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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

Solar Energy Evolution and Diffusion Studies 4 (SEEDS 4)

SEEDS4-FOA@ee.doe.gov

FOA Webinar

DE-FOA-0003226

12/18/2023

Notice

- NO NEW INFORMATION OTHER THAN THAT PROVIDED IN THE FOA 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 Funding Opportunity Announcement **DE-FOA-0003226 ("FOA")** and adhere to the stated submission requirements.
- This presentation summarizes the contents of FOA. If there are any inconsistencies between the FOA and this presentation or statements from DOE personnel, the FOA is the controlling document and applicants should rely on the FOA language and seek clarification by submitting a question to **SEEDS4-FOA@ee.doe.gov.**

Anticipated Schedule:

FOA Issue Date:	12/14/2023
Submission Deadline for Concept Papers:	1/30/2024
Submission Deadline for Full Applications:	3/15/2024
Submission Deadline for Replies to Reviewer Comments:	4/11/2024
Expected Date for EERE Selection Notifications:	5/20/2024
Expected Timeframe for Award Negotiations:	May - Aug 2024

Agenda

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

FOA Description: Background and Context

- This FOA is being issued by the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) to invest in innovative social science research that generates actionable insights to improve large-scale solar (LSS) siting processes and outcomes for host communities—particularly those that are disadvantaged—and the solar industry.
- 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 to support decarbonization goals, eventually 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%), many communities across the country will be asked to consider hosting LSS facilities.
- Land-use conflict due to siting and permitting of LSS facilities is becoming more prevalent and could impact the scale and pace of deployment. Research supported by this FOA will provide more clarity on the factors driving conflicts around LSS siting and produce actionable insights for stakeholders to improve siting processes and outcomes.

FOA 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 equitable deployment of solar energy.
- This funding opportunity will support research on the social dimensions of siting LSS facilities (possibly including storage) that are 1 MW_{dc} or larger and located on private land.
- The goal of this FOA is to generate actionable insights that can guide solar energy developers and owner/operators, local, state, federal, and Tribal governments, landowners, community organizations, and other stakeholders to improve LSS siting processes and outcomes for host communities and the solar industry.
- **Siting** in this FOA is defined as *the series of decision-making processes and actions that determine the location, design, and operation of new LSS facilities.*
- Due to the many impacts weighed during the siting process, and the interplay of multiple stakeholder groups, the social dynamics of siting can lead to conflict and generate distrust among stakeholders, in turn leading to prolonged project timelines, cancellations, and restrictions on LSS facilities, all of which lead to higher soft costs for those projects that are built and higher energy costs for consumers.

FOA Description: Technology Space and Strategic Goals

- Siting processes and their social dynamics also affect equity in the energy transition.
- One dimension of equity in siting is distributional: how benefits and burdens of LSS vary across different population segments. A recent analysis suggests that LSS projects are more frequently built in low-income communities relative to higher-income communities. The role of LSS deployment in advancing equity will depend on whether host communities experience net benefits or net burdens from the facility.
- Another dimension of equity is procedural: how access to information and influence in the siting process vary across groups. Current research suggests that siting processes differ in the degree to which they meet standards of procedural justice.
- To date, disparities in community impacts and procedural justice have not been well described and the factors that affect equity in siting have not yet been identified.

FOA Description: Technology Space and Strategic Goals

- The LSS project lifecycle can be divided into three phases: (1) prospecting and proposal, (2) permitting and land use planning, and (3) construction, operation, and decommissioning.
  - In the project prospecting and proposal phase, solar developers evaluate site suitability, negotiate land leases or purchases, establish financing and budgets for the project, determine the location and configuration for the potential project, and initiate engagements or communications with the host community.
  - In the permitting and land use planning phase, authorities consider existing rules and regulations (such as land use restrictions, comprehensive plans, and zoning), and weigh various other factors and evidence to make determinations about project approval and conditions.
  - In the third phase, projects are built and operated, and the community may experience both positive and negative impacts (i.e., benefits and burdens). Positive impacts include benefits such as increased tax revenue, local economic development, and ecosystem services from the facility. Negative impacts can include burdens such as visual changes to the landscape, decreased property values, perceived changes in community character, and disruptions associated with LSS construction.
- A better understanding of the factors that influence outcomes at each phase will inform development and evaluation of improved siting processes. Current work suggests that community members' perceptions of and responses to LSS and other renewable energy technologies are related to characteristics of the specific project, characteristics of the place and community in which it is sited, and characteristics of the siting process.

