

# AMERICAN **MADE**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



## Official Rules **American-Made Upskill Prize**

For the Solar Manufacturing Workforce

March 2024

# Preface

The U.S. Department of Energy's American-Made Upskill Prize for the Solar Manufacturing Workforce 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 Code of Federal Regulations 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.

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# 1 Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) is launching the \$5-million American-Made Upskill Prize for the Solar Manufacturing Workforce (Upskill Prize) to accelerate the historic expansion of the U.S. solar module manufacturing workforce and equip workers with the skills necessary to revitalize the domestic solar manufacturing supply chain. As the PV module supply chain is scaling dramatically from a relatively small base, this prize will address critical workforce needs.

Teams participating in the Upskill Prize will propose comprehensive workforce training plans that are composed of either or both:

- **New Worker Training:** Develop and propose plans to train new workers with the skills they need to be successful in the solar manufacturing industry, particularly at new or expanding manufacturing facilities.
- **Incumbent Worker Training:** Develop and propose plans to train incumbent (i.e., existing) workers with new skills needed to support the growth of solar manufacturing.

Successful submissions will support quality jobs<sup>1</sup> and skill sets that can be utilized for career growth and various opportunities within the solar manufacturing industry. The prize incentivizes partnerships between U.S. manufacturers and training organizations, aiming to attract new individuals, especially from lower-income and disadvantaged communities, to careers in solar manufacturing with job-ready training programs.

This prize is intended to supplement, not replace, manufacturer workforce training plans and budgets. See Box 1 for example submissions.

Teams may be led by either a U.S.-based manufacturing organization or a U.S.-based training organization (such as a community college, technical school, employment training center, joint apprenticeship or labor-management committee, community-based organization, etc.).

Submissions will be accepted and awarded on a 4–6-month rolling basis (as described in [Section 1.2: Key Dates](#)). Teams may submit one submission per deadline and are allowed to apply for multiple deadlines in order to win more than once. The purpose of allowing ongoing submissions is

## Box 1. Team Partnership Examples

1. A U.S.-based manufacturer (team lead) is building a new facility to make solar cells and needs to recruit and train new operators for the factory floor. The manufacturer leads the recruitment effort and partners with a U.S.-based community college (team member) to train new hires in a variety of skills to prepare them to work in a production environment. The manufacturer and community college share the prize payment.
2. A U.S.-based university (team lead) has an existing short course or certification for manufacturing or solar technology and has partnered with a U.S.-based manufacturer (team member) to offer the course to upskill their current employees. The university and manufacturer share the prize payment, with the majority of the funds going to the university.
3. A U.S.-based manufacturer (team lead) has an existing solar glass facility that is scaling up production and needs to recruit and train new and current workers to meet demand. The manufacturer partners with an employment training center (team partner) to provide a new-hire certification program. The manufacturer also provides employees with specialized equipment training hosted by the manufacturing equipment vendor (team partner) to upskill current workers. All three organizations share the prize payment.

<sup>1</sup> [Job Quality Check List | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

to give teams time to build partnerships, demonstrate progress, develop new training programs, and support capacity expansions at existing or new locations.

Teams are allowed to split their prize payments between up to three organizations if selected as a winner (split does not have to be equal).

## 1.1 Prizes

The Upskill Prize offers a total prize pool of \$5,000,000 in cash. Winning teams will receive up to \$500,000 each in cash in support of their submitted comprehensive workforce training plans.

Teams may apply and win more than once.

## 1.2 Key Dates

Submissions will be accepted and awarded over multiple rounds on an anticipated 4–6-month rolling basis. Key dates for the prize, including the open and close submission dates for each round, will be posted and updated regularly on the HeroX platform: <https://www.herox.com/upskillprize>

## 1.3 Eligibility and Competitors

Only submissions relevant to the technical areas laid out in [Section 2.3](#) of this document will be considered for an award. The prize administrator has the right to refuse any submission for incompleteness or unresponsiveness to the technical topic areas.

The competition is open only to the following:

- Private entities (for-profits and nonprofits)
- Nonfederal government entities such as states, counties, tribes, and municipalities
- Academic institutions.

Participants are subject to the following requirements:

- All teams must be led by either a U.S.-based PV manufacturer or a U.S.-based training organization.
  - A **U.S.-based PV manufacturer** is a private entity incorporated in the United States that operates in the solar PV module supply chain, including all upstream components, like polysilicon, ingot, wafer, cell, and module, as well as glass and other module components. Given that the domestic PV module industry is expanding dramatically from a small, active base, there is a clear need to support recruitment and specialized training. Balance-of-systems manufacturers are not eligible for this prize, as they can leverage workforce skills developed in other industries (e.g., electrical, structural) and have a stronger ability to scale.
  - A **U.S.-based training organization** is a public or private entity based in the United States that provides education and training opportunities to the current and future solar manufacturing workforce. Examples include but are not limited to community colleges, trade schools, employment training centers, community-based organizations, and joint apprenticeship or labor-management committees.
- Teams may partner with **non-U.S.-based training organizations**; however, payment must be made to a U.S.-based PV manufacturer and/or U.S.-based training organization.
- 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.

