



Rules

January 2024

Preface

The U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) Solutions for Lasting, Viable Energy Infrastructure (SOLVE IT) Prize will be governed by 15 U.S.C. §3719 and this Official Rules document. This is not a procurement under the Federal Acquisitions Regulations and will not result in a grant or cooperative agreement under 2 CFR 200. The Prize Administrator reserves the right to modify this Official Rules document if necessary and will publicly post any such notifications, as well as notify registered prize participants.

Date	Modification

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1 Executive Summary

The **Solutions for Lasting, Viable Energy Infrastructure Technologies (SOLVE IT) Prize** will empower communities to solve their energy-related challenges. Competitors will create plans that will ultimately allow them to develop clean energy projects. By supporting communities as they identify and implement innovative solutions in a way that addresses their unique needs and challenges, the SOLVE IT Prize aims to promote the commercialization of promising energy technologies that will lead to an equitable and just energy transition.

This prize seeks to award competitors with a demonstrated history of productive work with communities. Competitors will work collaboratively with stakeholders interested in community-scale (neighborhood-, town-, or city-scale) clean energy planning to engage their communities, build a network of support for clean energy or decarbonization projects, and develop plans for carrying these projects out.

DOE aims to enable innovative solutions for local energy-related challenges, promoting wider, more equitable technology uptake. The SOLVE IT Prize offers a total prize pool of up to \$5 million in cash prizes. Teams may win up to \$730,000 across three phases of the SOLVE IT prize.

Competitors will build capacity for and enable solutions to persistent energy-related challenges by determining how new clean energy or decarbonization technologies can meet the community's needs. Through this prize, competitors will catalyze long-term relationships and partnerships that empower communities to achieve their energy and decarbonization goals, ensure communities are prepared for project development, and reward communities that build a credible path toward the development of solutions for identified problems.

By the end of the prize, competitors should be poised to start or have begun project development, including environmental review, public notice and comment processes, analyses of potential sites, and execution of agreements with financiers, design-build engineers, construction firms, or other partners critical to project success.

Funding and resources provided in all phases of this prize will position competitors to take advantage of future opportunities for project development and will mobilize a network of communities that have interest in developing energy projects.

The SOLVE IT prize is guided by the principles of the Justice40 Initiative¹ and DOE's four core Community Benefits Plans policy priorities.² The main objectives of this prize include proactive engagement with a wide range of community and labor stakeholders and ensuring that economic and environmental benefits from clean energy investments flow to all Americans.

The SOLVE IT Prize is funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) through the Technology Commercialization Fund (TCF) and is administered by the American-Made Program. DOE's Office of Technology Transitions (OTT), Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED), and Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) have collaborated to launch the SOLVE IT Prize.

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>.

² These core priorities are investing in America's workforce; engaging communities and labor; advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; and implementing Justice 40. Learn more at <https://www.energy.gov/infrastructure/about-community-benefits-plans>.

1.1 SOLVE IT Prize Structure

The SOLVE IT Prize is structured into three phases. DOE anticipates offering cash prizes of \$80,000 each in Phase 1: Embark; \$150,000 each in Phase 2: Engage; and \$500,000 each in Phase 3: Establish.

In Phase 1: Embark, competitors will identify their community and the critical energy-related challenges impacting their community and articulate a clear plan to engage the stakeholders needed to find a lasting solution that works for the community. In Phase 2: Engage, Embark winners will engage their community stakeholders and compete to show that they have identified a clean energy or decarbonization project that addresses local energy challenges. Finally, in Phase 3: Establish, Engage winners will demonstrate their successful efforts to implement their clean energy or decarbonization project.

The table below outlines the total prizes DOE anticipates offering across the three phases:

Phase	Estimated Number of Winners	Prizes
Phase 1: Embark	25	\$80,000 each
Phase 2: Engage	10	\$150,000 each
Phase 3: Establish	3	\$500,000 each

1.2 Key Dates

- Visit [HeroX](#) for a list of deadlines and key dates.

1.3 Eligibility

All Phase Eligibility

The competition is open to individuals or entities that work collaboratively with communities to develop and carry out projects that benefit communities and reflect their priorities. Competitors should have knowledge and resources (or access to knowledge and resources) to promote clean energy projects in their communities. Eligible competitors include but are not limited to individuals, private entities (for-profits and nonprofits), consortia, academic institutions, labor unions, nongovernmental organizations, and nonfederal government entities (such as tribes, states, counties, and municipalities) in the United States, subject to the following requirements:

- An individual prize competitor (who is not competing as a member of a group) must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- A group of individuals competing as one team may win, provided that the online account holder of the submission is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Individuals competing as part of a team are eligible to participate if they are legally authorized to work in the United States.
- Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States.
- Academic institutions must be based in the United States.

Phase 1: Embark Eligibility

A single entity or individual may only submit one application as the lead competitor to this prize. Entities may participate as part of a team on multiple applications.

Phase 2: Engage Eligibility

Only Phase 1: Embark winners may compete in Phase 2: Engage.

Phase 3: Establish Eligibility

Only Phase 2: Engage winners may compete in Phase 3: Establish.

Ineligible Competitors

- DOE employees, employees of sponsoring organizations, members of their immediate families (e.g., spouses, children, siblings, or parents), and persons living in the same household as such persons, whether related, are not eligible to participate in the prize.
- Individuals who worked at DOE (federal employees or support service contractors) within 6 months prior to the submission deadline of any contest are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program.
- Federal entities and federal employees are not eligible to participate in any portion of the prize.
- DOE national laboratory employees cannot compete in the prize.
- Individuals participating in a foreign government talent recruitment program³ sponsored by a country of risk⁴ and teams that include such individuals are not eligible to compete.
- Entities owned by, controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of a government of a country of risk are not eligible to compete.
- Entities and individuals publicly banned from doing business with the U.S. government such as entities and individuals debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in Federal programs are not eligible to compete.

Eligibility Statement

As part of your submission to this prize program, you will be required to sign the following statement:

I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that the information contained in this submission will be relied on by the federal government to determine whether to issue a prize to the named competitor. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the Official Rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no

³ Foreign Government-Sponsored Talent Recruitment Program is defined as an effort directly or indirectly organized, managed, or funded by a foreign government, or a foreign government instrumentality or entity, to recruit science and technology professionals or students (regardless of citizenship or national origin, or whether having a full-time or part-time position). Some foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment programs operate with the intent to import or otherwise acquire from abroad, sometimes through illicit means, proprietary technology or software, unpublished data and methods, and intellectual property to further the military modernization goals and/or economic goals of a foreign government. Many, but not all, programs aim to incentivize the targeted individual to relocate physically to the foreign state for the above purpose. Some programs allow for or encourage continued employment at United States research facilities or receipt of federal research funds while concurrently working at and/or receiving compensation from a foreign institution, and some direct participants not to disclose their participation to U.S. entities. Compensation could take many forms including cash, research funding, complimentary foreign travel, honorific titles, career advancement opportunities, promised future compensation, or other types of remuneration or consideration, including in-kind compensation.

