

accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Department of Energy Organization Act (Pub. L. 95-91), and rules and regulations issued in implementation of those Acts.

Further information regarding this Advisory Committee can be obtained from Mrs. Rachel M. Samuel at (202) 586-3279.

Issued in Washington, DC on December 11, 2003.

James N. Solit,

Advisory Committee Management Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Office of Science Financial Assistance Program Notice DE-FG01-04ER04-06: Natural and Accelerated Bioremediation Research Program

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice inviting grant applications.

SUMMARY: The Office of Biological and Environmental Research (OBER) of the Office of Science (SC), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), hereby announces its interest in receiving applications for research grants in the Natural and Accelerated Bioremediation Research (NABIR) Program. The goal of the NABIR program is to provide the fundamental science that will serve as the basis for development of cost-effective bioremediation and long-term stewardship of radionuclides and metals in the subsurface at DOE sites. The focus of the program is on understanding the role of microorganisms in long-term immobilization of contaminants in place, and the potential for their remobilization. Contaminants of interest are uranium, technetium, plutonium, chromium or mercury. NABIR is focused on subsurface sediments below the zone of root influence and includes both the vadose (unsaturated) zone and the saturated zone (groundwater and sediments). Applications should describe research projects in one or more of the following program categories: (1) Biogeochemistry, Biotransformation, Community Dynamics and Microbial Ecology, or Assessment; (2) Interdisciplinary studies that integrate research from more than one NABIR element; or (3) Projects to be performed at the NABIR Field Research Center (FRC) addressing field scale processes that immobilize uranium and/or technetium; field teams must include, at a minimum, expertise

in microbiology, geochemistry and hydrology.

DATES: Researchers are strongly encouraged to submit a preapplication for programmatic review. Preapplications should be submitted on or before February 6, 2004, for review for programmatic relevance.

The deadline for receipt of formal applications is 4:30 p.m., E.S.T., March 9, 2004, to be accepted for merit review and to permit timely consideration for awards late in Fiscal Year 2004 or in early Fiscal Year 2005.

ADDRESSES: Preapplications referencing Program Notice DE-FG01-04ER04-06, should be sent by E-mail to: paul.bayer@science.doe.gov.

Formal applications referencing Program Notice DE-FG01-04ER04-06, must be sent electronically by an authorized institutional business official through DOE's Industry Interactive Procurement System (IIPS) at: <http://www.e-center.doe.gov/>. IIPS provides for the posting of solicitations and receipt of applications in a paperless environment via the Internet. In order to submit applications through IIPS, your business official will need to register at the IIPS Web site. IIPS offers the option of using multiple files, please limit submissions to one volume and one file if possible, with a maximum of no more than four PDF files. The Office of Science will include attachments as part of this notice that provide the appropriate forms in PDF fillable format that are to be submitted through IIPS. Color images should be submitted in IIPS as a separate file in PDF format and identified as such. These images should be kept to a minimum due to the limitations of reproducing them. They should be numbered and referred to in the body of the technical scientific grant application as Color image 1, Color image 2, etc. Questions regarding the operation of IIPS may be e-mailed to the IIPS Help Desk at:

HelpDesk@pr.doe.gov, or you may call the help desk at: (800) 683-0751. Further information on the use of IIPS by the Office of Science is available at: <http://www.sc.doe.gov/production/grants/grants.html>.

If you are unable to submit an application through IIPS, please contact the Grants and Contracts Division, Office of Science at: (301) 903-5212 or (301) 903-3604, in order to gain assistance for submission through IIPS or to receive special approval and instructions on how to submit printed applications.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Paul Bayer, Environmental Remediation Sciences Division, SC-75/Germantown

Building, Office of Biological and Environmental Research, Office of Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20585-1290, telephone: (301) 903-5324, e-mail: paul.bayer@science.doe.gov, fax: (301) 903-8519. The full text of Program Notice DE-FG01-04ER04-06, is available via the Internet using the following Web site address: <http://www.science.doe.gov/production/grants/grants.html>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

For more than 50 years, the U.S. created a vast network of more than 113 facilities for research, development, testing and production of nuclear weapons. As a result of these activities, subsurface contamination has been identified at over 7,000 discrete sites across the U.S. Department of Energy complex. With the end of the Cold War threat, the DOE has shifted its emphasis to remediation, decommissioning, and decontamination of contaminated groundwater, sediments, and structures at its sites. DOE is currently responsible for remediating 1.7 trillion gallons of contaminated groundwater and 40 million cubic meters of contaminated soil. It is estimated that more than 60 percent of DOE facilities have groundwater contaminated with metals or radionuclides. More than 50 percent of all DOE facilities have soils or sediments contaminated with radionuclides and metals. While virtually all of the contaminants found at industrial sites nationwide can also be found at DOE sites, many of the metals and most of the radionuclides are unique to DOE sites. The NABIR program aims: (1) To provide the fundamental knowledge that may lead to new remediation technologies or strategies for radionuclides and metals; and (2) to advance the understanding of the key microbiological and geochemical processes that control the effectiveness of *in situ* immobilization as a means of long term stewardship, and how these processes impact contaminant transport.

While bioremediation of organic contaminants involves their biotransformation to benign products, such as carbon dioxide, bioremediation of radionuclides and metals involves their removal from the aqueous phase to reduce risk to humans and the environment. Microorganisms can directly affect the solubility of radionuclides and metals by changing their oxidation state to a reduced form that leads to *in situ* immobilization. Or,