Topic Areas/Technical Areas of Interest

SETO seeks proposals for projects that examine how siting practices, defined as interventions or actions executed during LSS siting by one or more stakeholders, affect outcomes. Outcomes of interest include:

- Community acceptance or opposition
- Permitting and land use decisions, predictability, and timeliness
- Community impacts (including meaningful benefits, burdens, and equity and procedural and distributional justice)

Project teams can leverage multiple social science disciplines, such as anthropology, behavioral sciences, communication, economics, political science, public administration, sociology, and urban planning. While most teams are expected to be led by one or more research organizations, teams may also include community groups, energy industry partners, and/or government partners.

This funding opportunity has a single topic area on the social dynamics of LSS siting processes with three areas of interest. Projects must focus on at least one of the following areas of interest but can focus on multiple areas.

Area of Interest 1: Community Acceptance and Opposition

The first area of interest of this FOA is to understand how siting practices shape community acceptance of and opposition to proposed LSS projects. Types of siting practices could include, but are not limited to:

- proactive community- or local government-led planning for LSS deployment,
- community outreach and engagement tactics deployed by developers,
- participatory decision-making for LSS project design,
- community benefit agreements or plans,
- and third-party facilitation of community meetings.

Applications responsive to this area of interest will study how different factors and practices shape community acceptance of, or opposition to, projects. Selected projects will measure the effect of specific siting practices on community attitudes and beliefs and describe variations in the success of specific practices based on community and project context. Applicants must identify specific, granular aspects of siting practices that affect community perceptions. Outputs from selected projects in this area of interest will inform, develop, and/or test siting practice innovations that improve outcomes related to community acceptance.

Area of Interest 2: Permitting and Land Use Planning Process and Outcomes

Another area of interest in this FOA is to examine how community input or other factors influence land use and permitting outcomes. Permitting processes for LSS projects vary by jurisdiction and in some cases require modifications to zoning ordinances or special use permits. It is expected that public input, process characteristics, and other factors affect permitting outcomes, but more research is needed to understand how and to what extent.

Applications responsive to this area of interest will focus on the project permitting phase and investigate how permitting and land use decisions are influenced by community input and other factors. This includes analysis of how different types of processes, policies, and ordinances affect outcomes, such as:

- permit issuance/denial,
- changes to land use regulations,
- time to permit,
- changes in project design,
- negotiated community benefits,
- and perceived or measurable procedural justice.

Analyses may also describe how these outcomes vary among groups both within and across communities. Outputs could include descriptive data to assess current practices and outcomes, as well as studies of the causal impact of current or innovative permitting practices on relevant outcomes.

Area of Interest 3: Community Impact Evaluation

Lastly, this FOA seeks to understand the observable and perceived impacts (benefits and burdens) that LSS installations have on host communities and how they are influenced by the decisions made during the siting process. Further research is needed to fully characterize the different types of impacts (benefits and burdens) to host communities, their magnitude, and how they vary among and within host communities. In addition, research on the mechanisms behind these impacts is needed to inform strategies during the siting process that increase meaningful benefits and avoid or mitigate adverse impacts.

Applications responsive to this area of interest will focus on understanding how siting decisions affecting LSS construction, operation, and/or decommissioning practices influence host community benefits, burdens, and equity. Outputs from selected projects could include an in-depth characterization of trends in impacts and their relationship with siting practices and community characteristics, the identification of siting practice innovations that improve meaningful benefits, reduce burdens, and advance equity, and/or an evaluation of the mechanisms that produce impacts from LSS facilities.

