

## **2016 Tailored Collaboration Research Program Request for Preproposals in Water Reuse and Desalination**

### **Introduction**

The WateReuse Research Foundation is seeking preproposals for funding consideration under its 2016 Tailored Collaboration (TC) Research Program reserved for Foundation members. The total amount of funds for the Foundation's 2016 TC Research Program will not be approved by the Board until March 2016; however we anticipate funding 2-4 projects with a maximum funding level for any single project of \$100,000. Preproposals are due by **February 9, 2016**.

### **Mission and Objective**

The Foundation's research program is designed to meet the future needs of the water reuse and desalination communities. The Tailored Collaboration Program (TC) is designed to encourage collaboration with Foundation members on research. Tailored Collaboration projects typically address applied research topics of regional interest. In other words, TC projects may be local or regional in nature, but the research topic should be broadly applicable to the water reuse and desalination community. Proposals for the Tailored Collaboration Program should also complement the Foundation's ongoing research and not duplicate any current or pending project.

The Tailored Collaboration Program is governed by the [Foundation's Operating Plan](#). The Operating Plan describes the operational strategies used to fulfill the research needs of the Foundation.

The following guidelines outline the requirements for submitting proposals under the Tailored Collaboration Research Program. These guidelines also provide information on the process used by the Foundation to review, rank, and fund research projects.

### **TC Research Program Process**

TC proposals are accepted once per year under a two-step process. An initial preproposal of no more than four pages in length is first submitted for review and screening.\* In the second phase, full proposals are requested for those preproposals judged to have the greatest potential outcome for the water reuse and desalination communities. The number of full proposals requested is approximately twice the number of projects to be awarded.

The Foundation's TC Committee will review the preproposals and recommend a shortlist of projects which merit a request for full proposals. The TC Committee will also be tasked with reviewing the full proposals for funding consideration. The timeline for the 2016 TC Program is as follows:

- **January 5, 2016:** The "Request for Preproposals" is released under the Foundation's TC Program;
- **February 9:** Pre-proposals are due to the Foundation;
- **February/March:** TC Review Committee evaluates proposals and makes recommendations for short list;

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\* Preproposals may be no longer than four pages (all supporting materials included, excluding cover page), with at least 11 point font and 1-inch margins. Preproposals not meeting this requirement will be automatically disqualified.

- **March 7:** Foundation notifies research teams whose preproposals were selected and requests full proposals;
- **April 18:** Full proposals are due;
- **April/May:** TC Committee reviews full proposals and recommends projects for funding;
- **May 22:** Board of Directors reviews the projects and approves recommended proposals; and
- **Week of May 22:** Award projects under the 2016 Tailored Collaboration Research Program.

## **WateReuse Research Foundation TC Proposal Requirements**

- **Cash Match Requirement:** Budgets for Tailored Collaboration projects must allocate at least 50% of the total project funding for cash contributions. In other words, the researcher must obtain or contribute cash amounting to at least 50% of the amount WRRF is providing (if WRRF provides \$100,000, the team must provide a matching \$100,000 cash contribution). This cash match must be routed through and dispersed by the Foundation. Grants or awards from other institutions are not eligible towards the cash match. Additional in-kind services may be provided beyond the 50% cash match requirement.
- **Award Limitation per affiliation:** While organizations are eligible to submit more than one pre-proposal in a given year, only one per prime organization is ultimately eligible for funding per year.
  - Definition of 'prime' organization: This is the organization who is doing the work and receiving a majority (50% or greater) of the funding. This would not limit a research group from providing a supporting role (e.g., doing some analyses) for several funded projects.
- **Standard Agreement Conditions:** The Foundation includes special contract provisions as a condition of research awards. Acceptance of these contract conditions is a requirement of Foundation funding. Researchers should determine, before submission of a proposal, that such conditions are likely to be acceptable to the respondent, its subcontractors, and other participants. [The standard funding agreement](#) reflects the Foundation's requirement to solely own and publish a final report.
- **Eligibility:** The Tailored Collaboration Program is reserved exclusively for Foundation Subscribers who adhere to proposal guidelines, and are considered eligible due to sufficient quality on other Foundation projects.
- **Equipment Purchase:** In general, the Foundation does not pay for the purchase of major equipment for research tasks. Researchers submitting proposals should already possess, be willing to purchase or lease, or have access to the appropriate equipment and instruments to complete the proposed research tasks.
- **Publication:** The Foundation publishes a final edited report and other deliverables for Tailored Collaboration Program projects. Researchers should allocate adequate resources and personnel for developing a final report that is technically sound and adheres to the [Foundation's Style Guide](#). The guidelines establish formats and other publishing

requirements. Researchers should be prepared to review the edited report, answer editors' questions, and make changes to text, tables, and figures as necessary.

