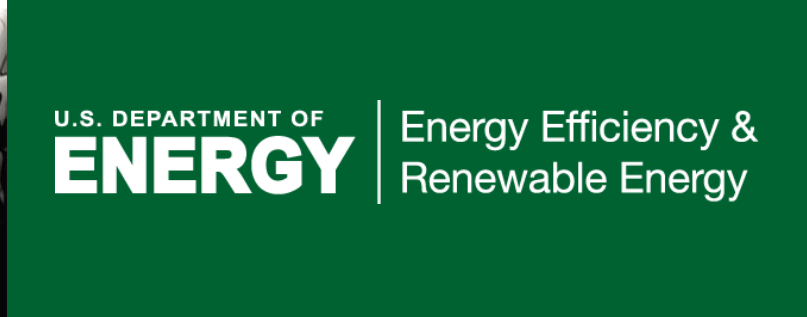


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Solar with Wildlife and Ecosystem Benefits (SolWEB2)

solarwildlife@ee.doe.gov

NOFO Webinar
DE-NOFO-0003492
1/10/2025

Notice

- NO NEW INFORMATION OTHER THAN THAT PROVIDED IN THE NOFO WILL BE DISCUSSED IN THE WEBINAR.
- No Live Q&A will be conducted today.
- 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.

Notice

- All applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully read the Notice of Funding Opportunity **DE-NOFO-0003492** (“**NOFO**”) and adhere to the stated submission requirements.
- This presentation summarizes the contents of the NOFO. If there are any inconsistencies between the NOFO and this presentation or statements from DOE personnel, the NOFO is the controlling document and applicants should rely on the NOFO language and seek clarification by submitting a question to **solarwildlife@ee.doe.gov**.

Solar with Wildlife and Ecosystem Benefits 2

Anticipated Schedule:

NOFO Issue Date:	12/23/2024
Submission Deadline for Concept Papers:	2/14/2025
Submission Deadline for Full Applications:	5/2/2025
Submission Deadline for Replies to Reviewer Comments:	6/3/2025
Expected Date for EERE Selection Notifications:	7/15/2025
Expected Timeframe for Award Negotiations:	July – Oct 2025

Agenda

- 1) NOFO Description
- 2) Topic Areas/Technical Areas of Interest
- 3) Award Information
- 4) Statement of Substantial Involvement
- 5) Cost Sharing
- 6) NOFO Timeline
- 7) Concept Papers
- 8) Full Applications
- 9) Merit Review and Selection Process
- 10) Registration Requirements

NOFO Description: Background and Context

- This NOFO is being issued by the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) to invest in research and development (R&D), technical assistance, and stakeholder engagement activities that improve the compatibility of large-scale solar (LSS) facilities with wildlife and facilitate the dual use of land for agricultural and solar energy production (agrivoltaics).
- In September 2021, DOE released the *Solar Futures Study*, which projects that U.S. solar capacity will need to grow by 30 GW_{ac} of solar generation capacity each year through 2025 and ramp up to 60 GW_{ac} per year from 2025 to 2030, reaching as much as 1 terawatt (TW_{ac}) of generating capacity for the power grid by 2035.
- Achieving this vision will require 5.6 million acres of land to host LSS facilities by 2035. While this is only a small fraction of the total land in the contiguous United States (0.3%), this expansion will result in increased interactions between LSS facilities and the surrounding environment, including natural wildlife habitats and agricultural areas.
- Land-use conflict due to siting and permitting of LSS facilities is becoming more prevalent and is already impacting the scale and pace of deployment. Research, technical assistance, and stakeholder engagement activities supported by this NOFO will help stakeholders overcome those conflicts by testing and helping to implement strategies that improve the compatibility of LSS facilities with wildlife and facilitating the dual use of land for agricultural and energy production (agrivoltaics).

NOFO Description: Technology Space and Strategic Goals

- This funding opportunity is being issued by SETO's Strategic Analysis and Institutional Support (SAIS) team. SAIS is focused on reducing soft costs (i.e., non-hardware costs) and other barriers to the deployment of solar energy.
- The goal of this NOFO is to improve the processes and outcomes of LSS development for wildlife, ecosystems, and communities hosting LSS facilities by soliciting projects that will a) test strategies that mitigate adverse impacts and/or maximize benefits to wildlife and ecosystems at LSS facilities, b) provide technical assistance and engagement opportunities that enable stakeholders to improve the compatibility of LSS facilities with wildlife, or c) provide technical assistance and engagement opportunities related to agrivoltaics.
- This funding opportunity will support R&D, technical assistance, and stakeholder engagement activities related to ground-mounted LSS facilities that are 1 megawatt direct current (MWdc) or larger, located on private or public land.
- Key decisions during the siting, permitting, design, and construction of an LSS facility determine the benefits and adverse impacts the facility will have on local wildlife, ecosystems, and agricultural areas.
- These processes are complex because they require decision-makers to evaluate current research findings and best practices and consult multiple entities, including LSS developers, utilities, regulators and permitting officials, Tribal governments and communities, environmental and conservation organizations, state or local governments, and host communities.

