

## PROJECT DATA

**Oxford Performance Materials, Inc. - 03GO13172**

**Development of Higher Temperature Membrane and Electrode Assembly (MEA) for Proton Exchange Membrane Fuel Cell Device Based on SPEKK Blends**

<p>Recipient: Oxford Performance Materials, Inc.</p> <p>Recipient Project Director: Seeverine Valdant 860.698.9300 120 Post Road Enfield, CT 06082</p> <p>Recipient Type: For Profit Organization</p> <p>Subcontractor(s): University of Connecticut</p> <p>EERE Program: Hydrogen, Fuel Cells, and Infrastructure Technologies</p>	<p>Instrument Number: DE-FG36-03GO13172</p> <p>CPS Number: 17832</p> <p>HQ Program Manager: Lisa Barnett 202.586.2212</p> <p>GO Project Officer: Gibson Asuquo 303.275.4910</p> <p>GO Contract Specialist: Melissa Wise 303.275.4907</p> <p>B&amp;R Number(s): ED1906020</p> <p>PES Number(s): 03-10157</p> <p>State Congressional District: CT - 2</p>
---	---

**PROJECT SCOPE:** The objective is to operate proton exchange membrane fuel cells (PEMFC) at higher temperatures by developing membrane electrode assemblies (MEAs) based on a novel ion-conducting Sulfonated Poly Ether Ketone Ketone. Increasing the PEMFC operating temperature from 80°C to 120°C could provide significant system integration benefits, including reduced system costs (possibly eliminating \$375/kWe out of stationary fuel cell targets of \$1500/kWe) and increased system efficiency (potentially increasing from 32 to 40%). The overall objective of these tasks is to demonstrate technical feasibility of MEAs based on Oxford's novel polymer.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Approved DOE Budget:	\$125,000	Approved DOE Share:	\$125,000
Obligated DOE Funds:	\$125,000	Cost Share:	\$94,860
Remaining Obligation:	\$0		
Unpaid Balance:	\$31,109	<b>TOTAL PROJECT:</b>	<b>\$219,860</b>

Project Period: 9/30/03-9/30/05

# **TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE**

**DE-FG36-03GO13172**

**Oxford Performance Materials, Inc.**

**Development of Higher Temperature Membrane and Electrode Assembly (MEA) for Proton Exchange Membrane Fuel Cell Device Based on SPEKK Blends**

## **PROJECT SYNOPSIS**

The objective of the project is to replace Nafion<sup>®</sup> in the (MEAs) of Proton Exchange Membrane Fuel Cells (PEMFC) with a higher temperature lower cost blend of a polymer called Sulfonated Poly Ether Ketone (SPEKK). Oxford Performance Materials (OPM) has an ongoing collaboration with the University of Connecticut (UCONN) and has developed a novel proprietary ion-conductive polymer, SPEKK. SPEKK blends show Nafion<sup>®</sup>-level conductivity. Proper selection of blend components and control of sulfonation, and nano-structure morphology are critical. SPEKK has outstanding thermal stability (~270°C). Preliminary MEAs, based on SPEKK membranes with Nafion<sup>®</sup> impregnated catalyst layers, show excellent activity in H<sub>2</sub>/air fuel cell tests. The critical task is to eliminate the Nafion<sup>®</sup>, by developing SPEKK-based catalyst layers.

The use of SPEKK in the catalyst layer is projected to permit performance at desirable higher temperature conditions. Most PEMFC development has used Nafion<sup>®</sup>-based membranes. However, Nafion<sup>®</sup> is expensive and poses many well-known limitations. Nafion<sup>®</sup> has a critical limitation, i.e., increased resistance in higher temperature/lower humidity environments. Several recent scientific reports have identified the benefits of higher temperature membranes concluding they will improve performance, increase efficiency and reduce system costs in PEMFC applications. OPM's invention, if successful, will enable net system efficiency improvements of 6-10% and system cost reductions of \$375/kW.

## **SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL PROGRESS**

Work commenced on this project September 19, 2003 with an initiation meeting. The laboratory requirements and necessary equipment and supplies are defined. Equipment needed for testing and production of the test polymers were obtained or fabricated. The setup of testing equipment has begun. The University of Connecticut subcontractor is in the progress of screening and selecting appropriate polymers for testing.

## **SUMMARY OF PLANNED WORK**

OPM plans to complete SPEKK Processing and SPEKK Characterization. OPM also has planned initial MEA testing to show technical feasibility of the SPEKK-based MEA at higher temperatures.