- 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 or not 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.
- 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.
- Individuals participating in a foreign government talent recruitment program<sup>2</sup> sponsored by a country of risk<sup>3</sup> 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.
- To be eligible, an individual authorized to represent the competitor team must agree to and sign the following statement upon registration with HeroX:

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.

The HeroX platform provides a space where parties interested in collaboration can post information about themselves and learn about others who are also interested in competing in this contest.

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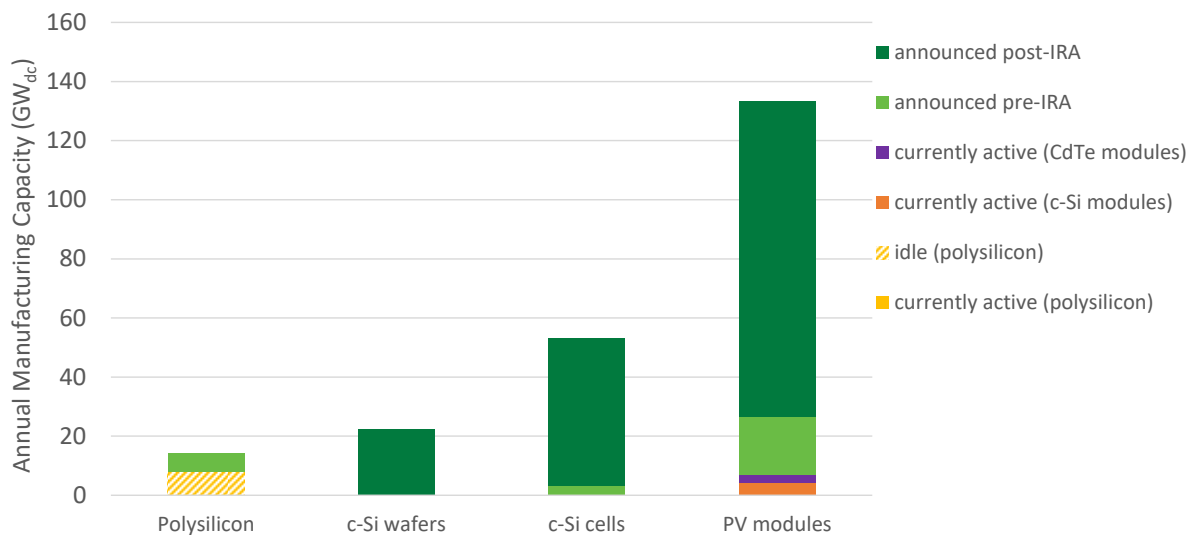
<sup>2</sup> A foreign government sponsored talent recruitment program is defined as an effort directly or indirectly organized, managed, or funded by a foreign government, or a foreign government instrumentality or entity, to recruit science and technology professionals or students (regardless of citizenship 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 U.S. 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.

<sup>3</sup> DOE has designated the following countries as foreign countries of risk: Iran, North Korea, Russia, and China. This list is subject to change.

# 2 Background

## 2.1 Prize Background

On August 16, 2022, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the most significant action on clean energy and climate change mitigation in U.S. history. The energy and climate provisions in the bill are poised to stimulate a new age for American solar manufacturing, with significant investments anticipated across the entire solar supply chain. Since the IRA was passed, there have been numerous announcements across the solar PV supply chain of planned domestic manufacturing capacity additions, including approximately 104 GW of module manufacturing and 140 GW for other PV supply chain segments, representing more than \$14 billion of total investment. Further information on active manufacturing operations can be found using SETO's Solar Manufacturing Map.<sup>4</sup>



Solar manufacturing capacity and expansion announcements as of February 2024 (DOE).

Core provisions of the IRA that are expected to accelerate domestic solar manufacturing investments include the qualifying advanced energy project credit, a tax credit for investments in clean energy manufacturing and recycling; the advanced manufacturing production credit, a tax credit for manufacturers of U.S.-made solar equipment; and the domestic content requirement, which incentivizes developers to install U.S.-made equipment. These incentives are expected to help close the gap between domestic and imported solar manufacturing costs and make domestic solar products more cost competitive.