Other Considerations

- Projects funded by EERE are expected to produce high-impact outputs that are publicly accessible. Findings must be widely disseminated through data (anonymized or not) and publication of results in peer-reviewed journals and in forms appropriate for non-technical audiences
- Projects should, whenever possible, include causal identification of the effect of specific practices on siting outcomes, an examination of equity both within and across communities, and an investigation of how effects are shaped by context. In addition, projects must articulate a clear vision of how results can be practically applied
- Applications must include a plan to engage with local communities. Applicants must explain how the knowledge and outputs generated from the project will contribute to more effective deployment of solar installations compared to current practices.
- SETO is committed to building a strong body of evidence related to the social dimensions of LSS siting to inform stakeholder decision-making. For research findings to be robust, reliable, and replicable, transparent reporting of methodologies, data sources, and analytical procedures are necessary. Applicants must develop project plans that outline how they will make the research transparent, maximize confidence in findings, and enable replication of findings.

Teaming Expectations

- Applicant teams must include the necessary stakeholders to perform the proposed research activities and to disseminate results.
- Inclusion of key stakeholders may be shown through a formal letter of support or commitment to recruit technical advisors if awarded. Teams are expected to include within their project the recruitment and formation of a project advisory committee composed of relevant experts and stakeholders to provide guidance and review of project plans and outputs.
- Projects should include partners that enable real-world testing and verification of the proposed practices or innovations. If the proposed project will require the involvement of a specific stakeholder or stakeholder group, proposals must provide evidence that the stakeholder or stakeholder group supports the project and is willing to participate. In addition, project plans that are connected to the development of a particular solar energy project must describe in their proposal the anticipated timeline for that project and explain how the solar energy project development fits into the project timeline. Projects awarded in this funding opportunity are anticipated to begin no earlier than October 2024 and may choose to delay their start date no later than July 1, 2025, to accommodate solar project timelines.
- Teams that include representation from diverse entities such as, but not limited to Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)/Other Minority Institutions (OMIs) are strongly encouraged.

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 Section I.A. and I.B. of the FOA.
- Applications that are not based on sound scientific principles (e.g., violates the principle of cause and effect).
- Projects that focus on quantifying the wildlife or ecosystem service impacts of LSS installations.
- Projects focused solely on studying the implementation or impacts of innovative siting types, including agrivoltaics, floating PV, and LSS on contaminated lands.
- Projects focused solely on the development of photovoltaic technology and design solutions.
- Projects exclusively focused on the siting of community solar to the exclusion of other types of LSS.
- Projects that propose to create a map or set of maps intended to guide the development of future LSS development.

Teaming Partner List

- To facilitate the formation of new project teams for this FOA, 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 $7,000,000
Average Award Amount	EERE anticipates making awards that range from $1,000,000 to $2,500,000.
Types of Funding Agreements	Cooperative Agreements
Period of Performance	12 to 36 months
Cost Share Requirement	20% of Total Project Costs for most entities; 10% of Total Project Costs for MSIs, governments, and nonprofits

*Subject to the availability of appropriated funds

Statement of Substantial Involvement

EERE has substantial involvement in work performed under awards made following this FOA. EERE does not limit its involvement to the administrative requirements of the award. Instead, EERE has substantial involvement in the direction and redirection of the technical aspects of the project as a whole. Substantial involvement includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- EERE shares responsibility with the Recipient for the management, control, direction, and performance of the Project.
- EERE 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.
- EERE may redirect or discontinue funding the Project based on the outcome of EERE's evaluation of the Project at that the Go/No Go decision point.
- EERE 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.

- **Cost Sharing for Minority Serving Institutions, Domestic Nonprofits, and State, Local, and Tribal Governments**

  DOE has authorized a Cost Share Reduction Determination for this funding opportunity that reduces the recipient cost share requirement from 20% to 10% for projects in which one of the following groups is a prime recipient: (1) minority serving institution of higher education, (2) domestic nonprofit entity, or (3) U.S. state, local, or Tribal government entity. To qualify, these institutions must perform at least 50% of the budgeted work in the proposed project. For these institutions, cost share must be at least 10% of total project costs. The cost share must come from non-federal sources unless otherwise allowed by law.

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.

