



**SOLAR POWERING AMERICA BY RECOGNIZING COMMUNITIES
(SPARC): NATIONAL SOLAR RECOGNITION/DESIGNATION
PROGRAM FOR SOLAR STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES**

SPARC@ee.doe.gov

**FOA Webinar
DE-FOA-0001241
2/18/2015**

Notice

- All applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully read the Funding Opportunity Announcement DE-FOA-0001241 (**“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 from EERE.
- If you believe there is an inconsistency, please email us at SPARC@ee.doe.gov

SOLAR POWERING AMERICA BY RECOGNIZING COMMUNITIES (SPARC):

Anticipated Schedule:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| FOA Issue Date: | February 5, 2015 |
| FOA Informational Webinar: | February 18, 2015 |
| Submission Deadline for Concept Papers: | March 5, 2015 |
| Submission Deadline for Full Applications: | April 27, 2015 |
| Expected Submission Deadline for Replies to Reviewer Comments: | June 2015 |
| Expected Date for EERE Selection Notifications: | August 2015 |
| Expected Timeframe for Award Negotiations: | September 2015 |

Agenda

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

PROBLEM

Market barriers such as a fractured policy landscape and red tape hinder solar energy market growth and deployment.



SOLUTION

Ready and recognize communities for leadership in improving local solar market conditions and deliver technical assistance and build a peer network of communities seeking to gain recognition for incremental efforts to boost their solar market conditions.



OUTCOME

A uniform policy landscape and healthy market that supports solar businesses, lowers costs to consumers, and increases solar deployment.





18,000 jurisdictions,
3,000 utilities,
50 states,
with different rules and regulations.

Solar America Cities (25 Cities)



Rooftop Solar Challenge I & II (300+ Communities)



SPARC



Strategically Scaling with SPARC

- Solar Market Roadmaps for the self-driven
- Building a peer network of solar market leaders
- Targeted TA to boost market potential

**1,000s of Communities
Ready & Recognized**

Topic Areas/Technical Areas of Interest

The FOA has two topic areas (A and B):

- **Topic A: Designation Program Administrator**

(1 award, 3 years, \$3M, 0% cost share required)

- *Establish and Administer the Designation*
- *Convene and Establish the Criteria Advisory Committee (CAC)*

- **Topic B: Technical Assistance Provider**

(1 award, 3 years, \$10M, 0% cost share required)

- *Create a robust, agile, and targeted technical assistance (TA) program to help communities reach national solar readiness goals and allow new market participants to reach crucial levels of recognition*

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.B of the FOA, including but not limited to :
- Local jurisdictions applying to receive a designation.
- Applications that propose detailed criteria for a designation. This FOA is seeking applicants to serve as a Designation Program Administrator that will convene a body to set specific criteria after the awards have been made. Therefore, EERE is NOT seeking specific designation criteria at this time and applicants that go beyond general descriptions of solar market maturity will be deemed non-compliant. Applicants should focus on how a Criteria Advisory Committee will be formed, and should not discuss what criteria will be required for a community to receive a designation.

Non-Responsive Applications (Continued)

- Applications that seek funding primarily to support existing programs or fund already-designed programs (e.g., established state-level climate/energy designation programs). However, applicants can propose innovative and novel iterations if responsive to parameters in Section I.B of this FOA and that are solar-specific and nationally applicable.
- Applications with a primary focus on energy technologies other than solar, including hydrogen and fuel cells, solar fuels, combined heat and power (CHP), wind energy, hydropower, bioenergy and biomass. Applications should be solar-focused, with goals related to lowering the cost of solar energy, even if acknowledging relationships to larger energy and climate goals and programs (e.g., Climate Action Champions).
- No purchase or installation of solar equipment will be funded with program funds. Engineering designs, environmental studies and other preparatory activities are not acceptable.

