**PHOTOVOLTAICS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (PVRD) 2:**

**MODULES AND SYSTEMS**

**Informational Full Application and SIPS Application Webinar Script**

1. Hello and welcome to the second webinar for the “Photovoltaics Research and Development 2: Modules and Systems” funding opportunity announcement, also known as the PVRD2 FOA. My name is Jonathan Trinastic and I am a member of the DOE SunShot Initiative’s Photovoltaics Team.

We’re glad you’ve joined us today and we have a lot of hopefully helpful information to cover about the next steps of the PVRD2 application process, including the Full Application, SIPS Application, and award management. At the end of today’s webinar, there will be a questionnaire that pops up asking for comments about today’s presentation. We ask that you fill this out so we can improve future webinars to maximize their value to you.

1. Before we get started, an important disclaimer. You may read this slide in its entirety later when this presentation is posted on the EERE Exchange website, which we’ll give you a link for later. Basically, we include this slide to make sure you’re aware that the ultimate authority on how this funding opportunity is constructed and the rules for applying to it is the funding opportunity document posted on the EERE Exchange website. This webinar is meant to be a guide only.
2. We conducted a first webinar in November that covered the PVRD2 funding opportunity in general as well as the Letter of Intent and Concept Paper submissions. You can always refer back to those slides by downloading them from the EERE Exchange website. Today we will be covering the next steps in the application process, including the SIPS application for Topic 1, the Full Application for Topics 2 and 3, award negotiations, and how we implement active program management with successfully negotiated awards.
3. Here is just a brief reminder of where you can find information about the PVRD2 FOA and how you can ask questions. Of particular note to applicants should be the Frequently Asked Questions, or FAQ pages, shown here in the middle column. Questions may be submitted via the chat function in the webinar today or via email to the funding opportunity’s mailbox address – PVRD2@ee.doe.gov. If you ask questions through the chat function today, please submit them through the “Questions” interface. These will be collected after the webinar and the most relevant answers will be posted on the FAQ. Finally, always check EERE Exchange for any updated changes made to the FOA.
4. Before we get into details about the application process, here is an overview of the size and length of PVRD2 awards. All Topic 1 awards will last one year and range between 100,000 and 225,000 dollars. Awards for Topics 2 and 3 will range between 450,000 – 1.6 million dollars over 2 to 4 years. This was all discussed in more detail in the first webinar and more information can be found in the FOA document on EERE Exchange.
5. Let’s first talk about the Full Application process outlined in the red box. This process only applies for those submitting to Topic Areas 2 and 3 of the FOA, which we reviewed in the first webinar.

By now, you should have submitted your Letter of Intent and Concept Paper, shown on the left-hand side of the figure. Your Full Application will only be considered if you submitted both a compliant Letter of Intent and a compliant Concept Paper by their respective deadlines. Even if your Concept Paper submission receives a ‘Discourage’ notification, you are welcome to submit a Full Application. Let’s now explore the steps in the red box in detail.

1. After the deadline for submitting Full Applications has passed, we review all entries for completeness – this is the Eligibility Review. If an applicant has submitted an incomplete or otherwise non-compliant Full Application, the submission is deemed ineligible for review and the applicant is notified of this fact. Please see Section III.C of the FOA for more information about eligibility.

Otherwise, a group of merit reviewers will evaluate compliant Full Applications based upon the ideas presented, with all evaluations being based upon criteria that we’ll describe in more detail in a little bit. After the reviews are completed, the applicants receive written reviewer comments. Applicants may write replies to these comments and must submit them to Exchange, typically 3 days after receiving them. Note that these replies to comments are completely optional. Their purpose is to provide merit reviewers with details that may have been lacking in the Full Application or to clarify an idea that was not perfectly communicated. Ultimately, these replies are very important to ensure that an applicant’s proposed work is fully understood and appreciated by the merit reviewers.

The merit reviewers then meet in a group to discuss all of the Full Applications that were received – this is known as the Merit Review Panel. The merit reviewers make recommendations to DOE’s federal officials as to which submissions should be funded. DOE’s federal officials then discuss which projects have the most technical and programmatic merit.