For more information, see the Cost Share Appendix A in the FOA

Unallowable Cost Share

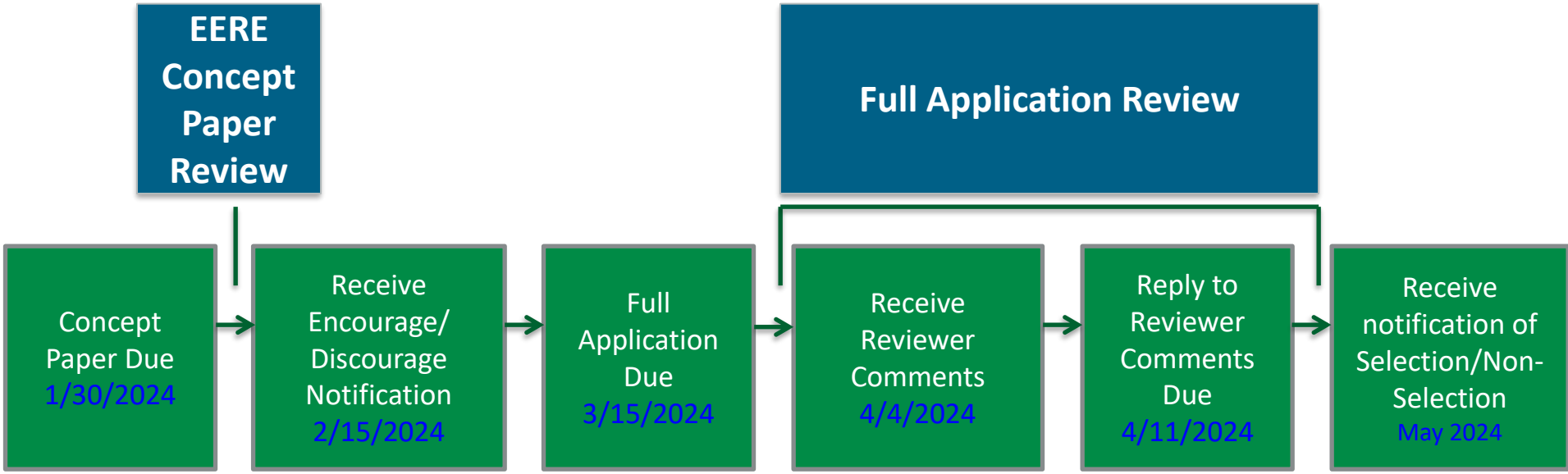
The Prime Recipient may **NOT** use the following sources to meet its cost share obligations including, but not limited to:

- 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. See Section III.B.vi of the FOA.

FOA Timeline



EERE anticipates making awards by 10/1/2024

Concept Papers

- Applicants must submit a Concept Paper
  - Each Concept Paper must be limited to a single concept or technology
- Section IV.C of the FOA 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 1/30/2024, 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 FOA Responsiveness and Viability of the Project (Weight: 100%). This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- The applicant clearly describes the proposed technology, how the technology is unique and innovative, and how the technology will advance the current state of the art;
- The applicant has identified risks and challenges of the technology, regulatory and financial aspects of the proposal including possible mitigation strategies, and has shown the impact that EERE funding and the proposed project would have on the relevant field and application;
- The applicant has the qualifications, experience, capabilities, and other resources necessary to complete the proposed project; and
- The proposed work, if successfully accomplished, would clearly meet the objectives as stated in the FOA.

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 Plans**
- **Administrative Documents:** FFRDC Authorization (if applicable), Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, Waiver Requests, Current and Pending Support, Location(s) of Work, 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 3/15/2024.
- Full Applications are eligible for review if:
  - The Applicant is an eligible entity Section III.A of FOA;
  - The Applicant submitted an eligible Concept Paper;
  - The Cost Share requirement is satisfied Section III.B of FOA;
  - The Full Application is compliant Section III.C of FOA; and
  - The proposed project is responsive to the FOA Section III.D of FOA
  - The Full Application meets any other eligibility requirements listed in Section III of the FOA.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

Eligible applicants for this FOA include:

1. U.S. citizens and lawful U.S. permanent residents
2. For-profit entities
3. Educational institutions
4. Nonprofits
5. State, local, and tribal government entities
6. DOE/NNSA FFRDCs

For more detail about eligible applicants, please see Section III.A of the FOA

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.

Prime Recipients must be in must be incorporated (or otherwise formed) under the laws of a State or territory of the United States and have a physical location for business operations in the United States. See Section III.A.ii for requirements applicable to foreign entities applying under this FOA.