Non-Responsive Applications (Continued)

- Proposals by for-profit entities that aim to promote a specific solar energy hardware technology or product.
- Applications that have the development of software or website tools as a primary focus. Software may be developed to supplement technical assistance and analysis during the project period, but will not be considered as a primary goal.

Award Information

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Total Amount to be Awarded | \$13,000,000* |
| Average Award Amount | EERE anticipates making awards that range from \$3,000,000 to \$10,000,000 |
| Types of Funding Agreements | Cooperative Agreements, Grants, Technology Investment Agreements, Work Authorizations, and Interagency Agreements |
| Period of Performance | Up to 36 months |
| Cost Share Requirement | Cost Sharing Not Required; cost sharing is encouraged. |

*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

Cost sharing is encouraged, but not required under this FOA

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
- 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

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 |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Educational Institutions | 2 CFR Part 220 |
| State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments | 2 CFR Part 225 |
| Non-profit Organizations | 2 CFR Part 230 |
| For-profit Organizations | FAR Part 31 & 2 CFR Part 200.910 |

Allowable Cost Share

- Cash Contributions
 - May be provided by the Prime Recipient, Subrecipients, or a Third Party
- In-Kind Contributions
 - Can include, but are not limited to: personnel costs, indirect costs, facilities and administrative costs, rental value of buildings or equipment, and the value of a service, other resource, or third party in-kind contribution

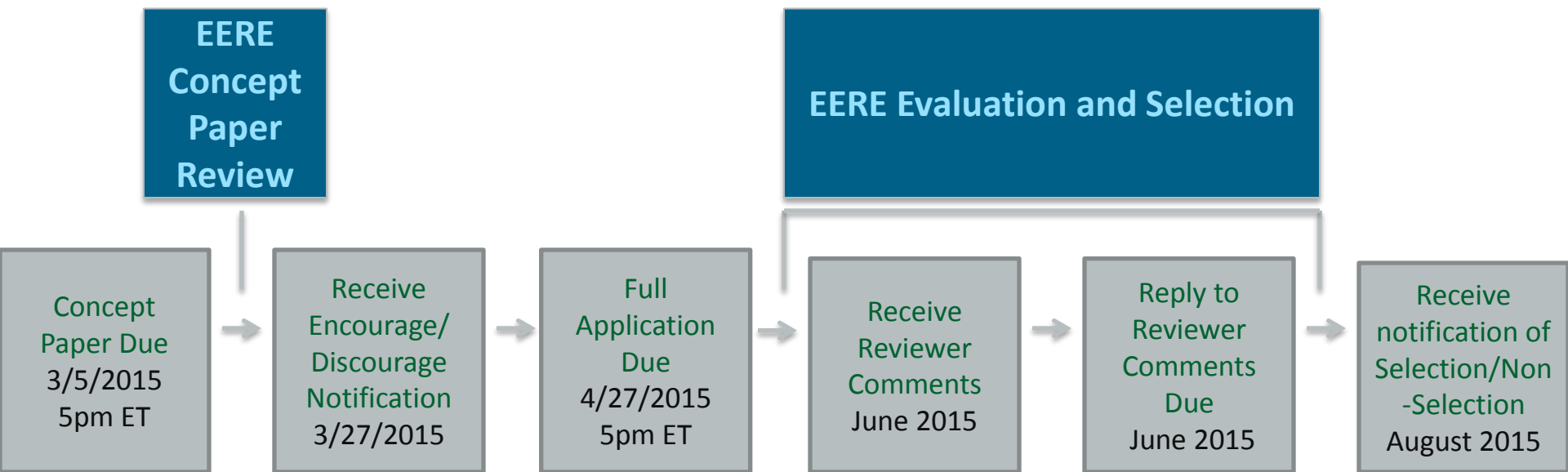
Unallowable Cost Share

- 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

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.6 of the FOA.