⁴ DOE has designated the following countries as foreign countries of risk: Iran, North Korea, Russia, and China. This list is subject to change.

misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the federal government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287, and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733 and 3801-3812.

1.4 Areas of Particular Interest

This prize will reward innovative clean energy solutions that address ongoing energy-related issues at the community level while providing economic, environmental, health, and other co-benefits to communities, specifically disadvantaged⁵, underserved⁶, or overburdened⁷ communities. Communities may choose from a range of energy-related challenges and identify solutions based on a variety of promising clean energy and decarbonization technologies. Technologies within the portfolios of DOE's OCED and EERE are eligible to compete in this prize and are listed below:

- Advanced materials and manufacturing technologies⁸
- Advanced nuclear reactors⁹
- Bioenergy¹⁰
- Building efficiency¹¹
- Carbon management¹²
- Clean hydrogen and fuel cells¹³
- Grid modernization¹⁴
- Geothermal energy¹⁵
- Industrial efficiency and decarbonization¹⁶
- Long-duration energy storage¹⁷

⁵ Disadvantaged communities are defined at the White House Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool: <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>.

⁶ Per Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, the term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive>.

⁷ Per the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice 2020 Glossary, overburdened communities are minority, low-income, tribal, or indigenous populations or geographic locations in the United States that potentially experience disproportionate environmental harms and risks as a result of greater vulnerability to environmental hazards, lack of opportunity for public participation, or other factors. The term describes situations where multiple factors, including both environmental and socio-economic stressors, may act cumulatively to affect health and the environment and contribute to persistent environmental health disparities. <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/ej-2020-glossary>.

⁸ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/ammto/advanced-materials-manufacturing-technologies-office> for more information.

⁹ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/oced/advanced-reactor-demonstration-projects-0> for more information.

¹⁰ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/bioenergy/bioenergy-technologies-office> for more information.

¹¹ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/buildings/building-technologies-office> for more information.

¹² Visit <https://www.energy.gov/oced/carbon-management-0> for more information.

¹³ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/fuelcells/hydrogen-and-fuel-cell-technologies-office> and <https://www.energy.gov/oced/regional-clean-hydrogen-hubs-0> for more information.

¹⁴ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/oced/distributed-energy-systems-demonstrations-program> and <https://www.energy.gov/gdo/grid-deployment-office> for more information.

¹⁵ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/node/832186> for more information.

¹⁶ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/iedo/industrial-efficiency-decarbonization-office> and <https://www.energy.gov/oced/industrial-demonstrations-program-0> for more information.

¹⁷ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/oced/long-duration-energy-storage-demonstrations-0> for more information.

- Solar energy¹⁸
- Vehicles¹⁹
- Water power²⁰
- Wind energy.²¹

While competitors are strongly encouraged to consider a range of potential technologies and a variety of solutions to find the best one for their communities' unique challenges, DOE is particularly interested in technically novel and innovative solutions. These may include but are not limited to first-of-a-kind demonstrations at a particular size or scale; innovative applications or approaches; and novel combinations of clean energy technologies. DOE is particularly interested in awarding projects that will benefit disadvantaged communities, especially when these projects will provide lasting economic and co-benefits. The degree to which a submission is likely to address all or a combination of these areas of interest is reflected in the scoring criteria (see sections 3.7, 4.7, and 5.7) and are among the factors the Judge may consider in selecting winners. Commercially available, off-the-shelf, or technologies already widely deployed in the market are unlikely to be competitive.

2 Background

2.1 Prize Background

The DOE Technology Commercialization Fund (TCF), administered by OTT, was established by Congress through the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPA05)²² and updated by the Energy Act of 2020 (EA 2020) to “promote promising energy technologies for commercial purposes.”²³ TCF is a primary component of DOE’s ongoing effort to commercialize cutting-edge energy technologies.²⁴

In November 2021, Congress passed into law the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act,²⁵ more commonly known as the BIL. The BIL appropriates more than \$62 billion to DOE.²⁶ Under BIL TCF, DOE pursues activities that broadly support the commercialization of promising energy technologies while simultaneously enhancing and improving American infrastructure, competitiveness, opportunity, and equity, and addressing the climate crisis. Working collaboratively across relevant program offices, OTT seeks to cultivate a broader innovation network around the BIL provision activities to enable faster replication and scaling of demonstration projects. To help achieve these aims, OTT, OCED, and EERE have developed the SOLVE IT Prize.

¹⁸ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/solar-energy-technologies-office> for more information.

¹⁹ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/vehicles/vehicle-technologies-office> for more information.

²⁰ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/water/water-power-technologies-office> for more information,

²¹ Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/wind/wind-energy-technologies-office> for more information.

²² Energy Policy Act of 2005, Public Law 109–58, 109th Cong. (August 8, 2005), Improved technology transfer of energy technologies, 42 U.S. Code § 16391 (a).

²³ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law 116–260, 116th Cong. (December 27, 2020), 134 Stat. 2597, Sec. 9003. <https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ260/PLAW-116publ260.pdf>.

²⁴ Learn more about the TCF at <https://www.energy.gov/technologytransitions/technology-commercialization-fund>.

²⁵ Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Public Law 117-58 (November 15, 2021).

²⁶ Learn more about the BIL and DOE: U.S. Department of Energy. 2021. “DOE Fact Sheet: The Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal Will Deliver For American Workers, Families and Usher in the Clean Energy Future.” <https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-fact-sheet-bipartisan-infrastructure-deal-will-deliver-american-workers-families-and-0>.

Communities across the country are faced with long-standing energy challenges. These include pollution from heavy industry and other sources, high energy costs, aging grid infrastructure, and more. Clean energy technologies²⁷ can help solve many of these challenges while providing other benefits, such as economic growth, workforce opportunities, improved public health, greater energy independence, and local backup power. However, many communities lack the resources and capacity to develop project action plans for a clean energy transition or proactively pursue beneficial opportunities, such as helpful partnerships.

