



**Federal Aviation
Administration**

**FAA Center of Excellence
For
Commercial Space Transportation**

Questions and Answers

*Updated to Include Q & A for the Week of
March 29-April 2, 2010**

April 2010

*** New Questions and Answers are listed in Red**

This is a listing of the **Questions and Answers** concerning the establishment of the **FAA Center of Excellence for Commercial Space Transportation (COE CST)**. The FAA released the Draft Solicitation for the COE CST in December 2009. The questions in this listing are from interested parties since the release of the Draft Solicitation, and from two Public Meetings held on February 9, and February 25, 2010.

Below are the major categories into which the questions have fallen:

COE CST Solicitation

Funding Questions

Matching Funds

Administrative/Procedural

COE Team Membership

Proposal Writing and Content

Volume I and Volume II Requirements

Miscellaneous

COE CST Solicitation

1. Q: Where can the Final Solicitation be found?

A: The Final Solicitation for the Center of Excellence for Commercial Space Transportation is posted on Grants.gov, the FAA COE Program Office website and the FAA Office of Commercial Space Transportation website. The addresses are:

Grants.gov

<http://www.grants.gov/search/downloadAtt.do;jsessionid=Y1ptLvzMRLVy104c6qQnJL1c95W4NJs4RZlpRgGb2nDyPzk2zQRL!-1291589621?attId=40790>

FAA COE Program Office

http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ato/service_units/nextgen/coe/

FAA Office of Commercial Space Transportation

http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ast/media/coe_final_solicitation.pdf

2. Q. Why does the Draft Solicitation for the COE CST use the term “air transportation services?” Does this mean just “air,” “space,” or “air and space?” **

A. The language is quoted from Public Law 101-508 and we assume a meaning to include both air and space as appropriate within the scope of FAA responsibilities.

****References to “air transportation” in Draft Solicitation**

- Page 4: “The extent to which the needs of the State in which the applicant is located are representative of the needs of the region for improved air transportation services and facilities.”
- Page 4: “The ability of the applicant to provide leadership in making national and regional contributions to the solution of both long-range and immediate air transportation problems.”
- Page 4: “The extent to which the applicant has an established air transportation program.”
- Page 6: “3.1 CRITERION 1: THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE NEEDS OF THE STATE IN WHICH THE APPLICANT IS LOCATED ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NEEDS OF THE REGION FOR IMPROVED AIR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AND FACILITIES.”
- Page 6: “The applicant must demonstrate: Relevant partnerships with members of the aviation industry.”
- Page 6: “3.3 CRITERION 3: THE ABILITY OF THE APPLICANT TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN MAKING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SOLUTION OF LONG-RANGE AND IMMEDIATE AIR TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS.”
- Page 7: “3.4 CRITERION 4: THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE APPLICANT HAS AN ESTABLISHED AIR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM.”

Funding Questions

1. Q: *What precisely are the budgeting periods called out in the form (It mentions periods 1,2,3,4 and 5 in all sections). Need they be aligned with the Government fiscal year, the academic fiscal year, or the award anniversary date?*

A: The cooperative agreements with each member university will be effective on the date signed by the COE program director. All universities will have the same agreement date (~ July/August). We expect to be awarding funds as amendments to the agreement during this fiscal year (August/September). Therefore, a reasonable budget period could begin as early as September 1st for initial meeting support and research that is generally aligned with the academic year in September or May be as late as January 2011. You may use a 12-month period that best aligns with your proposed plan.

Funding for fiscal year 2011 (which begins on Oct 1st) research and related activities will generally not be available until February/March. It would be reasonable to plan for additional awards to support work beginning in June 2011 if necessary or September.

2. Q: *For budgets and costs past the first year, should the form include anticipated research budgets, or solely the administrative costs of the Center?*

A: Budgets may be prepared to support anticipated research activities. However, as stated during the public meeting, such specifics will be better identified once the number of team members is known, the special skill sets of the members, available resources being made available at the institutions, and state and local contributions that might be provided by the winning team. No more than a brief abstract and general budget for research would be expected in the initial proposal. We are interested in your research approach in the topic areas, what the team members bring to the COE partnership, how the COE would be established and managed given the uniqueness of the talent pool and the individual state/local governments and industry contributions.

