

DE-FOA-0001840 Solar Energy Technologies Office FY2018 FOA
Topic 1: Advanced Solar Systems Integration Technologies
Webinar Script

Slide 1:

Good [afternoon/morning] everyone and welcome to our webinar. Thank you for your interest in the U.S. Department of Energy's efforts on renewable energy and energy efficiency. You are joining us for the Informational Webinar for Applicants and other interested parties for the Solar Energy Technologies Office FY2018 Funding Opportunity Announcement, or FOA, which was issued on April 17th, 2018. Specifically, this webinar is meant to cover the content of Topic 1, **Advanced Solar Systems Integration Technologies** which includes four subtopics. My name is David Walter and I am a Technology Manager in the solar office within the DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

Before we begin, I'd like to draw your attention to the email address on the left hand side of this cover page. This is the official mailbox to direct all of your questions during the entire FOA process. Please do not contact EERE individuals directly with questions, including myself. All questions received at this mailbox are posted publicly at the Q&A section of the FOA page on EERE Exchange in an anonymous way. The official answers to your questions will typically also be posted within 3 business days. Please be careful not to submit any language that might be business sensitive, proprietary or confidential.

In addition to emailing this inbox, you may type in the chat bar any questions you have as they come up. Again, please be careful not to submit any language that might be business sensitive, proprietary or confidential. We will be posting answers to these questions to EERE Exchange as well; note that we will not be able to answer these today during the webinar.

Also, just to be clear, there are no particular advantages or disadvantages to the application evaluation process with respect to participating on the webinar today. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Let's get started!

Slide 2: This slide shows the anticipated schedule for the FOA. The FOA has already been posted, and we are conducting the FOA Informational Webinar now. Please note that there are a few requirements that we will go over in the presentation that are different than in past FOAs, such as Replies to Reviewer Comments – we will cover all requirements for this FOA later in the presentation.

Slide 3: READ SLIDE

Slide 4: READ SLIDE

Slide 5: The agenda for this presentation is as follows: READ SLIDE

We encourage you to have a copy of the FOA in front of you for reference as we go through the presentation.

Slide 6: The FOA will support early-stage research that spans the SETO portfolio, seeking to advance both solar photovoltaic (PV) and concentrating solar thermal power (CSP) technologies and to facilitate the swift integration of those technologies into the nation's electricity grid.

It also is designed to support efforts that prepare the workforce for the solar industry's future needs.

Historically, SETO has released separate funding opportunities that address specific stages and types of solar research. For the first time, this funding program combines SETO funding efforts into one FOA for fiscal year 2018 (FY2018). By providing a more streamlined and consistent FOA strategy SETO hopes to further accelerate the advancement of solar research and reduce government overhead.

Lastly, the Innovative Pathways topics you will see in the FOA aim to fund projects are different than typical DOE technology development projects. They do not fund individual technologies along their pathway to market, but instead focus on improving the pathway itself for portfolios of technologies. The projects will seek to unlock private sector support for energy innovation and encourage private funding for later-stage technological development.

Slide 7: The FOA contains 4 high level technical areas of interest.

Topic 1: Advanced Solar Systems Integration Technologies describes SETO research priorities in the seamless integration of high penetrations of solar energy onto the nation's electricity grid. Responsive projects would advance the prediction, monitoring, and control of solar power production, the capabilities of solar power electronics and the integration of solar energy with synergistic technologies.

Topic 2: Concentrating Solar Thermal Power Research and Development describes SETO research priorities that support solar technologies that focus sunlight to generate and store high-temperature heat for electricity generation and other end uses. Responsive projects would contribute to increasing solar power adoption and grid reliability often through combined power and storage.

Topic 3: Photovoltaic Research and Development describes SETO research priorities that support the further development of photovoltaic technologies that improve system reliability, annual energy yield, demonstrate performance of novel PV devices and develop new PV materials. Responsive projects would directly contribute to increasing PV affordability through continuous improvements in PV efficiency and reliability. SETO's work ensures that a pipeline of innovation continues to reduce PV system cost, increase power conversion efficiency, and reduce supply-chain capital expense.