NOFO Description: Technology Space and Strategic Goals

- Regional variation in habitat types, species of interest, community priorities, and agricultural practices further complicate these decision-making processes.
- Further research is needed, as well as technical assistance and stakeholder engagement activities that make the research findings and best practices well-known and accepted by stakeholders.
- Given the current and projected scale of deployment of ground-mounted LSS facilities, ways to mitigate potential impacts to wildlife from LSS development need to be evaluated. The most prominent concerns regarding wildlife impacts from LSS development are disturbance of wildlife movements and loss of natural habitat. LSS facilities are required to include security fencing around the perimeter of each project, which can prevent wildlife from entering the facility or moving through it.
- Research examining wildlife interactions with LSS infrastructure has been expanding rapidly in recent years, but the efficacy of mitigation strategies at LSS facilities remains largely understudied.
- Stakeholders have identified the development and evaluation of strategies to mitigate wildlife risks at solar facilities as a research priority.
- The shortage of research studies on the efficacy of mitigation strategies is in part due to the timescale that is required to definitively evaluate impacts and benefits to wildlife, challenges with implementing a study design that includes LSS facilities with different mitigation treatments and corresponding controls, and the costs associated with implementing studies at the necessary scale.

NOFO Description: Technology Space and Strategic Goals

- Western big game species are reliant on long-distance migration routes and seasonal ranges that can overlap with areas that are prime for LSS development. Impermeable security fencing, construction activities, and the presence of new infrastructure on the landscape could be the cause of this change in activity.
- However, there is limited empirical evidence on the efficacy of strategies that intend to mitigate these adverse impacts, such as wildlife movement corridors, roadway offsets, and other fencing designs (e.g., rounded or angled fence corners).
- Other strategies such as low-impact construction practices, native vegetation preservation and planting, and vegetation management regimes during operation can help maintain or provide new habitat for wildlife within LSS facilities. These tactics, paired with wildlife-permeable fencing that enables movement in and out of facilities, could be beneficial for wildlife species of concern, such as gopher tortoises and desert tortoises that are especially susceptible to habitat loss.
- However, empirical evidence of the efficacy and impact of these strategies is lacking. In addition, barriers for adopting these strategies, such as increased costs or concerns about liability from the presence of sensitive species at LSS facilities, need to be evaluated and addressed.
- There is a need for improved cross-sector communication and coordination between stakeholders involved in LSS siting and permitting processes.
- As research on wildlife-solar interaction continues to advance, stakeholders need support applying the latest research findings to decisions about LSS site location, facility design, and operations and maintenance regimes.

NOFO Description: Technology Space and Strategic Goals

- “Agrivoltaics” or “agrivoltaic systems” is agricultural production (crop or livestock production) underneath solar panels or in between rows of solar panels. Agrivoltaics is a promising strategy because it could provide agricultural producers with diversified revenue sources, create ecological and environmental benefits for host communities, optimize land use, and reduce land use conflict between the solar and agricultural sectors.
- Active research on agrivoltaics is helping stakeholders identify optimal designs for energy and agricultural production.
- Many new agrivoltaic systems are demonstrating innovative and inclusive business models and cross-sector collaborations. However, research results, data, and best practices are not readily accessible to all stakeholders, especially those that have no or limited experience with agrivoltaics.
- In addition, since agrivoltaics is a relatively new strategy, many stakeholders remain skeptical or unaware of potential benefits and use cases.
- There is a need for technical assistance and stakeholder engagement opportunities that make the benefits and costs of agrivoltaic systems available to all interested stakeholders.

Topic Areas/Technical Areas of Interest

- This funding opportunity has two topic areas. Topic area 1 has two areas of interest.
- Topic Area 1: Wildlife-Solar Energy Research, Technical Assistance, and Stakeholder Engagement
 - Area of Interest 1: Strategies to Mitigate Adverse Impacts on and/or Maximize Benefits to Wildlife (Research & Development)
 - Area of Interest 2: Wildlife-Solar Energy Technical Assistance and Stakeholder Engagement (Outreach and Education)
- Topic Area 2: Agrivoltaics Technical Assistance and Stakeholder Engagement (Outreach and Education)
- A single project *cannot* address both areas of interest or both Topic Areas.