3. Q: *What are the current requirements for cost-sharing? If a for-profit industrial organization participates in the COE, is that organization required to provide cash payments to the academic partner or are “in-kind” contributions acceptable?*

A: In-kind is fine. PIs are encouraged to discuss specific contributions with their Grants Officers while planning. Dr. Watts will provide information on OMB Guidance for Matching Funds at the Public Meeting and this information will also be available on the FAA website at <http://faa.gov/go/coe>.

4. Q: *Interested parties have heard that at least one college is trying to use the Congressional earmark or authorization process to circumvent your competitive solicitation. Can this be addressed publicly? Would serious outside bidders be wasting their time?*

A: The FAA Administrator has made a decision to initiate a COE competitive process as a separate action from any politically supported activities. The FAA will

conduct the competition as mandated in the enabling legislation. There may more information available about such Congressional language by February 9th. If more information is available, the FAA will address the issue during the open discussion session at the Public Meeting.

5. Q: *I have been working with the engineering staff at a local airport to explore a lighting efficiency retrofit for the C Gates. It looks as though they missed the deadlines for relevant Department Of Energy Federal grant applications. Would their project qualify for these monies? Or, are you aware of any stimulus funding sources for which they should apply? The project targets are: High performance lighting controls, Digitally addressed, Software controlled, lighting, Automated daylight harvesting, Enhanced commissioning, Building as a teaching tool, Demand response/ load shedding capabilities, Advanced reporting, Buy American components, Self-installation and optimization (with manufacturer-provided training).*

A: I am not aware of efforts in this field other than the establishment of our FAA COE Commercial Space Transportation. You can view our web site noted below for complete information about our Program. This COE, however, is not the recipient of Recovery funds at this point.

6. Q: *The draft solicitation states that the FAA may choose to fund some or all of the first year projects offered in the winning proposal. Given this fact, can our proposed projects exceed the amount of funding available, or must they cumulatively remain within the \$1M limit established for year one FAA funding? Would it be acceptable if we were to include 30 projects, exceeding the \$1M, and allow the FAA to select only those they want to fund?*

A: Proposals should address the research approach one would take in each topic area not to be limited by the exact funding commitment currently anticipated. University members will elaborate and provide specifics after COE team is chosen and actual amounts are available.

7. Q: *How are COEs funded?*

A: Once selected, COE universities and the FAA will enter into a cooperative agreement to initiate the establishment of the COE. Grants will be directly awarded to each core member as amendments to this agreement. All grants awarded to *establish, operate and conduct related research* will be subject to matching requirements as set forth in P.L. 101-508.

8. Q: *Will the COE have a contract associated with it?*

A: The solicitation allows the sponsoring organization (FAA Office of Commercial Space Transportation) to award an IDIQ contract to COE core team members, however, the initial awards will all be made through cooperative agreements and grants. There is no guarantee that future awards will be IDIQ contracts.

9. Q: *Can state funds be used as matching contributions?*

A: Yes.

10. Q: *Is there a requirement to put dollar values for each abstract?*

A: No.

11. Q: *Should budgets for proposed projects be for two or three years duration?*

A: Once the COE team is selected, funds for specific projects will be awarded for periods as needed for each task, generally for 12 months at a time. Proposals are written to the amount being awarded and budgets are proposed for the specific amount and time period as agreed upon with the FAA sponsor.

12. Q: *Can we include unrecovered indirect costs as cost sharing?*

A: Yes, a university may request prior approval for this in writing.

13. Q: *Can costs associated with pre-award activities be included in the proposal?*

A: Once the Administrator selects the winning team, the FAA will enter into a cooperative agreement with each core university member and the 'establishment' date will be stated. Thereafter, costs that are reasonable, allowable and allocable in accordance with OMB guidance may be contributed or invoiced.

14. Q: *How do we set a value on the contribution of human resources and the commitment of human capital?*

A: Fiscal Officers at the university or company are generally familiar with allowable charges/costs for professional time contributed to a project or activity. An individual's hourly rate is documented and verifiable as are institutional overhead rates. Questions should be discussed with your fiscal officers prior to final proposal preparation.