FOA Timeline



EERE anticipates making awards by September 2015

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
- EERE will not reimburse applicants for travel and other expenses relating to the Pre-Selection Interviews, nor will these costs be eligible for reimbursement as pre-award costs
- Participation in Pre-Selection Interviews with EERE does not signify that applicants have been selected for award negotiations

Concept Papers

- Applicants must submit a Concept Paper
 - Each Concept Paper must be limited to a single concept or technology
- The Concept Paper must include a technology description (See Section IV.C of the FOA)
 - **The project description is limited to 3 pages**
 - The Concept Paper can also include graphs, charts, or other data (**total limited to 5 pages, including cover page**)
- Concept Papers must be submitted by 3/5/2015, 5:00pm, ET, through EERE Exchange, and must comply with the content and form requirements in Section IV.C of the FOA
- EERE provides applicants with: (1) an “encouraged” or “discouraged” notification, and (2) the reviewer comments

Concept Paper Review

EERE evaluates the Concept Papers based on the following technical review criteria:

Criterion 1: Mission, Innovation, Impact (50%)

- This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:
- **Mission** – Extent to which the proposed project will enable the achievement of SunShot goals as pertains to reduction of soft costs and market barriers.
- **Innovation** - Extent to which the proposed project represents a significant improvement with respect to existing solutions.
- **Market Impact** – Extent to which the proposed project will result in quantifiable and measurably enhanced local solar markets.

Concept Paper Review Continued

EERE evaluates the Concept Papers based on the following technical review criteria:

Criterion 2: Project Feasibility and Team (50%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- **Team** - The extent to which the capability of the Principal Investigator(s) and the proposed team, including sub-recipients and partnerships, can address all aspects of the proposed project with a good chance of success, including, but not limited to, qualifications, relevant expertise, and time commitment of the individuals on the team.
- **Plan** - Adequacy, value, and reasonableness of the schedule and quality of the plan to achieve stated project outcomes, while identifying and addressing the expected barriers and risks.
- **Measurable goals** - Extent to which the proposed activities in the proposal are validated through explicitly stated and measurable goals.

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.
 - **EERE 159:** a detailed budget and spend plan for the project.
 - **Summary for Public Release**
 - **Summary Slide**
 - **Administrative Documents:** E.g., FFRDC Authorization (if applicable), Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, etc

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 | 25% |
| Workplan | 50% |
| Technical Qualifications and Resources | 15% |

Full Application Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must submit a Full Application by April 27, 2015 at 5pm ET
- 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's Eligible to Apply?

Eligible applicants for this FOA include:

1. Individuals
2. Domestic Entities
3. Foreign Entities
4. Incorporated Consortia
5. Unincorporated Consortia

For more detail about each eligible applicant, please see Section III.A of the FOA for eligibility requirements

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.

Multiple Applications

- Applicants may submit one (1) Concept Paper for each topic area.
- If applicants submit Concept Papers for both topic areas, EERE reviewers will encourage a maximum of one Concept for submission as a Full Application.
- While applicants may still submit a Full Application for each topic area, applicants are NOT eligible to eligible to receive awards under both topic areas.
- Therefore, applicants are encouraged to submit a Full Application for one concept only.

Merit Review and Selection Process (Full Applications)

- The Merit Review process consists of multiple phases that each include an initial eligibility review and a thorough content review
- Rigorous 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

Merit Review Criteria

Criterion 1: Knowledge, Innovation, and Impact (30%)

- **Market Knowledge** - Sufficiency of detail in the application to assess whether the applicant possesses familiarity with the *current solar marketplace and local/state-level solar market barriers*, as well as opportunities for market growth;
- **Innovation** - Extent to which the proposed project represents a *significant improvement* with respect to existing solutions for addressing solar market barriers;
- **Identifying Impact** – The *potential impact* of the project on advancing the solar marketplace and how the project supports the topic area objectives and target specifications and metrics.