Topic 4: Improving and Expanding the Solar Industry through Workforce Initiatives describes SETO research priorities that support solar workforce development. Responsive projects would focus on increasing the size of the pipeline of skilled workers being employed by the solar industry while simultaneously working to increase the proportion of industry participants from the talent pools of veterans and other communities, providing increased value to the solar industry as a whole.

Slide 8: Topic 1.1 is focused on adaptive solar grid integration. This topic will support applications to research and field validate innovative technologies that enable distributed solar photovoltaic (PV) to contribute to grid reliability and resilience by providing solar dispatchability and grid-support functions—including energy, capacity, and reliability and resilience services. These technologies can be deployed throughout the electric distribution system. The approaches will focus on developing flexible interconnection requirements and dynamic hosting capacity concepts for solar PV as opposed to today's prevalent "firm" interconnection requirements and static hosting capacity planning. It is expected that the same design concepts will be applicable for energy storage and other distributed energy resources (DERs). Through the intelligent control of the distributed assets, flexible interconnection requirements can increase the overall hosting capacity for solar and DERs in the distribution system, support diverse customer interconnection choices, improve system reliability and resilience, and reduce PV curtailment. Applications must consider diverse DER options (e.g. PV, energy storage, flexible load) available as well as power systems engineering alternatives, and demonstrate the benefits of the proposed technologies in the hosting capacity analysis. It should also be shown in these solutions how a fleet of PV systems from multiple customers at multiple locations will be able to respond to fast changing conditions under normal operations and provide power to critical loads during grid outages – with consideration of other DER options and distribution system constraints. Example projects may include, but are not limited to, control hardware and software innovations for smart PV inverters and DER management system (DERMS) that allow more flexibility to interconnection and operation of small scale PV and other DER systems.

Slide 9: Topic 1.2 is on Solar Observability, This topic will support applications to research, develop and validate observability or situational awareness technologies at the grid edge to support planning and operation with high PV penetration. Primary focus areas include PV-integrated sensor technologies, secure and robust communication, advanced data analytics (including machine learning) and detection of cyber-intrusion. Projects may also be considered with secondary focus areas, which enhance grid-edge observability of solar systems by integration with additional planning, operations and business unit systems. All applications should have an assessment of economic viability of the system or component in the application and as part of the project. READ SLIDE

Slide 10: Solar + X is topic 1.3. This topic will support applications to research and field validate innovative approaches to integrate Behind-the-Meter (BTM) solar PV with synergistic technologies (including but not limited to energy storage, building controls, demand response, electric vehicles, and other DERs) to support dispatchability and provide grid services – including energy, capacity, and reliability and resilience services – as a single control point. Projects will focus on research and development in control coordination and optimization of BTM customer-owned and co-located behind a single (master) meter: PV, storage, and other DER assets in response to broader system-wide conditions, with key interest in utilizing DER assets to provide critical power during outages. Projects may consider traditional “firm” DER interconnection requirements as well as emerging flexible interconnection approaches (such as those sought in Topic 1.1) and innovative compensation mechanisms. In an effort to minimize the overall system cost for solar integration arising from new hardware deployment, such as battery storage, , applicants are encouraged to consider how solar and load estimation, advanced data analytics, and artificial intelligence can be utilized in the operations of their proposed systems. All Applicants should have an assessment of economic viability of the system or component in the application as part of the project.

Slide 11: The final subtopic in Topic 1 is known as Innovative Pathways. This topic area will fund innovative approaches and models to accelerate the transfer of systems integration and related technologies from the lab to the private sector. Instead of direct technology solutions, successful applicants will research and develop new methods to advance solar research portfolios and overcome challenges endemic to the solar technology transfer space. These challenges could include knowledge gaps between research and industrial communities, or constraints on access to necessary resources. Some areas of interest include, but are not limited to: alternative capital for technology transfer, new ways to incentivize industry-researcher collaboration, methods to reduce barriers for new entrants in the industry to

leverage existing facilities, data and build capacity, and methods to drive down the cost or accelerate hardware validation and certification processes.