15. Q: *Almost all monies generate from the federal government in one way or another. How far back do you track the source of a contribution?*

A: If a corporate entity contributes to the COE and their fiscal officers allow for the contribution, it is generally accepted by the FAA. We have not experienced a situation that resulted in denial of a cash or in-kind contribution that complied with OMB guidance. When situations are unusual, we always advise that the FAA/company/university fiscal officers discuss the matter prior to submission of the matching plan.

16. Q: Do we propose \$1 million for the first year or will it be a smaller amount?

A: The FAA is interested in knowing how you plan to manage the COE and what costs you would expect to incur during startup, including personnel, travel, etc. We plan to award funds to winning team members within FY 2010 and these amounts will be available for start up activities. The remainder of the first year's funding of \$1 million will be available for research, education and training during FY 2011. During 2011, additional funds will be made available to support continuing research activities or new projects.

17. Q: Is it possible, even though it's set at \$1 million per year, if there are unspent funds, that the COE can receive more?

A: The \$1 million per year funding level is a baseline limit. It is possible, but not guaranteed that other FAA and Federal funding could be added to this initial amount.

18. Q: Under a Federal contract, will there be a limitation on the pass-through (e.g., you take \$1 million award, keep \$100,000 for yourself and pass through the remainder).

A: We have never stipulated a limit on amounts that would be sub-contracted or granted to others. We consider what is allowable, allocable and reasonable, and encourage members of the core team to assume an important role and seriously participate and oversee the research.

Matching Funds

1. Q: Will the 1:1 match apply to each individual project, or can we use a cumulative match to cover our entire portfolio of projects?

A: For projects requiring a 1:1 match, contributions are not required on a task by task basis and may be accumulated, pooled, and distributed as needed across projects and teams. However, all requirements must be satisfied prior to the end of Phase I (by yr 4). Phase II agreements for all team members will be executed when the entire team has fully satisfied all Phase I matching requirements.

2. Q: If Congress changes the 1:1 matching requirements, will the new requirements become effective immediately?

A: Grants awarded after matching requirements are redefined would reflect new language in keeping with Congressional intent.

3. Q: Are there restrictions on the matching funds? Do they have to be non-Federal matching funds or can we use other government funds, as matching?

A: Matching must be provided by a non-Federal source, in-kind or cash contributions.

4. Q: To what extent must we document every dollar of matching in the proposal? Do we need letters from industry affiliates saying they will donate?

A: You would present only your 'plan' to generate match in your initial proposal and substantiate the projected plan with letters of intent/support from industry, state or local entities. As tasks are defined and proposals are written against identified requirements in 2011, specific amounts and sources would be documented in final proposals as available, and 'actuals' provided when they are contributed or by the end of the project of Phase.

5. Q: Can cost share or match be in facilities, reduced rates, contributed IP, etc., instead of cash?

A: Yes, as long as it is project/program related from a non-federal source. See OMB guidance, provided at the Public Meeting.

6. Q: If NASA has donated a lab and equipment to the university, can we use this as a matching contribution?

A: No.

7. Q: Can a corporation donate IRAD funds to a university as a matching contribution?

A: The corporate affiliate should discuss this issue with his/her fiscal officer.

8. Q: *If a university has more than \$1M in matching contributions during the first year, is it possible that FAA might award more than \$1M?*

A: Excess match may be carried over from year to year and applied as needed. However, it is possible that the FAA with other government entities could provide for more than \$1M to the COE during any year.

9. Q: *The draft solicitation states: "The COE must average a 50% cost share during each five-year phase on all funds awarded..." This differs from the oft-spoken "one-to-one" matching. Please clarify.*

A: Congress has indicated that through grant awards the federal government shall not contribute more than 50% of the costs to establish, operate and conduct related research within a Center of Excellence. Therefore, the matching contributions become a one-to-one match.

10. Q: *Is there matching with IDIQ contracts?*

A: Cost-share is negotiable within the contract and is strongly encouraged to avoid the appearance that a contract is used to bypass the matching requirement.

11. Q: *Can matching funds come from other Federal agencies?*

A: No. Matching funds must be non-Federal, non-tax payer money.

