

U.S. Geological Survey

Mineral Resources External Research Program – FY 2012

Funding Opportunity and Award Description

The Mineral Resources Program (MRP) of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is offering a grant and/or cooperative agreement opportunity, called the Mineral Resources External Research Program (MRERP) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012. This opportunity is extended to universities, State agencies, Tribal governments or organizations, and industry or other private sector organizations that have the ability to conduct research in topics related to nonfuel mineral resources. For FY 2012 the MRP is intensifying its efforts in critical minerals research.

The total amount of funding available for the FY 2012 MRERP is expected to be \$250,000. As of the posting date of this announcement the Federal appropriations process for FY 2012 was not complete. If the available funding remains \$250,000 for FY 2012, the MRP anticipates funding 3 to 5 proposals submitted under this program announcement, however, individual proposals are not restricted to a set level of funding.

The FY 2012 MRERP is accepting applications from September 7 to October 6, 2011. Access and download the FY 2012 MRERP announcement by going to <http://www.grants.gov/> and search for this grant opportunity by using keyword “mineral”, funding opportunity number “G12AS00004”, or CFDA number “15.816”.

Applicant Eligibility

Applications will be accepted from any individual who has the ability to conduct research consistent with the Mineral Resources Program goals (see Research Topic Eligibility section below) and who is not employed by a U.S. federal agency. Applicants need not be U.S. citizens and can be affiliated (but are not required to be affiliated) with universities, State agencies, Tribal governments or organizations, industry, or other private sector groups.

Research Topic Eligibility

All proposals must meet two primary criteria to qualify for funding consideration. Criterion 1: The proposed work must be research; a systematic inquiry to generate new knowledge about a subject of investigation, through a process of interpretation. Data collection and compilation are important early steps in a research project, but do not, alone, constitute research.

Criterion 2: The proposed work must address the long term goals of the MRP as outlined in the USGS science strategy plan (<http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/2007/1309>). These are:

- Ensure availability of up-to-date quantitative assessments for undiscovered mineral deposits
- Ensure availability of up-to-date mineral environmental assessments for areas of interest
- Ensure availability of reliable geologic, geochemical, geophysical, and mineral locality data for the United States
- Ensure availability of long-term data sets describing mineral production and consumption

Note that evaluation criteria reward proposals that address one or more of the priority research topics outlined below.

Priority Research Topics

The USGS MRP conducts research to reduce the uncertainty in nonfuel mineral resource and mineral environmental assessments. As assessments are dynamic, so must be the research that supports them. Each year the MRERP designates research topics as priority for support. In FY 2012 the MRP is expanding its efforts in critical minerals research on commodities that are of increasing importance to economic and national security and may be subject to disruption in supply.

To support this expanded critical minerals effort, the FY 2012 MRERP is soliciting research proposals that address one or more of the following topics:

- Methods development of critical mineral designation (i.e., criticality and supply risk analysis)
- Regional metallogenic framework studies to understand geotectonic controls on the distribution of critical mineral-bearing systems
- Research to better understand the geology, mineralogy, geochemistry, and geophysical properties of critical mineral-bearing deposits, both conventional and unconventional (e.g., Ga and REE in residual materials, REE-bearing phosphate resources, etc.)
- Research on environmental pathways and biogeochemical behavior of critical and associated metals
- Life-cycle and materials flow analysis of critical commodities

For the purpose of this solicitation critical mineral commodities are defined as follows (in alphabetical order):

Cobalt
Gallium
Indium

Lithium
Niobium
PGEs
REEs
Rhenium
Tantalum
Tellurium

For further information contact MRERP@usgs.gov.