

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
NEPA DETERMINATION**



RECIPIENT: [DE-FOA-0002064 Topic Area 3](#)

STATE: [Mult](#)

PROJECT TITLE: [Ten awards under Subtopics 3.1, 3.3, 3.4 only](#)

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0002064		GFO-0002064-001	

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Policy 451.1), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits), data analysis (including, but not limited to, computer modeling), document preparation (including, but not limited to, conceptual design, feasibility studies, and analytical energy supply and demand studies), and information dissemination (including, but not limited to, document publication and distribution, and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring. (See also B3.1 of appendix B to this subpart.)

A11 Technical advice and assistance to organizations Technical advice and planning assistance to international, national, state, and local organizations.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to multiple awardees for ten projects selected under Topic Area 3 of the Solar Energy Technologies Office Fiscal Year 2019 Funding Program (DE-FOA-0002064). Topic Area 3 is focused on “soft-cost” research to reduce the costs associated with non-hardware components of a solar power system. The proposed projects fall under three of the four Areas of Interest for Applications to Topic Area 3 (Subtopics):

Subtopic 3.1 “Collaborative Partnerships to Address Regulatory Burdens”
Subtopic 3.3 “Increasing Solar Affordability through Innovative Solar Finance”
Subtopic 3.4 “Rapid Solar Software Development”

This NEPA Determination applies only to the ten awards listed below, and does not apply to any alternate selections under these Subtopics which may be considered for federal funding in the future. Projects selected for negotiation under Subtopic 3.2 “Data Collection Methods to Assess Avian Impacts” require separate NEPA review.

Award Number: [DE-EE0009000](#) (Subtopic 3.1)
International City/County Management Association
“Solar@Scale: Improving the Local Rules of the Game for Large Scale Solar”

Award Number: [DE-EE0009001](#) (Subtopic 3.1)
Interstate Renewable Energy Council
“Developing Consensus Recommendations to Address Challenges with Solar and Solar + Storage Code Enforcement and Permitting Approvals”

Award Number: [DE-EE0009002](#) (Subtopic 3.1)
Interstate Renewable Energy Council
“Defining Safe and Efficient Interconnection Policies for Energy Storage and Solar + Storage to Improve Integration and Reduce Costs”

Award Number: [DE-EE0009003](#) (Subtopic 3.1)
World Resources Institute
“Addressing Regulatory Burdens to Accessing Solar Among Municipal, Commercial and Institutional Customers”

Award Number: [DE-EE0009004](#) (Subtopic 3.1)
National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO)

“Enabling Solar Cybersecurity Solutions Through State Energy Office and Public Utility Commission Engagement with Private Sector Partners”

Award Number: DE-EE0009007 (Subtopic 3.3)

Houston Advanced Research Center

“Activating Opportunity Zones for Rapid Solar+Storage Deployment in LI Communities”

Award Number: DE-EE0009008 (Subtopic 3.3)

National Association of State Energy Officials

“Inclusive Shared Solar Initiative”

Award Number: DE-EE0009009 (Subtopic 3.3)

University of New Hampshire

“Accessible Training and Shared Capitalization Platforms for Low-Income Solar Finance”

Award Number: DE-EE0009010 (Subtopic 3.3)

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

“Cooperatives Achieving Rural Equity in Solar (CARES)”

Award Number: DE-EE0009011 (Subtopic 3.4)

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

“R3IT: Rapid, Rural, and Resilient Interconnection Toolkit”

DOE has reviewed project documents for each of these awards, and has determined that all work to be performed would consist exclusively of intellectual, academic, or analytical tasks. The types of activities associated with these projects, collectively, would include: outreach and stakeholder engagement; data analysis and paper studies; document preparation, and; results dissemination and guidance. Specific activities may include:

- Educational events such as workshops, in-person trainings, webinars, and/or conferences.
- Software toolkit development and/or website launch.
- Advisory or focus group formation.
- Market analysis and economic modeling leading to the creation and provision of a financing platform.
- Cybersecurity research and technical advice/assistance.
- Virtual network building to link potential investors, service providers, communities and/or local governments.

Project activities would be primarily desktop-based, or else involve a range of collaborative efforts conducted indoors at various public or corporate meeting sites around the country. No change in the use, mission, or operation of existing facilities would arise out of these efforts. Federal funding provided by DOE in support of these projects (including Recipient cost-share) would not be used to acquire or install any new equipment or directly enable the initiation of such work. Completion of the proposed projects would require no resources beyond basic office supplies, computers, servers, and software.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Solar Energy Technologies Office

This NEPA determination requires a tailored NEPA Provision.

NEPA review completed by Whitney Doss Donoghue, 01/17/2020

This NEPA Determination applies to the following ten awards selected under Topic Area 3 of the Solar Energy Technologies Office Fiscal Year 2019 Funding Program (DE-FOA-0002064). This NEPA Determination does not apply to any other projects funded under DE-FOA-0002064, including any alternate selections under Topic Area 3.

DE-EE0009000 International City/County Management Association

DE-EE0009001 Interstate Renewable Energy Council

DE-EE0009002 Interstate Renewable Energy Council

DE-EE0009003 World Resources Institute

DE-EE0009004 National Association of State Energy Officials

DE-EE0009007 Houston Advanced Research Center

- DE-EE0009008 National Association of State Energy Officials
- DE-EE0009009 University of New Hampshire
- DE-EE0009010 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
- DE-EE0009011 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATIONS

The proposed action (or the part of the proposal defined in the Rationale above) fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D. To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposed action has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  Electronically Signed By: Kristin Kerwin Date: 1/21/2020
NEPA Compliance Officer

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

- Field Office Manager review not required
- Field Office Manager review required

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Field Office Manager