12. Q: *What if University A has more in a match, can that be distributed among all team members?*

A: Yes, it can be shared with others and/or carried over to the next Phase.

13. Q: *Is there a process for removing a team member because of a repeated delinquency in the matching process?*

A: If a member is consistently unable to generate matching contributions, this would be indicated and explained during each reporting cycle. All university members must satisfy matching requirements within the 4th year. OMB requires the return of funds if requirements are not met. The COE Program Office has not had such an experience to date. Universities finding difficulty securing such contributions may withdraw from the partnership after completing all requirements.

If members are not fully participating, etc., should either they or the other members question member's commitment to the COE, the team would address and resolve these issues on an individual basis. It is suggested that such topics be included in agreements amongst members and reflected in the management plan.

If the FAA finds 'just cause' for terminating an agreement with a university, the FAA will take 'punitive' action at any time as needed.

14. Q: If a Federal agency were to MIPPR funding to the FAA to award grants in support of COE projects, would these funds be subject to matching requirements?

A: Yes.

15. Q: If another federally funded Center were to work in collaboration with an FAA COE, would such efforts be subject to match or count as match?

A: Such efforts would neither be subject to match nor count as match.

Administrative/Procedural Questions

1. Q. In Section 6.3 (b) of the Final Solicitation, the page count limit is listed as 50 and Appendix A refers to 125 pages. Is this meant to suggest that the narrative is limited to 50 pages, but that the whole section has a 125 page limit in order to accommodate letters of commitment, etc.?

A: Yes, the narrative is limited to 50 pages (Volume I), and the total package (Volume I and Volume II) should be no more than 125 pages including attachments such as brochures.

2. Q. Can you give an estimated date of when the actual RFP will be released and the deadline to submit the proposal?

A: We allow for public comment and input during and after the public meeting. The final solicitation will be issued approximately 4 weeks after the public meeting. The deadline to submit will be announced at that time, but generally the solicitation is open for approximately 6 weeks. A tentative schedule is provided at the Public Meeting.

3. Q. Will proposers be required to attend the public meeting?

A: Proposers are not required to attend the Public Meeting, but it is highly recommended. Teams form very often during this gathering and the information presented is generally critical to preparing a sound proposal.

4. Q. Is there a requirement that the principal investigator (PI) have a PhD?

A: No.

5. Q. Is there a requirement that the PI have no current or pending Federal support from any Federal agency?

A: No. If you have experience with Grants.gov, you know that the application forms for funding are standardized. COE Proposals are shipped to the FAA COE Program Office in hard copy.

6. Q: Is the deadline for final submission of the proposal the same for Grants.gov and for sending the hard copy to Dr. Watts?

A: Yes, plan on shipping hard copies for delivery by the same date.

Note: Proposals will be reviewed as received. Those delivered prior to the deadline, either version, will be subject to initial review upon receipt. Those who submit early will be permitted to provide additional information if omitted or clarifications if needed. Late submissions are not accepted.

7. Q: Are the Executive Directors at the universities allowed to communicate with the Advisory Board?

A: Yes.

8. Q: Who determines how many members and who will serve as members on the Advisory Board?

A: The Center team members make those determinations.

9. Q: If you have 20 universities in the COE Core Team, does the FAA award 20 separate cooperative agreements and grants to each?

A: Yes.

10. Q: What are the restrictions on our communications once the solicitation is issued in final?

A: Once the Final Solicitation is issued, additional questions may be submitted to the COE Program Office in writing, patricia.watts@faa.gov and fax (609) 485-4101. Answers will be added to FAA's list of questions and forwarded to the mailing list.

11. Q: Will the COE lead(s) serve as prime on all awards or will direct grants be awarded to each COE member?

A: Grant awards are made directly to each core member. The FAA will negotiate a cooperative agreement with each university core member. Grant awards are issued as amendments to the cooperative agreement. As needed, core members may subaward to others outside the core.

12. Q: When submitting proposals for grant awards, will you accept electronic signatures on required forms?

A: Yes.

13. Q: When submitting the proposal to establish a COE in response to the current solicitation, do all partner organizations need to sign the cover page?

