Request for Proposals for “Regents Innovation Fund” Grants Competition

Due Date: May 31, 2016

The Office of Economic Development and Industry Relations is accepting applications for the grants program designed to expand the commercialization of ISU technology (pending the legislative session outcome). The grants program is supported by Iowa economic development appropriations to the Board of Regents (“Regents Innovation Fund”). This call is for Phase II proposals for projects that have received Phase I funding during FY15 or FY16, and is pending the availability of funds. Phase I applications will not be considered for the May 31 deadline. A separate RFP for Phase I applications will not be issued; however, Phase I applications will be accepted and reviewed on an ad hoc basis beginning in August, 2016.

The funds are to support the development of ISU innovations with commercial potential and to help more ISU technology reach the marketplace as the foundation for new Iowa companies and/or the growth of existing Iowa companies. The funding is intended to support a wide-range of stages in technology development, from the initial research concept (prior to intellectual property disclosure), to proof of concept, to licensing and commercialization. All proposals should have a clear commercial benefit or potential for the state of Iowa and must show a clear participation by Iowa industry(s). Interdisciplinary proposals are encouraged.

Funding per project for Phase II will be up to $50,000 and for a six month project. Successful proposals will demonstrate a high potential to lead to one or more of the following:
- New Iowa businesses and/or jobs created based on ISU technology.
- Increased sales and/or profitability of Iowa companies developed from or utilizing ISU technology.
- Improvements in the products and/or practices in Iowa businesses receiving assistance from ISU programs.
- New ISU technology licensed to companies with an Iowa presence.
- Collaborative research projects with companies with an Iowa presence.
- Submissions to the SBIR/STTR programs (Small Business Innovative Research & Small Business Technology TRansfer)

In addition to the above considerations, Phase II applicants must demonstrate:
- Timely expenditures of funding awarded under Phase I.
- Successful completion of Phase I milestones
- Fulfillment of matching funds commitment (cash or in-kind) by industry partner.
- Timely receipt of requested reports.

Matching Funds Requirement
Each proposal must demonstrate one-to-one matching funds. Most sources of funding can be used as matches. Examples include:
- The university general fund, including faculty and staff salaries (even if these are from multiple sources), start-up funds and recruitment packages
- Federal funds
- Industry funds are strongly encouraged—cash or in-kind support. While not required, in comparing submissions, cash match will carry more weight than in-kind, and companies exceeding 500 employees in size are expected to make a cash contribution to the project.
- Private gifts and endowments
- Pappajohn Center donor support
- Funds generated by the Research Park

State appropriations specifically directed to economic development programs at Iowa State University cannot be used as matches. Please contact Kris Johansen (mailto:kajohans@iastate.edu) at the Office of Economic Development and Industry Relations if you have specific questions regarding the ability to use matching funds.
Please remember that a cost share is considered cash only when provided by a third party as funds paid to ISU in support of the project. All other cost share is considered “in-kind”.

To apply, please complete the Proof-of-Concept Initiative (POCI) application form. Note that this form includes a cover page and two pages for the project description. Proposals that fail to conform to the application guidelines may be returned without review. Note that for projects that will be using ISU-developed technology, an appropriate license or option agreement must be in place at the time of award. Investigators planning to launch a startup company (or that will partner with an existing ISU startup) as a result of RIF funding must have also completed a conflict-of-interest (COI) disclosure on Access Plus and have a COI management plan in place (for all ISU members of the startup company) at the time of award.

A copy of the application form can be downloaded here, while the evaluation criteria can be viewed here.

Deadline for receipt of applications: May 31, 2016. Completed applications can be emailed to industry@iastate.edu.

Applicants from selected proposals will be invited to present their project at a review panel to be held June 10, 2016; the PI or someone from the proposing team must be available to present on that date for the project to be considered for funding. Funding decisions will be made at the conclusion of the review panel. It is anticipated that most projects will have a start date on or near August 1, 2016.

Note that applications for RIF funding will also continue to be accepted on an ad hoc basis.