**Questions:** If you have questions about these guidelines or the Foundation's research process, contact Julie Minton, at [jminton@WateReuse.org](mailto:jminton@WateReuse.org) or 571-445-5508; or [tcprogram@watereuse.org](mailto:tcprogram@watereuse.org).

## **Pre-Proposal Instructions**

The format and content of the preproposals must include the following:

1. Pre-proposals must be submitted electronically by the due date in either MS Word or PDF format.
2. Pre-proposals must be at least two (2) pages and no more than four pages in length, including figures, tables, and appendices. A cover page and résumés/bios (limited to one page or less per person) and lists of references are excluded from this page requirement.
3. Pre-proposals must be formatted for standard letter size paper with 1 inch margins and a font of at least 11 characters per inch.
4. Pre-proposals must include the following:
  - i. Cover sheet – Include title, Submitting member, research team (PI, co-PIs), budget (from WateReuse and matching), matching funding source(s)
  - ii. Research Objective – The research objective should be clearly identified in one or two sentences.
  - iii. Background/Understanding of the Problem – Provide brief background on the topic and articulate why this research is important and needed.
  - iv. Technical Approach – Describe how the research will be conducted, and elucidate the tasks necessary to accomplish the objective, and identify technical challenges associated with the work.
  - v. Originality and Innovation of the Research – Briefly identify how the proposed work is unique and innovative.
  - vi. Potential Relevance and Future Applications – Discuss why this work would be important to the water reuse and/or desalination community. Explain the potential benefits of the work, as well as the project’s potential impact on future research.
  - vii. Budget – A detailed budget is not required in the pre-proposal. Pre-proposals should identify the amount of Foundation funds requested (not to exceed the maximum amount stated in the call for pre-proposals), other funding, and in-kind support expected for the work. Proposals requiring funds in excess of the maximum allowable amount will not be considered. The Foundation will match only cash contributions to the TC project, and the scope of work must be based upon the requested Foundation funds and in-kind contributions.  
Projects will require matching cash funds of **at least 50%** of the total project costs. Beyond the cash match accounting for 50% of the budget, the team is welcome to provide in-kind contribution of such items as personnel costs, analytical and support services, facilities, consulting services, etc.
  - viii. Schedule – A detailed task specific schedule is not required in the pre-proposal. However, an estimate of the project duration should be provided.

## **Utility Participation**

The preproposal must be submitted by a current Foundation member. The Foundation encourages research teams to include the participation of water and wastewater utilities (members and nonmembers) in research efforts.

## **Application Procedure and Deadline**

Preproposals must be submitted **via email** to [TCprogram@watereuse.org](mailto:TCprogram@watereuse.org) by **February 9, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. EST**. Proposals received after 5:00 p.m. EST on this date will not be considered. Receipt of preproposals will be acknowledged by email from the Foundation.

## **Proposal Instructions**

**Formal Proposal:** In the event that a pre-proposal is approved by the Tailored Collaboration Committee, the candidate will be instructed to submit a formal proposal. The format and content of the formal proposal is detailed below.

**Structure:** Proposals should be structured as follows:

1. Cover sheet (including title, PIs, budget, matching funding source)
2. One page abstract summarizing the project (including title, team, objectives, technical approach, why this is important research for Subscribers, and budget)
3. Understanding of the Problem
4. Technical Approach (a well developed experimental plan is needed, include details on replicates, frequency, etc)
5. Management, Communication, and Quality Assurance Plans
6. Schedule and Deliverables
7. Budget (the cash match must be listed and confirmed at this point)
8. Letters of Support, Qualifications, Résumés, Organizational Charts, References, and Technical Resources

**Page Length Restriction:** The technical portions of the formal proposal (items 3-6 listed above) are limited to no more than 20 pages in length. The technical portions do not include letters of support, resumes, organizational charts, or references (item 8).

**Period of Performance:** The Period of Performance will be determined by each candidate in the formal proposal.

**Budget:** Respondents should provide a realistic budget showing separate cost estimates for salaries, fringe benefits, supplies, services, travel, subcontracts, and other direct costs. The budget should be specific and complete. TC project proposals should not request more than the maximum allowed defined in the call for pre-proposals. Proposals requiring funds in excess of this amount will not be considered. The Foundation will match only cash contributions to the TC project, and the scope of work must be based upon the requested Foundation funds and in-kind contributions.

Budgets for TC projects must include at least 50% (of the total project funding) for cash contributions. Refer to [the Foundation's Budget Template](#) for more information.

Specific budget requirements include:

- i. **Direct Labor.** Identify the name and title of each project participant, the number of hours to be spent on the project, and total cost (including overhead) of project.
- ii. **Subcontractor Effort.** The estimated subcontractor costs must be supported in a manner similar to the required detail for the primary contractor.
- iii. **Travel Expense.** The Foundation will accept as a direct charge only that travel which is required to perform the project scope of work.
- iv. **Equipment Rental.** Provide a description of the item and cost for each proposed item with a rental cost of more than \$1,000.
- v. **Purchased Special Equipment.** The Foundation assumes that the researcher has the capability to perform work with existing facilities and equipment. It is the Foundation's policy not to purchase equipment. If some special purpose items are

- needed solely for this project and are not available by other means, provide a description of the use or application and a detailed justification.
- vi. **Other Direct Material.** For line items in excess of \$1,000, provide information necessary to evaluate the need for such items, and provide a justification.

A breakdown of in-kind contributions is also required as part of the budget. In-kind support information must also be included with the budget. In-kind contributions require either: 1) a letter of commitment with dollar value; or 2) the signature of a representative for the contributing organization on the proposal transmittal letter. Under the terms of the Foundation's standard funding agreement, the proposing organization is contractually responsible for providing the specified in-kind support during the project. A description of in-kind services must be included in the proposal.

**Schedule:** Identify a proposed start date and estimate the duration of the project's research and report preparation phases. In general, the project start date should be about three months after submission of the proposal. The schedule should include dates for a draft report, revised draft, and a final report.

**Proposal Evaluation:** Refer to the [Foundation's Proposal Evaluation Criteria Form](#) for more information regarding proposal evaluation. Please do not include this form with your proposal.

**Application Procedure and Deadline:**

Proposals must be submitted **via email** to [TCprogram@watereuse.org](mailto:TCprogram@watereuse.org) by **April 2, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. EST**. Proposals received after 5:00 p.m. EST on this date will not be considered. Receipt of proposals will be acknowledged by email from the Foundation.

**WaterReuse Research Foundation – Tailored Collaboration Proposal  
Evaluation Criteria  
(Updated October 2012)**

**Score**

**A.**

**Suitability of the Proposal (maximum 15 points)**

Is the proposal compelling and relevant? Is the topic broadly applicable to the water reuse/ desalination community? Does the proposal complement the Foundation’s ongoing research, rather than duplicate?

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**B.**

**Presentation of the Issue and Challenge (maximum 15 points)**

Does the proposal adequately explain the issue? Does it reflect knowledge of the issue and how solving the problem will benefit the water reuse/ desalination industry?

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**C.**

**Technical and Science-based Approach (maximum 35 points)**

Is the proposal prepared with supportive information and is it self-explanatory and clearly understandable? Is the proposed effort technically defensible? Is the approach practical? Can the project objectives be achieved in the stated time period with the allotted personnel and budget?

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**D.**

**Management and Communication Plans (maximum 10 points)**

- a) Are the roles, responsibilities, and assignments clear?
- b) Do the supporting organizations on the team have complementary skills?
- c) Does the lead organization have adequate resources to provide the appropriate level of management, oversight, and project implementation?
- d) Is the Quality Assurance/Quality Program acceptable?
- e) Are schedules and deliverables clearly defined?

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**E.**

**Budget (maximum 10 points)**

Is the budget reasonable and matching cash accounted for? Are there one or more Subscribers involved? Has the applicant provided any in-kind (services) contributions to the project? Is the level of effort allocated to each task logical? Is the Indirect Cost Rate reasonable and has it been detailed in the proposal?

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**F.**

**Qualifications of Organization and Key Personnel (maximum 15 points)**

Does the lead organization have demonstrated experience and expertise in the issues and objectives discussed in the RFP? Do the key project personnel have experience in the proposed area of research? Have key personnel committed an appropriate amount of time to the project? Are water and wastewater agencies involved?

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**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_