Sometimes there are lingering questions remaining about applications after the Merit Review Panel has concluded. In this case, to ensure that all possible information regarding the proposed work is known prior to selecting awardees, DOE may hold pre-selection clarification meetings or calls with applicants. These meetings provide the final few details that DOE’s federal officials need to make their selections. Once selection decisions have been made, all applicants are notified regarding their selection status and negotiations begin regarding budgets and the specific work tasks to be done.

1. All Full Applications will be due by 5:00pm ET on March 3. All applicants must have submitted a compliant Letter of Intent and compliant Concept paper in order to be eligible to submit a Topic 2 or 3 Full Application. We also strongly encourage you to submit your application one or two days before the hard deadline in case any technical difficulties arise.

1. We’re moving now into the details of the Full Application materials for Topics 2 and 3, and we’d like to first emphasize a new component of the PVRD2 Full Application that wasn’t present in last year’s PVRD funding opportunity. As part of the Technical Volume for Topic 2 and 3 applications, we are asking for an estimate of the proposed technology’s impact on the levelized cost of electricity for solar, or LCOE. This analysis provides us with an additional resource to assess the potential impact of an application. Also, it gives applicants a chance to make their own case for the impact of their application. Overall, the process will ensure that all applicants have thought about how their proposed work will help progress toward the SunShot 2020 and 2030 goals of reduced LCOE.

This section in the Technical Volume will ask for a table listing the estimated changes in important cost parameters, shown here. This table should be filled out assuming that all milestones for the project were met and the proposed technology were scaled up. The section also asks for an explanation to defend the proposed changes. The more convincing the application is in defending the cost estimates, the more likely it is that the review panel will agree with the values provided.

1. Here is an example of a completed table to help give you an idea of what we’re looking for. Please note a couple important points. First, all estimates should start from a reference technology of your choice. The reference should have cost parameters that are fairly well known and it should be relevant to your application. Here, the reference is a p-type, mono-crystalline silicon cell with an aluminum back surface field.

Second, all input parameters are estimated as changes relative to this reference technology. For each parameter, you are required to enter a “high”, optimistic value with only a 10% chance that a better outcome could be achieved, along with a “low”, pessimistic value with a 90% chance that a better outcome would be achieved. These low and high values will define a normal distribution for each parameter that can be used for a simple LCOE calculation, which we’ll talk about in a couple slides.

Make sure you are careful of the sign for each change in parameter. For example, the first cost parameter is a **decrease** in module cost, so a **negative value** would actually correspond to an **increase in cost**. Therefore, the low value is negative 14 dollars per square meter, indicating an increase in costs, compared to the high parameter of negative 12 dollars per square meter. Going through the rest of the table, this example proposal would increase the rated module power by 18 Watts per square meter, decrease the degradation rate by 0.2 percent per year, and increase the annual energy yield by one percent. Feel free to mark certain parameters as not applicable or zero if they are not directly affected by the proposed work. Again, be sure to defend the numbers included in this table.

1. We realize that not all of you may feel comfortable or be familiar with calculating how the changes in cost parameters impact LCOE. Therefore, we have included an Excel spreadsheet on EERE Exchange that contains an LCOE Impact Estimate Tool to help you. As shown in this screenshot, the tool can be found under the ‘Required Application Documents’ section of the PVRD2 funding opportunity in Exchange. The link is titled ‘Background Spreadsheet for Levelized Cost of Energy Impact Estimates’ and is listed with the rest of the Full Application documents.

Also, a very important note is that this tools has been recently updated and a new version has been uploaded to Exchange as of February 1st. Please be sure to download the latest version of the spreadsheet tool before using it.

1. This tool allows you to set high and low cost parameters for a reference technology and then test how changing these parameters affects the probability of an LCOE cost reduction. The spreadsheet contains three examples to explore – silicon, thin film, and concentrated PV – but here we’ll look at silicon to show you how the tool works.