This topic will explore innovative approaches and models to accelerate the transfer of systems integration and related technologies from the lab into the real world. Rather than funding research on individual technology solutions directly, applicants will research and develop new methods to advance research portfolios of solar (and related) technologies and overcome challenges endemic to the solar technology transfer space, including knowledge gaps between the research/industrial communities and constraints on access to necessary resources. Applicants must demonstrate a realistic pathway to test, scale and sustain the model after the period of performance. Potential areas of interest include, but are not limited to, models to deploy alternative capital (e.g., local public-private partnerships, foundations) for technology R&D or transfer, structures to incentivize industry-researcher collaboration, approaches to lower barriers such that new entrants can leverage existing facilities, data and build capacity (e.g., dormant manufacturing capacity or underutilized laboratory space), and methods to drive down the cost and accelerate processes around hardware validation and certification.

Slide 12: Projects within each subtopic of Topic 1 will be provided different amounts of estimated funding as shown on the slide.

EERE intends to fund mostly cooperative agreements under this FOA, but may also fund Grants, TIAs, Work Authorizations, and Interagency Agreements. Cooperative Agreements include Substantial Involvement, which we will discuss next.

A minimum of 20% cost share is required across all subtopic areas for Topic 1.

Slide 13: READ SLIDE

Please note that nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that engaged in lobbying activities after December 31, 1995, are not eligible to apply for funding.

Also, note that all Prime Recipients receiving funding under this FOA must be incorporated (or otherwise formed) under the laws of a State or territory of the United States. If a foreign entity applies for funding as a Prime Recipient, it must designate in the Full Application a subsidiary or affiliate incorporated (or otherwise formed) under the laws of a State or territory of the United States to be the Prime Recipient. The Full Application must state the nature

of the corporate relationship between the foreign entity and domestic subsidiary or affiliate.

Slide 14: The following types of applications will be deemed nonresponsive and will not be reviewed or considered for an award. Examples of non-responsive applications include:

Undifferentiated research, products, and/or solutions: This FOA seeks innovative solutions that help achieve SETO goals. Incremental advancement of undifferentiated or duplicative efforts is insufficient to meet SETO goals and is not of interest to this FOA.

Projects lacking influential impact from federal funds: This FOA intends to fund projects where Federal funds will provide a clear and measurable impact, (e.g. retiring risk sufficiently for follow-on investment or catalyzing development.) Projects that have sufficient monies and resources to be executed regardless of federal funds are not of interest.

Re-funding the same idea at the same technology readiness level: This FOA does not intend to re-fund prior SETO awardees for the same idea at the same technology readiness level.

Slide 15: Under cooperative agreements, there will be what is known as “substantial involvement” between EERE and the Recipient during the performance of the project.

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Slide 16: READ SLIDE

Slide 17: The total budget presented in the application must include both Federal (DOE), and Non-Federal (cost share) portions, thereby reflecting TOTAL PROJECT COSTS proposed. All costs must be verifiable from the Recipient’s records and be necessary and reasonable for the accomplishment of the project.

Slide 18: Cost Share must be allowable and must be verifiable upon submission of the Full Application. Please refer to this chart for your entity’s applicable cost principles. It is imperative that you follow the applicable cost principles when creating your budget for the full application.

Slide 19: Every cost share contribution must be allowable under the applicable Federal cost principles, as described in Section IV.J.1 of the FOA.

Project Teams may provide cost share in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Cost share may be provided by the Prime Recipient,

Subrecipients, or third parties (entities that do not have a role in performing the scope of work). Vendors/Contractors may not provide cost share.

Cash contributions include, but are not limited to: personnel costs, fringe costs, supply and equipment costs, indirect costs and other direct costs.

In-kind contributions are those where a value of the contribution can be readily determined, verified and justified but where no actual cash is transacted in securing the good or service comprising the contribution. Allowable in-kind contributions include, but are not limited to: the donation of space or use of equipment.

