



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

American-Made Solar Prize Rules

OFFICIAL RULES

The American-Made Solar Prize is designed to accelerate and sustain American solar innovation through a series of prize competitions and the development of a diverse and powerful support network that leverages national laboratories, energy incubators, and other resources from across the United States.

These rules are effective from March 2, 2020 onwards for the Round 2 Set! and Go! contests as well as Round 3.

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PROGRAM SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION: A TWO PRONGED APPROACH

This program consists of two parallel and integrated features: the Ready! Set! Go! **Contests** and the **American-Made Network**.

Competitors in the Ready! Set! Go! Contests will participate in three escalating challenges. The contests will provide up to \$3 million in cash prizes and other benefits and will incentivize driving innovations from idea to pilot testing in less than one year through an accelerated schedule.

The development of the American-Made Network grows in parallel with the contests and will amplify competitors' efforts by connecting them with the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) national laboratories and their world-class research facilities and experts; and a private sector stakeholder community that is already actively assisting entrepreneurs to bring innovative ideas and concepts to market. This community includes incubators, investors, philanthropists, fabrication facilities, experts, and seasoned industry leaders, all of whom will provide technical insight, marketing expertise, product validation, and other support. Throughout the competition, these diverse elements are labeled "Connectors" and will make up the key components of the network.

The contests and the American-Made Network will bring connections, resources, and funding to competitors as they advance their innovations, accelerating their cycles of learning from years to months. The program will reenergize innovation in U.S. solar technology manufacturing and reassert the country's global leadership in next-generation technologies.

2. BACKGROUND

New energy technologies have begun to reshape the national and global energy landscape. Advanced electrification, digitization, and deployment of grid-connected distributed energy assets are changing the energy industry. The United States has been at the forefront in this transformation, and as technologies, markets, service, and capital providers have evolved over the past decade, there is a reinvigorated entrepreneurial interest across all facets of the nation's energy system.

However, domestic manufacturing of solar technologies has continued to decline, impeding innovation that has been created in America from being produced in America. This decline has negatively impacted job and economic benefits created by these innovations, while weakening domestic supply chain infrastructure, competitiveness, and national security. U.S.-led energy research and development efforts continue to identify and lay the groundwork for exploring many of the most advanced energy technologies in the world. New and existing efforts that create and support advanced manufacturing solutions must now come together, re-establishing U.S. manufacturing leadership to drive down costs and ensure that the nation leads the world in energy production and innovation.

The American-Made Solar Prize is designed to meet this challenge.

The American-Made Solar Prize, also referred to as the Solar Prize, will spur innovation and address tough problems facing the solar energy sector broadly and technology manufacturing specifically. Spearheaded by the [Solar Energy Technologies Office](#) (SETO) within Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) and in partnership with the [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#) (NREL), the Solar Prize is a series of three progressive competitions that will incentivize the nation's innovators and entrepreneurs to rapidly discover, research, iterate, and deliver new solutions to market with the goal of expanding solar manufacturing in the United States. This new, scalable approach to rapid product development not only provides cash prizes, but also engages America's energy incubators, investors, universities, 17 national laboratories, and others to help participants achieve their goals.

The Solar Prize utilizes a new program structure that is designed to strengthen and scale critical connections that accelerate and sustain American innovation through two intertwined tracks: prize competitions and the establishment of the American-Made Network. The unique American-Made Network takes a structured approach to bring diverse sources of support, such as DOE's national laboratories, business incubators, and prototype fabrication facilities, together under one umbrella. This approach is designed to be flexible, scalable, and extend beyond solar to other technology domains and sectors.

Instead of investing in one-of-a-kind solutions or scaling "safe-bet" approaches with dated technologies, the Solar Prize will apply a resource-multiplying approach that not only invests in multiple new innovations but also creates a foundation for expanding support for future manufacturing growth. This will simultaneously enable the rapid development of technology and strengthen critical connections for commercialization.

While global competitors are spending their resources scaling legacy technology, this program develops next-generation commercially viable solutions, thus planting the seeds for a U.S. manufacturing renaissance.