Additionally, in August 2021, DOE held an Equitable Demonstration and Deployment Roundtable²⁸ to identify community-based challenges to equitable energy demonstration and deployment. The lack of resources and support for community involvement, as well as misalignment between program or technical priorities and community priorities, were identified as significant barriers to equitable demonstration and deployment. These barriers can lead to unequal distribution of clean energy benefits and opportunities and limit the number of demonstration and deployment opportunities for next-generation clean energy technologies.

2.2 Competitor Support

The SOLVE IT Prize is administered by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) through the American-Made Challenges program. This program includes the American-Made Network, which cultivates resources and builds connections that enhance, accelerate, and amplify competitors' efforts. The objective is to link competitors with the people, resources, financing, perspectives, and industry expertise necessary for long-term success.

The American-Made Network comprises the following elements:

1. **Prize and Network Administrator (NREL):** NREL, as the Administrator, helps competitors locate and leverage the vast array of national laboratory resources. NREL also connects elements of the network with the competitors, as described below.
2. **Power Connectors:** Power Connectors are entities who play a substantial role in the competition and receive funds to expand and amplify DOE and NREL's efforts. They are deeply involved with prize program execution, recruitment, and support. These organizations are contracted to perform a variety of tasks for specific prizes that advance program successes—extending the reach and improving the diversity and inclusivity of the American-Made Network overall.

Competitors are encouraged to leverage Power Connectors and the wider American-Made Network as part of their prize participation. The [HeroX platform](#) provides a space where parties interested in collaboration can find Power Connector support, as well as post information about themselves and learn about others who are also interested in competing in this contest. The Prize Administrator will also support additional teaming events and opportunities, directly and/or through the American-Made Network. Follow the [HeroX platform](#) for more information about teaming events and opportunities.

Community Clean Energy Project Analysis and Evaluation: As part of the SOLVE IT Prize program, the Prize Administrator will conduct an analysis and evaluation of best practices and lessons learned to promote more widely equitable and community-driven clean energy projects. Elements considered in this

²⁷ This prize seeks to incentivize clean energy demonstration and pilot projects within the missions of DOE's Offices of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (<https://www.energy.gov/eere/eere-technology-areas-and-offices>) and/or Clean Energy Demonstrations (<https://www.energy.gov/oced/portfolio>).

²⁸ [Equitable Demonstration and Deployment Roundtable Report \(nrel.gov\)](#).

evaluation may include but are not limited to the SOLVE IT Prize process, competitor deliverables, resulting outcomes, similar programs, relevant publications, and other community engagement efforts. The Prize Administrator and/or a subcontractor will lead this project, performing research, compiling data, and drafting outputs. Competitors will be asked to provide information about their experience and work as part of the prize and other relevant areas through calls and interviews. Participation by competitors is strongly encouraged. DOE believes that sharing lessons learned is critical to the long-term value and impact of this program.

3 Phase 1: Embark

3.1 Goal

To win Phase 1: Embark, organizations interested in addressing challenges related to clean energy or decarbonization in their communities will show the following:

- That they have identified a community and describe challenges facing that community that can be addressed by a technology solution within the areas of interest for this prize (see section 1.4).
- That they have or can assemble a team with the necessary experience and have a track record of successful community engagement.
- That they have a clear approach for engaging with this community.

Competitors will submit a concise narrative describing their experience working with communities and their history of successful community-based projects; the community they are working with and their relationship to that community; the energy-related challenge(s) in that community; and an achievable but robust plan for engaging with relevant stakeholders.

3.2 Prizes

An estimated 25 winners will be awarded \$80,000 each.

3.3 How to Enter

Visit [HeroX](#) and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the phase deadline.

3.4 Important Dates

Refer to the timeline on [HeroX](#) for relevant dates and deadlines.

3.5 What to Submit

A complete submission package for Phase 1: Embark should include the following items:

- Cover page
- Submission narrative
- Letters of support (optional)
- Submission summary slide (will be made public).

3.5.1 Cover Page Content

List basic information about your submission, including:

- Submission title
- Team name/your name
- Short description (1–3 sentences) of you/your team and the community
- List of team members (names, nine-digit ZIP codes, and links to professional profiles)
- Other partners (if any), brief descriptions, and nine-digit ZIP codes
- Competitor’s city, state, and nine-digit zip code.

3.5.2 Submission Summary Slide (Will Be Made Public)

Submit a public-facing, one-slide submission summary that introduces you and your team (if applicable), your community, and your energy-related challenge(s). Any text must be readable in a standard printed page and a conference room projection and should be in at least 14-pt font.

3.5.3 Submission Narrative

Submit a written narrative that describes the individual or team you have assembled, the energy challenges and community needs that you have identified, and the engagement plan you have crafted. Narratives may not exceed 2,000 words and may include up to five tables/figures ([see template for more details](#)). Suggested content for the narrative is below.

- Experience
 - Introduce yourself and member organizations/supporters, and shared mission, vision, and goals.
 - Demonstrate that you have experience working with communities. Include examples of successful participatory community initiatives, including how you worked with the community and the outcomes of this work.
 - Describe your track record with and commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, as well as environmental and energy justice, including how this commitment is currently or planned to be measured or tracked.
- Energy Challenges and Community Needs
 - Clearly define the community you are focusing on and describe your relationship to that community.
 - Describe the specific energy challenges, needs, or inequities facing this community.
 - Briefly describe potential solutions that might address these energy challenges.
 - Show how these possible solutions align with DOE’s areas of interest for this prize as described in Section 1.4: Areas of Particular Interest.
- Engagement Plan
 - Describe your approach for comprehensive, successful, and effective community engagement and how you plan to measure progress toward community engagement goals.
 - Describe the resources, including resources to help evaluate different technologies for various scenarios, that you will need to successfully engage with your community.
 - Describe any actions required to access or obtain these resources.

3.5.4 Letters of Support (Optional)

Attach one-page letters of support or other documentation from partners or other relevant entities that are critical to the success of your effort. Please upload all letters in a single PDF file.

3.6 Assessment

The Prize Administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures the competitors are eligible. The Prize Administrator then assigns eligible submissions to expert reviewers. The reviewers will include federal and nonfederal subject-matter representatives with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the competitor's submission package according to the criteria below. The scores from each reviewer will be averaged to produce a final score for the competing team/organization. This score will inform the Judge's decisions on prize awards. See Section A.14 for a list of factors the Judge may consider as part of the selection process.