To fully realize this growth, the U.S. solar manufacturing workforce needs to scale in turn. However, domestic manufacturing of solar technologies faces numerous workforce barriers, as evidenced by responses to DOE's recent request for information.<sup>5</sup> There is a lack of trained labor across the solar module supply chain, from entry-level to senior-level positions. Much of the necessary domestic

<sup>4</sup> [Solar Manufacturing Map | Department of Energy](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Summary: Scaling the U.S. Solar Manufacturing Workforce Request for Information | Department of Energy](#)

expertise required for parts of the module supply chain, including R&D and manufacturing, has eroded and migrated overseas. Training resources and opportunities are not keeping pace with the needs of the rapidly expanding industry, leading many manufacturers to worry about the availability of skilled labor to operate advanced solar manufacturing facilities.

Wide-scale efforts to recruit, train, and support the solar manufacturing workforce are now needed to realize the full potential of the IRA, reestablish U.S. competitiveness in the solar module supply chain, and reclaim high-quality jobs for U.S. workers. The regrowth of domestic solar manufacturing brings tremendous opportunity, not only to create new jobs, but also to ensure that these jobs are family-sustaining careers that will help revitalize communities across the country. The Biden administration is committed to ensuring that overburdened, underserved, and underrepresented individuals and communities have access to federal resources, and specifically, that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities (the Justice40 Initiative).<sup>6</sup> The clean energy transition should advance equity for all—in particular, communities who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

The American-Made Upskill Prize for the Solar Manufacturing Workforce is designed to meet these challenges and fill the workforce gaps necessary to strengthen the U.S. solar module supply chain. This prize will align education and training programs with the needs of manufacturers to accelerate the growth and expansion of the U.S. solar module supply chain. The aim of this prize is to encourage partnerships between manufacturers and training organizations, in order to ensure the long-term growth and resilience of a solar manufacturing workforce that can meet the needs of the domestic solar industry, while also enabling individuals from lower-income and disadvantaged communities to enter the clean energy workforce.

## 2.2 Prize Rounds

The Upskill Prize will be awarded multiple times over a series of prize rounds (see [Section 1.2: Key Dates](#)). Additional rounds will be announced and scheduled until the requisite number of prizes and funding are awarded (see [Section 1.1: Prizes](#)).

Organizations may submit multiple submissions over the course of the prize, and organizations may win the prize multiple times as they demonstrate progress and development in their training programs (see Question 4 in [Section 3.6.2: Narrative](#)).

## 2.3 Program Goal Requirements

Only submissions relevant to the goals of this program are eligible to compete. The prize administrator must conclude that all the following statements are true when applied to your submission:

- The proposed solution is related to the U.S. solar module manufacturing industry.
- The majority of the activities that are described in the submission have the potential to benefit the U.S. market.
- The proposed workforce development plan is not dependent on new, pending, or proposed federal, state, or local government legislation, resolutions, appropriations, measures, or policies.

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<sup>6</sup> [The White House – Justice40](#)



- The proposed solution does not involve the lobbying of any federal, state, or local government office.
- The manufacturing facilities where trained workers will be employed are not dependent on pending or proposed financing.
- The submission content sufficiently confirms the competitor’s intent to provide high-quality jobs and a commitment to workforce diversity.
- The submission content sufficiently confirms the competitor’s interest in long-term development of a solar manufacturing workforce.

## 2.4 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

DOE is committed to investing in innovations and training solutions that deliver benefits to the American public and lead to commercialization of technologies and products that foster sustainable, resilient, and equitable access to clean energy. Further, DOE is committed to supporting the development of more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplaces to help maintain the nation’s leadership in science and technology.

As part of the application, teams are required to describe how diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility objectives will be incorporated into their project. Specifically, teams are required to submit a response to Question 4 in their narrative section describing how their proposed training program will support lower-income and disadvantaged communities and individuals (see [Section 3.6.2: Narrative](#)).

## 2.5 Additional Requirements

Please read and comply with the additional requirements in [Appendix 1](#).

**COMPETITORS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.**

# 3 Prize Rules

## 3.1 Goal

The goal of the American-Made Upskill Prize for the Solar Manufacturing Workforce is to accelerate the historic expansion of the U.S. solar module manufacturing supply chain workforce and equip workers with the skills needed to grow the U.S. solar manufacturing industry. Reestablishing U.S. manufacturing competitiveness will drive down costs and ensure that the nation leads the world in energy production and innovation. This involves developing comprehensive workforce plans based on the specific needs of solar manufacturers, fostering collaborations between manufacturers and training organizations, and attracting individuals from historically underserved backgrounds to pursue careers in solar manufacturing through job-ready training programs and upskilling opportunities. This prize is intended to supplement, not replace, manufacturer workforce training plans and budgets, and may be applied to workforce training for new or existing manufacturing facilities.