## **PROJECT ANALYSIS**

The project is several months behind. Technical results have yet to become available.

## **ACTION REQUIRED BY DOE HEADQUARTERS**

No action is required from DOE Headquarters at this time.

# STATEMENT OF WORK

DE-FG36-03GO13172

Oxford Performance Materials, Inc.

Development of Higher Temperature Membrane and Electrode Assembly for Proton Exchange Membrane Fuel Cell Device Based on SPEKK Blends

## Detailed Task Description

### Task 1: SPEKK Material Selection

Two to three optimum SPEKK blends for achieving membrane conductance at higher temperatures will be selected (Target:  $> 0.1$  S/cm at  $120^{\circ}\text{C}$ , 30% R.H.).

### Task 2: SPEKK Blend Processing

Blend processing will include: development of polymer blend processing techniques, evaluating optimum solvent systems and thermal treatments, and preparation of mechanically stable films and catalyst layers. Testing will evaluate solvent cast and/or melt processed blends. The testing target will be:  $>2000$  kPa membrane yield strength and  $< 15\%$  elongation after exposure to  $120^{\circ}\text{C}$ , 30% R.H.).

### Task 3: SPEKK Blend Characterization

The blend will be characterized for conductance, adhesion and yield strength of optimized films, catalytic layers vs. temperature ( $25$ - $200^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), relative humidity, and fractional polymer content. The testing will measure temperature dependence for SPEKK conductivity vs. R.H. and demonstrate catalyst layer adherence.

### Task 4: MEA Feasibility

This stage includes demonstrating technical feasibility of SPEKK blend-based MEAs in single cell testing using both  $\text{H}_2/\text{O}_2$  and  $\text{H}_2$  oxidation/reduction reactions and performance of electrochemical cyclic voltametry of Pt in SPEKK MEA environment. The testing will target MEA resistance  $< 1$  ohm $\text{cm}^2$  or  $< 80$  mV resistive polarization at  $100$  mA/ $\text{cm}^2$  on  $\text{H}_2$  feed at  $120^{\circ}\text{C}$  and 30% R.H. and demonstrate mechanically stable MEA interfaces after initial thermal/humidity cycling.

### Task 5: MEA Optimization

This task will optimize MEA performance using preferred SPEKK blend and processing steps. This task will prepare a matrix of MEA candidates with various catalyst/SPEKK blend/porosity volumetric ratios (The nominal catalyst will be commercially available 20wt% Pt on Vulcan XC72 carbon.). Identify optimum candidates using single cell testing (Target: MEA resistance  $< 0.1$  ohm $\text{cm}^2$  or  $< 80$  mV resistive polarization at  $1000$  mA/ $\text{cm}^2$ ).

### Task 6: Platinum (Pt) Loading

OPM will evaluate electrode performance vs. Pt content, preparing a matrix of MEA candidates using optimized MEA preparation techniques as a function of catalyst content ( $0.1$ - $1$  mgPt/ $\text{cm}^2$ ) and catalyst loading ( $5$ - $40$  wt% Pt on carbon). Performance at two Pt loadings will be evaluated

vs. a range of temperature (80-200°C) and humidity (10-50% R.H.). Electrochemical utilization of Pt will be measured. (Target: Demonstrate Pt loading  $< 0.2 \text{ mgPt/cm}^2$  at 120°C).

### **Task 7: Durability**

Selected MEAs will be tested in single cells for 100 hours plotting polarization vs. time. (Target:  $< 50 \mu\text{V/hr. decay at } 200 \text{ mA/cm}^2$ .)