(click animation)

At the top of the tool, the orange-colored cells provide all information about the reference technology. You can use the pre-set cost parameters if the reference is relevant to your proposal, or you can create your own. The six quantitative values in row 4 correspond to the reference starting point of each cost parameter. Here, we are looking at a p-PERC monocrystalline silicon technology as a reference.

(click animation)

All the rows below this reference technology represent the estimated changes in the cost parameters due to the proposed technology. These parameters correspond to the same values that were listed in the table in the previous slides: for example, module cost reduction, additional module power, and decreased degradation rate. The green-colored cells indicate the pessimistic, 10th percentile values, and the yellow cells indicate the optimistic, 90th percentile values if all milestones were reached and the technology were to be scaled up.

(click animation)

Based on these estimated changes in cost parameters, a probability curve for LCOE reductions is calculated, shown on the right. This calculation assumes a normal distribution for all parameters, defined by the 10th and 90th percentile values. It also assumes a normal distribution of outputs. If you’re interested in the details, you can see all the formulas used to calculate the LCOE probability curve by clicking on the various cells below the graph after you download the spreadsheet.

The x-axis of the graph indicates the LCOE reduction and the y-axis indicates the probability of achieving that reduction or more as a result of the proposed project. There are two primary values of interest based on this graph, shown by the orange dots. The first dot, shown here at 70% on the y-axis, indicates the probability of some decrease in LCOE, no matter how small. The second orange dot indicates the LCOE reduction with a 10 percent probability, here about a 4% reduction. This is meant to be a measure of how well the project could do if it surprisingly exceeds expectations, with only a 10% chance of reaching this level of success.

Finally, let’s see what happens if I modify our input parameters. Let’s say there is a very optimistic chance that the proposed technology does not lead to any module cost reduction. In this case, I would change the value in the yellow cell to 0, as shown here.

(click animation)

1. All other parameters remain constant – only the optimistic module cost reduction value has increased to 0. Now take a look at the probability curve. Since there is a much wider range between the lower and higher values for this particular parameter, the standard deviation of the normal distribution has increased and therefore the probability curve has broadened slightly. In addition, there is now a higher probability of some LCOE cost reduction, just under 90%, indicated by the orange dot moving farther up the y-axis. Also, the optimistic LCOE reduction has increased to about 8%.

This example demonstrates the major uses of this tool and how you can test your expected changes in cost parameters to see how they impact LCOE. In addition, please read the summary tab in the spreadsheet to help understand the tool beyond what has been described in this webinar.

Finally, just a reminder that this funding opportunity does require cost analysis estimates to be submitted as part of the technical volume, but the spreadsheet tool provided on Exchange is entirely optional. It is only intended for any applicant who wants help determining how their proposed technologies could impact LCOE. We hope it helps applicants think more deeply about the potential impact of their proposals and how to reach probable LCOE cost reductions. In Appendix E, we provide detailed instructions and also list other links for resources about calculating LCOE impact.

1. OK, let’s now talk about all the documents necessary for the Full Application. The Full Application requires a host of forms that are all listed here, each of which is described in more detail in Section IV.E of the FOA. Note that not all of these documents are required in all cases. Some are only to be submitted if applicable, so please use your best discretion to decide what to send us. Note also that there is an optional template for the Technical Volume provided on the Exchange webpage for the PVRD2 funding opportunity that you can use. We strongly encourage applicants to utilize this optional template, as doing so will ensure that your submission contains all of the most pertinent information for our merit review process.

I’d like to point out that everything on this list will typically be submitted in PDF format, except for the Technical Volume, which should be a Word document, the Budget Justification, which should be a spreadsheet, and the Summary Slide, which should be a PowerPoint slide. Also, when making the Summary Slide, keep in mind that it will be used to communicate internally at DOE about your project as well as with the external merit reviewers. You should make sure that it is comprehensible to a technical individual that has no previous experience with your application.

1. The Technical Volume contains many different sections, such as the Technical Description and Technical Qualifications, which are all outlined in detail in Section IV.E.ii. However, we would like to provide more insight into constructing the work plan within the Workplan and Market Transformation Plan section.