The program will make it faster and easier for our nation to transform innovative research and ideas into early-stage concepts and then build prototypes ready for validation. Competitors will not only be working to win cash prizes and other benefits, they will be connected with mentoring, training, and other services from the American-Made Network community, resulting in long-term success for participants and U.S. manufacturing.

3. CONTESTS: READY! – SET! – GO!

The Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests will fast-track efforts to identify, develop, and test disruptive solutions to meet solar industry needs. Each stage will include a contest period when participants will work to rapidly advance their solutions. DOE invites anyone, individually or as a team, to compete to transform a conceptual solution into product reality.

The three contests:

- 1. Ready! Contest** – Competitors will demonstrate that they have identified and taken action to develop an impactful idea or solution that will address a critical need for the solar industry. They will also propose a path to develop a proof-of-concept. Winners will receive \$50,000 in cash and will then be eligible to compete in the Set! Contest. Any person or team can submit a package to compete in the Ready! Contest. A panel of expert reviewers from industry, national labs, and government will evaluate submissions.
- 2. Set! Contest** – Competitors will work to substantially advance their technology solution toward a viable and promising proof-of-concept. They must show that not only will their proof-of-concept solve an important problem in the solar industry, but it will also have significant demand if the concept comes to market. It is also expected that competitors make significant progress toward developing a mechanism that can validate and pilot test their solution. Winners will receive \$100,000 in cash and up to \$75,000 in vouchers that may be redeemed at national labs and qualified fabrication facilities to further develop their solution. Winners of the Set! Contest will be selected by a panel of reviewers during a national demo day event.
- 3. Go! Contest** – Competitors work to substantially advance their solution from proof-of-concept to a refined prototype and find a partner to perform a pilot test of the prototype solution. Winners will receive \$500,000 in cash and up to an additional \$75,000 in vouchers redeemable at national labs and qualified fabrication facilities. Winners of the Set! Contest are eligible to compete in the final Go! Contest where overall contest winners will be chosen by a panel of reviewers during a live demo day event.

This set of three contests offers a total of \$3 million in cash prizes and \$900,000 in vouchers.

Contest Funding:

Contest	Winners	Prizes
1. Ready!	Up to 20	Up to \$1,000,000 with cash prizes of \$50,000 per winner
2. Set!	Up to 10	Up to \$1,000,000 in cash prizes and \$750,000 in vouchers with each winner receiving between \$100,000 in cash and up to \$75,000 in vouchers
3. Go!	2	\$500,000 in cash prizes and up to \$75,000 in vouchers per winner

To learn more and sign up go to <https://www.herox.com/SolarPrize>

4. AMERICAN-MADE NETWORK

The American-Made Network will cultivate resources and build connections that enhance, accelerate, and amplify the efforts of the competitors. The objective is to link participants with ideas, people, resources, financing, and relevant industry expertise, all of which are necessary for long-term success.

The network is comprised of the following elements:

- 1. Prize and Network Administrator: the National Renewable Energy Laboratory:** The DOE has partnered with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to administer the American-Made Solar Prize. NREL, as the administrator, will help competitors locate and leverage the vast array of national lab resources. NREL will also connect elements of the network with the competitors as described below.
- 2. Vouchers:** Winners of the Set! and Go! Contests will receive vouchers that they may use to fund work at national laboratories and other facilities to accelerate the production, improvement, or validation of prototypes. Entities interested in helping competitors through the voucher program can visit the following site for details: <https://americanmadechallenges.org/vouchers.html>.
- 3. Connectors:** Connectors are entities capable of helping competitors navigate the innovation process and identify, recruit, and support contest participants. Connectors can be incubators, universities, think tanks, industry groups or any enabler seeking to help competitors win by performing support activities such as:
 - Attracting a diverse range of talented individuals to become contest competitors;
 - Helping competitors refine their innovations, develop business plans, work with mentors, and connect with investors and industry partners;
 - Raising non-federal funding to support this program and its participants;
 - Providing in-kind resources, tools, and facilities to accelerate competitors' abilities to innovate, test, and refine their solutions while reducing technology and business risks;
 - Connecting competitors to regional prototyping and manufacturing expertise, facilities, and experts.

Connectors who support participants that go on to win any of the Ready!, Set!, or Go! Contests will be financially rewarded based on the table below.