### **Task 8: Project Management and Reporting**

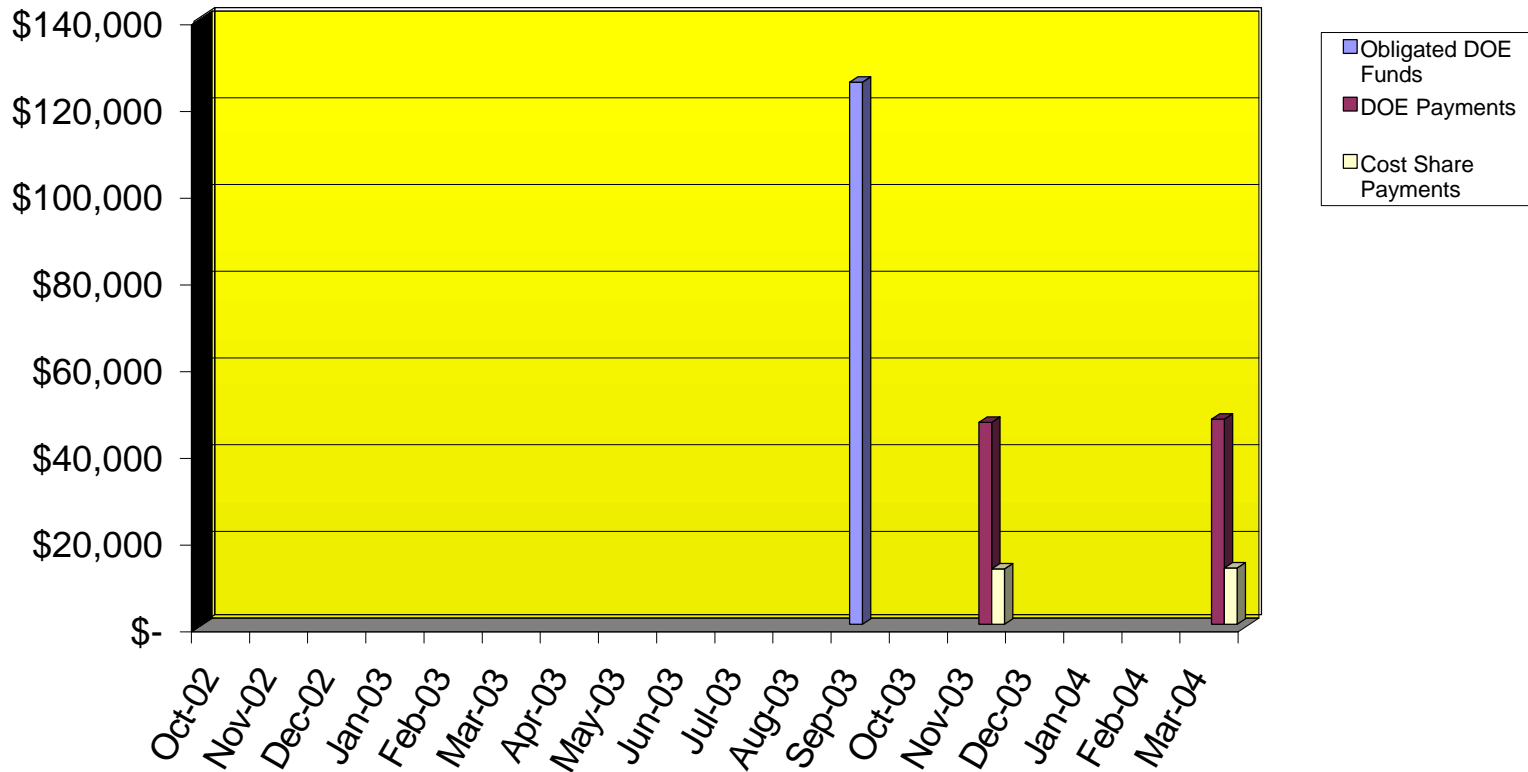
All required quarterly and final reports will be submitted to DOE.

## Project Cost Performance in DOE Dollars for Fiscal Year 2003

DE-FG36-03GO13172

Oxford Performance Materials, Inc.

Development of higher Temperature Membrane and Electrode Assembly for Proton Exchange Membrane Fuel Cell Device Based on SPEKK Blends



	Oct-02	Nov-02	Dec-02	Jan-03	Feb-03	Mar-03	Apr-03	May-03	Jun-03	Jul-03	Aug-03	Sep-03
Obligated DOE Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$125,000
DOE Payment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cost Share Payment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

	Oct-03	Nov-03	Dec-03	Jan-04	Feb-04	Mar-04	PFY*	Cumulative
Obligated DOE Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$125,000
DOE Payment	\$0	\$46,563	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$47,327	\$0	\$93,891
Cost Share Payment	\$0	\$12,810	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$13,020	\$0	\$25,829

