

Q&A for SM-LCA-2023-1 'LCA of Future Critical Mineral Extraction'

Q: Could you please clarify the expected duration of the proposed project and the anticipated ceiling award amount for this funding opportunity?

- The expected duration is stated in the RFP: “The project shall be completed within a period not exceeding one (1) year from the contract start date.” However, if a bidder believes the project would benefit from a different timeline, they are encouraged to provide a clear rationale for that alternative timing within their proposal.
- There is no established ceiling award amount for this project. During the selection process, CRC members will evaluate proposals by balancing the available funding against the project's value relative to other priorities. Proposers are welcome to submit a primary proposal for their desired scope of work, as well as a more limited scope (with a reduced budget) if they believe that flexibility would assist in the selection process.

Q: For this project, is the cradle-to-gate considered from the extraction process till the critical mineral reaches the battery manufacturing facility, or are environmental impacts of the battery manufacturing process to be included in the work?

- The focus is on the critical minerals sourcing stage of the LCA. Therefore, the cradle-to-gate scope ends once the critical mineral is processed and ready for manufacturing, not including the battery manufacturing process itself.

Q: The RFP mentions cradle-to-gate as the scope of interest in the automobile life cycle. It also says EOL is out of scope. But it also says that recycled feedstocks should be considered. The pathways section, however, does not mention recycling type operations as a pathway.

Verifying that the relevant connection here is that critical minerals could be in existing products and then be recycled (as secondary source materials) into new batteries and/or motors. In short, verifying that in other words this means both primary and secondary pathways for CMMs are in scope.

- Yes, both primary and secondary pathways for Critical Mineral Materials (CMMs) are in scope. Recycling pathways should be included only if the recycled feedstocks can be used for battery or motor applications. End-of-life processing for disposal, or for recycling into other applications, is out of scope.

Q: The literature review requested seems to be qualitative versus quantitative in nature. Verifying that the focus of interest is whether and what environmental impact information exists for the selected materials rather than substantive quantitative analysis of the literature results.

- Correct. The literature review is primarily qualitative, aiming to provide a snapshot of current and past work. While relevant quantitative data should be reported to illustrate trends and variability, a detailed re-analysis or validation of the underlying models is not expected.

Q: The scope was noted as cradle-to-gate. Does the gate end with (1) individual metal oxide/salt, (2) metal, or (3) any form that has market value and can be used for EV motors and batteries?

- Option 3 is the correct interpretation. In general, the 'gate' should be defined as the point where the material has been processed into a tradeable commodity form suitable for direct input into battery or motor component manufacturing (e.g., Lithium Hydroxide for batteries, Neodymium Oxide/Metal for magnets).

Q: Can we propose to re-run life cycle analysis (LCA) models based on the existing LCA literature data to obtain updated LCA results for data consistency and fair comparison with other literature?

- Yes, but please include this as a proposed add-on.

Q: What must bidders include as part of corporate information and legal identifiers? (i.e., UEI #, TIN, Points of Contact, company certifications, etc.?)

- Points of contact and CVs/resumes for key personnel who will be working on the project.

Q: What time (including time zone) is the proposal due on Friday, February 27?

- There is no specific time zone requirement for the proposal due date.

Q: Do interested companies need any pre-qualifications or be a part of a pre-qualification process in order to bid?

- There is no pre-qualification process to bid.