EERE anticipates making awards that will run between 24 and 48 months depending on the submission. Project continuation will be contingent upon satisfactory performance and go/no-go decision reviews performed every budget period. At the go/no-go decision points, EERE will evaluate project performance, project schedule adherence, meeting milestone objectives, compliance with reporting requirements, and overall contribution to the program goals and objectives. As a result of this evaluation, EERE will make a determination to continue the project, re-direct the project, or discontinue funding the project. More information on go/no-go decisions can be found in Section VI.B.xiii of the FOA.

Based on this evaluation process, it’s important to construct the Workplan and Market Transformation Plan so that it includes a scope of work divided into performance periods that are separated by the go/no-go decision points. In addition, the work plan should include quantitative milestones and describe how the applicant will achieve these milestones. On the right is a copy of the example workplan structure found in Section IV.E.ii of the FOA. Please pay careful attention to this example when writing your Technical Volume.

We’ll talk more about milestones and go/no-go decision points later in the presentation when discussing award negotiations.

1. Let’s now discuss the evaluation criteria that will guide the review of PVRD2 Full Applications. These are the key areas in which merit reviewers will evaluate your application, so we would like to clearly outline the selection criteria. As you can see, there are three criteria for Full Applications and their weightings are all shown here. These criteria will be discussed in more detail in the next few slides. More information can be found in Section V.A.iii of the FOA.
2. The Technical Merit criterion focuses on two areas: Technical Merit and Innovation; and Impact of Technology Advancement.

**The Technical Merit and Innovation** will be evaluated based upon the extent to which the proposed technology or process is innovative; the degree to which the current state of the technology and the proposed advancement are clearly described; the extent to which the application specifically and convincingly demonstrates how the applicant will move the state of the art to the proposed advancement; and the sufficiency of technical detail in the application.

**The Impact of Technology Advancement** considers how the project supports the topic area objectives and target specifications and metrics; the impact on LCOE based on an LCOE Impact Estimate Analysis discussed already; and the impact of the project on advancing the state-of-the-art.

1. The Project Research and Market Transformation Plan criterion has four sub-criteria: the first three are Research Approach and Workplan; Identification of Technical Risks; and Baseline, Metrics, and Deliverables.

**The Research Approach and Workplan** sub-criterion considers the degree to which the approach and critical path have been clearly described and thoughtfully considered; and the degree to which the tasks are clear, detailed, timely, and reasonable, resulting in a high likelihood of success.

**The Identification of Technical Risks** sub-criterion considers the 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.

**The Baseline, Metrics, and Deliverables** sub-criterion evaluates the level of clarity in the definition of the baseline, metrics, and milestones; and the strength of the quantifiable metrics, milestones, and/or mid-point deliverables defined in the application, such that meaningful interim progress will be made.

1. Finally the **Market Transformation Plan** judges how well the application identifies target market, competitors, and distribution channels for the proposed technology along with known or perceived barriers to market penetration, including a mitigation plan. In addition, the comprehensiveness of the plan will be evaluated including areas such as product development, commercialization timeline, and financing.
2. The Team and Resources criterion evaluates the presence of entities within the project team that contribute an enabling ability to address the goals of the funding opportunity. These entities are different for each Topic Area and can be found in Section V.A.iii of the FOA – be sure that all necessary entities are included in the application. In addition, these criteria will evaluate the capability of the proposed team to address all aspects of the proposed work with a high probability of success; the degree to which the proposed team demonstrates the ability to facilitate and expedite further development and commercial deployment of the proposed technologies; the level of participation by project participants; and the reasonableness of the budget and spend plan for the proposed project and objectives.
3. After applicants have received written reviewer comments based on the previously listed evaluation criteria, they will be given the opportunity to reply to these reviewer comments as previously mentioned. Writing this reply is completely optional, but it is a valuable opportunity to support your application during the merit review process. Details on the content and form of the reply can be found in Section IV.F of the FOA. In general, separate evaluation criteria are not used to evaluate replies to reviewer comments, but rather they are considered an extension of the Full Application.