A: Each University core member includes required forms as stated in the solicitation, and a budget form with a supporting narrative that is signed by a fiscal officer. The proposed COE lead packages the full proposal and submits this with a cover letter signed by a senior university official. However, the full proposal should make clear the commitments, capabilities and resources being provided by each member via appropriate documentation.

14. Q: In the case of small business/industry partners who do not have external financial audit reports for Volume II, would a DCAA report or CPA letter suffice?

A: University core members are those receiving direct awards from the FAA, thus only core universities are required to provide audit reports. Industry affiliates are not required to provide this documentation to the FAA.

Q: Who serves on the evaluation team and about how long does that process take?

A: Government employees may serve on the team, generally not those from the sponsoring organization. The identity of the technical evaluators and the management/fiscal reviews will not be divulged. A COE evaluation generally takes about 3 days.

15. Q: *As a core member, are there specific overhead amounts for meetings?*

A: University faculty members should meet with their fiscal officers before preparing a proposed budget for COE related research. Anticipated COE related travel would be presented as a line item on the budget form and substantiated by a narrative (number of trips, duration, purpose, location) in the proposal.

16. Q: *If a university or industry entity is not selected during the open solicitation, how can their expertise be leveraged into the selected research project?*

A: It would depend on whether they are providing something which would be captured as a match or whether they are being awarded funding as a sub from one of the core team members. The team may accept matching contributions from any entity at any time. Teams can develop plans for adding core team members and affiliate members as needed. Such a process should be incorporated into the COEs management plan. Core team members are generally those who participate in the overall direction and management of the Center.

17. Q: *Will the solicitation define the meetings and requirements and where will the meetings be held?*

A: The Solicitation includes guidance regarding meetings and other requirements in **Section 4. Center Operations**. **Section 4** also provides additional guidance on the types of activities that COEs can use to disseminate information and utilize new knowledge.

"The COE must maintain close working relationships with the FAA COE Program Office and the sponsoring research program offices. This relationship extends to participation in conferences, meetings, joint research efforts, and submission of significant activity reports to the FAA on a routine basis. The COE is required to prepare and submit semiannual reports and a fully inclusive annual report on research projects, other accomplishments, matching contributions and fiscal expenditures. During the first year, the COE is required to conduct on-site reviews and submit these reports quarterly. The FAA will require the COE to hold an annual meeting with agency representatives on topics relating to the status and results of the designated research. The COE members will host a major symposium before the end of the initial five-year phase and thereafter as agreed upon. The Center is also required to actively participate in FAA Joint COE Meetings as scheduled."

Meetings are generally hosted by the Core Team Members during the first year and held at mutually agreed upon locations. Industry affiliates may also offer to host meetings as appropriate.

Section 5. Annual Research Review provides information on the requirements for Annual Research Reviews and Annual Reports.

Letters of Commitment/Support

18. Q: *Do letters from corporate and other potential sponsors count against the 50 page limit to the narrative in the proposal?*

A: No, these should be included in Vol. II with required forms, etc.

19. Q: *Is there a special format for Letters of Commitment? Do you have a generic example?*

A: There is no required format for the Letter of Commitment. A Letter of Commitment would:

- Justify the reasons why the entity/organization is in favor of the establishment of the COE;
- Indicate the type of coordination/support they would intend to provide to the COE team; and
- Be signed off at the highest level possible.

20. Q: *If a company provides a letter of support to one team, is it free to provide such a letter to competing teams?*

A: Yes, companies may provide letters to each team submitting a proposal, and we would expect the industry to align with the winning team to the extent possible.

21. Q: *Does just the lead university submit such letters of support in the proposal?*

A: No, all team members should seek involvement and support from corporations, state and local entities within your respective regions. These letters should also state how a COE relationship with the FAA would positively impact the geographic regions represented by the proposing team.

22. Q: *Should letters come from the research division or from the university president on university letterhead?*

A: The Principal Investigator should try to go as high as possible. It is optimal to get the president's buy-in and make sure that president and all university officials are aware of the COE and its activities.

23. Q: *Volume I, Letters of Commitment: Are these to be provided for all university/industry/government partners identified in the proposal?*

A: Core university members should include a letter of commitment signed by a senior official. Other letters should be included as appropriate to the extent possible.

