future success, individually and collectively, as nationally competitive scientists and engineers;
- *How well an RII investment would add value to the proposed research group and Idaho's current research competitiveness;
- *The match of the investigators' qualifications and research interests with NSF EPSCoR goals and objectives and the proposed research area;
- *The demonstrated knowledge of the investigators and relevance of the proposed research focus to identifiable federal programs, particularly of NSF, which provide support for cutting edge science and engineering; and
- *The relevance of the proposed research to institutional priorities and Idaho's S&T plans and long-term goals.



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Tentative RII Development Timeline

Stage I: (May/June 2007)

This “open call” for white papers shall be distributed to Idaho’s public universities by May 25, 2007. White papers will be due (electronically) at the Idaho EPSCoR Office on or before June 15, 2007.

Stage II: (June 2007)

Idaho EPSCoR will forward white papers to the Vice Presidents for Research (VPRs) and an external project development team (TIG) by June 18, 2007. The VPRs will work with each other and with TIG to condense the white papers and identify high priority and high potential subject areas. The VPRs may invite groups or individuals to further develop white paper ideas as appropriate. TIG and the VPRs will review the white papers to identify possible subject areas and corresponding investigators for the RII that align with NSF eligible areas and priorities. The VPRs will submit their recommendations to TIG and the EPSCoR Project Director by June 27, 2007.

Stage III: (July 2007)

The VPRs, TIG, and the EPSCoR Project Director will meet (in person and/or via conference call) during the week of July 9-13, 2007. The purpose of the meeting is to identify and agree upon the most promising research themes and a set of white papers that will pass to the next round of project selection. TIG will lead this process. The outcome of this meeting will be presented to the Idaho EPSCoR Committee for discussion, suggestions, and approval.

Upon EPSCoR Committee approval, the EPSCoR Office will invite several groups and/or individuals to expand their ideas into 7-page preliminary RII proposals (or RII components) for consideration in designing the final Idaho RII proposal. These expanded proposals will be sent to TIG for external merit review and comment by July 30, 2007.



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Stage IV: (August 2007)

TIG will submit external reviews to the EPSCoR Director and the VPRs by August 10, 2007. During the period August 16-19 2007, invited investigators will present their expanded proposals and give oral presentations (including response to reviewers concerns) in Boise to the VPRs, TIG, several external reviewers, the EPSCoR Project Director, and members of the Idaho EPSCoR Committee. TIG will lead this group in the selection of a few topics/projects to be integrated into the RII proposal. The process of integration may require additional adjustments to the proposed work in order to address both technical merit and the broader impacts mentioned above. The EPSCoR Committee will be informed of RII topic/project selection.

Stage V: (August/September 2007)

Draft RII proposal development, modification, and writing will be led by the EPSCoR Project Director and selected RII leaders, with the advice and consultation of TIG and the VPRs. Additional external reviewers will be used as necessary until proposal completion. The EPSCoR Committee will review the status of project development by August 31, 2007 and subsequently review and approve a final proposal before October 1, 2007.