Two key requirements to keep in mind when crafting your replies are that 1) replies have a three-page limit, which includes Figures and Tables; and 2) extra material (such as pages beyond the limit) will be redacted or removed from the reply document and not provided to reviewers. The expected deadline for your reply to reviewer comments is **April 20 by 5pm ET**, although EERE reserves the right to change this deadline as needed to coordinate the funding opportunity schedule. Applicants will be notified of any change to this deadline if it occurs.

1. Now we will move to the SIPS application process, which shares many similarities with the Full Application process. However, we’d like to highlight the major differences here. As covered in the first webinar, the SIPS application only required a minimal concept paper submission that did not undergo a formal review. For those applicants that submitted a compliant Letter of Intent but did not click through to submit a minimal Concept Paper entry in Exchange, the FOA team has submitted this Concept Paper information for you. This submission just contains information you already included in the Letter of Intent along with dummy data for additional fields.

All SIPS applicants will also likely have received an email stating that they have received an ‘Encourage’ decision for this minimal Concept Paper. This is just an automatic response due to how Exchange works, so all SIPS applicants have received this message by default. The main take-home message here is that all SIPS applicants that submitted a compliant Letter of Intent are now eligible to now submit the full SIPS Application.

1. As shown in this flowchart, SIPS applications will undergo an eligibility review similar to Full Applications. If an applicant has submitted an incomplete or otherwise non-compliant SIPS Application, the submission is deemed ineligible for review and the applicant is notified of this fact. Please see Section III.C of the FOA for more information about eligibility.

Compliant SIPS Applications are then passed on to a group of merit reviewers that will read and evaluate them based upon criteria that we’ll show in a couple slides. An important difference between SIPS and Full Applications is that, for SIPS, there is no reply to reviewer comments. Instead, merit reviewers will directly meet to discuss all SIPS applications and make recommendations to DOE’s federal officials as to which submissions should be funded. DOE’s federal officials then discuss which projects have the most technical and programmatic merit. DOE may hold pre-selection clarification meetings or calls with applicants.

1. SIPS Applications will be due on the same day as Full Applications – March 3 by 5:00pm ET. Only applicants that have submitted a compliant Letter of Intent are eligible to submit a SIPS Application. Again, please try to give yourself 1-2 days ahead of the deadline to submit your application in case of any technical glitches.
2. Here is the list of forms required for the SIPS application. Please notice that this list is slightly different compared to the Full Application for Topics 2 and 3, so make sure you submit the correct documents based on the topic area of interest.

Similar to the Full Application, the Summary Slide is used to communicate internally at DOE about your project as well as with the external merit reviewers. You should make sure that it is comprehensible to a technical individual that has no previous experience with your application. Also, an optional SIPS Technical Volume template is available on EERE Exchange that we encourage you to use since it can help to make sure you include all important components of the application.

1. The workplan for a SIPS Technical Volume is important but will look slightly different compared to Full Applications. In particular, go/no-go decisions will not be included because SIPS awards only last one budget period, which is typically one year. In addition, the LCOE Impact Estimate is not a required section of the Technical Volume as it is for the Full Application. However, the workplan should still include a detailed description of the specific activities conducted over the life of the project that will lead to successful project goals. This plan should also provide appropriate milestones every quarter to demonstrate success in terms of quantifiable technical achievements rather than just completing a task.
2. The evaluation criteria topics and their weightings are the same for SIPS Applications, shown here, as for Full Applications. However, there are slight differences to the specific selection criteria that I would like to highlight next. More information can be found in Section V.A.ii of the FOA.
3. The Technical Merit criterion focuses on two areas: Technical Merit and Innovation; and Impact of Technology Advancement. All of these criteria are similar to the Full Application except for one. The impact on LCOE as calculated by the LCOE Impact Estimate Analysis will not be considered, since such an estimate is not required for a SIPS application. Feel free to return to these slides or refer to the FOA to read these criteria again in detail.
4. The Project Research criterion has three sub-criteria: Research Approach and Workplan; Identification of Technical Risks; and Baseline, Metrics, and Deliverables. The Market Transformation Plan sub-criterion for Full Applications does not apply to SIPS applications.
5. Finally, the Team and Resources criterion for the SIPS application is the same as that for the Full Application. Please feel free to review these slides at your leisure after they are posted on Exchange or refer to the FOA.
6. Now that we have reviewed the general information about SIPS and Full Applications, let’s talk about what happens if you are selected for award negotiation.
7. First things first: each applicant, unless you are an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from these requirements, is required to do the following in order to begin negotiating an award: be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) at [www.sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov/); provide a valid Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number; and continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which the applicant has an active Federal award or an application under consideration.