24. Q: *Do Letters of Commitment fall outside of the 50-page narrative limit for Volume I?*

A: The letters do not count against the 50 page narrative.

Team Membership

1. Q: *How will the FAA Civil Aerospace Medical Institute (CAMI) participate with the new COE members? Can we include them as part of our team?*

A: CAMI has confirmed that within the scope of their existing “*Memorandum of Cooperation Between the FAA Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST) and AVS Office of Aerospace Medicine (AAM) Concerning Commercial Human Space Flight Operations*,” CAMI’s programs and infrastructure will be available resources in support of the COE for Commercial Space Transportation. Personnel at CAMI will discuss future collaborative opportunities with the winning COE team.

NOTE: Contributions of space or other resources may not count toward matching requirements.

2. Q: *We must address needs of your home state and your region. Please provide insight as to how you balance the state, regional and national needs in forming a team.*

A: P.L 101-508: *The extent to which the needs of the state in which the applicant is located are representative of the needs of the region for improved air transportation services and facilities.*

Identify state/local/regional commercial space transportation human and other resources. Make clear how you intend to partner with these institutions/entities and to what extent related activities would result in a positive impact on your geographic area. The proposal should include the resources and benefits that would be realized in each of the states/regions represented by the team members.

3. Q: *Can a team include international members?*

A: Yes. However, agreement(s) with international entities have been negotiated and entered into by the COE university members rather than the FAA. Currently, the COE for Noise & Emissions Mitigation is formally co-sponsored with Transport Canada, and York University is a core member. TC provides funds to YU and to the US universities in order to achieve a coordinated approach to research of mutual interest. Other international entities have also participated with FAA COEs. Specifics should be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

4. Q: *Is geographic equity satisfied by only the location of the lead university or are the various locations of the core team and ancillary partners important?*

A: The entire team should be reflected in the proposal. The team lead(s) should be clearly identified and their role(s) specified. Core members should be specified. Should there be second tier members, this should be specified as well.

5. Q: *Re participation of government centers, either NASA, national labs, FFRDCs etc., the Universities are clearly displayed as lead partners, but can other entities join a proposal?*

A: Yes, FFRDCs may participate as members of the COE team, but FAA only enters into cooperative agreements with University members.

Note: If government entities provide funding to the COE, these funds are subject to matching requirements. FFRDC's may participate, although they may not be the direct awardee. Only "Institutions of higher education" are eligible for award. Also, FFRDC funds awarded through the FAA would have to be matched, and could not count as matching against FAA dollars.

6. Q. *Can a team member, drop out of the team during the research period?*

A: Yes, e.g., a team member will complete all of its research or responsibilities.

7. Q. *Are other Federal entities allowed to be part of the overall proposal?*

A: Yes. However, should they provide funding to the COE, these funds must also be matched.

8. *Can a university or other organizations be added to the team, after the winning team has been selected (i.e. during the research period).*

A: Yes, e.g., the team may need a specific expertise.

9. *Are FAA offices/organizations, e.g. FAA's Civil Aerospace Medical Institute (CAMI) allowed to participate as team members? If yes, can FAA offices/organizations receive grant money?*

A: The FAA office/organization can participate through AST, but it would not receive funds through the COE.

10. Q: *What are the differences between core members and affiliates?*

A: Core members will enter into a cooperative agreement with the sponsoring organization and receive grant awards. Affiliate members will not.

11. Q: *Can industry be core members?*

A: No, only universities.

Proposal Writing and Content

1. *Q: How should we address management costs in the proposal?*

A: Overall management and oversight of the COE is critical. During the first year, you should reflect 4 meetings that each of the core members would be expected to attend. The proposal should address such topics as the role of the business office; a system to track funds and progress; the expected roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Board, Director(s)/ Business Manager, etc. Costs to operate the COE should be limited but reasonable to assure smooth operations, facilitate teaming and learning, and ensure adequate fiscal controls and oversight.

2. *Q: What is the best way to approach the writing of the proposal?*

A: Follow the final Solicitation. This document outlines the areas that are important. The selection criteria presented by Congress are not weighted; therefore, these elements are equally considered unless stated otherwise.

3. *Q: Would spaceport systems, operations and technologies be an appropriate project for the SOW?*

A: Yes, these areas fall under the **Space Launch Operations and Traffic Management** SEE **Section 2.1** in the Final Solicitation.

4. *Q: The Draft Solicitation states that 10-20 projects should be included. Is 20 the limit, or just a suggestion?*

A: The suggested 10-20 projects is intended to be a suggested range to determine how the proposing team might approach the most significant areas they are prepared to support. It is required that the proposal narrative be within the page limit specified and it is suggested that the projects be presented as abstracts.

- a.** It is important that the proposal provide the evaluators with a clear understanding of the positive impact a COE would have on the geographic regions represented, and the team's local and regional support, capabilities, facilities, and resources that will be brought together to provide a sound structure within which the partnership will operate, and conduct research, education and training over the next decade

5. *Q: Technical abstracts will consist of the university's ideas. What structure do you propose that we use for specific budgets for each organization that is part of the team?*

A: The allocation of resources among the COE CST team members is up to the proposing team. For the first year, team members should focus on research priorities and administrative duties, i.e., the tasks, equipment, etc. for initiating a Center of Excellence.

Volume I and II Requirements¹

Because the COE-CST proposal involves a number of partners from university, government and industry, I would like to request clarification on the Volume II requirements. Based on the organizational charts presented at the 2/9/10 public meeting, it is my interpretation that you are viewing the university team members as the “core partners” and the industry and government partners in an advisory capacity. Thus the bulk of the Volume II requirements apply to the university team members and only LOC’s would be included (in Volume I) for the industry/government partners.

1. Q: Copy of each team member’s institutional audit report: Does this only apply to the universities?

A: This applies to university core members.

2. Q: Small businesses/for-profits do not seem to meet this requirement.

A: Correct.

3. Q: FAA Form 9550-1 Cover Sheet: Is this only signed by the lead institution, or do all partnering universities need to sign as well? If everyone signs, is there one form per institution?

A: The COE administrative lead must submit the cover sheet and the proposal for electronic receipt by FAA CST - Ken/Brenda by the due date specified in the final solicitation. Concurrently, the lead will submit a cover letter and coordinate the submission of the number of hard copies, of volumes I and II to be sent to the FAA COE Program Office - Pat by the due date.

Submissions are review upon receipt. For those submissions received prior to the due date, if items are missing or clarifications needed, the lead will be notified and given an opportunity to make changes/additions prior to the final due date.

4. Q: Do industry partners need to sign anything beyond a Letter of Contribution (LOC)?

A: Letters indicating the names, titles, contact information of industry affiliates and the extent of their commitments would be sufficient.

5. Q: Certifications, including Lobbying: This coincides with the above question.

A: Only universities need provide

¹ The formal submission requires a Cover Letter, Volume I: Proposal, and Volume II: Certifications and Declarations. SEE Section 6: PROPOSAL PREPARTION AND SUBMISSION, Subsection 6.3 in the Final Solicitation.

6. Q: *FAA Form 9550-3 Current & Pending Support: Is this provided only for the lead institution's PI's or from all PI's at all institutions including industry partner contacts?*

A: All core university PIs must submit this form.

7. Q: *If an industry partner is involved in one of the 10-20 proposed projects, would we include a C&P for the PI at that organization, or collect their proposal details at a later date if the project is selected by the FAA for funding?*

A: Consider the initial submission of proposed projects to be more similar to an abstract. Proposal 'details' will be required along with any additional forms after the COE team members are selected.

8. Q: *Indirect Cost Agreement: Required of each university team member, but not of industry/government partners, correct?*

A: A verification of each core university's indirect cost agreement is required with the initial submission. As universities may be added in the future or may be the recipient of sub-awards, additional information/forms/etc. Will be required on a case-by-case basis.

9. Q: *Volume I, Letters of Commitment: Are these to be provided for all university/industry/government partners identified in the proposal?*

A: Core university members should include a letter of commitment signed by a senior official. Other letters should be included as appropriate to the extent possible.

10. Q: *Do Letters of Commitment fall outside of the 50-page narrative limit for Volume I?*

A: The letters do not count against the 50 page narrative.