Cost share contributions must be specified in the project budget, verifiable from the Prime Recipient's records, and necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of the project. As all sources of cost share are considered part of total project cost, the cost share dollars will be scrutinized under the same Federal regulations as Federal dollars to the project. Every cost share contribution must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Contracting Officer and incorporated into the project budget before the expenditures are incurred.

Applicants are encouraged to refer to 2 CFR 200.306 as amended by 2 CFR 910.130 & 10 CFR 603.525-555 for additional guidance on cost sharing.

Slide 20: Be aware that there are items that are considered unallowable cost share. If a cost is considered unallowable, it cannot be counted as cost share. This slide provides some examples of cost share that is unallowable.

Slide 21: Cost Share must be provided on an invoice basis, unless a waiver is requested and approved by the DOE Contracting Officer.

Slide 22: EERE's Evaluation and Selection Process is shown in blue here. EERE will review Concept Papers, Replies to Reviewer Comments (which we will cover later in the presentation), and Full Applications. The gray boxes represent the actions that apply to applicants throughout the FOA process.

Slide 23: As part of the merit review process, EERE may invite certain applicants to participate in Pre-Selection Interviews.

The invited applicants will meet with EERE I to allow the Merit Review Panel to seek clarification on the contents of the Full Applications and otherwise ask questions regarding the proposed project. The information provided by applicants to EERE through Pre-Selection Interviews contributes to EERE's selection decisions.

As part of the evaluation and selection process, EERE may invite one or more applicants to participate in Pre-Selection Interviews. Pre-Selection Interviews are distinct from and more formal than pre-selection clarifications (See Section V.D.3 of the FOA). The invited applicant(s) will meet with EERE representatives to provide clarification on the contents of the Full Applications and to provide EERE an opportunity to ask questions regarding the proposed project. The information provided by applicants to EERE through Pre-Selection Interviews contributes to EERE's selection decisions.

EERE will arrange to meet with the invited applicants in person at EERE's offices, a mutually agreed upon location, or virtually via web conference. EERE may also arrange site visits at certain Applicants' facilities.

EERE will not reimburse applicants for travel and other expenses relating to the Pre-Selection Interviews, nor will these costs be eligible for reimbursement as pre-award costs.

EERE may obtain additional information through Pre-Selection Interviews that will be used to make a final selection determination. EERE may select applications for funding and make awards without Pre-Selection Interviews. Participation in Pre-Selection Interviews with EERE does not signify that applicants have been selected for award negotiations.

Slide 24: Letters of Intent will be used by EERE to plan for the merit review process. In order to submit a Concept Paper and Full Application, applicants are REQUIRED to submit a Letter of Intent by May 4, 2018.

Slide 25: Concept Papers are required for this FOA. Concept Papers are brief descriptions of the proposed project. It allows applicants to submit their ideas with minimal time and expense. EERE will provide feedback on the proposed project so the Applicant can make an informed decision whether to expend additional resources to prepare a full application.

If an applicants fails to submit an eligible Concept Paper, the applicant is not eligible to submit a Full Application.

Concept Papers must be submitted by May 9 2018 at 3 pm Eastern, through EERE Exchange.

EERE will provide applicants with either an encouraged or discouraged notification as well as reviewer comments. A "discouraged" notification conveys EERE's lack of programmatic interest in the proposed project. An applicant who receives a "discouraged" notification may still submit a Full Application.

Please note that regardless of the date applicants receive the Encourage/Discourage notifications, the submission deadline for the Full Application remains the date stated on the FOA cover page

Slide 26: READ SLIDE

Slide 27: READ SLIDE

Slide 28: The Full Application includes:

Technical Volume: The key technical submission. Applicants submit info pertaining to the technical content, project team members, etc.

SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance: The formal application signed by the authorized representative of the applicant. Includes cost share amounts and Federal certifications and assurances.

Summary Slide: Powerpoint slide that provides quick facts about the technology. Slide content requirements are provided in the FOA.

And other Administrative Documents

Slide 29: To streamline the application process for applicants, the documents listed on the slide will only be requested upon selection, including the Budget Justification Workbook (EERE 335) and US. Manufacturing Commitments.

Other documents or clarifying information that can be requested at the time of Selection for Negotiation can be found on the slide.