DOE may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time DOE is ready to make a Federal award, DOE may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Also, applicants must register in FedConnect to receive notification that an award has been executed by the EERE Contracting Officer and to obtain a copy of executed award documents. FedConnect is a portal used by the Department of Energy and further registration instructions can be found on that site. Finally, register at Grants.gov, if you haven’t already, to receive automatic updates about this FOA.

More information about these requirements can be found in section VI.B of the FOA and on the EERE webpage linked to on this slide.

1. One of the major aspects of negotiating an award is coming to agreement on what work will occur and in what time frame. This aspect of the negotiations process primarily involves discussion between the applicant team and Technical Managers or technical Points of Contact from DOE. The end result of this negotiations process is the Statement of Project Objectives, or SOPO. Let’s take a moment to dive into what a SOPO is.

The SOPO is the legally-binding work agreement between the DOE and the project performers. It is divided into distinct budget periods comprised of tasks and milestones and culminates in go/no-go decision points. These tasks, milestones, and decision points should have first been outlined in the workplan as part of the Technical Volume, as discussed earlier. Effectively, the SOPO is a slimmed-down version of the workplan, and it contains tasks and milestones that DOE and the applicant have agreed upon. A well-designed SOPO will adequately define the path of success for your project and should convey your goals all along that path. When thinking about how to define your project objectives, we have devised the following pneumonic as a guide: **SMART**, for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ggressive, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-bound. We also encourage you to consider this pneumonic when writing the workplan for your application.

1. Let’s dive into what we mean by SMART milestones. These are milestones that enable the applicant to demonstrate that they have: a mastery of the field and the current state-of-the-art; an awareness of the major challenges in that field; an understanding of the market and what will represent a ‘disruptive’ improvement; an ability to define aggressive success values, pursue efficiencies of effort, and implement quality control; and a method to compare the measured results to the pre-stated success values to come to a rigorous conclusion about the outcome.
2. Successful negotiation of a SOPO is one of the major determining factors in ultimately receiving an award. To stay on track at this stage, remember to place as much thought and effort on the project management, SOPO, and capabilities as is expended on the technical narrative. Also note that milestones and final deliverables should be in alignment with those presented in the technical narrative of the application.
3. In addition to the SOPO negotiation process, a DOE technical project officer and grants management specialist will work with you during these negotiations. Their role is to work with you on the following three negotiation areas: cost share, in which we will be working with you to assess whether the required cost share is in place with partners and that it fulfills the required amount; NEPA assessment, which ensures that the impacts of the project are evaluated as per NEPA requirements; and budget negotiations, wherein we will evaluate if all costs are a*llowable, allocable*, and r*easonable*. These negotiations will also confirm that the finalized budget is based on the staff time, equipment, supplies, contractual costs, and so on, that are required to complete the tasks and milestones in the SOPO.

A DOE contracting officer is the final signoff needed to finalize the award, once the work plan and these other items have been agreed upon between the applicant and DOE.