## 3.2 Prizes

\$5 million in cash prizes is available for winners of the Upskill Prize. Individual team awards will be up to \$500,000, depending on the work proposed.

Submissions are accepted and awarded on an anticipated 4–6-month rolling basis (as described in [Section 1.2: Key Dates](#)). Teams may submit one submission per deadline but are allowed to apply for multiple deadlines and are permitted to win more than once.

## 3.3 How To Enter

Go to [HeroX](#), click on the “Solve This Challenge” button, and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the submission deadline. Competitors can also form teams or find partners through the HeroX platform.

## 3.4 Important Dates

Refer to the timeline on HeroX and [Section 1.2: Key Dates](#) for relevant dates and deadlines.

## 3.5 Prize Steps

Each round of the prize consists of the following steps:

1. **Submission** – Teams develop comprehensive workforce training plans to train current workers and/or attract and train new workers in partnership with training organization(s). Teams complete their submission packages and submit them online before the submission deadline.
2. **Evaluation** – The prize administrator screens submissions for eligibility and completion and assigns subject-matter-expert reviewers to independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers evaluate the following criteria for each submission:
  - **Question 1 – Manufacturing Facility, Job Quality, and Impact:** Evaluates the organization’s manufacturing facility details, including structure and capabilities, facility

and operation documentation, overview of the existing workforce, clear articulation of future workforce needs, logical estimates for new workers, and a detailed presentation of job quality measures, including benefits, support services, and worker safety.

- **Question 2 – Comprehensive Workforce Training Plans and Partners:** Evaluates the manufacturer’s proposed workforce training plan, which includes new worker onboarding and/or upskilling initiatives aligned with current and future workforce needs. The criteria
  - consider the number and types of workers for training, qualifications of training partners, a well-defined new worker recruitment plan with achievable targets, and a realistic budget breakdown demonstrating the manufacturer’s commitment and collaborative financial involvement, ensuring that funds align with the outlined workforce training plan.
  - **Question 3 – Prize-Supported Workforce Training Plan, Partners, and Budget:** Evaluates the specific training proposed for prize funding support, including training partner(s) and curriculum development plans if necessary. If the lead organization is not the training entity, a commitment letter from the identified training organization is required. The submission should include a workforce training plan for new and/or existing workers, specifying targets and timelines, and a budget detailing the requested prize funding, its allocation, and contributions from team members toward training activities.
  - **Question 4 – Workforce Diversity and Support to Disadvantaged Communities:** Evaluates evidence of the manufacturing facility’s positive impact on local disadvantaged areas; community partnership initiatives with local organizations, educational institutions, or community groups; and specific recruitment and hiring strategies for attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. This criterion also evaluates inclusivity and accessibility plans within the training program for both new and current workers, emphasizing targeted efforts and support mechanisms for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds to ensure equitable access and successful participation in training opportunities.
  - **Question 5 – For Competitors Who Have Previously Won the Upskill Prize and Are Reapplying for Another Round of This Prize:** Evaluates the team’s success in the initial training award, emphasizing their ability to identify additional value for further development.
3. **Announcement** – After the winners are publicly announced, the prize administrator notifies them and requests the necessary information to distribute cash prizes.

## 3.6 What To Submit

A complete submission package should include the following items:

- Team information (required; select elements will be made public)
- A declaration of other funding or in-kind support for training that the manufacturer is currently receiving, which could be from state or local government programs or other grants or prizes (required; will not be made public)
- Narrative (required; will not be made public)
- Summary PowerPoint slide (required; will be made public)
- Letters of commitment or support (required; will not be made public)

- Supporting documentation.

The following details provide more guidance on what information to provide and how reviewers will evaluate and score your submission. Reviewers will evaluate your submission by assigning a single score (1–6) for each scored submission section, based on their overall agreement or disagreement with a series of statements.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

### 3.6.1 Team Information and Declaration of Funding

List basic information about your submission on the HeroX submission form. Elements marked with an asterisk (\*) will be made public.

- Project title\*
- Team name\*
- Lead organization name\*
- Organization address (street, city, state, and nine-digit zip code)
- Organization URL
- Short description of planned workforce training initiative\*
- Team lead name
- Team lead email
- Team lead phone number
- Key project members (names, contacts, and links to their professional online profiles)
- Manufacturing facility information, including products, workforce size, facility location, etc.
- Training facility information, including locations, staff size, and past experience
- Other partners (if any)
- Description of how prize funding would be allocated to each partner organization, expressed as a percentage.<sup>7</sup>
- A declaration of other funding or in-kind support for training that the manufacturer is currently receiving, which could be from state or local government programs or other grants or prizes.