Connector Recognition Reward Opportunities:

Recognition Reward Name	Anticipated Number of Awards	Dollar Amounts	Details
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Engage	Up to 25	\$25,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that engage with potential participants through targeted outreach and events leading up to the Ready! Contest submission deadline. Individual \$1,000 payments will be distributed to Connectors that host events that meet the event requirements below.
Mobilize	Up to 3 per team and 20 teams	\$100,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that recruit and support competitors that go on to win the Ready! Contest.
Mentor	Up to 3 per team and 10 teams for Set!	\$50,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by competitors that win the Set! Contest.
	Up to 3 per team and 2 teams for Go!	\$20,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by competitors that win the Go! Contest.

Competitors and reviewers in any given round cannot also be a Connector for that round. If a Connector formally joins a team, they forego any financial incentive and recognition payment for that Round.

Entities interested in participating as a Connectors can visit the following site for details:
<https://americanmadechallenges.org/network.html>

4. **Power Connectors:** A subset of Connectors play a more substantial role in the competition and receive funds to expand and amplify DOE and NREL’s efforts. Power Connectors operate under a contract with NREL and may be selected to host a national demo day. Not only will these stakeholders work to identify talent and support participants in the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests, they partner with NREL to envision and execute a long-term sustainable strategy for scaling the American-Made Challenges Contests. Power Connectors are ineligible for all recognition awards. Power Connectors will be rewarded for efforts that achieve:

- Increasing the number of new, high-quality competitors;
- Expanding the network of partners, resources, and tools;
- Increasing the diverse set of funding sources;
- Producing engaging and well-attended national demo day showcases;
- Expanding the scope of manufacturing and technological challenges addressed by the program;
- Repeated support of contests with an increasingly robust American-Made Network and expanded funding from non-governmental sources.

Entities interested in participating as Power Connectors can visit the following site for details:
<https://americanmadechallenges.org/network.html>

5. IMPORTANT DATES

These rules are applicable for the current open rounds of the the American Made Solar Prize. Please visit <http://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize.html> and select the relevant round to view the key dates for each round of the prize.

READY! CONTEST RULES

1. INTRODUCTION

The American-Made Solar Prize is a three-contest Up to \$3 million cash prize competition designed to accelerate and sustain solar innovation by supporting entrepreneurs as they develop transformative technology ideas into concepts and then into early-stage prototypes ready for industry testing. It is the first step to set American entrepreneurs on a pathway of accelerated innovation so ideas can become products in months, not years. The Ready! Contest is the first in this three-contest series with a total \$1 million in cash prizes. Anyone can compete in the Ready! Contest, but only winners of this contest (referred to as Ready! Contest winners or American-Made Solar Prize Semi-finalists) can compete in the subsequent Set! Contest. **The following rules are for competitors in the Ready! Contest. “You” and “your” reference competitors in the contest.**

Ready! Contest Prizes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 20 Winners• Up to \$1,000,000 distributed equally among each winner with \$50,000 per winner

2. GOAL

Rapidly transform an important problem from a conceptual solution to a plan for building a proof-of-concept.

3. PRIZES TO WIN

The Ready! Contest offers up to 20 cash prizes for \$50,000.

4. HOW TO ENTER

Complete a submission package online at <https://www.herox.com/SolarPrize> before the contest closing date.

5. READY! CONTEST PROCESS

The Ready! Contest consists of three important steps:

1. **Preparation, Activation, and Submission** – Competitors identify and take action on a critical need in the solar industry, develop a transformative solution pathway, and make a plan to build a proof-of-concept for this solution. They also engage the American-Made Network¹ and gain help and support. Finally, competitors complete their submission packages and submit online before the Ready! Contest closes.
2. **Assessment** – The Prize Administrator screens all completed submissions and assigns subject matter expert reviewers to independently score the content of each submission. The judging criteria will assess the following competitor activities.
 - **Problem-Solution Fit:** Developing a credible solution concept to a real-world problem faced by the solar industry. The performance of substantive due diligence to gather feedback and validate that the proposed solution addresses a real problem and is technically feasible.
 - **Team Capabilities:** Forming an exceptional and committed team to accomplish the stated goals of the proposed solution.
 - **Network Engagement:** Cultivating relationships with members of the American-Made Network and/or other entities that can help maximize the likelihood of creating a viable business based on the proposed solution and enhance the quality of the proposed submission package.
3. **Announcement** – Approximately 2 months after the contest closes, the Prize Administrator notifies winners and requests the necessary information to distribute cash prizes. The Prize Administrator will then publicly announce winners. After winning the Ready! Contest prize, competitors will develop their solutions in accordance with their plan to compete in the Set! Contest.