Multiple Applications

An entity may submit more than one Concept Paper and Full Application to this FOA, 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 FOA
- 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 and Innovation

- Extent to which the proposed technology, process, or project is innovative or replicable;
- Degree to which the current state of the social science and the proposed advancement are clearly described;
- Extent to which the application specifically and convincingly demonstrates how the applicant will move the state of the art to the proposed advancement;
- 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;
- Extent to which project has buy-in from needed stakeholders to ensure success;
- Degree to which key manufacturing and supply chain challenges are considered, as applicable, for viable scale-up in this and future demonstrations;
- Degree to which siting and environmental constraints are considered for deployment;
- Extent to which project has the potential to reduce emissions and provide clean energy acceleration benefits for a community or region; and
- Sufficiency of existing infrastructure to support addition of proposed demonstration.

Technical Merit Review Criteria: Criterion 1 (con't)

Criterion 1: Technical Merit, Innovation, and Impact (50%)
This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

Impact of Technology Advancement

- Ability of the project to advance industry adoption;
- Extent to which the project supports the topic area objectives and target specifications and metrics;
- Potential impact of the project on advancing the state of the art;
- Extent to which demonstration/deployment is replicable and may lead to future demonstrations; and
- 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 (con't)

Criterion 1: Technical Merit, Innovation, and Impact (50%)
This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

Project Management

- Adequacy of proposed project management systems including the ability to track scope, cost, and schedule progress and changes;
- Reasonableness of budget and spend plan as detailed in the budget justification workbook for proposed project and objectives;
- Adequacy of contingency funding based on quality of cost estimate and identified risks;
- 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;
- 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;
- Adequacy of the identification of risks, including labor and community opposition or disputes, and "timely" and appropriate strategies for mitigation and resolution; and
- Soundness of a plan to expeditiously address environmental, siting, and other regulatory requirements for the project, including evaluation of resilience to climate change.

Technical Merit Review Criteria: Criterion 2

Criterion 2: Project Research and Market Transformation Plan (25%)
This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

Research Approach, Workplan, and SOPO
- Degree to which the approach and critical path have been clearly described and thoughtfully considered; and
- 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
- 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
- Level of clarity in the definition of the baseline, metrics, and milestones; and
- 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.

Market Transformation Plan
- Identification of target market, competitors, and distribution channels for proposed technology along with known or perceived barriers to market penetration, including mitigation plan; and
- Comprehensiveness of market transformation plan including but not limited to product development and/or service plan, commercialization timeline, financing, product marketing, legal/regulatory considerations including intellectual property, infrastructure requirements, and product distribution.

Industry Adoption Plan
- Identification of the interest and extent of industry adoption of the technology/process.

Technical Merit Review Criteria: Criterion 3

Criterion 3: Team and Resources (15%)
This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- Capability of the Principal Investigator(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;
- Diversity of expertise and perspectives of the team and the inclusion of industry partners that will amplify impact;
- Sufficiency of the facilities to support the work;
- Degree to which the proposed consortia/team demonstrates the ability to facilitate and expedite further demonstration, development, and commercial deployment of the proposed technologies;
- Level of participation by project participants as evidenced by letter(s) of commitment and how well they are integrated into the Workplan; and
- 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:

- The quality and manner in which the measures incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion goals in the project; and
- Extent to which the project benefits underserved communities.

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 4/11/2024, 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 FOA

Program Policy Factors

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

- 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 FOA;
- The degree to which the proposed project, including proposed cost share, optimizes the use of available EERE funding to achieve programmatic objectives;
- The level of industry involvement and demonstrated ability to accelerate commercialization and overcome key market barriers;
- 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;
- The degree to which the proposed project, or group of projects, represent a desired geographic distribution (considering past awards and current applications);
- The degree to which the proposed project incorporates applicant or team members from Minority Serving Institutions (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)/Other Minority Institutions (OMIs)); and partnerships with Minority Business Enterprises, minority-owned businesses, woman-owned businesses, veteran-owned businesses, or Indian Tribes; and
- 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 FOA, 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 FOA:

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 FOA?
- Email SEEDS4-FOA@ee.doe.gov
  - All Q&As related to this FOA will be posted on EERE eXCHANGE
    - You must select this specific FOA 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 FOA name and number in subject line