1. The default award instrument is a cooperative agreement, involving substantial federal involvement. It requires involvement in, and contribution to, the technical aspects necessary for the project’s accomplishment. Involvement may include collaboration, participation in the management of the project, and intervention in the agreed-upon activities. This management of activities occurs through the Statement Of Project Objectives (the SOPO) crafted in your application modified during award negotiations.
2. Before moving on to our final topic today, there are a few key take-aways we want to mention regarding negotiations. Remember that the DOE team will be involved in the structuring, planning, and execution of the award. To stay on track during this process, you should be prepared for DOE representatives to ask technically rigorous questions to clarify the details of your project and try to be open to some constructive criticism.
3. Imagine you have now finished your negotiations and your award is set to begin. Now the real fun begins! When the award is approved and executed by the DOE Contracting Officer, your organization will receive an Assistance Agreement through FedConnect.gov. Also, DOE usually announces the finalized awards through a press release. At this time, the SunShot Communications Team will contact your project manager or communications contact to discuss the announcement strategy.
4. Remember that it is very important that you stay in touch with our communications team to fill them in on important developments, press releases, successes, or announcements. You can also ask them for feedback on communication strategies or help you craft your success stories so they are easy to understand for the average American. By actively collaborating in the communications process, both you and DOE can ensure that proper credit is given whenever important breakthroughs occur in solar.
5. OK, we’d like to end the webinar today by discussing the Active Program Management process that DOE uses to manage active awards.
6. What is Active Program Management? At its core, APM is centered on accountability. It is a way for you and your project manager to review and demonstrate your progress and achievements throughout your award. Included in APM are: written quarterly reports; quarterly calls when you and your research team will present your progress; site visits where DOE representatives will visit your team and review your facilities and progress; written technical feedback provided by DOE after each quarterly call; being held accountable to the literature by framing your work in the context of what has been done and what is being reported as the state of the art; and technically rigorous continuation reviews wherein DOE will review your progress and your ability to stay on track to meet your stated milestones and Go/No-Go points.
7. Now that you have an idea of what APM entails, there are a number of ways in which you can stay on track and be a successful SunShot awardee. First of all, be proactive. Stay up-to-date on the literature. Implement any new findings into your work. Next, set and implement designs for experiments that maximize efficiency and effectiveness. Also, be forthcoming about challenges and failures, and present strategies to overcome them. No project will be successful 100% of the time, and DOE understands that. We want to help you be successful whenever possible, so we need to be open about any issues that may arise during the project’s execution. Finally, remember that the “terms and conditions” of your award document details how your award will operate and you should account properly for these conditions as the award progresses.
8. As many of you know, the Solar Energy Technologies Office is an applied research technology office, and we do not want to lose sight of our ultimate commercialization goals. SETO funds awards so that they may ultimately advance the technology or concept to ‘graduation’. Graduation in this context can mean commercialization of your work through licensing, collaboration, or other means. It can also mean forming a start-up based on your work that secures follow-on funding from VC’s, angel investors, or other funding sources. To this end, awardees must be proactive in identifying interested stakeholders and keep project managers informed of any developments for commercialization of the work being done in their projects. Don’t forget to be SMART! Capture concrete ‘terms’ from the industry stakeholders that, if achieved, would spark their interest. This is a great way to formulate a high-impact SOPO or proposal work plan.

As your project moves forward, be sure to keep DOE informed if you bring in industry sponsors or make progress on your path to commercialization after the project begins.

1. Ok, that was a lot of information but we hope it was helpful for you to plan for your SIPS or Full Application and beyond! Before you go, we’d like to emphasize the important application deadline for PVRD2. For all Topic Areas, SIPS and Full Applications are due on March 3 by 5:00pm ET. You must have submitted a compliant Letter of Intent to be eligible to submit either type of application. For Topic Areas 2 and 3, a compliant Concept Paper must have been submitted to be eligible to submit the Full Application.

1. Thank you for joining us today! We hope you feel prepared to submit an application and join our efforts to bring more solar into the world! Any questions about this funding opportunity should be submitted to PVRD2@ee.doe.gov and that answers to questions submitted via that mailbox or through the Questions bar in today’s webinar will be answered on the FAQ page for this funding opportunity on EERE Exchange.

Also, please take a moment when this webinar ends to answer the questions that will pop up. If you don’t have time to do so now, a link to the questions will be included in the follow-up email sent to all attendees of this webinar, so please keep an eye out for that. These questions are completely optional, so you may fill out as many or as few as you like. Thank you and have a wonderful day!