

# Frequently Asked Questions about the Genesis Mission: Transforming Science and Energy with AI Notice of Request for Application (RFA): DE-FOA-0003612

This FAQ document will be updated as new questions are submitted to [GenesisMissionNOFO@science.doe.gov](mailto:GenesisMissionNOFO@science.doe.gov). Last updated on 3/23/2026.

## Getting Help

**Q. I have a question that isn't answered in the RFA or this FAQ document. Whom do I contact?**

A. Send your question to [GenesisMissionNOFO@science.doe.gov](mailto:GenesisMissionNOFO@science.doe.gov).

**Q. How can I get help with PAMS?**

A. For help with PAMS, click the "PAMS Help" link on the PAMS website, <https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov/>. Help is also available through the question mark ("?") icon at the bottom of every page. You may also contact the PAMS Help Desk, which can be reached Monday through Friday, 9AM – 5:30 PM Eastern Time. Telephone: (855) 818-1846 (toll free) or (301) 903-9610, Email: [sc.pamshelpdesk@science.doe.gov](mailto:sc.pamshelpdesk@science.doe.gov).

**Q. How can I get help with Grants.gov?**

A. Contact 800-518-4726 (toll-free) or [support@Grants.gov](mailto:support@Grants.gov). Also see Section IX of this RFA for detailed instructions.

## Phase I and II Awards

**Q. What is a Phase I project?**

A. Phase I projects will design and demonstrate a clear, tangible research workflow that incorporates AI with concrete evaluation of the potential for AI advantage. Projects are from \$500K - \$750K for 9 months. At 6 months, there will be a go/no go decision to determine if the project is eligible to advance to Phase II. Phase I projects may request up to a 3-month extension to the go/no go review date to complete planned tasks, such as experiments.

**Q. What are the goals of a Phase I project?**

A. Phase I projects are expected to provide a quantitative assessment of whether the proposed approach to demonstrating AI advantage in the scientific and/or technical research workflow is on a trajectory to yield a transformative scientific capability or transformative approach to an energy application, thereby justifying consideration for increased investment through a Phase II project.

**Q. What is a Phase II project?**

A. Phase II projects will be conducted by large teams pursuing promising directions identified in the Phase I projects. If a team believes they have already achieved the goals of Phase I projects, they may apply directly for a Phase II project in FY26. Projects are approximately 3 to 5 times the level of

effort of Phase I projects per year for three years. Unlike Phase I projects, Phase II projects that follow a phase I award in future fiscal years may include multiple Phase I teams, remove Phase I team members, add external researchers, and/or address additional focus areas provided in the RFA.

**Q. How much funding is available?**

A. DOE anticipates a total of \$293.76 million in prior and current fiscal year funds are available to support awards under this RFA. Future year funding depends on future congressional appropriations.

**Q. What is the anticipated funding for Phase II awards?**

A. The RFA says that Phase II awards are “approximately 3 to 5 times the level of effort of Phase I awards per year for three years”. Based on funding per time, the minimum is approximately  $\$500,000 * 12 \text{ months} / 9 \text{ month} = \$2 \text{ million per year}$  and the maximum is  $\$750,000 * 12 \text{ months} / 9 \text{ months} = \$5 \text{ million per year}$ , for a total estimated award size range of \$6 million to \$15 million.

**Q. What is the expected distribution of Phase I vs Phase II projects?**

A. It is anticipated that most FY 2026 awards will be Phase I projects.

**Q. How many Phase I projects are expected to transition to Phase II projects in FY 2027?**

A. Only a small fraction of Phase I teams will be selected for Phase II awards. The larger Phase II projects may include multiple Phase I teams, removal of Phase I team members, or additional external researchers.

**Q. What happens to Phase I projects that don't pass the go/no-go decision?**

A. Phase I projects not selected for a Phase II award will end.

**Q. If a Phase I award passes the go/no-go decision, would a Phase II award be for an additional three years?**

A. Yes, it is anticipated that follow-on Phase II awards would be for an additional three years.

**Q. Can institutions apply for both Phase I and Phase II awards using this RFA?**

A. Yes. However, the institution may only submit one Phase I OR one Phase II application as the lead institution per focus area, not both.

**Q. What topics and focus areas are included in this RFA?**

A. The challenge topics are a subset of the [Genesis Mission National Science and Technology Challenges](#) (Topics 1-17) and cross-cutting needs of the Genesis Mission (Topics 18-21). DOE program offices have specific focus areas under each of the topics above.