Reviewers will assess submissions against the following criteria:

- **Criterion 1: Experience (40%)**
 - The competitor's mission and goals are clear and well-described.
 - The competitor has a demonstrated history of productive work with communities, including examples of successful participatory community-based initiatives.
 - The competitor has access to or can obtain the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience needed to lead discussions on a range of energy technologies.
 - The competitor demonstrates the ability to work with broad stakeholders to develop a shared vision and solution.
 - The competitor demonstrates a credible connection to and relationship with the community.
 - The competitor's proposed work will advance at least one of DOE's eight policy priorities²⁹ for Justice40 Initiative implementation.
- **Criterion 2: Energy Challenges and Community Needs (30%)**
 - The community identified in the submission is well-defined.
 - The team demonstrates a thorough understanding of the named community, including its energy challenges and needs, inequities facing the community, and opportunities to address these issues.
 - The competitor has clearly identified a challenge or challenges impacting the community and has considered how this might be addressed through innovative clean energy solutions as described in Section 1.4.
 - The submission shows how the identified challenge(s) pose significant constraints on the community's ability to pursue balanced and just economic development and/or severely impacts community well-being or health.
- **Criterion 3: Engagement Plan (30%)**
 - The competitor has described clear and specific next steps. These steps are reasonable and achievable with resources currently available to the competitor or that will be available after the Phase 1 award.
 - The competitor demonstrates a clear path to successfully develop, implement, and track progress on a clean energy project action plan.

²⁹ The eight policy priorities that guide DOE's implementation of Justice40: (1) Decrease energy burden in disadvantaged communities (DACs); (2) Decrease environmental exposure and burdens for DACs; (3) Increase parity in clean energy technology (e.g., solar, storage) access and adoption in DACs; (4) Increase access to low-cost capital in DACs; (5) Increase clean energy enterprise creation and contracting (minority business enterprise [MBE]/disadvantaged business enterprise [DBE]) in DACs; (6) Increase clean energy jobs, job pipeline, and job training for individuals from DACs; (7) Increase energy resiliency in DACs; and (8) Increase energy democracy in DACs. For more information, see <https://www.energy.gov/diversity/justice40-initiative>.

- The competitor has outlined a clear and robust plan to meaningfully engage local stakeholders in a manner that influences decisions.
- The competitor has included specific diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility goals and describes how progress toward these goals will be tracked. Examples could include fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment; supporting groups underrepresented in clean energy; advancing equity; and/or encouraging the inclusion of individuals from underrepresented groups and those facing systemic barriers to quality employment.

3.7 Interviews and Clarifying Questions

The Prize Administrator may decide to interview a subset of competitors. The interviews would be held prior to announcing the winners and would help clarify questions the reviewers may have. Participating in interviews is not required and interviews are not an indication of a competitor's likelihood to win. The Prize Administrator may also ask clarifying questions in writing to a subset of competitors.

3.8 Final Determination

DOE will designate a federal employee as the Judge before the final determination of the winners. Final determination of the winners by the Judge will consider the reviewers' feedback and scores, application of program policy factors, and the interview findings (if applicable).

3.9 Announcement

Approximately 45 days after the submission deadline, the Prize Administrator will notify the winners and request the necessary information to distribute the prizes. The Prize Administrator will then publicly announce the winners.

4 Phase 2: Engage

4.1 Goal

During this phase, winners from Phase 1: Embark will:

- Engage with their community stakeholders to develop the community's vision for their future clean energy or decarbonization project, in accordance with the Phase 1: Embark submission.
- Demonstrate the results of a comprehensive and innovative engagement effort that has identified community priorities.
- Identify a clean energy solution to address these priorities.

4.2 Prizes

An estimated 10 winners will be awarded \$150,000 each.

4.3 How to Enter

Go to [HeroX](#) and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the phase deadline.

4.4 Important Dates

Refer to the timeline on [HeroX](#) for relevant dates and deadlines.

4.5 What to Submit

A complete submission package for Phase 2: Engage should include the following items:

- Cover page
- Submission narrative
- Additional information (optional)
- Updated summary slide (will be made public).

4.5.1 Cover Page Content

List basic information about your submission, including:

- Submission title
- Team Name
- Short description of the results of your engagement efforts, including high-level metrics (number of engagements, summary of mechanisms, stakeholders engaged)
- Short summary of the clean energy or decarbonization project
- List of team members (names, nine-digit ZIP codes, and links to their professional online profiles)
- Other partners (if any), brief descriptions and nine-digit ZIP codes
- Competitor's city, state, and nine-digit ZIP code.

4.5.2 Updated Summary Slide (Will Be Made Public)

If applicable, update your public-facing, one-slide submission summary that introduces your team and community, summarizes the results of your engagement, describes the planned energy project, and explains how it addresses the community's energy challenges. Any text must be readable in a standard printed page and a conference room projection and should be in at least 14-pt font.

4.5.3 Submission Narrative

The competitor submits a narrative describing the community engagement effort, a list of community priorities, and a selected project. The narrative should not be more than 5,000 words in total and may include up to five tables/figures. Suggested content for the document is below:

- Briefly describe the team, highlighting key team members and changes since the team's Phase 1: Embark submission, including new partners.
- Summarize your community engagement effort, including metrics tracked to date.
- Provide a list of the community priorities identified through the engagement process to be addressed through clean energy or decarbonization planning and projects.
- List and describe solutions that can address the listed community priorities and energy challenges.
- Describe the single clean energy or decarbonization project being considered. Describe how the project addresses the community's challenges, meets the priorities of the community as heard in outreach efforts, is technically innovative, and is feasible to be carried out.

4.5.4 Additional Information (Optional)

Attach any additional information that demonstrates the success and strength of your engagement effort and proposed solutions. This may include materials that showcase the completed engagement and outreach, additional support for this endeavor, or commitment to solve challenges or find solutions with an energy project. These items may include but are not limited to:

- **Letters of Support or Commitment:** Up to 10 one-page letters of support or letters of commitment from the community, partners, and others actively engaged in the project. Please prioritize letters from entities critical to the success of your project and/or stakeholders that could represent opposition to the project. Please upload all letters of support or commitment as a single PDF document.
- **Media:** Any pictures, video link that can showcase the outreach efforts performed and the engagement with the community.
- **Stories:** Anecdotes of discussions, experiences, situations or other stories from the community.
- **Reports of Engagement Efforts:** Meeting summaries, analytics, etc.

Please upload all additional information as a single PDF document not more than 50 pages in total length.

4.6 Assessment

The Prize Administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures the teams are eligible. The Prize Administrator then assigns eligible submissions to expert reviewers. The reviewers will include federal and nonfederal subject-matter representatives with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the competitor's submission package according to the criteria below. The scores from each reviewer will be averaged to produce a final score for the competing team/organization. This score will inform the Judge's decisions on prize awards. See Section A.14 for a list of factors the Judge may consider as part of the selection process.

Reviewers will assess submissions against the following criteria:

- **Criterion 1: Community Engagement (40%)**
 - The team has successfully completed a robust community engagement initiative and clearly described the results, including metrics and measures tracked to date.
 - The engagement effort was comprehensive and actively involved the community. The community was well-represented, including stakeholders potentially opposed to the project, and the team employed a diverse and innovative range of engagement strategies.
 - The team has clearly articulated the identified community priorities. How community engagement informed these priorities is clear.
 - The team has demonstrated that they discussed several possible clean energy technology solutions, analyzing potential benefits and drawbacks.
 - The team has provided summarized community feedback on each potential solution, along with relevant future action items.
 - The competitor has demonstrated accountability for and action on specific and high-quality diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility goals.
 - The team has grown, bringing in additional decision makers, partners, or resources needed to make both this endeavor and any selected clean energy project successful.
- **Criterion 2: Alignment of Selected Energy Project With Community Needs and Priorities (60%)**
 - The team clearly has described one selected technically novel clean energy or decarbonization project that best addresses the community's challenges and priorities heard in outreach.
 - The selected project is novel, innovative, and unique.
 - The team has provided demonstrable evidence of how the community informed the project as well as of community buy-in, such as engagement documentation, letters of commitment, etc.

- The team has demonstrated how their proposed project can meaningfully address at least one of DOE’s eight policy priorities for Justice40 Initiative implementation.³⁰
- The project demonstrates a consideration of both the potential benefits and the possible negative outcomes for the community, especially disadvantaged communities and impacted tribes, that could result from the project. The team describes how it is mitigating negative outcomes and maximizing and equitably distributing benefits.
- The team demonstrated how, if successful, the project will make a positive economic and environmental impact on the community.

4.7 Interviews and Clarifying Questions

The Prize Administrator may decide to interview a subset of competitors. The interviews would be held prior to announcing the winners and would serve to help clarify questions the reviewers may have. Participating in interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of a competitor’s likelihood to win. The Prize Administrator may also ask clarifying questions in writing to a subset of competitors.

4.8 Final Determination

DOE will designate a federal employee as the Judge before the final determination of the winners. Final determination of the winners by the Judge will consider the reviewers’ feedback and scores, application of program policy factors, and the interview findings (if applicable).

4.9 Announcement

Approximately 45 days after the submission deadline, the Prize Administrator will notify the winners and request the necessary information to distribute the prizes. The Prize Administrator will then publicly announce the winners.

5 Phase 3: Establish

5.1 Goal

During this phase, winners of Phase 2: Engage will create Clean Energy Project Action Plans that clearly articulate a credible path forward to carrying out at least one specific, technically novel clean energy or decarbonization project. Winners will prove that they have at least one binding commitment in place to support project implementation and provide a clear and reasonable project plan (the Clean Energy Project Action Plan).

5.2 Prizes

An estimated three winners will be awarded \$500,000 each.

³⁰ The eight policy priorities that guide DOE’s implementation of Justice40: (1) Decrease energy burden in disadvantaged communities (DACs); (2) Decrease environmental exposure and burdens for DACs; (3) Increase parity in clean energy technology (e.g., solar, storage) access and adoption in DACs; (4) Increase access to low-cost capital in DACs; (5) Increase clean energy enterprise creation and contracting (MBE/DBE) in DACs; (6) Increase clean energy jobs, job pipeline, and job training for individuals from DACs; (7) Increase energy resiliency in DACs; and (8) Increase energy democracy in DACs. For more information, see <https://www.energy.gov/diversity/justice40-initiative>.

5.3 How to Enter

Go to [HeroX](#) and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the phase deadline.

5.4 Important Dates

Refer to the timeline on [HeroX](#) for relevant dates and deadlines.

5.5 What to Submit

A complete submission package for Phase 3: Establish should include the following items:

- Cover page
- Submission narrative
- A minimum of one binding commitment toward implementing the clean energy project
- Letters of support (optional)
- Clean Energy Project Action Plan
- Updated summary slide (will be made public).

5.5.1 Cover Page Content

List basic information about your submission, including:

- Submission title
- Team name
- Short description of the effort to date and overall objectives, including updated engagement metrics since Phase 2: Engage (number of engagements, summary of mechanisms, stakeholders engaged)
- List of team members (names, nine-digit ZIP codes, and links to their professional online profiles)
- Other partners (if any), brief descriptions and nine-digit ZIP codes
- Competitor's city, state, and nine-digit ZIP code.

5.5.2 Submission Summary Slide (Will Be Made Public)

Make updates to your public-facing, one-slide submission summary that introduces your team and community, describes the results of your engagement, describes the planned energy project, and describes the key points of the project action plan to complete the energy project. Any text must be readable in a standard printed page and a conference room projection and should be in at least 14-pt font.

5.5.3 Submission Narrative

The competitor submits a narrative describing the clean energy project action plan, deliverables that show a credible path forward to completing their energy project. The narrative should not be more than 6,000 words in total and may include up to five tables/figures. Suggested content for the document is below:

- Briefly describe updates to the project team, highlighting any changes since the team's Phase 2: Engage submission, including new partners (provide the total number of partners).
- Describe how the team has continued to engage with and remain accountable to the community throughout the development of the Clean Energy Project Action Plan, including any metrics or measures tracked to date.

- Demonstrate that your team has the support of the community. Describe and provide the number of formal project partners or commitments to the Clean Energy Project Action Plan.
- Provide a summary of the proposed clean energy or decarbonization project and progress to date, including how it is innovative and technically novel.
- Describe outreach efforts to potential clean energy project implementation partners, the results of these efforts, and any established partnerships (also see Section 5.6.4 below).
- Describe the key elements of the Clean Energy Project Action Plan, including:
 - The project leadership team responsible for overseeing the project’s implementation.
 - A project champion who will lead implementation efforts and will ensure its success.
 - The key action items outlined in the Clean Energy Project Action Plan, including responsible parties and timelines.
 - The clean energy project budget and financing plan.
 - The budget for the project’s ongoing operations.
 - The potential risks associated with the project and how these will be addressed or mitigated.
 - The community benefits associated with the project, including economic, workforce, environmental, health, or other benefits, as well as any drafted or adopted Community Benefits Plans.³¹
 - The action plan and clean energy project evaluation strategies, including planned metrics and measures to track.