Topic Area 1, Area of Interest 1: Strategies to Mitigate Adverse Impacts on and/or Maximize Benefits to Wildlife

- Projects will test new or existing strategies for mitigating adverse impacts on and/or maximizing benefits to wildlife and ecosystems from LSS development. Strategies may include but are not limited to:
 - Wildlife-permeable fencing, native vegetation management, wildlife movement corridors through or around LSS facilities, construction practices that minimize soil and vegetation disturbance, and translocation or relocation of sensitive species before construction.
- To better evaluate the impact of mitigation strategies, applicants should consider ways to leverage data that has already been collected (e.g., pre-construction data on wildlife presence or movement) or implement study designs that enable the collection of data before, during, and after the construction of an LSS facility.
- Project outputs must be relevant to other LSS facilities so that entities involved in LSS development (including solar industry actors, state and federal wildlife agencies, and Tribal governments and communities) can apply research findings, replicate study designs, gather and share additional data on solar-wildlife interactions, and/or develop evidence-based best management practices.
- Projects must address challenges or limitations associated with the adoption of the studied mitigation strategies. Challenges include but are not limited to
 - Increased project development costs, delays in obtaining permits, limitations to the scale at which mitigation actions can be executed, and constraints related to site conditions (e.g., incompatible terrain, pre-construction land use, and conflict with neighboring properties).

Topic Area 1, Area of Interest 1: Strategies to Mitigate Adverse Impacts on and/or Maximize Benefits to Wildlife (Continued)

- Applications must identify project partners that enable real-world testing and verification of the proposed mitigation strategy. If the proposed project will require accessing existing solar installation sites, modifying or retrofitting existing LSS facilities, or implementing design strategies during construction of new facilities, applicants must provide evidence that the site owner or controller is willing to participate in the study (e.g., letter of commitment) or present a viable pathway for obtaining that support.
- Applicants must present a cohesive study design that identifies specific and clearly articulated research questions and hypotheses, independent and dependent variables, treatment and control groups, data collection methodologies, data analysis methodologies, expected sample sizes, and other critical components of the study design. Projects must implement data collection methodologies that provide reliable and robust datasets on wildlife presence, movement, and response to the mitigation strategies being implemented.
- Applicants must also describe how project outputs will inform current practices and explain improvements relative to existing benchmarks. Applications must discuss limitations with the proposed study design, risks and challenges to implementing the design, and justification or mitigation strategies for addressing those limitations and risks. Projects under this area of interest must be no more than four years long.

Topic Area 1, Area of Interest 2: Wildlife-Solar Technical Assistance and Stakeholder Engagement

- Applications responsive to this area of interest will improve LSS siting and permitting processes by developing resources, facilitating cross-sector conversations, and providing technical assistance to stakeholders. SETO is interested in projects that involve and meaningfully incorporate the perspective of all entities involved in the siting and permitting processes for LSS facilities, including but not limited to LSS developers, utilities, state and federal wildlife agencies, Tribal governments and communities, and environmental and conservation organizations.
- Applicants must describe a cohesive communications and engagement strategy, including but not limited to expected outcomes and outputs, stakeholders participating in or benefiting from project activities, the format for stakeholder convenings and engagement, metrics of project success, and strategies for bridging conflicting priorities or perspectives among stakeholders.
- Project activities may include but are not limited to workshops, trainings, or webinars that facilitate cross-sector collaboration by disseminating the latest research findings, helping stakeholders identify common challenges and research priorities, and providing access to resources that can inform LSS siting and permitting processes. Applicants must identify clear project objectives and outputs and acknowledge limitations or challenges associated with the proposed approach.

Topic Area 1, Area of Interest 2: Wildlife-Solar Technical Assistance and Stakeholder Engagement (Continued)

- SETO is also interested in projects that provide technical assistance to stakeholders, such as to state fish and wildlife agencies, LSS developers, and engineering, procurement, and construction companies (EPCs) to improve their ability to site, permit, and manage LSS facilities that minimize adverse impacts and maximize benefits to wildlife. Applications focused on providing technical assistance to stakeholders must identify the expected audience, the method of technical assistance delivery, the topics covered, and the expected outcomes or outputs from proposed activities.
- Given the variation in species of interest, habitat types of conservation concern, and LSS deployment trends, a regional approach to the projects under this area of interest could be appropriate. Applicants must identify and justify the region(s) of focus and discuss how topics of interest will vary between regions.

Topic Area 2: Agrivoltaics Technical Assistance and Stakeholder Engagement

- Applications responsive to this topic area will develop and disseminate informational resources, make research and data more accessible, educate new audiences, facilitate cross-sector collaborations, and provide technical assistance on agrivoltaic systems.
- SETO is interested in cross-sector initiatives and convenings that apply the latest research findings and benefit farmers, developers, and rural communities. Entities that could participate in and benefit from these technical assistance and engagement activities include but are not limited to
 - Agricultural producers (including tenant, land-owning, and small- and medium-sized farms and ranches), agricultural interest groups and nonprofits, solar industry members, EPCs, state and local governments, Tribal governments and communities, utilities, and electric cooperatives.
- Applicants must describe a cohesive communications and engagement strategy that identifies expected outcomes and outputs, stakeholders participating in or benefiting from project activities, the format for stakeholder convenings and engagement, metrics of project success, and other key considerations for project success. Project activities may include but are not limited to
 - Hosting workshops, providing one-on-one technical assistance, developing and implementing educational curriculums, conducting trainings, and organizing community events, such as site visits. In addition, applicants must provide a platform (e.g., website or resource hub) for hosting educational materials and other resources that is user-friendly, publicly accessible, and maintained beyond the project period of performance.

Topic Area 2: Agrivoltaics Technical Assistance and Stakeholder Engagement

- SETO is interested in outreach, technical assistance, and stakeholder engagement initiatives that make agrivoltaic system implementation more accessible for small- and medium-sized farms and solar industry participants that have not previously developed agrivoltaic systems. Project activities should introduce stakeholders to the challenges and benefits of developing agrivoltaic systems, provide science-based educational materials, and offer opportunities to engage with other interested stakeholders, including those from other sectors.
- SETO is also interested in projects that provide technical assistance or engagement opportunities to state and local governments that are interested in expanding their own capacity to engage constituents and facilitate the development of agrivoltaic systems in their jurisdictions. Applicants aiming to implement national-level technical assistance or engagement programs must describe a strategy and include the appropriate partners to implement the program across multiple states or regions.

Non-Responsive Applications

The following types of applications will be deemed nonresponsive and will not be reviewed or considered for an award:

- Applications that fall outside the technical parameters specified in the **Background and Purpose** and **Topic Areas** sections of the NOFO.
- Applications for proposed technologies that are not based on sound scientific principles.
- Projects that focus on solar generation deployed on rooftops at the residential or the commercial scale.
- Projects focused on concentrating solar thermal power. This funding opportunity is only focused on photovoltaic technologies.
- Projects that focus on the design of photovoltaic modules, heliostats, inverters, or turbine-generators.
- For Topic 1:
 - a. Projects that conduct research solely on ecosystem services from solar facilities.
 - b. Projects that perform data collection or impact evaluation of solar sites, but do not test existing and/or develop new mitigation strategies to mitigate adverse impacts or maximize benefits relating to wildlife.
 - c. Projects that focus solely on avoidance (i.e., site selection) as a mitigation strategy.
 - d. Projects that focus solely on mitigation strategies for avian species.
 - e. Projects that address both areas of interest.
- For Topic 2:
 - a. Field research on agrivoltaics, including research on agricultural or energy production, economic viability, cost, or social dimensions of agrivoltaics.

Teaming Partner List

- To facilitate the formation of new project teams for this NOFO, a Teaming Partner List is available on EERE eXchange.
- Any organization that would like to be included on this list should submit the requested information through the EERE eXchange portal.
- By submitting this information, you consent to the publication of the above-referenced information
- By facilitating this Teaming Partner List, EERE does not endorse or otherwise evaluate the qualifications of the entities that self-identify themselves for placement on the Teaming Partner List

Award Information

Total Amount to be Awarded	Approximately \$11,000,000*
Average Award Amount	EERE anticipates making awards that range from \$1,000,000 to \$3,000,000
Types of Funding Agreements	Cooperative Agreements
Period of Performance	24 to 48 months
Cost Share Requirement	20% of Total Project Costs for Topic 1, Area of Interest 1; 0% of Total Project Costs for Topic 1, Area of Interest 2 and Topic 2

*Subject to the availability of appropriated funds

Statement of Substantial Involvement

DOE anticipates awarding cooperative agreements under this NOFO, which include a statement of DOE's "substantial involvement" in the work performed under the resulting awards. For cooperative agreements, DOE does not limit its involvement to the administrative requirements of the award. Instead, DOE has substantial involvement in the direction and redirection of the technical aspects of the project. DOE's substantial involvement in resulting awards may include the following:

- DOE shares responsibility with the recipient for the management, control, direction, and performance of the project.
- DOE may intervene in the conduct or performance of work under this award for programmatic reasons. Intervention includes the interruption or modification of the conduct or performance of project activities.
- DOE may redirect or discontinue funding the project based on the outcome of DOE's evaluation of the project at that the Go/No Go decision point(s).
- DOE participates in major project decision-making processes.

Cost Sharing Requirements

- **Standard Cost Sharing**
 - The cost share must be at least 20% of the total project costs for research and development projects. The cost share must come from non-federal sources unless otherwise allowed by law.
 - This only applies for applicants under Topic 1, Area of Interest 1: Strategies to Mitigate Adverse Impacts on and/or Maximize Benefits to Wildlife
- **Cost share is not required for education and outreach projects**
 - This applies specifically to projects submitted under (1) Topic 1, Area of Interest 2: Wildlife-Solar Technical Assistance and Stakeholder Engagement, and (2) Topic 2, Agrivoltaics Technical Assistance and Stakeholder Engagement.
- **Projects submitted under Topic 1 cannot blend cost share or combine areas of interest**
- **Tribes and Tribal Nation applicants are required to provide only a minimum 10% cost share**
 - Pursuant to EERE’s blanket cost share reduction applicable to NOFOs issued after October 3, 2024, entitled Determination to Reduce Non-Federal Cost Share Requirements for Tribes and Tribal Nations Applying for Funding from the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