**Q. Do you expect to issue another Genesis Mission: Transforming Science and Energy with AI funding opportunity in FY 2027?**

A. Yes. In FY 2027, DOE plans to amend the RFA or to issue an alternative funding opportunity to update the topics and focus areas to allow a second competition of Phase I small team applications and Phase II large team applications.

**Q. What happens if I miss the application or LOI deadlines?**

A. The RFA will remain open. Additional applications for Phase I and Phase II applications may be submitted after the corresponding deadline listed on the cover of the RFA. However, DOE reserves the right to decline such applications without review. If a Phase II LOI is not submitted by the deadline, DOE may hold any subsequent Phase II application until FY 2027.

**Q. When are Phase I applications due?**

A. April 28, 2026, at 11:59 PM ET in Grants.gov.

**Q. When are Phase II Letters of Intent (LOI) due?**

A. April 28, 2026, at 5:00 PM ET in PAMS.

**Q. When are Phase II applications due?**

A. May 19, 2026, at 11:59 PM ET in Grants.gov.

## Eligibility

**Q. What types of institutions are eligible to submit an application as the lead institution?**

A. U.S. universities, DOE/NNSA National Laboratories, for-profit institutions, and not-for-profit institutions are eligible to serve as lead institutions. Non-DOE/NNSA Federally Funded Research and Development Centers, Other Federal Agencies, and international entities may submit applications as a member of a team but may not be the lead institution. Note that not-for-profit institutions described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1985 that engaged in lobbying activities after December 31, 1995, are not eligible.

**Q. Does an eligible individual submitting an application as the PI or in another role need to be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.**

A. No, DOE does not require that individuals submitting an application as the PI or listed in the application in another role be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. However, all personnel working or proposed to work under an award must have the legal right to perform such work in the jurisdiction where the work will be performed.

**Q. Are there limitations on eligibility based on career stage of the applicant?**

A. No, eligible individuals from any career stage may be proposed as a PI as long as they have the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research.

**Q. Are there limitations on the number of applications a PI can submit?**

A. Yes. A PI can be the lead-PI on only one Phase I or Phase II application. However, they may be a senior investigator on an unlimited number of other applications.

**Q. Are there limitations on the type of position a lead PI must be in to apply?**

A. Yes. PIs must be in a permanent or indefinitely extensible position at the lead institution, whether part-time or full-time.

**Q. If a PI has a joint appointment, can they apply as the lead PI from either institution?**

A. PIs on joint appointments can be the PI on an institution's application if they are paid by the institution and the work will be done there. However, PIs with joint appointments at DOE/NNSA

national labs and another institution can only be the lead PI at the institution that pays for more than half their salary and benefits.

**Q. Are there limitations on the number of applications a senior investigator can participate in as a member but not the lead PI?**

A. No, senior investigators can participate in an unlimited number of Phase I or Phase II applications.

**Q. Can a joint appointee whose salary and benefits are paid by the university (with nine months reimbursed by the national lab) serve as the lead PI from the university side?**

A. No. As the RFA states, "Individuals receiving more than half of their salary and benefits from a DOE/NNSA National Laboratory may not be named as the PI in an application submitted by an applicant other than a DOE/NNSA National Laboratory, regardless of any arrangement between the employing Laboratory and the applicant institution." Since the majority of their salary and benefits come from the lab, they can only be a lead PI on the lab application.

**Q. Can I serve as the lead PI if I have never been funded by DOE before?**

A. Yes, anyone who meets the requirements of a lead PI may apply. See section "LIMITATIONS ON PI" in the RFA for a full list of requirements.

**Q. What is the difference between a lead PI, PI, co-PI, or senior/key person?**

A. In the RFA, there is only one PI, the lead PI. All other investigators are a senior/key person. However, outside the RFA it is common to refer to senior/key persons as PIs or co-PIs. For clarity, in some places the PI is referred to as the lead PI in the RFA and this frequently asked questions document. Senior/Key Personnel is defined in the section IX.D Reference Material in the RFA.

**Q. Are there limitations on the number of applications an institution can submit as the lead?**

A. Yes, an institution may only submit one Phase I or Phase II application per focus area.

**Q. Are there limitations on the number of applications an institution can submit as a non-lead?**

A. No, an institution may be a non-lead institution on an unlimited number of applications.

**Q. Are different campuses in a state university system considered separate institutions for this solicitation?**

A. In general, yes. Any institution that has registered with SAM and obtained a different Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is considered a separate institution.