5.5.4 Clean Energy Project Action Plan

Provide the full Clean Energy Project Action Plan as a single PDF document. The plan should describe how the team, working with the community, will implement a chosen clean energy project. The document will describe how the clean energy project is a solution to community challenges that meet the identified priorities of the community. It should describe the specific tasks and activities necessary to implement the project as well as the people, organizations, companies, and other stakeholders who will play a role. It should include:

- Energy project description
- Tasks
- Roles and responsibilities
- Timeline
- Financing
- Economics
- Required permits and approvals (federal, state, local)
- Community benefits
- Risks.

The Clean Energy Project Action Plan should not be more than 50 pages in total, including any appendices.

5.5.5 Commitment to Implement the Clean Energy Project

A minimum of one binding commitment to implement an innovative clean energy project is required as a part of the submission package. The document should demonstrate firm commitment to carrying out a

³¹ For more information about Community Benefits Plans, visit <https://www.energy.gov/infrastructure/about-community-benefits-plans>.

technically novel clean energy project in the near-term. Examples of commitment could include signed contracts, approved or in-process leasing or permitting applications, formally documented partnerships committing to the project, etc. Competitors should submit the strongest possible documentation to meet this requirement. The Judge may consider the likelihood that the proposed project will be completed, the potential impact to the proposed project, and/or the number of commitments secured in award determinations. If you obtain multiple commitments, submit all documents in a single PDF document.

5.5.6 Letters of Support

Attach up to 10 one-page letters of support in a single PDF document from partners or other relevant entities that are critical to the success of your project. Please only include letters from entities critical to the success of your project and/or stakeholders that could represent opposition to the project. Please upload all letters of support or commitment as a single PDF document.

5.6 Assessment

The Prize Administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures the teams are eligible. The Prize Administrator then assigns eligible submissions to expert reviewers. The reviewers will include federal and nonfederal subject-matter representatives with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the competitor's submission package according to the criteria below. The scores from each reviewer will be averaged to produce a final score for the competing team/organization. This score will inform the Judge's decisions on prize awards. See Section A.14 for a list of factors the Judge may consider as part of the selection process.

Reviewers will assess submissions against the following criteria:

- **Criterion 1: Strength of Energy Project Plan (30%)**
 - The team clearly describes the clean energy or decarbonization project.
 - The described action items are clear, comprehensive, and reasonable, presenting a credible path forward.
 - The team has identified a project champion who will lead implementation and be accountable to the project.
 - The team demonstrates that all relevant stakeholders, including impacted communities, tribes, and workers, participated in creating the action plan.
 - The described project leadership team is capable, diverse, and reflective of the community with resources in place to drive its execution.
 - Clear and measurable community benefits associated with the project, as well as any drafted or adopted Community Benefits Plans, are well described.
 - The project financial requirements and economics are sound and reasonable.
 - Roles for various project participants (e.g., key project team, community, local leadership, etc.) are clearly described and all key partners have demonstrated support for the project.
 - The team has clearly described how the community will be involved in carrying out the planned action items and energy project, including articulating the community role in the project and plans for ongoing engagement that includes measures to ensure accountability and transparency.
- **Criterion 2: Impact of Energy Project (30%)**
 - The proposed clean energy project presents a novel approach to solving the identified challenge(s) and priorities.

- The proposed clean energy project can provide far-reaching benefits for this technology/set of technologies/approach to solving this challenge (e.g., first-of-a-kind application, replicability, novel lessons learned)
- The competitor has described the impact of the project on the community, including environmental, economic, health, or other benefits.
- The proposed clean energy project will have a significant positive impact on this community that is unlikely to happen in the absence of winning this prize.
- The competitor has demonstrated how their proposed plan can meaningfully address at least one of DOE's eight policy priorities for Justice40 Initiative implementation.³²
- The team demonstrates consideration of the potential benefits and negative outcomes for the community, especially disadvantaged communities and impacted tribes, that could result from the project and describes how it is mitigating negative outcomes and maximizing and equitably distributing benefits.
- **Criterion 3: Implementation Commitments (40%)**
 - The project team has demonstrated strong proof of binding commitments to carry out the proposed project.
 - The path to project execution is clear and reasonable. The team presents a credible path forward for carrying out their proposed project.
 - The team has gained commitment from project stakeholders.
 - The team has identified areas where further support and/or types of people, expertise, or resources needed and presents a credible plan for how to obtain the necessary resources or expertise.

5.7 Interviews and Clarifying Questions

The Prize Administrator may decide to interview a subset of competitors. The interviews would be held prior to announcing the winners and would serve to help clarify questions the reviewers may have. Participating in interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of a competitor's likelihood to win. The Prize Administrator may also ask clarifying questions in writing to a subset of competitors.

5.8 Final Determination

DOE will designate a federal employee as the Judge before the final determination of the winners. Final determination of the winners by the Judge will consider the reviewers' feedback and scores and application of program policy factors.

5.9 Announcement

Approximately 60 days after the contest closes, the Prize Administrator will notify the winners and request the necessary information to distribute the prizes. The Prize Administrator will then publicly announce the winners.

³² The eight policy priorities that guide DOE's implementation of Justice40: (1) Decrease energy burden in disadvantaged communities (DACs); (2) Decrease environmental exposure and burdens for DACs; (3) Increase parity in clean energy technology (e.g., solar, storage) access and adoption in DACs; (4) Increase access to low-cost capital in DACs; (5) Increase clean energy enterprise creation and contracting (MBE/DBE) in DACs; (6) Increase clean energy jobs, job pipeline, and job training for individuals from DACs; (7) Increase energy resiliency in DACs; and (8) Increase energy democracy in DACs. For more information, see <https://www.energy.gov/diversity/justice40-initiative>.

Appendix A: Additional Terms and Conditions

A.1 Requirements

Your submission for the SOLVE IT Prize is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- You must post the final content of your submission or upload the submission form before the phase submission period closes. Late submissions or any other form of submission may be rejected.
- All submissions that you wish to protect from public disclosure must be marked according to the instructions in Section 10 of Appendix A (Section A.10). Unmarked or improperly marked submissions will be deemed to have been provided with unlimited rights and may be used in any manner and for any purpose whatsoever.
- You must include all the required elements in your submission. The Prize Administrator may disqualify your submission after an initial screening if you fail to provide all required submission elements. Competitors may be given an opportunity to rectify submission errors due to technical challenges.
- Your submission must be in English and in a format readable by Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. Scanned handwritten submissions will be disqualified.
- Submissions will be disqualified if they contain any matter that, in the sole discretion of DOE or NREL, is indecent, obscene, defamatory, libelous, and/or lacking in professionalism, or demonstrates a lack of respect for people or life on this planet.
- If you click "Accept" on the [HeroX](#) platform and proceed to register for any of the prizes described in this document, these rules will form a valid and binding agreement between you and DOE and are in addition to the existing [HeroX](#) Terms of Use for all purposes relating to these contests. You should print and keep a copy of these rules. These provisions only apply to the prize described here and no other prize on the [HeroX](#) platform or anywhere else.
- The Prize Administrator, when feasible, may give competitors an opportunity to fix nonsubstantive mistakes or errors in their submission packages.
- As part of your submission to this prize, you will be required to sign the following statement:

I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that the information contained in this submission will be relied on by the federal government to determine whether to issue a prize to the named competitor. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the Official Rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the federal government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287, and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733 and 3801-3812.

A.2 Verification for Payments

The Prize Administrator will verify the identity and role of all competitors before distributing any prizes. Receiving a prize payment is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements contained herein. The Prize Administrator will notify the winning competitors using provided email contact information for the individual or entity that was responsible for the submission. Each competitor will be required to sign and return to the Prize Administrator, within 30 days of the date on the notice, a completed NREL Request for

ACH Banking Information form and a completed W9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>). In the sole discretion of the Prize Administrator, a winning competitor will be disqualified from the competition and receive no prize funds if: (i) the person/entity does not respond to notifications; (ii) the person/entity fails to sign and return the required documentation within the required time period; (iii) the notification is returned as undeliverable; and (iv) the submission or person/entity is disqualified for any other reason.

In the event of a dispute as to any registration, the authorized account holder of the email address used to register will be deemed to be the competitor. The "authorized account holder" is the natural person or legal entity assigned an email address by an internet access provider, online service provider, or other organization responsible for assigning email addresses for the domain associated with the submitted address. All competitors may be required to show proof of being the authorized account holder.

A.3 Teams and Single-Entity Awards

The Prize Administrator will award a single dollar amount to the designated primary submitter, whether consisting of a single or multiple entities. The primary submitter is solely responsible for allocating any prize funds among its member competitors or teammates as they deem appropriate. The Prize Administrator will not arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters or disputes between team members or competitors.

A.4 Submission Rights

By making a submission and consenting to the rules of the contest, a competitor is granting to DOE, the Prize Administrator, and any other third parties supporting DOE in the contest a license to display publicly and use the parts of the submission that are designated as "public" for government purposes. This license includes posting or linking to the public portions of the submission on the Prize Administrator or [HeroX](#) applications, including the contest website, DOE websites, and partner websites, and the inclusion of the submission in any other media worldwide. The submission may be viewed by DOE, Prize Administrator, and judges and reviewers for purposes of the contests, including but not limited to screening and evaluation purposes. The Prize Administrator and any third parties acting on their behalf will also have the right to publicize competitors' names and, as applicable, the names of competitors' team members and organization that participated in the submission on the contest website, indefinitely.

By entering, the competitor represents and warrants that:

1. The competitor's entire submission is an original work by the competitor and the competitor has not included third-party content (such as writing, text, graphics, artwork, logos, photographs, likeness of any third party, musical recordings, clips of videos, television programs, or motion pictures) in or in connection with the submission, unless (i) otherwise requested by the Prize Administrator and/or disclosed by the competitor in the submission, and (ii) competitor has either obtained the rights to use such third-party content or the content of the submission is considered in the public domain without any limitations on use.
2. Unless otherwise disclosed in the submission, the use thereof by Prize Administrator, or the exercise by Prize Administrator of any of the rights granted by the competitor under these rules, does not and will not infringe or violate any rights of any third party or entity, including, without limitation, patent, copyright, trademark, trade secret, defamation, privacy, publicity, false light, misappropriation, intentional or negligent infliction of emotional distress, confidentiality, or any contractual or other rights.
3. All persons who were engaged by the competitor to work on the submission or who appear in the submission in any manner have:

- a. Given the competitor their express written consent to submit the submission for exhibition and other exploitation in any manner and in any and all media, whether now existing or hereafter discovered, throughout the world.
- b. Provided written permission to include their name, image, or pictures in or with the submission (or, if a minor who is not competitor's child, competitor must have the permission of the minor's parent or legal guardian) and the competitor may be asked by the Prize Administrator to provide permission in writing.
- c. Not been and are not currently under any union or guild agreement that results in any ongoing obligations resulting from the use, exhibition, or other exploitation of the submission.

A.5 Copyright

Each competitor represents and warrants that the competitor is the sole author and copyright owner of the submission; that the submission is an original work of the competitor or that the competitor has acquired sufficient rights to use and to authorize others, including DOE, to use the submission, as specified throughout the rules; that the submission does not infringe upon any copyright or any other third-party rights of which the competitor is aware; and that the submission is free of malware.

A.6 Contest Subject to Applicable Law

All contests are subject to all applicable federal laws and regulations. Participation constitutes each participant's full and unconditional agreement to these Official Rules and administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest. This notice is not an obligation of funds; the final award is contingent upon the availability of appropriations.

A.7 Resolution of Disputes

DOE is solely responsible for administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest.

Neither DOE nor the Prize Administrator will arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters between team members or among competitors.

A.8 Publicity

The winners of these prizes (collectively, "winners") will be featured on DOE and NREL websites.

Except where prohibited, participation in the contest constitutes each winner's consent to DOE's and its agents' use of each winner's name, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions, and/or hometown and state information for promotional purposes through any form of media worldwide, without further permission, payment, or consideration.

A.9 Liability

Upon registration, all participants agree to assume any and all risks of injury or loss in connection with or in any way arising from participation in this contest. Upon registration, except in the case of willful misconduct, all participants agree to and, thereby, do waive and release any and all claims or causes of action against the federal government and its officers, employees, and agents for any and all injury and damage of any nature whatsoever (whether existing or thereafter arising, whether direct, indirect, or consequential, and whether foreseeable or not), arising from their participation in the contest, whether the claim or cause of action arises under contract or tort.

In accordance with the delegation of authority to run this contest delegated to the Judge responsible for this prize, the Judge has determined that no liability insurance naming DOE as an insured will be required of competitors to compete in this competition per 15 U.S.C. § 3719(i)(2). Competitors should assess the risks associated with their proposed activities and adequately insure themselves against possible losses.