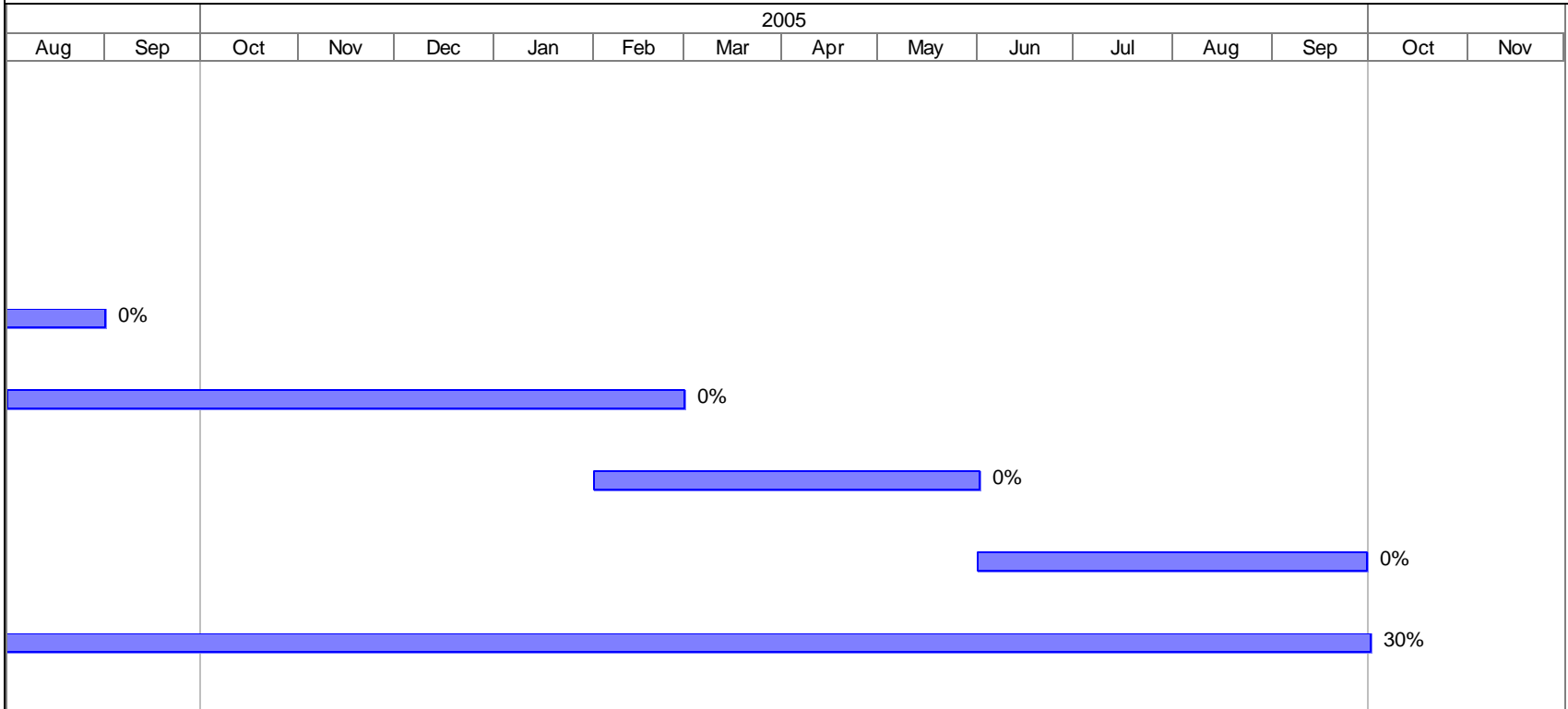
Approved DOE Budget:	\$125,000
Approved Cost Share Budget:	\$94,860
<b>Total Project Budget:</b>	<b>\$219,860</b>

\* Prior Fiscal Years

## Oxford Performance Materials, Inc. - 03GO13172

ID	Task Name	Start	Finish	2004											
				Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul		
1	Task 1: Material Selection	Wed 10/1/03	Tue 12/30/03												
2	Task 2: SPEKK Processing	Mon 11/3/03	Fri 1/30/04												
3	Task 3: SPEKK Characterization	Thu 1/1/04	Thu 4/1/04												
4	Task 4: MEA Feasibility	Mon 3/1/04	Wed 9/1/04												
5	Task 5: MEA Optimization	Mon 8/2/04	Tue 3/1/05												
6	Task 6: Pt Loading	Tue 2/1/05	Wed 6/1/05												
7	Task 7: Durability	Wed 6/1/05	Fri 9/30/05												
8	Task 8: Project Management and Reporting	Wed 10/1/03	Sat 10/1/05												

## Oxford Performance Materials, Inc. - 03GO13172



**Oxford Performance Materials, Inc. - 03GO13172**

2006

20

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar