

Applicant Informational Webinar – Webinar Transcript

Slide 1: Introduction

I am a member of the Technology-to-Market team at the Department of Energy in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Today's webinar is going to review the funding opportunity. I would like to initially point out that this presentation will be posted on EERE Exchange, the same location where you can download the Funding Opportunity Announcement instructions. We will briefly review some of the more dense slides and post them so you can read them later. Additionally, we have muted everyone's phones just to streamline the communication and question asking. If you would like to ask a question at any point, you can type the question into the Q&A box in the webinar and at the end of the presentation, we will start reading through those and answer the questions. With that, I will go ahead and begin.

Slide 2: Notice

Everyone is strongly encouraged to carefully read the entire Funding Opportunity Announcement. Everything we are going to be saying today is included in that announcement. A great deal of time and thought went into drafting the announcement so we hope that you will read the document to enable you to write the strongest application possible.

This presentation will summarize what, we feel, is very important for you to be reviewing in the Funding Opportunity Announcement. We have done this to try to help you. If we make a mistake, by accident, and are inconsistent with anything that is in the written Funding Opportunity Announcement, the information written in the document is the real answer. If you do notice an inconsistency and are confused please email the Funding Opportunity inbox at T2M@ee.doe.gov. Additionally and in general, if there are any questions about the Funding Opportunity Announcement, please email that inbox at T2M@ee.doe.gov.

Slide 3: Questions

All of the questions and answers will be answered and posted to EERE Exchange. If your question is redundant with one that has already been asked, we will send you a link to that answer. Additionally, we will try to respond within three days. If you are asking last minute questions at the very end there is a chance that the question will not be answered, so please read the FOA and ask the questions as early as possible. If you have any problems with the application system, EERE Exchange, there is a specific support group, we encourage you to email them for assistance. They will be able to help you directly with any problems. Also, the EERE Exchange support leaves for the day at 5pm ET, so if you are in the middle of trying to submit your full application or having a problem and it is after 5pm ET, you will be out of luck that is why we strongly encourage you to submit early. Please include the FOA name in any questions you ask. This will allow EERE Exchange support and the T2M team to quickly know which FOA you are referring to. As a reminder, all questions that are asked during this presentation will also be posted to Exchange.

Slide 4: Schedule

This slide shows the schedule that is posted on the first page of the Funding Opportunity Announcement. The main thing we want to point out here is the submission deadline for Letters of Intent is coming up. It is on 18th of this month, January, and is mandatory. Some people get confused and think that they can just submit a Full Application without submitting a Letter of Intent. That will not be possible. If you do not submit a Letter of Intent you will not be able to apply. Please make sure submit a Letter of Intent. We use the information from the Letter of Intent to coordinate a more rapid review for your Full Application. It is important that we get that in soon. Please make sure that you submit your application by 2/15, excuse me by February 15th. I believe the deadline is at 3pm ET and please allow a few hours to do that in case there are any glitches. There is a tendency for EERE Exchange to get a little bit slow right at the deadline, so again we encourage you to submit early.

Slide 5: Award Information

Some award information, the total amount of federal funding, that we hope to be available, will be \$4.2 million in federal funds, subject to final appropriations. Of that \$4.2 million we hope to award approximately seven awards in a Phase 1. After Phase 1, which will we explain in a later slide, we will do a down-select one year later. We will go over that in a minute.

Excuse me one second.

Sorry for the pause, looks like some people might be having trouble hearing. Can at least one person type in the Q&A or in the chat box that they can hear me talking through the phone? You guys can hear if you use the phone instead of using the computer. Please go ahead and dial in to the call-in number and you will be able to hear. Great thank you everybody for the resounding response that you can hear me.

The type of funding agreements are cooperative agreements which are a little bit different than a general grant in that there's substantial involvement, you can read about that in the funding opportunity. This means that we want to be a partner with you and try and help you be successful. In terms of the period of performance, each Phase, 1 and 2, will be one year each and there will be a 20% cost share requirement which we will go over in a later slide. With that I will hand it off to Johanna Wolfson who will go over some of the specifics of the intent of the FOA.

Slide 6: FOA Description

Hi I am Johanna Wolfson, the director of Tech-to-Market for EERE. We want to spend a few minutes giving a pretty high level overview describing the intent of this FOA, the intent behind the various Topics, and help you understand if you should apply to this FOA or not. This slide provides a high level overview of the funding opportunity. This funding opportunity is really seeking to surface new testable and also scalable ways to alleviate different structural challenges that face promising energy technologies on their pathway to market. It is really important to understand that this FOA is not intended to fund individual technology solutions directly, rather it is meant to fund the implantation of new mechanisms that could address some of those common structural challenges on the pathway to market. Hopefully that will become clear as you read the full description of the Topics in the funding opportunity. Our intent is really to pilot and evaluate these new mechanisms and position those that prove to be successful for adoption by the private sector. The funding is meant to support the work

required to evaluate the viability of a new model. The new model is a new concept you have to test out in the real world, involve other partners and analyze the outcomes to prove to yourself and to us that it either does work or does not and is applicable for uptake by the by the energy industry as a whole.

Slide 7: Topic Areas of Technical Areas of Interest

This funding opportunity is looking for proposals in two different Topic areas. The first Topic is calibration between the technical community and industry and the second Topic is lowering barriers to resource access. We have highlighted two Areas of Interest, one under each Topic. The first area of interest under Topic 1 is models for better industry startup partnerships and the area of interest under Topic 2 is new investment models. I want to highlight that applicants can apply and we welcome proposals with concepts outside of the two Areas of Interest that we have highlighted as long as they are still within the scope of the overall Topic. All proposals that fall within the scope of Topic 1 or Topic 2 will be considered for funding. Applicants can only submit one full application for each Topic. However, this is not meant to prohibit applicants from collaborating on other applications such as being a subrecipient or a partner. Also keep in mind that an individual entity/individual organization can only be listed as the prime applicant on one full application per Topic, but there is no limit on the number of applications that one can collaborate on as a subrecipient or a partner. Just to be clear that to apply to both Topics, applicants need to submit one letter of intent for each Topic and then a full application for each Topic.

Slide 8: Topic 1 and Area of Interest

In the next two slides, I will give a high level overview of each Topic. In the Funding Opportunity Announcement, we have listed out examples of the different models under the two Topics that would potentially be of interest, although those examples are not meant to limit the responses the examples provide ideas.

For Topic 1, which is Technical Community and Industry Collaboration, we want to look for new models for collaboration among technology developers, industry and other entities within the innovation ecosystem that could level the disconnect between the technical community and the market. We are also seeking to support new models for collaboration so innovations can both be better prepared for market adoption and that market players can explore new innovations more easily. The area of interest that we have highlighted under Topic 1 is models for industry startup partnerships. This area of interest was highlighted due to the feedback we received that many programs assist technology developers with developing business plans and early stage prototypes but far fewer actually help technology developers and innovators get the knowledge needed to develop products that are commercially relevant and industry ready and are able to be integrated into the very complex systems that exists in the energy industry. We are specifically interested in proposals that can address that gap and proposals should focus on presenting feasible ways to overcome the barriers that are currently preventing effective collaboration. Additionally, we really want to understand that you know why this collaboration isn't working right now and why your idea has the ability to smooth those barriers. We want to see that you have a method by which to stress-test your model with existing industry partners and be able to evaluate its viability by the end of year one. Furthermore, models that are not able to be evaluated as working or not working are not of interest for this funding opportunity. Finally, we want applicants to articulate a pathway to private sector adoption in the case that the model is shown to be successful.

Slide 9: Topic 2 and Area of Interest

Topic 2, Lowering Barriers to Resources Access, stems from the principle that the U.S. innovation system has a great deal of strengths in terms of financial and laboratory manufacturing resources. However, these resources are not always optimally aligned and especially not always optimally available to early stage innovators. Thus, we are looking for new models to lower the barriers and align incentives that could enable both capital and physical resources to be used more effectively by the innovation community. We are seeking new models to optimize access to those resources.

The area of interest we are highlighting under this Topic is New Investment Models. This area of interest stems from the fact that conventional venture capital, for early-stage energy innovation, has declined in the past several years. At the same time, new capital sources have emerged that have the potential to be unlocked if the right mechanisms can be presented and shown to be viable. We are very interested in proposals that develop and would test new investment models and have provided examples of what this might look like in the funding opportunity. We want to make sure that applicants again are presenting really concrete and feasible ways to overcome barriers that are currently preventing investment. Applicants should present an understanding of the ways to overcome the barriers and how an individual solution is going to be different. We want to see that there is a method by which to stress-test and validate their proposed investment model by the end of Year one. For instance, this could be done by simulating an investment portfolio or developing a specific structured financing instrument. Finally as in the previous case, we are looking to see a clear pathway to private sector adoption and validation of the model in year one. Again that's because we are looking to catalyze the implantation of new models that would ultimately be relevant to the industry as a whole.

I want to emphasize that EERE spends nearly two billion dollars per year supporting individual technology projects, however the T2M team does not support individual technology projects. Thus, we are not providing funds for direct investment into clean energy companies as part of the funding opportunity. Instead, we want these funds to support the work that is required to evaluate new ways of investing and bringing investment partners on board and unlocking investment opportunities for those partners testing out the viability and analyzing outcomes.

Slide 10: Applications Specifically Not of Interest

I want to emphasize applications that are especially not of interest and if they apply to any of you, then this is probably not the right funding opportunity for you. Those applications that fall outside of the Areas of Interest include any direct funding to individual companies or entities for individual technology projects. We are not seeking proposals from entities or organizations that are looking to progress their single technology solution from one stage of commercialization to the next. Likewise, technical demonstration or deployment is not going to be considered for this funding opportunity. The only exception to that would be if the proposed activities somehow facilitate more efficient, productive or cost effective mechanisms for demonstration or deployment. We are also not interested in funding policy changes and will not consider funding proposals that are just incremental improvements to existing solutions or programs. We will not consider for funding programs that require continued government support beyond the two year period for this funding opportunity.

Slide 11: Additional Considerations

I will read through some additional considerations to keep in mind as you are putting together your applications. We are seeking approaches that are extremely high leverage. We want them to have the potential, if successful, to effect significant improvements within the innovation ecosystem with limited capital. We are looking for applicants to demonstrate how they are going to do that. We want to see that you have the ability to create scalable solutions that can be adopted by the broader clean energy industry. Similarly, proposed models should have the potential to either unlock significant additional capital or change the way in which clean energy technologies actually reach the market. Again, this is all if your model is shown to be successful and were to be adopted as scale. We are encouraging partnership with other entities especially entities directly involved in industry and investment that includes private sector, subject matter experts, and practitioners.

As I mentioned on the previous slides, to be considered for this funding opportunity, applicants need to present a plan to test the viability of the proposed approach by the end of year one and to quantify the value of the approach to private sector partners. We don't want to fund proposals that are not testable. Anything that is submitted needs to be clearly testable. Finally we want the technology developers, startups or innovators supported to be of greatest interest to the market rather than some preselected group of technology developers or startups. Applicants should demonstrate how they are going to determine solution of greatest interest to the market.

Slide 12: Teaming Partner List

Finally before I pass it back to Victor, I want to mention that we are encouraging the formation of project of partners and invite anyone who is interested, while not required, to submit the information they see on the screen to T2M@EE.DOE.GOV. We will compile the information into a teaming partner list that is continuously updated, as we receive responses, and uploaded onto EERE Exchange under this FOA documents. Now back over to Victor to go through more of the logistics.

Slide 13: Who is Eligible to Apply?

Who is eligible to apply to this funding opportunity, basically everyone. We did not restrict eligibility and the standard EERE eligibility language is included. You can read about specifics of that in the funding opportunity announcement. I am going to pick up the pace just so we can try and get to the questions and answers.

Slide 14: Key Submission Points

Some key submission points where we have seen people make errors and disqualify themselves from review, which we want you to avoid, are the points on the slide. Submissions could be deemed ineligible if you do not fill in all the required fields as you are going through the submission process. The system will ask you to input key points of contact, cost share amount, and similar information. Please make sure you fill out everything required and do so very carefully.

You are also encouraged to submit at least 48 hours early. This will allow you, if you encounter a technical error, to have time to contact tech support and get assistance. If you wait to the last minute and have a problem, the contracting officers, who determine whether to accept your application or not, are not very forgiving, so please do not wait until the last second. Also, once you hit submit there is a

tendency to go back and change a few things. If you go back and change something and do not hit submit again your application will not show up in the system and it will not be reviewed. This situation has happened to several people and we want you to avoid it. Also, for your records please print the EERE Exchange confirmation that could help if there is some sort of glitch on our side. The printout will contain your application control number.

Slide 15: Letters of Intent

Once again, we want to emphasize the Letters of Intent are mandatory and they must be submitted by 3pm ET on January 18th to be eligible to submit a full application. If you are submitting more than one application, you need to submit more than one letter of intent. It might be wise even if you are thinking about submitting a full application, to submit a letter of intent. If you submit a letter of intent, you are not obligated, but are allowed to submit a full application. Please make sure you submit that letter of intent.

Slide 16: Letters of Intent Format

We have provided a reiteration of the format of the letter of intent. Each of these fields are required in EERE Exchange. You will not be emailing us the letter of intent. You need to go into EERE Exchange, create an account, and submit a letter of intent using the fields generated. If the letters of intent information are emailed to the T2M inbox, they will not be reviewed, so make sure you submit the information in EERE Exchange.

Slide 17: Registration Requirements

There are some registration requirements that confuse people. If you wait until the very last day to start your submission process, you will realize you need some key registration numbers needed to submit your application. The most important registration number is the DUNS number. It can take several weeks to actually receive this number. Once you submit your letter of intent, or even sooner, login into the system and request your DUNS number. This number is part of the SF 424A form that you will need to submit as part of your full application. The other numbers on this slide will be required to receive federal funding if you are selected. It's good to go ahead and get started as the process can also take several weeks. We encourage you to login and create these accounts.

Slide 18: Full Application

For the full application, we have provided a detailed checklist of everything that you will need to accomplish to be successful in submitting an application that can be reviewed and potentially receive an award. The checklist is located in the funding opportunity. We encourage you to print that out and check things off as you accomplish them.

Slide 19: Full Application Compliance

For the full application, I won't read through this slide but, there are several things that you need to make sure you accomplish to be compliant. The components of the full application include: the technical volume, where you describe your project; the SF424 or Standard Form 424, which is your official request for federal assistance; your summary slide, which we will use to present to senior leadership on the selections, so it is a good idea to spend some time on the summary slide to make sure it looks good and will represent your application idea; and then all the other administrative documents that are

mentioned in the funding opportunity. If you receive an award, there will be an additional set of documents you will need to fill out during the negotiation process.

Slide 20: Full Applications: Technical Volume Content

The technical volume this is what the reviewers will read to provide you with a score, so you should obviously take great care in the construction of this section. Also, please be aware of the page limits. We have set a page limit of seven pages. For example, you can adjust maybe your project overview to be one and a half pages and your program description to be one and a half pages. We will not enforce page limits by section but, we will enforce the seven page limit for the entire document. If you go over seven pages, anything over the limit will simply not be reviewed. Also please note that in the work plan you will be asked to submit an estimated project budget. This is pretty high level. We are not asking for the full budget request that will be needed to receive the actual award. The full budget request will be completed during award negotiation but, you need to know how much you are requesting, what your project cost share will be, and roughly the categories of how this will be spent, i.e. things like personnel travel, vendor costs, etc.

Slide 21: Cost Sharing Requirements

For the cost share, we have seen several people kicked out and not reviewed because they did not use the correct formula to calculate cost share. You have to have a minimum of 20%. We have provided some various breakdowns of formulas at the bottom of the slide but, basically it's your contribution over the total project amount which means the total project amount is your contribution plus the federal amount. What we have seen people do in the past is they put their contribution over the federal amount. If you do it that way, you will be under the requirement and you will not be reviewed, so please make sure you take care in calculating your cost share.

Slide 22: Merit Review and Selection Process: Full Applications

The merit review and selection process will utilize expert independent reviewers. It consists of multiple stages. Each application will be reviewed by at least three people or three reviewers and ultimately a selection official makes the final decision based on the scoring criteria.

Slide 23: Technical Merit Review Criteria

I am not going to read through all the criteria listings on the coming slides. We have the scoring criteria split into one thirds. Criterion 1 is innovation and impact and you can read the categories of what will be looked for on the slide. It is important to understand these are the things that your application will be judged and scored. As you read through these slides your technical narrative should address these criteria to receive a high score.

Slide 24 and 25: Technical Merit Review Criteria (cont.)

Criterion 2 is quality and likelihood to complete the stated goals and Criterion 3 is capability and resources of the applicant and project team. All of these will be clearly stated in the funding opportunity announcement. I encourage you to look through these closely and structure your application to speak to these criteria.

Slide 26: Replies to Reviewer Comments

After your proposal is submitted and reviewed, you will be able to sign into EERE Exchange. You will receive a notification to login and will be able to see what the reviewers write. These will be raw reviewers' comments. These comments are not a reflection of EERE's views of your application. These are a reflection of the independent merit reviewers' views. You will have the opportunity, for a few days, to reply to the reviewer comments in case something was misunderstood or you would like to directly respond to a criticism. You do not have to reply to reviewer comments, it is not required but, it is something you should plan for if you plan to do so. We listed the dates, so when you receive that notification you will only have a few days.

Slide 27: Pre-Selection Interviews

After that point, there will be some additional things that happen during the review process, most notably a pre-selection interview. The pre-selection interview means that we might call or email you to either ask for some clarifying questions or for an in person interview. These are not mandatory but our request for clarification of various things. If you are asked for a pre-selection interview, this does not represent that you have been selected but, means you are under consideration and that we have questions.

Slide 28: FOA Review Timeline

This slide is the FOA review timeline again. The schedule is stated on the first page of the funding opportunity announcement. Again you must submit a letter of intent on the 18th. Here we are showing you when the full application review will occur and when reviews and selections will occur. The clarification interviews might be between the end of March and the beginning of May. You will receive detailed information on that if that is required.

Slide 29: Program Down-Select

This program will utilize the down-select process. We wanted to award as many groups as possible for the first year to test approaches and will be awarding approximately seven. We would hopefully award around 300,000 dollars each and would have one year to execute an activity based on their proposal and what is discussed during the project negotiation. After one year, the progress towards their milestones and deliverables would be accessed in what is called a continuous review process. Reviewers would also be called on to provide input on how the various awards are doing. Ultimately, we hope to select three of the original Phase 1 awards for a Phase 2 award which would be 700,000 dollars for a total of one million dollars over two years. This would really solidify the approach that was proven in Phase 1 so it could hopefully continue on without federal funding after year two. That is the general structure.

Slide 30: Upcoming FOA Deadlines

We will say it one more time, letters of intent on the 28th please submit one if you plan to submit an application. We will have another webinar. It will be very similar to this one in case others were not able to make it on the 7th of February. The full application will be due on 3pm on February 15th. So for questions again, if you are unable to get your question answered on this webinar, you can email us and

we can post the answer. If you have problems logging into Exchange, be sure to email EERE support and include the FOA name and again we will post the questions from this webinar on Exchange.

Slide 31: Questions

Questions and Answers

Please see the Webinar Questions and Answers document for responses to the webinar questions.