A.10 Records Retention and Freedom of Information Act

All materials submitted to DOE as part of a submission become DOE records and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. The following applies only to portions of the submission not designated as public information in the instructions for submission. If a submission includes trade secrets or information that is commercial or financial, or information that is confidential or privileged, it is furnished to the government in confidence with the understanding that the information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation of the application. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, DOE will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for review of the application or as otherwise authorized by law. This restriction does not limit the government's right to use the information if it is obtained from another source.

Submissions containing confidential, proprietary, or privileged information must be marked as described below. Failure to comply with these marking requirements may result in the disclosure of the unmarked information under the Freedom of Information Act or otherwise. The U.S. government is not liable for the disclosure or use of unmarked information and may use or disclose such information for any purpose.

The submission must be marked as follows and identify the specific pages containing trade secrets, confidential, proprietary, or privileged information: "Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data: Pages [list applicable pages] of this document may contain trade secrets, confidential, proprietary, or privileged information that is exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes. [End of Notice]"

The header and footer of every page that contains confidential, proprietary, or privileged information must be marked as follows: "Contains Trade Secrets, Confidential, Proprietary, or Privileged Information Exempt from Public Disclosure." In addition, each line or paragraph containing proprietary, privileged, or trade secret information must be clearly marked with double brackets.

Competitors will be notified of any Freedom of Information Act requests for their submissions in accordance with 29 C.F.R. § 70.26. Competitors may then have the opportunity to review materials and work with a Freedom of Information Act representative prior to the release of materials. DOE does intend to keep all submission materials private except for those materials designated as "will be made public."

A.11 Privacy

If you choose to provide [HeroX](#) with personal information by registering or completing the submission package through the contest website, you understand that such information will be transmitted to DOE and may be kept in a system of records. Such information will be used only to respond to you in matters regarding your submission and/or the contest unless you choose to receive updates or notifications about other contests or programs from DOE on an opt-in basis. DOE and NREL are not collecting any information for commercial marketing.

A.12 Cybersecurity Consideration

America's safety and well-being depends on cybersecurity. It is critical that cybersecurity considerations are embedded in BIL-funded systems and technologies to ensure a secure, reliable, and resilient energy future. BIL Section 40126 provides a framework for ensuring that DOE's investment in energy sector research and infrastructure is secure and resilient from cybersecurity threats. Competitors should carefully consider and include in their plans actions to mitigate risks and threats related to data integrity, confidentiality where appropriate, and availability. DOE recommends using open guidance and standards such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Cybersecurity Framework and the DOE Cybersecurity Capability Maturity Model.

A.13 General Conditions

DOE reserves the right to cancel, suspend, and/or modify the prize, or any part of it, at any time. If any fraud, technical failures, or any other factor beyond DOE's reasonable control impairs the integrity or proper functioning of the prize, as determined by DOE in its sole discretion, DOE may cancel the prize. Any performance toward prize goals is conducted entirely at the risk of the competitor, and DOE shall not compensate any competitors for any activities performed in furtherance of this prize.

Although DOE may indicate that it will select up to several winners for each prize, DOE reserves the right to only select competitors that are likely to achieve the goals of the program. If, in DOE's determination, no competitors are likely to achieve the goals of the program, DOE will select no competitors to be winners and will award no prize money.

DOE may conduct a risk review, using Government resources, of the competitor and project personnel for potential risks of foreign interference. The outcomes of the risk review may result in the submission being eliminated from the prize competition. This risk review, and potential elimination, can occur at any time during the prize competition. An elimination based on a risk review is not appealable.

A.14 Program Policy Factors

While the scores of the expert reviewers will be carefully considered, it is the role of the prize Judge to maximize the impact of prize funds. Some factors outside the control of competitors and beyond the independent expert reviewer scope of review may need to be considered to accomplish this goal. The following is a list of such factors. In addition to the reviewers' scores, the below program policy factors may be considered in determining winners:

- The degree to which the submission supports or aligns with program goals.
- The degree to which the submission promotes quality employment, equitable economic development, and/or other community benefits within disadvantaged communities.
- The degree to which the submission contributes to the Justice40 Initiative.
- Likelihood that the proposed plan will substantially benefit communities categorized as disadvantaged communities.³³
- Whether the proposed plan will support and/or includes representation from minority business enterprises; minority-, women-, or veteran-owned businesses; and minority serving institutions.
- Whether the proposed plan will involve operations in economically distressed areas.
- Geographic diversity and potential economic impact of projects.
- Whether the submission will result in new initiatives, efforts, or activities not previously underway.

³³ Disadvantaged communities are defined at the White House Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool: <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>.

- Whether the use of additional DOE funds and provided resources are non-duplicative and compatible with the stated goals of this program and the DOE mission generally.
- The degree to which the submission exhibits technological or programmatic diversity when compared to the existing DOE project portfolio and other competitors.
- The degree to which the submission operates in partnership with tribal energy development organizations, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and/or substantially benefits tribes or tribal communities.
- The degree to which the submission will accelerate transformational technological, financial, or workforce advances in areas that industry by itself is not likely to undertake because of technical or financial uncertainty.
- The degree to which the submission supports complementary DOE-funded efforts or projects, which, when taken together, will best achieve the goals and objectives of DOE.
- The degree to which the submission expands DOE's funding to new competitors and recipients who have not been supported by DOE in the past.
- The degree to which the submission enables new and expanding market segments.
- Whether the project promotes increased coordination with nongovernmental entities toward enabling a just and equitable clean energy economy in their region and/or community.

A.15 National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

This prize is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq.). NEPA requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making processes by considering the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions. For additional background on NEPA, see DOE's NEPA website at <http://nepa.energy.gov/>.

While NEPA compliance is a federal agency responsibility and the ultimate decisions remain with the federal agency, all participants in the Prize will be required to assist in the timely and effective completion of the NEPA process in the manner most pertinent to their participation in the prize competition. Participants may be asked to provide DOE with information on their planned activities such that DOE can conduct a meaningful evaluation of the potential environmental impacts.

A.16 Return of Funds

As a condition of receiving a prize, competitors agree that if the prize was made based on fraudulent or inaccurate information provided by the competitor to DOE, DOE has the right to demand that any prize funds or the value of other non-cash prizes be returned to the government.

ALL DECISIONS BY DOE ARE FINAL AND BINDING IN ALL MATTERS RELATED TO THE PRIZE.