Miscellaneous

1. Q: *RAND is an independent nonprofit organization (www.rand.org). Research is carried out by five units that address social and economic policy issues both in the United States and overseas; by five centers that focus on international policy; by three federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs) that focus on national security; and by RAND Europe, an independently chartered European affiliate. Since 1970, RAND has operated an innovative and respected graduate school specializing in public policy analysis. The Pardee RAND Graduate School (PRGS) is the world's leading producer of Ph.D.'s in public policy analysis (www.prgs.edu). PRGS currently enrolls approximately 90 Ph.D. students from more than 20 countries around the world. PRGS is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).*

One of the previously mentioned five units is the RAND Infrastructure, Safety, and Environment (ISE). ISE provides effective solutions and insights to decision makers in the public and private sectors on the challenges of developing, managing, and protecting energy, transportation, water, communications, and other infrastructure as well as the safety and security of individuals and communities. ISE studies are coordinated through four programs: Environment, Energy & Economic Development; Homeland Security & Defense; Safety & Justice; and Transportation, Space, & Technology.

RAND, under the auspices of the PRGS and the Transportation, Space, & Technology program of ISE, is considering joining a FAA COE CST proposal team as a Core Member. We would like to confirm that the FAA would consider us eligible as a Core Member in the COE for CST. We recognize that the matching funds commitments must be from non-federal sources, which precludes contributions and involvement with our FFRDC components.

A: Based on this information, RAND qualifies as an “institution of higher education” as required by the COE statute 49 USCA 44513.

2. Q: *You mention the number of students who have received degrees as a result of COE partnerships, yet there is no criterion that requires this. Under which criterion would that be evaluated, if at all? How many students would be reasonable to include?*

A: You are correct, Congress has not specifically stated a requirement to educate a number of students; however, education, training and research are reflected in the enabling legislation. We do consider the COE Program overall to be a way to encourage students to pursue advanced technical degrees. Successful COEs will span a decade allowing for the completion of doctoral dissertations and masters level theses. The establishment of Centers also formalizes a commitment by the FAA to train a pool of professionals for the next generation.

The number of students one might hire to support a given project would depend on the funds available, the oversight needed, the overhead costs which vary greatly, etc.

3. Q: *How is the first year different from the others?*

A: During the first year the COE will be forming a new team, developing and executing a management, education and research plan. Generally, awards are made to each core member for start-up costs and initial meeting attendance. First year funds remaining will be applied to specific research and related activities during the second year. Additional proposals will be submitted during the second year and new funds will be added.

4. Q: *Can graduate students receive grant money for the full-term or is it periodic?*

A: Although proposals may be accepted at any time during the fiscal year, research projects are funded annually by the FAA and grants are awarded as new year funds are made available. Therefore, graduate students are generally funded for a year at a time.

5. Q: *How long are quarterly meetings?*

A: 1-2 days.

6. Q: *Are the annual reports and financial statements available for review by the interested parties?*

A: No, it is recommended that applicants find past or existing COE members from their own universities and ask to see their records.

7. Q: *Who are the auditors (for auditing the matching funds, etc.) reports and financial statements available for review by the interested parties?*

A: Dr. Watts reviews financial statements on a regular basis and the COE-CST FAA Program Manager, Mr. Davidian, will be reviewing invoices and financial reports quarterly. Matching contributions are generally captured as received, accumulated and reported in quarterly reports during each cooperative agreement phase. The FAA COE Program Office calls upon the university's Federal Cognizant Government Auditing Agency during the fourth year of the cooperative agreement to request a formal review of the university's matching contributions and related expenditures.

8. Q: *We are looking into what potential role JSC and local universities might play in this effort. Is there any way I can get more background on it? What's the vision? Role of COE? Expected outcomes? Impediments?*

A: We hope JSC will join us for what will surely be a mutually beneficial effort over time. Also, additional information is posted on [Grants.gov/FAA/Centers of Excellence/CFDA # 20.109/Commercial Space Transportation](https://www.grants.gov/FAA/Centers of Excellence/CFDA # 20.109/Commercial Space Transportation). Please see our COE website for additional information about our program. For more information about FAA Centers, see www.coe.faa.gov