### 3.6.2 Narrative

Every submission must answer each of the following four questions. Submissions from previous winners of the Upskill Prize must also answer a fifth question. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide your responses. You decide where to focus your answers. The individual answers to the four questions do not have a word limit; however, **the aggregate response to these four questions must not exceed 3,000 words**, not including captions, figures/graphs, and/or references. If responding to the fifth question, an additional allocation of 1,000 words is allowed (total of 4,000 words in aggregate for all five questions). A word count must be included at the end of your submission (see template for details). You may also include **up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs**. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

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<sup>7</sup> Please note that any changes to the payment information provided after the winner announcement will result in a significant delay in payment.

## Narrative

**New Submissions – Questions 1–4:** Max 3,000 words and five supporting images or figures (PDF)  
**Returning Winners – Questions 1–5:** Max 4,000 words and five supporting images or figures (PDF)

### Question 1 – Manufacturing Facility, Job Quality, and Impact

What type of manufacturing organization will be receiving/implementing the training, and what are the long-term workforce development needs for this organization?

<p><b>Suggested content competitor provides:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Organization:</b> Briefly describe your organization and your goals and objectives in applying to the prize.</li> <li>• <b>Support to U.S. Solar Manufacturing Facilities:</b> Describe the existing or new manufacturing facility that your workforce training plan will support. If the manufacturing facility is not yet completed, please include documentation (see <a href="#">Section 3.6.5: Supporting Documentation</a>), including construction timelines, location, and ramp-up timing for manufacturing capacity. Describe the products that you plan to manufacture.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If the lead organization is not itself the owner/operator of the manufacturing facility, a letter of commitment from the facility <u>must</u> be supplied. See <a href="#">Section 3.6.4: Letters of Commitment</a> for more information.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>A single score on a scale of 1–6 is provided, taking the following statements into consideration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Organization and Manufacturing Facility:</b> The submission effectively details the organization's manufacturing facility, including its structure, size, and capabilities.</li> <li>• If construction of the manufacturing facility is not yet complete, comprehensive documentation outlining construction timelines, location specifics, and other pertinent evidence about the planned facility is provided. This documentation provides compelling evidence that the facility will be ready for operation on a timeline consistent with the proposed training plan.</li> <li>• If the lead organization is not itself the owner/operator of the manufacturing facility, a strong letter of commitment from the facility is supplied.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Current Workforce:</b> Describe the current workforce of the manufacturer team member. Detail how many individuals are currently employed at the manufacturing facility and a breakdown of the types of roles/positions that the manufacturer currently has.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Current Workforce:</b> The submission offers a comprehensive overview of the existing workforce, including the total number of employed workers and a breakdown of roles/positions, illustrating a clear understanding of the organization's current human resource structure.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Future Workforce:</b> What skills are required for the future operation of your manufacturing facility? How does the skill set of your existing workers need to change? How many new workers do you need to support your planned manufacturing activities and in what roles/positions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Future Workforce:</b> The submission effectively articulates the essential skill sets necessary for the efficient future operation of the manufacturing facility, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the workforce needs and technical competencies required.</li> <li>• The submission provides clear and logical estimates or projections of the number and type of new workers needed to support manufacturing activities, aligning with the organization's growth and production goals.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Job Quality:</b> Describe your organization’s current and/or planned benefits for workers and what wraparound services (childcare, transportation, etc.) you provide. What is your current worker retention rate/turnover? Will you be offering any new/additional services to workers? Does your organization have defined career pathways? Describe current wages and how they measure against regional benchmarks. Describe the workplace health and safety track record.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Job Quality:</b> The submission comprehensively outlines the array of benefits offered to workers, highlighting a commitment to providing competitive and attractive benefit packages. This may include healthcare, retirement plans, and other pertinent benefits.</li> <li>• The submission elaborates on the supplementary services provided to workers (e.g., job application support, other wraparound services), showcasing an understanding of holistic worker support needs.</li> <li>• The submission discusses actual or expected worker turnover, and the value of improving it.</li> <li>• The submission describes the workplace health and safety culture and addresses prior and outstanding Occupational Safety and Health Administration violations.</li> </ul>
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**Question 2 – Comprehensive Workforce Training Plans and Partners**

What is your holistic approach to training, and how will the partners work together to develop a training and upskilling program solution?

