

Environmental Science and Policy Program and Center for Water Sciences
Water Initiative Research Grants
Call for Proposals
November 5, 2012

The Water Initiative Research Grants (WIRGs) are intended to support interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research efforts that advance water sciences (broadly defined) and lead to applications for major external funding.

The WIRGs will contribute to the overall goal of making MSU a leader in water research. The MSU Global Water Initiative and Blue Ribbon Report emphasize that interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary efforts will help tie different components of MSU water research programs together and enable successful competition for major funding such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, NSF STC and ERC programs, NSF Climate Water and Sustainability Grants, NSF-USAID new initiatives, philanthropic foundations, etc.

Our goal for the WIRGs is to engage faculty teams to explore cutting-edge issues in water science and to build or enhance interdisciplinary teams in order to pursue major external funding opportunities, making MSU highly competitive for “big science” funding in water.

Expected Outcomes

Each WIRG recipient team is expected to submit to external funders at least one major water-related grant proposal involving researchers from multiple disciplines. We define major as grant awards of approximately \$1 million or more; however, we realize that different funding programs have different funding levels and therefore the \$1 million amount is a guideline rather than a requirement. Proposals with clear plans to submit a major water-related grant proposal are preferred. We also encourage peer-reviewed publications in addition to grant proposals.

Eligibility

The program is open to all MSU faculty members.

Use and Availability of Funds

Funds may be used for salary, workshops and symposia, travel, supplies, or equipment. For example, teams may use funds to support:

- Salary for faculty, including release time of key faculty members, in order to lead teams. This release time may come in the form of buyout of teaching time and/ or summer salary.
- Travel and administrative support for developing contacts with federal agencies, philanthropic foundations, and private corporations that may be interested in funding research in water and the environment, and for developing collaborations with partners at other universities, governmental bodies, and NGOs.
- Workshops, symposia, and meetings, including with visiting scientists and invited speakers. (*Note: Application to the Visiting Water Scholar Program may be more appropriate if the visit is the primary element of the team’s activities; WIRG funding is intended for a more extended team effort.*)
- Support for a post-doctoral researcher. Given the limited funds, this will likely be partial support for a post-doctoral researcher.
- Collection of preliminary data to strengthen proposals to external funders.

Faculty are encouraged to identify opportunities early and plan far ahead enough in time to complete submission of the proposal at the end of the WIRG grant period.

Funding Amount

WIRG grants will focus on positioning teams to be successful in garnering external funding. Awards will provide up to \$100,000 in funding over two years. Teams are expected to submit at least one proposal to external funding agencies as well as publish papers in peer-reviewed journals to position teams for future funding.

Funding Availability and Types of Awards

We expect that up to \$225,000 will be available annually in 2012-2013, and 2013-2014. These funds will be distributed between the WIRGs and the Visiting Water Scholar Program. The distribution will depend on proposals received.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should be written for a general scientific audience. Proposals should include:

- Cover Page. Include title of project, complete contact information for the PI, list of team members, and accounting contact for PI's department.
- Project Summary. 250 words.
- Project Description. Not to exceed 7 pages.
 - Goals: Describe the specific aims of the project. How will the project better position MSU to be a leader in water science?
 - Introduction: Include a brief background describing the current status of knowledge in the relevant field(s) and the research questions your team will address.
 - Team Contribution: Why is collaboration of members of your team needed? How will it advance research at MSU? How does the expertise of different members of the team contribute to addressing the research questions? Include information about past team collaboration and accomplishments.
 - Funding Target: Identify the program you are targeting for external funding. How will an award from the program achieve the WIRG goal for bringing "big science" on water to MSU? If your team has applied to the program previously, include any information on feedback from reviewers on previous proposals and discuss how WIRG funding would strengthen your proposal.
 - Activities under the grant: How will the team use the grant - what activities or efforts are planned? Describe the specific techniques that will be used to foster collaboration among team members and the process for developing your proposed product(s). How will the team maintain regular interaction so that goals are achieved? How will activities strengthen the team's chances for garnering external support?
 - Outcomes: Describe the concrete outcomes you anticipate (i.e., extramural funding, publications). How will your team achieve these outcomes? Who are the main audiences for your products? How will these outcomes position MSU to be a leader in water science?
 - Timeline and project milestones: Provide a timeline with milestones for the project.

- Budget. All proposals must include an itemized budget. Because this is an internal grant, no indirect costs are included. If you are supporting salary, you must include fringe benefits.
- Budget justification.
- Curriculum vitae. Attach a current 2 page CV for the PI and all collaborators. Follow the [NSF guidelines](#) for preparing CVs.

Deadlines

Proposals are due **February 1, 2013**. (Future calls for proposals will depend on funding availability.)

Proposals must be submitted as a single pdf file. Submit applications to Erin Dreelin (dreelin@msu.edu), with “Water Initiative Research Grant” in the subject line. Proposals will be peer-reviewed based on criteria below and recommendations for support or no support will be submitted to the ESPP and CWS directors, who will make final award decisions.

Review Criteria

In evaluating proposals, we will use the following review criteria:

1. Likelihood of a major external grant proposal will be submitted and funded.
2. Quality of the research proposed
3. Interdisciplinary nature of the team and project
4. Competitiveness of PIs as a result of their past records in the field
5. Ability to achieve activities proposed outcomes under grant (i.e., clear plan for achieving the goals)
6. Opportunity and commitment to pursue specific external funding opportunities, specifically major grants, and publications
7. Evidence of likely success at fostering new collaborations; and
8. Inclusion of junior faculty.

Awards

Award decisions will be made within 8-10 weeks of submission. The lead PI will be awarded the funds and be responsible for account management.

ESPP and CWS will assist teams that receive funding by:

1. Holding and facilitating meetings with all grant recipients (all-team meetings), including an annual meeting for teams to present their results; and
2. Providing logistic support for team meetings and proposal development as requested by the team.

Agreement for Funding

Faculty receiving funding will be expected to:

- Submit project information, such as information regarding proposals, publications and presentations, upon request by ESPP and CWS for inclusion in reports to the university. Acknowledge the WIRG funding in all publications that result from work supported or partially supported with these resources such as: “This material is based upon work supported in part by Michigan AgBio Research, Environmental Science and Policy Program, and Center for Water Sciences.”
- Present and submit a brief interim report at 6 months into the project describing accomplishments, timeline and milestones, and any changes to the project.

- Provide a final report to ESPP and CWS to be posted on the web. Final reports will be due one month after the end of the project. Reports should include any/all grant proposals and publications, including abstracts of presentations at international, national and local meetings that are derived from the project.
- Be responsible for the financial management of the project and follow all relevant MSU policies and guidelines.