**Q. What is a focus area?**

A. There are 21 topics in the RFA. Under each topic are focus areas. For example, "1. Reenvisioning Advanced Manufacturing and Industrial Productivity" is a topic and "A. Agentic AI-Driven Chemical Manufacturing" and "B. AI-Driven Materials Processing" are two different focus areas. The same institution could submit an application to the 1-A focus area and a different application to the 1-B focus area.

**Q. Can an applicant select more than one focus area?**

A. Each applicant must address a topic and focus area specified in the RFA. Phase I applications are limited to a single focus area. Phase II applications must identify a primary focus area but can

also address secondary focus areas. The primary focus area will be used for determining limitations on institutional submissions.

**Q. Can a seed team funded as a pilot under the DOE’s Transformational AI Models Consortium apply for a Phase I or Phase II award?**

A. Yes.

**Q. Can a foreign institution be included as a member of a funded team?**

A. Yes, a foreign institution may submit a collaborative application as a member of a team but may not be the lead institution. Applicants are advised that successful applications that propose non-domestic entities as subrecipients include a detailed demonstration of how the proposed non-domestic subrecipients possess skills, resources, and abilities that do not exist among potential domestic subrecipients.

**Q. What is a domestic organization?**

A. As stated in the RFA in Section IV.D. Reference Material, *Domestic organization* means a public (including a State or other governmental agency) or private non-profit or for-profit organization that is located in the United States or its territories, is subject to U.S. laws, and assumes legal and financial accountability for awarded funds and for the performance of the grant-supported activities.

**Q. Are non-profits allowed to propose Cost-Plus-Fixed-Fee or is fee prohibited for this type of award?**

A. “Fee” is not an applicable cost category for non-profits.

Under this RFA, awards will be made using DOE’s “other transaction” authority. Awards will be structured in one of two formats:

1. With payments tied to reaching specific milestones, or
2. On a cost-reimbursement basis similar to research grants under 2 CFR 200.

There will be no cost-plus awards.

## Teaming Requirements

**Q. Is the lead institution considered a partner for determining teaming requirements?**

A. Yes, the lead institution is considered a partner of the team. For example, for a Phase I application, an application with a university (lead) and lab would be eligible. If both institutions were from a lab, it would not be eligible.

**Q. Are there restrictions on teaming for Phase I?**

A. Yes. Applicants for phase I proposals must include partner institutions from at least two of the categories listed in the solicitation: (1) DOE/NNSA National Laboratories or Scientific User Facilities, (2) Industry, and (3) Institutions of Higher Education/Non-profits/other.

**Q. Are there restrictions on teaming for Phase II?**

A. Phase II applicants must propose larger teams and include at least one partner from categories (1) and (2). The inclusion of a lead or partner institution from category (3) is strongly encouraged but not required.

**Q. Do all partners on a proposal need to be funded by DOE?**

A. No. Unfunded partners are eligible to be members of a Phase I or Phase II team. However, to meet partnering requirements described in the RFA, an unfunded partner must provide intellectual contributions to the proposed project that are defined in the proposal.

**Q. Do I need to be a member of the Genesis Mission Consortium to be eligible for a Phase I or Phase II award?**

A. No. Participating institutions do not need to be members of the Genesis Mission Consortium to be eligible for consideration of a Phase I or Phase II award as a lead or partner. However, members of the Consortium are eligible to submit applications or be partners in submitted applications.

**Q. If I received an award under this RFA, will I become a member of the Genesis Mission Consortium?**

A. No, receipt of an award under this RFA does not grant membership or require membership in the Genesis Mission Consortium.

**Q. What is the Genesis Mission Consortium's partnership service?**

A. The Genesis Mission Consortium's partnership service is intended to help members and non-members of the Consortium collaborate for applications related to the DOE Genesis Mission, including this RFA. The Service will help identify high-value partnerships between applicants and consortium members to catalyze data flows and promote novel data applications.

**Q. How do I access the partnership service offered by the Genesis Mission Consortium?**

A. Applicants interested in leveraging the partnership service can do so by contacting the Genesis Mission Consortium. More information on the partnership service can be found on the Consortium website (<https://genesismissionconsortium.org/>).

**Q. Are applicants required to utilize the Genesis Mission Consortium partnership services when establishing a teaming arrangement for their proposal?**

A. No, utilization of the Genesis Mission Consortium partnership service is encouraged, but not required, for team formation.

**Q. What does the "/" mean in "DOE/NNSA National Laboratory"? Is it DOE \*OR\* NNSA national laboratory or does it mean just the NNSA National Laboratories?**

A. The use of the backslash is to recognize the NNSA's quasi-autonomous status within the DOE. Our intent is to refer to all 17 national laboratories, including those sponsored by the Office of Science, the NNSA, and other departmental elements.