<p><b>Suggested content competitor provides:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comprehensive Workforce Training Plan Overview:</b> Describe the entirety of the manufacturing facility’s workforce training plan (new and/or current worker training), including how it will benefit the current and/or future workforce needs described in Question 1. How many current/future workers do you plan to train and in what areas? What is your planned timeline for training? How will worker health and safety be integrated into the training plan? How will new and current workers be compensated during training?</li> <li>• Please summarize all aspects of training and training partners anticipated to reach a fully operational facility, not just the training that you hope to accomplish with the prize funds (which will be further described in Question 3).</li> <li>• Please include details on all training partners who are supporting your workforce training plan, even if not all partners are involved in the proposed prize-funded training.</li> </ul>	<p><b>A single score on a scale of 1–6 is provided, taking the following statements into consideration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comprehensive Workforce Training Plan:</b> The submission outlines a detailed, comprehensive workforce training plan for new worker onboarding and/or upskilling initiatives. It clearly demonstrates how this training addresses the current and future workforce needs of the manufacturing facility highlighted in Question 1, emphasizing its strategic relevance. Worker health and safety initiatives are addressed.</li> <li>• The submission specifies the number of incumbent/future workers earmarked for training, providing clarity on the quantity and distribution across relevant skill areas and showcasing a well-structured approach to addressing training needs.</li> <li>• The submission provides adequate detail on all training partners, regardless of their direct involvement in the prize-funded training.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overall Budget:</b> Describe your planned overall budget for training and recruitment. The budget should include anticipated costs for new worker and/or incumbent worker training. What is your plan to fund your</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overall Budget:</b> The submission includes a description of the planned overall budget for training and recruitment. The budget demonstrates the manufacturer’s commitment to investing in the training and</li> </ul>

<p>training plan beyond the prize support requested in Question 3 below?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams may upload supporting documentation, such as a declaration of other funding for training that the manufacturer is currently receiving, which could be from state or local government programs or other grants or prizes (see <a href="#">Section 3.6.5: Supporting Documentation</a>).</li> </ul>	<p>recruitment by sharing the costs, showcasing a collaborative financial involvement.</p>
<p><b>Question 3 – Specific Workforce Training Plan and Budget</b></p> <p>Describe which elements of your comprehensive training plan (from Question 2) you are proposing for prize funding support. Describe training partners, timeline, strategy, and budget.</p>	
<p><b>Suggested content competitor provides:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Workforce Training Plan With Prize Support:</b> Specify the components of the comprehensive workforce training plan (as described in Question 2) for which you are requesting prize support.</li> <li>In your description of prize-supported training activities, please specifically detail your plan to address either or both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>New Worker Training:</b> Develop and propose plans to train <b>new workers</b> with the skills they need to be successful in the solar manufacturing industry.</li> <li><b>Incumbent Worker Training:</b> Develop and propose plans to train <b>incumbent workers</b> with new skills needed to support solar manufacturing.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>A single score on a scale of 1–6 is provided, taking the following statements into consideration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Workforce Training Plan With Prize Support:</b> The submission clearly specifies the components of the comprehensive workforce training plan outlined in Question 2 that the team is seeking the prize to support. This includes a detailed breakdown of training activities, their relevance to the identified workforce needs, and how they contribute to the overall success of the organization.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Training Partner:</b> Provide additional detail on the training partner(s) who will be supporting the training funded by this prize. Who will be providing the training, and what are their credentials? Is the proposed training curriculum already developed? If not, what is the plan and timeline to develop it?</li> <li>If the lead organization is not itself the training organization, a letter of commitment from the identified training organization(s) <b>must</b> be supplied. See <a href="#">Section 3.6.4: Letters of Commitment</a> for more information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Training Partner:</b> The submission details the qualifications and credentials of experienced training provider(s), highlighting their expertise in delivering effective training programs aligned with the manufacturing industry’s needs. The training partner(s) either have curriculum and training materials prepared or have presented a plan for the development of training materials. The training partner(s) have demonstrated experience reaching the desired worker pool for training.</li> <li>If the lead organization is not itself the owner/operator of the manufacturing facility, a strong letter of commitment from the facility has been supplied.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>New Worker Recruitment:</b> If proposing training for new workers, what is your plan for recruitment of new, interested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>New Worker Recruitment:</b> The submission outlines a clear and well-defined plan for recruiting new individuals interested in the proposed training. It demonstrates a</li> </ul>