6. WHAT TO SUBMIT

A complete submission package for the Ready! Contest should include the following items:

- 90-second video (public)
- Cover page content
- Narrative answers to four questions about the *problem, solution, team, and plan*
- Technical assistance request (public)
- One power point slide (public)
- Letters of commitment or support (optional)

¹ The Prize Administrator has dedicated approximately \$1 million to recognize members of the American-Made Network who help competitors advance through the contests.

All documents must be uploaded as a PDF.

Reviewers and the prize judge will evaluate your submissions by agreeing or disagreeing with assigned statements on a 1-6 scale, as shown below. These statements are the criteria.

1	2	3	4	5	6
strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree

Online public video - What is your innovation in 90 seconds	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The real-world problem you are solving • Your solution and why it's transformational • Who you are and why you have a competitive edge 	<p>Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The video explains a compelling real-world problem • The video describes a unique innovation that is implementable within the next five years • The video shows a knowledgeable and skillful team

Post your publicly accessible video online (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, etc.). Be creative and produce a video that conveys the required information in exciting and interesting ways but do not focus on time-consuming activities that only improve production values (i.e. technical elements such as décor, lighting, and cinematic techniques). Assistance from others with experience in this area may be helpful. The American-Made Network may be able to help you with creating your video.

Cover page – List basic information about your submission	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project name • Innovation tagline (e.g. your mission in few words) • Link to your 90-second video online • Key project members (names, contacts, and links to their LinkedIn profiles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keywords that best describe your solution (e.g., CdTe deposition, Microinverters) • Your city and state • The Connectors² (up to 3) that significantly helped you advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable)³ • Other partners (if any)

² See description of Connector in I. Program Summary

³ Competitors may identify their Connectors up to two weeks after the close of the Set! Contest by sending an email to the prize administrator. This is only allowed if they did not identify their supporting Connector organizations in their cover page.

You should answer each of the following four questions. 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 2,500 words. 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.

Narrative	
Question 1: <i>Problem</i> - What is the problem and why is solving it important?	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the problem, quantify its significance with metrics, and explain why now is the right time to solve it. Explain why existing solutions are inadequate. Show how you know this is a significant problem using evidence-based validation (e.g. interviews with users, case studies, literature). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale The competitor quantifies a critical problem using important metrics and a compelling analysis of why now is the right time to address it. The competitor’s assessment of current solutions and their limitations show a comprehensive understanding of the problem-solution space. The competitor uses real-world evidence to validate key assumptions about the industry need.
Question 2: <i>Solution</i> - What is your solution and why will it be successful?	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your innovation and how it is better than existing products or emerging solutions. Describe your innovation’s unique value proposition and how it will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. Define the proof-of-concept you will produce by the Set! Demo Day and explain what critical failures would cause you to reconsider your approach. 	<p>Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The solution represents an innovative approach built on reasonable assumptions, valid technical foundations, and lessons learned from other notable efforts in this space. The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution that will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. The planned Set! Demo Day proof-of-concept is reasonably ambitious and validates the critical assumptions necessary to advance.

Question 3: *Team* - What have you done to date and what qualities give you a competitive edge?