Topic	Type of Projects	Recipient Cost Share (%)
Topic 1, Area of Interest 1	Research & Development	20%
Topic 1, Area of Interest 2	Education & Outreach	0%
Topic 2	Education & Outreach	0%

Cost Share Contributions

- Contributions must be:
 - Specified in the project budget
 - Verifiable from the Prime Recipient's records
 - Necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of the project
- If you are selected for award negotiations, 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
- Please note, vendors/contractors may NOT provide cost share. Any partial donation of goods or services is considered a discount and is not allowable.

Allowable Cost Share

- Cost Share must be allowable and must be verifiable upon submission of the Full Application
- Refer to the following applicable Federal cost principles:

Entity	Cost Principles
For-profit entities	FAR Part 31 http://farsite.hill.af.mil/reghtml/regs/far2afmcfars/fardfars/far/31.htm
All other non-federal entities	2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1.5&rgn=div6

Allowable Cost Share

- Cash Contributions
 - May be provided by the Prime Recipient, Subrecipients, or a Third Party (may not be provided by vendors/contractors)
- In-Kind Contributions
 - Can include, but are not limited to: the donation of volunteer time or the donation of space or use of equipment.

Please refer to the NOFO Part 2, Eligibility for more information on Cost Sharing.

Unallowable Cost Share

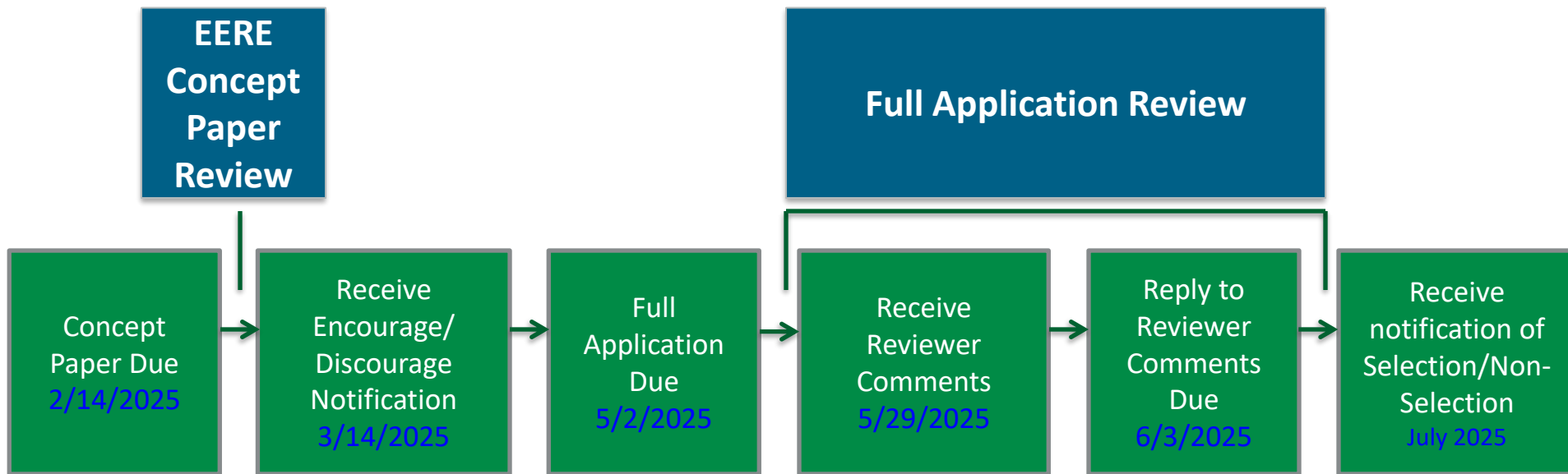
The Prime Recipient may **NOT** use the following sources to meet its cost share obligations including, but not limited to:

- Revenues or royalties from the prospective operation of an activity beyond the project period
- Proceeds from the prospective sale of an asset of an activity
- Federal funding or property
- Expenditures reimbursed under a separate Federal Technology Office
- The same cash or in-kind contributions for more than one project or program
- Vendor/contractor contributions

Cost Share Payment

- Recipients must provide documentation of the cost share contribution, incrementally over the life of the award
- The cumulative cost share percentage provided on each invoice must reflect, at a minimum, the cost sharing percentage negotiated
- In limited circumstances, and where it is in the government's interest, the EERE Contracting Officer may approve a request by the Prime Recipient to meet its cost share requirements on a less frequent basis, such as monthly or quarterly.

NOFO Timeline



EERE anticipates making awards by **1/1/2026**

Concept Papers

- Applicants must submit a Concept Paper
 - Each Concept Paper must be limited to a single concept or technology
- [Section IV.B](#) of the NOFO states what information a Concept Paper should include and the page limits.
 - Failure to include the required content could result in the Concept Paper receiving a “discouraged” determination or the Concept Paper could be found to be ineligible
- Concept Papers must be submitted by [2/14/2025, 5pm ET](#) through EERE eXCHANGE
- EERE provides applicants with: (1) an “encouraged” or “discouraged” notification, and (2) the reviewer comments

Concept Paper Review

Concept Paper Criterion: Overall NOFO Responsiveness and Viability of the Project (Weight: 100%). This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- The applicant has clearly described the proposed research, technical assistance, and/or stakeholder engagement activities, including how the activities are unique and innovative and how the activities will advance the current state of the art.
- The applicant has succinctly described a research study design and/or communications and engagement strategy that presents a clear plan for how project objectives will be achieved.
- The applicant has identified risks and challenges of proposed project activities and specific mitigation strategies to address those risks and challenges.
- The applicant has shown the impact that DOE funding and the proposed project activities would have on the relevant field and application.
- The applicant has succinctly described their approach to integrate DEI principles into the project.
- The applicant has the qualifications, experience, capabilities, and partners necessary to complete the proposed project activities.
- The proposed work, if successfully accomplished, would clearly meet the objectives as stated in the NOFO.

Full Applications

The Full Application includes:

- **Technical Volume:** The key technical submission - info relating 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.
- **SF-424A Budget & Budget Justification:** a detailed budget and spend plan for the project, including for subrecipients if necessary.
- **Summary for Public Release**
- **Summary Slide**
- **Resumes**
- **Letters of Commitment**
- **Statement of Project Objectives**
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan**
- **Administrative Documents:** Impacted Indian Tribes Documentation, Work Proposal for FFRDC (if applicable), FFRDC Authorization (if applicable), Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, Certification Regarding Lobbying (OMB 4040-0013), Waiver for Foreign Entity Participation Requests, Performance of Work in the United States (Foreign Work Waiver), Research Security Training Requirement (for each covered individual), Current and Pending Support including Digital Persistent Identifier (for each covered individual), Location(s) of Work, Data Management Plan, Transparency of Foreign Connections, and Potentially Duplicative Funding Notice.

Full Applications: Technical Volume Content

Technical Volume: the key technical component of the Full Application

Content of Technical Volume	Suggested % of Technical Volume
Cover Page	
Project Overview	10%
Technical Description, Innovation and Impact	30%
Workplan	40%
Technical Qualifications and Resources	20%

Full Application Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must submit a Full Application by 5/2/2025.
- Full Applications are eligible for review if:
 - The Applicant is an eligible entity, Section II.A of the NOFO;
 - The Applicant submitted an eligible Concept Paper;
 - The Cost Share requirement is satisfied, Section II.C of the NOFO;
 - The Full Application is compliant Section IV.C of the NOFO; and
 - The proposed project is responsive to the NOFO Section II of the NOFO
 - The Full Application meets any other eligibility requirements listed in Section II of the NOFO.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

Domestic entities are eligible to apply as recipients or subrecipients. The following types of domestic entities are eligible to participate as a recipient or subrecipient of this NOFO:

1. Institutions of higher education (e.g., universities, colleges, MSIs)
2. For-profit organizations (e.g., environmental consultants, large-scale solar (LSS) developers, facility owners and operators, utilities)
3. Nonprofit organizations (e.g., research institutions, conservation nonprofits, hunting organizations, environmental nonprofits, trade associations, utilities and electric cooperatives)
4. Federally funded R&D centers (FFRDCs)
5. State and local governmental entities (e.g., state wildlife or agricultural agencies)
6. Indian Tribes, as defined in Section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, 25 U.S.C. § 5304.

For more detail about eligible applicants, please see Section II.A of the NOFO

Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that engaged in lobbying activities after December 31, 1995, are not eligible to apply for funding.

Recipients must only be legally formed in the United States and have a physical location for business operations in the United States.

Entities that are organized, chartered, or incorporated (or otherwise formed) under the laws of the United States or a particular state or territory of the United States and have a physical location for business operations in the United States are eligible to apply for funding as a recipient or subrecipient.

Multiple Applications

An entity may submit more than one Concept Paper and Full Application to this NOFO, provided that each application describes a unique, scientifically distinct project and an eligible Concept Paper was submitted for each Full Application.