<p>individuals? What are your recruitment targets and timeline?</p>	<p>strategic approach to attracting suitable candidates from a diverse pool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and achievable recruitment targets are specified, indicating the number of new workers sought through this process. Additionally, a realistic timeline for the recruitment process is provided, showing an understanding of the time required to attract and onboard new talent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prize-Specific Budget:</b> How much prize funding are you requesting?<sup>8</sup> Provide details on how the prize funds will be allocated and used. If necessary, describe what funding beyond the prize will be contributed by team members for the training activities.</li> <li>• Funding allocation between team members should match that submitted as part of the Team Information (see <a href="#">Section 3.6.1: Team Information and Declaration of Funding</a>).<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prize-Specific Budget:</b> The submission provides a detailed breakdown of the planned budget for training activities, including a clear allocation of funds and description of use. The budget is realistic.</li> <li>• A sufficient amount of the requested budget is allocated to the organization conducting the training and is consistent with the workforce training plan outlined; funds not directly used for training (e.g., recruitment) are sufficiently justified.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Question 4 – Workforce Diversity and Support of Disadvantaged Communities</b></p> <p>How does this training program support low-income and disadvantaged communities?</p>	
<p><b>Suggested content competitor provides:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Manufacturing Facility:</b> Discuss the potential positive impacts the facility will have on local disadvantaged areas or populations, including but not limited to HUBZone participation, Energy Community participation, or recruitment of returning citizens.</li> </ul>	<p><b>A single score on a scale of 1–6 is provided, taking the following statements into consideration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Manufacturing Facility:</b> Clear evidence is provided of the manufacturing facility’s support or potential support for the development of local disadvantaged areas or populations, showcasing specific ways in which the facility positively impacts (or will positively impact) the surrounding community.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Partnership Initiatives:</b> Highlight collaborations or partnerships with local organizations, educational institutions, or community groups aimed at providing training opportunities specifically targeted toward individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Partnership Initiatives:</b> The submission effectively highlights collaborations, partnerships, and/or initiatives with local organizations, educational institutions, or community groups dedicated to providing economic opportunities geared specifically toward individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Teams may request up to \$500K per award in prize funding; it is acceptable for proposed specific training to exceed this amount, provided that teams explain how the remaining expense will be funded.

<sup>9</sup> Prize payments may be split between up to three U.S.-based organizations.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For the Recruitment and Hiring of New Workers:</b> Detail specific outreach efforts or recruitment and hiring strategies aimed at attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, ensuring equitable access to employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Discuss plans within the training program to ensure inclusivity and accessibility, such as targeted outreach or support systems designed to help individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds successfully complete the training. Discuss how the training may be made available in a variety of languages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For the Recruitment and Hiring of New Workers:</b> The submission thoroughly details specific outreach efforts or recruitment and hiring strategies designed to attract and retain a diverse workforce, ensuring fair and equal access to employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Clear plans within the training program are outlined to ensure inclusivity and accessibility, demonstrating targeted outreach efforts or tailored support systems to help individuals successfully complete the training.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For the Training and Retention of Incumbent Workers:</b> Describe the diversity of the current worker pool and how the training program caters to individuals from various backgrounds, including underrepresented groups, to ensure equitable access to training opportunities and high retention.</li> <li>• Detail specific initiatives or support mechanisms that are/will be put in place to help workers from underrepresented groups successfully participate in and complete the training program.</li> <li>• Describe how planned retention strategies will address or prevent turnover of workers from underrepresented groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For the Training and Retention of Incumbent Workers:</b> The submission effectively describes the diversity present within the current worker pool and demonstrates how the training program caters to individuals from diverse backgrounds, ensuring equitable access to training opportunities and high retention.</li> <li>• Detailed initiatives or support mechanisms aimed at helping workers from underrepresented groups are showcased, emphasizing their role in aiding the successful participation and completion of training programs.</li> <li>• A description of plans and strategies to address retention of workers from underrepresented groups is provided.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Question 5 – Application From Previous Winner (i.e., for Competitors Who Have Already Won a Previous Upskill Prize), Additional 1000 Words</b></p> <p>What was the impact of your previous training program, and how will an additional prize award impact your continued efforts?</p>	
<p><b>Suggested content competitor provides:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the impact of the training program funded with your prior Upskill-Prize-winning submission. How many people were trained, how many new training products were developed, and what impact have you seen in the manufacturing facility? Supporting documentation (see <a href="#">Section 3.6.5: Supporting Documentation</a>) evidencing the success of this training is strongly encouraged. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Documentation could include training completion certificates/records, worker surveys or testimonials, worker participation and retention statistics, wage and promotion statistics, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>A single score on a scale of 1–6 is provided, taking the following statements into consideration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team achieved positive impact from the first round of the training award and has identified additional value to building on that success.</li> <li>• The team identified a clear plan that will expand the workforce training program.</li> <li>• The team documented the impact measured, the diversity achieved, and any new training products developed.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe how your workforce training plan and approach, including training needs (e.g., if you are expanding operations and need to train more people), have evolved since the last time you submitted.</li> <li>• Describe why you need additional funding to continue to make progress. What was not achieved the first time around? Are there additional people who need to be trained? Do you need additional training materials?</li> <li>• Will the approach this time around be different than the first time around? What are you looking to achieve with additional funding?</li> </ul>	
<b>Reviewer Recommendation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for this score. Rather, it is an overall assessment of all materials submitted in HeroX.</li> </ul>	<p><b>A single score of either 1 or 6 is provided, taking the following statements into consideration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team and plan should be strongly considered for a prize.</li> </ul>

### 3.6.3 Submission Summary Slide (Will Be Made Public)

Make a public-facing, one-slide submission summary that introduces your team and/or organization and your mission. There is no template, so competitors are free to present the information in any format. Any text must be readable on a standard printed page and a conference room projection and should be in at least 14-point font.

