THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
RFP REVIEW PROCESS

To achieve the goal of the DCEO/ICCI R&D program, investments must be made in ideas and technology with the greatest potential to benefit the Illinois coal industry in the shortest possible time. Therefore, the intent of the proposal review process is to select those projects that have the greatest potential to advance toward commercialization and/or to provide information that will be of the greatest benefit to the Illinois coal industry. The review process consists of the following steps:

- Initial review by the ICCI to determine if the proposal is responsive.
- Review of responsive proposals by outside peer reviewers, ICCI, and DCEO personnel.
- Compilation of all reviews and ranking of proposals.
- Funding recommendations submitted to the DCEO based upon reviews and ranking.
- DCEO authorizes funding for proposals from funding recommendations.

After selections have been made, proposers are notified of the final decision with regard to their proposal, and reviewer comments will also be available regardless of funding status.

All proposals considered responsive will be reviewed on a 100 point scale, based on the following four categories:

- Technology Concept and Research Hypothesis 20 points
- Market Impact and Commercialization Potential 20 points
- Statement of Work 20 points
- Project Funding 20 points
- Organizational Management 20 points

External peer reviewers, as well as ICCI and DCEO personnel, will rate proposals on all five categories. The categories are discussed in more detail on the following page.
**Technology Concept and Research Hypothesis**

The most important category in the review process is the technical criteria. Scoring high on the technical factors will be considered a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to win a contract award. If an excellent technical proposal cannot overcome economic or other constraints that create non-technical barriers to the implementation of the proposed technology, it may not be funded. This section will assess the innovation of the research and originality of the R&D approach, reviewing, in particular, information provided in Section 5 of the proposal. Typical questions to be asked are:

- Is the research justified and the hypothesis based on sound reasoning?
- Are any perceived advantages over existing or competing technologies discussed?
- Does the proposal indicate why/how the proposed technology will be better than existing technologies?
- Will fundamental questions remain that will not be answered by the proposed work?
- What is the potential benefit to Illinois coal?

**Market Impact and Commercialization Potential**

The following factors affecting the market impact of the proposed technology or concept will be evaluated:

- Could this technology be implemented in a practical and cost-effective manner?
- What is the potential of the technology to create or protect markets for Illinois coal?
- What is the potential to lower the cost of producing or using Illinois coal?
- What is the potential to solve Illinois coal users’ environmental problems at competitive costs?
- What is the time and investment required to advance the technology or process to the demonstration and/or commercialization level? Is this adequately addressed in the proposal?

**Statement of Work**

This section will assess whether the research plan has a well-defined Statement of Work (SOW) with milestones and decision points identified, reviewing, in particular, information provided in Section 6 of the proposal. Typical questions are:

- Is there a clearly thought out data analysis procedure to produce results?
- Are potential experimental/technical problems identified, and are solutions detailed?
- Will the proposed work accomplish the objectives of the project?
- Are there barriers to the completion of the project that are not addressed?
- Are revisions to the SOW needed?
Project Funding

Factors included in this section are project cost, overhead cost (the ICCI’s goal is to maximize the fraction of the project cost that is directed to doing project work), and project cost sharing by outside organizations and the proposing organization. Typical questions to be asked are:

- Are overall project costs reasonable? Is the budget adequate to execute the proposed work?
- Does the project leverage any cost sharing from outside organizations and the proposing organization?
- Are costs well documented and justified?
- Are there cost items that seem unjustified or higher than required?
- Are significant equipment purchases cost shared?

Organizational Management

Organizational capability, expertise, and previous history to effectively carry out projects will be carefully evaluated. Key considerations include capabilities, expertise, and commitment of the project staff, and the ability to utilize existing facilities and equipment. Subcontractor tasks and control, and documentation by subcontractors demonstrating understanding of their project role, will be important. Typical questions to be asked are:

- Does the proposing company or organization have a history with similar projects?
- Are the PI and other identified personnel capable and experienced in area of research proposed?
- Is there a well-defined project organizational structure with responsibilities for each person identified?
- Are the roles and duties of subcontractors well defined?
- Does the project include collaboration with industry and other research organizations?