Merit Review and Selection Process (Full Applications)

- The Merit Review process consists of multiple phases that each include an eligibility review and a thorough technical review
- Rigorous technical reviews are conducted by reviewers that are experts in the subject matter of the NOFO
- Ultimately, the Selection Official considers the recommendations of the reviewers, along with other considerations such as program policy factors, to make the selection decisions

Technical Merit Review Criteria: Criterion 1

Criterion 1: Technical Merit, Innovation, and Impact (50%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

Technical Merit, Innovation, and Impact

1. Extent to which the proposed project is innovative.
2. Degree to which the current state of the science and the proposed advancement are clearly described.
3. Extent to which the application specifically and convincingly demonstrates how the applicant will move the state of the science to the proposed advancement.
4. Sufficiency of technical detail in the application to assess whether the proposed work is scientifically meritorious and revolutionary, including relevant data, calculations, and discussion of prior work with analyses that support the viability of the proposed work.
5. Extent to which project has buy-in from needed stakeholders to ensure success.
6. Degree to which siting and environmental constraints are considered for deployment.
7. Sufficiency of existing infrastructure to support addition of proposed demonstration.

Technical Merit Review Criteria: Criterion 1 (Continued)

Criterion 1: Technical Merit, Innovation, and Impact (50%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

Impact of Technology Advancement

1. Ability of the project to advance industry adoption.
2. Extent to which the project supports the topic area objectives and target specifications and metrics.
3. Potential impact of the project on advancing the state of the science.
4. Extent to which project activities are replicable and could lead to future adoption or implementation by industry actors and other stakeholders.
5. Extent to which the project facilitates stakeholder relationships across new or existing stakeholders to gain technical buy-in and increase potential for future deployments.

Technical Merit Review Criteria: Criterion 1 (Continued)

Criterion 1: Technical Merit, Innovation, and Impact (50%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

Project Management

1. Adequacy of proposed project management systems, including the ability to track scope, cost, and schedule progress and changes.
2. Reasonableness of budget and spend plan as detailed in the budget justification workbook for proposed project and objectives.
3. Adequacy of contingency funding based on quality of cost estimate and identified risks.
4. Adequacy, reasonableness, and soundness of the project schedule, as well as periodic Go/No-Go decisions prior to further funds disbursement, interim milestones, and metrics to track process.
5. Adequacy, reasonableness, and soundness of the project schedule, as well as annual Go/No-Go decisions prior to a budget period continuation application, interim milestones, and metrics to track process.
6. Adequacy of the identification of risks, including labor and community opposition or disputes, and “timely” and appropriate strategies for mitigation and resolution.
7. Soundness of a plan to expeditiously address environmental, siting, and other regulatory requirements for the project, including evaluation of resilience to climate change.
8. Completeness, comprehensiveness, accuracy, and strength of the application deliverables, such that DOE and independent experts will be able to identify project risk.

Technical Merit Review Criteria: Criterion 2

Criterion 2: Project Research and Workplan (25%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

Research Approach, Workplan, and SOPO

1. Degree to which the approach and critical path have been clearly described and thoughtfully considered.
2. Degree to which the research study design (Topic 1, Area of Interest 1) and/or a communications and engagement strategy have been clearly described.
3. Degree to which the task descriptions are clear, detailed, timely, and reasonable, resulting in a high likelihood that the proposed Workplan and SOPO will succeed in meeting the project goals.

Identification of Technical Risks

1. Discussion and demonstrated understanding of the key technical risk areas involved in the proposed work and the quality of the mitigation strategies to address them.

Baseline, Metrics, and Deliverables

1. Level of clarity in the definition of the baseline, metrics, and milestones.
2. Relative to a clearly defined project baseline, the strength of the quantifiable metrics, milestones, and mid-point deliverables defined in the application, such that meaningful interim progress will be made.

Technical Merit Review Criteria: Criterion 3

Criterion 3: Team and Resources (15%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

1. Capability of the project manager(s) and the proposed team to address all aspects of the proposed work with a high probability of success. The qualifications, relevant expertise, and time commitment of the individuals on the team.
2. Diversity of expertise and perspectives of the team and the inclusion of industry partners that will amplify impact.
3. Sufficiency of the facilities to support the work.
4. Degree to which the proposed consortia/team demonstrates the ability to improve the processes and outcomes of LSS development for ecosystems, wildlife, and host communities.
5. Level of participation by project participants as evidenced by letter(s) of commitment and how well they are integrated into the Workplan.
6. Reasonableness of the budget and spend plan for the proposed project and objectives.

Technical Merit Review Criteria: Criterion 4

Criterion 4: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (10%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

- Clear articulation of the project's goals related to DEI.
- Quality of the project's DEI goals, as measured by the goals' depth, breadth, likelihood of success, inclusion of appropriate and relevant SMART milestones, and overall project integration.
- Degree of commitment and ability to track progress toward meeting each of the DEI goals.
- Extent of engagement of organizations that represent disadvantaged communities or underrepresented populations as a core element of their mission, including MSIs, underrepresented businesses, and Tribal, nonprofit, or community-based organizations.

Other Considerations Linked With Energy and/or Environmental Justice

- Clear workplan tasks, staffing, research, and timeline for engaging energy equity and community and/or environmental justice stakeholders and/or evaluating the possible near- and long-term implications of the project for the benefit of the American public, including but not limited to public health and public prosperity benefits.
- Approach, methodology, and expertise articulated in the plan for addressing energy and/or environmental justice questions or concerns associated with the technology innovation.
- Likelihood that the plan will result in improved understanding of distributional public benefits and costs related to the innovation if successful.