### 3.6.4 Letters of Commitment (Required) and Letters of Support (Optional)

Team leads are required to obtain letters of commitment from each team member:

- If the team lead is a **U.S.-based manufacturer**, then a letter of commitment from a training organization is required. U.S.-based manufacturers should partner with a training organization to execute a comprehensive workforce training program that meets the needs of the manufacturing facility.
- If the team lead is a **training organization**, then a letter of commitment from a U.S.-based manufacturer is required. Training organizations should build a comprehensive workforce training program with a specific U.S.-based manufacturer as a key partner who is willing, able, and responsible for implementing the training program to expand and advance the diverse workforce needed in the manufacturing facility.

Additional letters of support (from financiers, community-based organizations, trade organizations, state and local governments, etc.) are optional.

### 3.6.5 Supporting Documentation

To support the narrative discussion (see [Section 3.6.2: Narrative](#)), competitors may upload a single PDF of additional supporting documentation (up to 15 pages).

## 3.7 How We Determine and Award Winners

The prize administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures that the teams are eligible. Next, the prize administrator, in consultation with DOE, assigns subject-matter-expert reviewers who independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers will be composed of federal and external nonfederal subject-matter experts and representatives with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the competitor's submission package according to the criteria above.

### 3.7.1 Reviewer Panel Scoring

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

- Experts will review each submission individually and assess the competitor's response to each statement in the four or five criteria areas described in [Section 3.6.2: Narrative](#).
- Reviewers will score each section 1–6, depending on the degree to which the reviewer agrees that the submission reflects the statements for consideration.
- Each individual section score will be added together to generate a total score for the submission.
- The total 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.

### 3.7.2 Interviews

DOE may decide to interview a subset of competitors. The interviews would be held prior to the announcement of 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 of winning.

### 3.7.3 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 take into account the reviewers' feedback and scores, application of program policy factors, and the interview findings (if applicable).

### 3.7.4 Announcement

Approximately 30–60 days after each prize round 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.

## 3.8 Additional Terms and Conditions

See [Appendix 1](#) for additional requirements.

**COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN APPENDIX 1 MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.**

# Appendix 1: Additional Terms and Conditions

## A.1 Requirements

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

- You must post the final content of your submission or upload the submission form online by the deadline specified for the Round you are applying, before the Round 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 1 \(Section A.10\)](#). 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 the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) or the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (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 winning competitors and each designated partner organization using the provided email contact information for the individual or entity that was responsible for each

partner organization. Each partner organization will be required to sign and return to the prize administrator, within 30 days of the date on the notice, a complete Prize Acceptance Form noting the percentage of the total payment the partner organization should receive as listed in the original submission on HeroX, a completed NREL Request for ACH Banking Information form, and a completed W-9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>). In the sole discretion of the prize administrator, a winning partner organization or team 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; (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 partner organizations listed in the HeroX submission (up to 3 awardee organizations per winning submission). The single dollar amount will be the percentage of the total prize the winning submission receives, as designated on the HeroX submission. The partner organizations are solely responsible for allocating any prize funds among their 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, competitors, or the partner organizations.

## 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, the 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, which 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) the 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 the prize administrator, or the exercise by the 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, the 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; and
  - 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 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 failure, 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.13 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:

- Geographic diversity and potential economic impact of projects.
- Whether the use of additional DOE funds and provided resources is nonduplicative 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 is likely to lead to increased employment and manufacturing in the United States or provide other economic benefits to U.S. taxpayers.
- 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.14 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, please 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 Upskill 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 further information such that DOE can conduct a meaningful evaluation of the potential environmental impacts.

## A.15 Definitions

prize administrator means both the Alliance for Sustainable Energy operating in its capacity under the Management and Operating Contract for NREL and the Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO). When the prize administrator is referenced in this document, it refers to staff from both the Alliance for Sustainable Energy and SETO staff. Ultimate decision-making authority regarding prize matters rests with the director of SETO.

## 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 noncash prizes be returned to the government.

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

**This is the end of the Rules Document. Thank you for reading.**