Slide 30: The key technical component of the full application is the Technical Volume, which helps applicants frame the technical information that the application will be evaluated on. The Technical Volume provides information regarding what the project is, how the project tasks will be accomplished, and the project timetable.

The Technical Volume is comprised of

The Cover Page will be a one page document and provides basic information on their project, such as title, topic area, points of contact, etc.

The Project Overview provides information on project background, goals, impact of EERE funding

The Technical Description, Innovation, and Impact section provides information on project relevance and outcomes, feasibility, and

innovation/impacts. This ultimately provides the justification as to why EERE should fund the project.

The Summary Statement of Project Objectives (SOPO) or “Workplan” details the proposed milestones and project schedule. If selected for award negotiations, the Workplan serves as the starting point when negotiating the Statement of Project Objectives.

The Technical Qualifications and Resources section provides applicants and opportunity to provide information about the proposed project team and demonstrate how the applicant will facilitate the successful completion of the proposed project.

And Appendices as needed

There are not strict page limits on sections to allow applicants the flexibility to structure the application in a way to best articulate the project and address the content requirements. The applicant should consider the weighting of each of the evaluation criteria (see Section V.A.2 of the FOA) when preparing the Technical Volume.

Slide 31: As we previously pointed out, applicants must submit full applications by June 26, 2018. EERE will conduct an eligibility review, and full application will be deemed eligible if:

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Slide 32: READ SLIDE

Slide 33: READ SLIDE

Slide 34: Applications will be evaluated against the following merit review criteria:

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Slide 35: READ SLIDE

Slide 36: READ SLIDE

Slide 37: The Full Application are reviewed by experts in the FOA topic area(s). After those experts review the applications, EERE will provide applicants with reviewer comments. Applicants will have a brief opportunity to review the comments and prepare a short Reply to Reviewer Comments responding to comments however they desire. The Reply to Reviewer Comments is due by the date and time provided on this slide. Applicants should anticipate

receiving the independent reviewer comments approximately three business days before this due date. The Reply to Reviewer Comments is an optional submission; applicants are not required to submit a Reply to Reviewer Comments.

This a **customer centric** process that provides applicants with a unique opportunity to correct misunderstandings and misinterpretations and to provide additional data that might influence the selection process in their favor. The Replies are considered by the reviewers and the selection official.

Replies to Reviewer Comments must conform to the content and form requirements listed here, including maximum page lengths. If a Reply to Reviewer Comments is more than three pages in length, EERE will review only the first three pages and disregard any additional pages.

Please see Sections IV.F. and V.A.3 for additional information regarding Replies to Reviewer Comments

Slide 38: READ SLIDE

Slide 39: After the Merit Review process, the Selection Official may consider program policy factors to come to a final selection decision.

READ SLIDE

Slide 40: READ SLIDE

Slide 41: There are several one-time actions before submitting an application in response to this FOA, and it is vital that applicants address these items as soon as possible. Some may take several weeks, and failure to complete them could interfere with an applicant's ability to apply to this FOA, or to meet the negotiation deadlines and receive an award if the application is selected.

DUNS Number

Obtain a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.

System for Award Management

Register with the System for Award Management (SAM). Designating an Electronic Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) and obtaining a special password called an MPIN are important steps in SAM registration. Please update your SAM registration annually. We specifically want to emphasize the importance of SAM registration as we have run into numerous problems in the past. Selections and Awards cannot be made without SAM registration.

Fedconnect

Register in FedConnect. To create an organization account, your organization's SAM MPIN is required. For more information about the SAM MPIN or other registration requirements, review the FedConnect Ready, Set, Go! Guide at the FedConnect site.

Grants.gov

Register in Grants.gov to receive automatic updates when Amendments to this FOA are posted. However, please note that Letters of Intent, Concept Papers, and Full Applications will not be accepted through Grants.gov.

Slide 42: All required submissions must come through EERE Exchange. EERE will not review or consider applications submitted through any other means.

Slide 43: READ SLIDE

Slide 44: READ SLIDE

Slide 45: READ SLIDE