Replies to Reviewer Comments

- EERE provides applicants with reviewer comments
- Applicants are not required to submit a Reply - it is optional
- To be considered by EERE, a Reply must be submitted by 6/3/2025, 5pm ET and submitted through EERE eXCHANGE
- Content and form requirements:

Section	Page Limit	Description
Text	2 pages max	Applicants may respond to one or more reviewer comments or supplement their Full Application.
Optional	1 page max	Applicants may use this page however they wish; text, graphs, charts, or other data to respond to reviewer comments or supplement their Full Application are acceptable.

Pre-Selection Interviews

- EERE may invite one or more applicants to participate in Pre-Selection Interviews
- All interviews will be conducted in the same format through videoconferencing software
- Participation in Pre-Selection Interviews with EERE does not signify that applicants have been selected for award negotiations

Selection Factors

The Selection Official may consider the merit review recommendation, program policy factors, and the amount of funds available in arriving at selections for this NOFO.

Program Policy Factors

The Selection Official may consider the following program policy factors in making his/her selection decisions:

1. The degree to which the proposed project exhibits technological diversity when compared to the existing DOE project portfolio and other projects selected from the subject NOFO.
2. The degree to which the proposed project, including proposed cost share, optimizes the use of available DOE funding to achieve programmatic objectives.
3. The level of industry involvement and demonstrated ability to accelerate demonstration and commercialization and overcome key market barriers.
4. The degree to which the proposed project will accelerate transformational technological advances in areas that industry by itself is not likely to undertake because of technical and financial uncertainty.
5. The degree to which the proposed project, or group of projects, represent a desired geographic distribution (considering past awards and current applications).
6. The degree to which the proposed project incorporates applicant or team members from MSIs, and partnerships with businesses majority owned or controlled by underrepresented persons or groups of underrepresented persons or Indian Tribes.
7. The degree to which the proposed project, when compared to the existing DOE project portfolio and other projects to be selected from the subject NOFO, contributes to the total portfolio meeting the goals reflected in the DEI Plan criteria.
8. The degree to which the proposed project will employ procurement of U.S. iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials.

Registration Requirements

- To apply to this NOFO, Applicants must submit application materials through EERE eXCHANGE:
 - Beginning in July 2022*, eXCHANGE will be updated to integrate with Login.gov. As of Sept. 29, 2022*, applicants must have a Login.gov account to access EERE eXCHANGE. Please ensure that the email address associated with Login.gov matches the email address associated with your eXCHANGE account. For more information, refer to the eXCHANGE Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) Quick Guide in the Manuals Section in eXCHANGE.
- Obtain a “control number” at least 24 hours before the first submission deadline.
- Although not required to submit an Application, the following registrations must be complete to receive an award under this NOFO:

Registration Requirement	Website
SAM	https://www.sam.gov
FedConnect	https://www.fedconnect.net
Grants.gov	http://www.grants.gov

*Date subject to change

Means of Submission

- Concept Papers, Full Applications, and Replies to Reviewer Comments must be submitted through EERE eXCHANGE at <https://eere-eXCHANGE.energy.gov>
 - EERE will not review or consider applications submitted through other means
- The Users' Guide for Applying to the Department of Energy EERE Funding Opportunity Announcements can be found at <https://eere-eXCHANGE.energy.gov/Manuals.aspx>

Key Submission Points

- Check entries in EERE eXCHANGE
 - Submissions could be deemed ineligible due to an incorrect entry
- EERE strongly encourages Applicants to submit 1-2 days prior to the deadline to allow for full upload of application documents and to avoid any potential technical glitches with EERE eXCHANGE
- Make sure you hit the submit button
 - Any changes made after you hit submit will un-submit your application and you will need to hit the submit button again
- For your records, print out the EERE eXCHANGE page at each step, which contains the application's Control Number

Applicant Points-of-Contact

- Applicants must designate primary and backup points-of-contact in EERE eXCHANGE with whom EERE will communicate to conduct award negotiations
- It is imperative that the Applicant/Selectee be responsive during award negotiations and meet negotiation deadlines
 - Failure to do so may result in cancellation of further award negotiations and rescission of the Selection

Questions

- Questions about this NOFO?
- Email solarwildlife@ee.doe.gov
 - All Q&As related to this NOFO will be posted on EERE eXCHANGE
 - You must select this specific NOFO Number in order to view the Q&As
 - EERE will attempt to respond to a question within 3 business days, unless a similar Q&A has already been posted on the website
- Problems logging into EERE eXCHANGE or uploading and submitting application documents with EERE eXCHANGE? Email EERE-eXCHANGESupport@hq.doe.gov.
 - Include NOFO name and number in subject line