## Budgets

### **Q. Are there cost share requirements for funded awards?**

A. Unless otherwise specified, cost share is not required for basic and applied R&D under this RFA except for-profit entities. For-profit entities, whether prime recipients or sub-recipients, are required to provide not less than 20% cost share for basic and applied R&D, and not less than 50% of total project costs for demonstration and commercial application tasks. Applicants should review the focus area aligned with their application for any additional cost share requirements.

### **Q. How can companies meet the cost share requirements?**

A. Section II.B. of the Request for Applications (RFA) leaves it up to applicants as to how to meet the required cost share commitments. As stated in this section, the 20% and 50% cost sharing funds must originate from non-federal sources.

### **Q. Are companies allowed to request funding under this RFA?**

A. Yes. It is envisioned that DOE funding for all participating companies combined could be up to 20% of the total requested budget for specific project-relevant research efforts.

### **Q. What award budget period should Phase I applications use?**

A. Applicants for Phase I awards should prepare budgets with a single period that starts on July 1, 2026, and ends on March 31, 2027.

## Application Process

### **Q. Can you tell me if idea X is in scope for focus area A, B, ...?**

A. To maintain a fair and transparent process for all applicants, we are not providing feedback to potential applicants on the scope of specific focus areas or the competitiveness of proposed research.

A public webinar will be hosted on March 26, 2026, at 3:00PM. We are currently expecting several of the DOE program offices participating in this RFA to host their own webinars to provide greater clarity on their expectations. Registration for all webinars, along with recordings of past webinars, will be available at <https://science.osti.gov/Funding-Opportunities>.

### **Q. Can I use AI when preparing my application?**

The use of AI for preparing applications is discussed on page 68 of the RFA. DOE will apply a “fair-use” concept regarding the use of generative AI to support investigators’ efforts in presenting their intellectual work in an application. Guided by the principles expressed by others (<https://www.acm.org/publications/policies/frequently-asked-questions> and <https://journals.ieeeauthorcenter.ieee.org/become-an-ieee-journal-author/publishing-ethics/guidelines-and-policies/submission-and-peer-review-policies/#ai-generated-text>), applicants must disclose the use of any AI tools in applications, unless the tools were used solely for editing an original draft. Submission of a Project Narrative that is not the work of the proposed researchers, including machine-generated Project Narratives, may constitute academic dishonesty or research misconduct.

**Q. Where can I find the Collaborator Template form?**

A. The Collaborator Template is available at <https://science.osti.gov/grants/Policy-and-Guidance/Agreement-Forms>.

**Q. After preparing the required Collaborator table using the Collaborator Template from <https://science.osti.gov/grants/Policy-and-Guidance/Agreement-Forms> satisfy the requirement to provide a “List of Individuals Who Should Not Serve as Reviewers”, should the file remain as an Excel doc or be converted to a pdf file for final submission in PAMS?**

A. The instructions “10. How to Prepare a List of Individuals Who Should Not Serve as Reviewers” begin on Page 102. As noted on those pages, the Collaborator Template available at <https://science.osti.gov/grants/Policy-and-Guidance/Agreement-Forms> may be used for your convenience. The file should remain as an Excel doc.

**Q. Should the “List of Individuals Who Should Not Serve as Reviewers” (i.e., Collaborators table) be separate files and/or tabs for each senior personnel and/or institution?**

A. The collaborator spreadsheets from all participating key personnel and partner institutions should be consolidated into a single file with two tabs (“Senior-Key Personnel” and “Collaborators”) for submission. The file should remain as an excel doc.

**Q. What mechanisms are used by this RFA to support teams of multiple institutions and are applicants required to use a specific mechanism?**

A. There are two different mechanisms used by this RFA to support teams of multiple institutions: collaborative applications wherein each member of the team submits an application, and subawards, wherein all other team members are proposed as subrecipients of the lead institution. Applicants are not required to use one or the other mechanism, but DOE strongly encourages the use of collaborative applications.

**Q. Is a data management and sharing plan required for this application?**

A. Yes. The requirements for the data management and sharing plan (DMSP) are different for phase I and phase II proposals. For a phase I proposal, the DMSP will be required at the time of the award. For a phase II proposal, the DMSP will be required at the time of the application. For guidance on the requirements of the DMSP, please refer to the RFA.

**Q. Is a letter of commitment required from participating team members?**

A. Yes, a letter of commitment, signed by a person authorized to commit the participating institution to a legally binding agreement, is required from each institution participating as a team member on the proposal. This includes the lead institution. Please refer to the RFA for submission requirements.