Merit Review Criteria - Continued

Criterion 2: Workplan, Risk Identification, and Deliverables (40%)

- **Approach and Workplan** – degree to which the *approach* has been clearly described and thoughtfully considered and applicants provide a *clear path to the desired outcome*; degree to which the task descriptions are clear, detailed, timely, and reasonable, resulting in a high likelihood that the *proposed workplan will succeed* in meeting the project goals.
- **Identification of Risks and Mitigation Strategies** – thorough discussion and demonstrated *understanding of the key risk areas* involved in the proposed work, and the *quality of the mitigation strategies* to address them.
- **Metrics , Milestones, and Deliverables** – Extent to which the proposed tasks and subtask activities in the workplan are *baselined, tracked, and verified through milestones and deliverables* that are specific, measurable, aggressive (but attainable), realistic, and timely (i.e., not a report summarizing work that was done);
- **Market Transformation Plan** – Extent to which applicant has provided a viable and well-considered plan for *program sustainability and continued market transformation*, utilizing the resources and programs developed through this project, following the award period.

Merit Review Criteria - Continued

Criterion 3: Team Capabilities, Contributions, and Resources (30%)

- **Capabilities and Readiness:** The extent to which the *capability of the Principal Investigator(s) and the proposed team*, including sub-recipients and partnerships, can address all aspects of the proposed project with a good chance of success in advancing local solar markets, including, but not limited to, qualifications, relevant expertise, and time commitment of the individuals on the team; extent to which the final team required to execute this project is *fully in place* (e.g., are there any key members that are “to be hired at a later date?”);
- **Contributions and Commitments** - *Clarity, adequacy, and completeness of roles and contributions* of each team member in execution of the project, including *financial and demonstrated written support of partners and strength of letter(s) of commitment*;
- **Budget:** Reasonableness of the budget and spend plan for meeting objectives.

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 the due date indicated upon release of the comments (anticipated in June) 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. |

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, including proposed cost share, optimizes the use of available EERE funding to achieve programmatic objectives
 - The level of industry involvement and demonstrated ability to commercialize energy or related technologies
 - Technical, market, organizational, and environmental risks associated with the project
 - Whether the proposed project is likely to lead to increased employment and manufacturing in the United States
 - Whether 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 directly addresses EERE's statutory mission and strategic goals
 - The degree to which the proposed project impacts a geographically and demographically diverse area; and
 - The degree to which the proposed project enables new and expanding market segments.

Program Policy Factors

- The degree to which the proposed project complements other efforts to incentivize community action on climate mitigation and adaptation; and
- Whether the proposed project will advance the goals of the Climate Action Champion Initiative, as committed to by the designated Champion pursuant to its designation agreement. The Climate Action Champion Initiative goals include improving climate resilience and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Note: The Climate Action Champion initiative program policy factor is only applicable to (1) projects proposed by Climate Action Champions as designated under DOE's Request for Applications DE-FOA-0001241; (2) projects proposed by a member of a regional collaboration or consortium designated as a Champion and (3) projects proposed in a Climate Action Champion community where the applicant submits a letter from the Champion confirming the proposed project would further the Champion's goals under the Climate Action Champion Initiative.) If an applicant is seeking receive consideration under (3), the applicant must contact the applicable Champion to obtain a letter of support.

Registration Requirements

- To apply to this FOA, Applicants must register with and submit application materials through EERE Exchange: <https://eere-Exchange.energy.gov>
- 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 received an award under this FOA:

| Registration Requirement | Website |
|--------------------------|---|
| DUNS Number | http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform |
| SAM | https://www.sam.gov |
| FedConnect | https://www.fedconnect.net |
| Grants.gov | http://www.grants.gov |

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 Confirmation 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 SPARC@ee.doe.gov
 - SPARC, is a competitive solicitation and private discussions with DOE staff, while the announcement is open, are prohibited.
 - All questions regarding this FOA must be submitted through the email address provided in the FOA. All questions asked through this email will be answered through the EERE eXCHANGE system and will be available to all interested parties.
 - 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

Questions

- 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
- All questions asked during this presentation will be posted on EERE Exchange

Thank you!