Suggested content you provide	Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce your team, explain how it came together, and highlight the knowledge and skills that make it uniquely capable of achieving success.• Highlight your team’s experience in trying new things, solving difficult problems, and overcoming barriers to bring ideas to reality.• Describe what drives your team to realize this solution and why you will continue when facing difficulties.• Explain why winning the Ready! Contest will substantively change the likely outcome for the proposed solution.• Describe your efforts to advance your solution concept since the announcement of the prize contest or prior and highlight key milestones achieved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The team’s track record demonstrates notable entrepreneurial qualities such as adaptability, creativity, decisiveness, and resourcefulness.• The team’s drive, knowledge, and complementary skillsets provide a strong competitive edge towards realizing this solution in the near future.• Winning the Ready! Contest will significantly increase the team’s chances of creating a viable business based on this solution.• A considerable amount of high-quality effort was put into defining and advancing the proposed solution.• This team has the knowledge, experience, and determination to transform their proposed solution into a viable business.

Question 4: *Plan* – What is your plan to achieve your goals?

Suggested content you provide	Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe where you stand in your solution’s development cycle and define goals for Set! and Go! Demo Days (based on the schedule listed in section I.6 and a one year goal (see special instructions below)).• Describe your team’s readiness to meet your goals and if additional talent and resources are needed.• Provide a high-level budget and plan to meet your goals between the conclusion of the Ready! Contest and the Go! Demo Day including how you will leverage program resources, members of the American-Made Network, or other entities (include references to letters of support/commitment if applicable).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The stated goals are ambitious, reduce risks and show a commitment to an accelerated development cycle.• Meeting the stated goals will demonstrate critical progress towards developing, testing, and validating the functionality and market demand of this innovation.• The proposed plan effectively uses resources available in this program to advance the innovation.• This innovation, team, and plan should be strongly considered for a Ready! Contest Prize (score only a 1 or a 6).

Special instructions for Question 4

- Use only specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely (SMART) outcome-based goals, not activity-based, so that a neutral third-party can validate them (if possible).
 - For example: Demonstrate a definitive achievement of progress (e.g., ‘X letters on interest signed’ or ‘achieve X% efficiency’ **not** describe how you spent your time (e.g., ‘provide a report,’ ‘talk to customers,’ or ‘perform experiments’).
- Entities that would be the eventual customers or end users of the product.
- SMART goals for the Go! Contest Demo Day should include demonstrating a functional prototype based on prior progress and learning and at least one committed pilot partner.
- In defining your SMART goals, include quantified, risk-reducing, meaningful, practical, and testable interim milestones
- SMART goals should include assessment and feedback from many relevant stakeholders (e.g possible investors, customers and experts in the solution space).
- The American-Made Network may be able to help you to formulate your SMART goals.

Technical Assistance Request (2 pages, including images, will be made public)

Provide a two-page description of the unique challenges and needs a national lab, private facility, and/or member of the American-Made Network could potentially help you resolve. The Prize Administrator will make this request broadly available so members of the American-Made Network can understand your needs and assist you through the voucher program or otherwise.

Submission Summary Slide (a PowerPoint slide as a PDF, will be made public)

Make your own public-facing one-slide submission summary that contains technically specific details but can be understood by most people. There is no template, so feel free to present the information as you see fit. Please make any text readable in a standard printout and conference room projection.

Letters of Commitment or Support (Optional)

Attach one-page letters (of support, intent, or commitment) from other relevant entities (e.g. potential users of the proposed innovation) to provide context. Letters of Support from partners or others that are critical to the success of your proposed solution will likely increase your score. General letters of support from parties that are not critical to the execution of your solution will likely not factor into your score.

Please do not submit multi-page letters.

Please read and comply with additional requirements about your submission in [Section VI](#). COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

7. HOW WE SCORE

Peer-Ranking: In this contest, each competitor is expected to rank ten of their peers' submissions. The success of this program ultimately depends on bringing relevant innovation and impactful ideas to the solar industry. As such, we seeking community input into the judging process. By using this peer ranking, the Prize Administrator will be able to better assign individual submissions to reviewers with the appropriate expertise.

Competitors will be asked to rank the submissions 1 through 5 based on the extent to which the submission represent an impactful solution to a real-world problem faced by the solar industry, with 1 being most preferred submission and 5 being the least.

The HeroX platform will randomly assign two sets of five submissions (total of ten) to each competitor who completed a submission. Competitors will only be able to view the publicly-facing portion of the submission packages (the 90-second video, the publicly-facing summary slide, and the Technical Assistance Request). Competitors will not have access to the 2500-word submission narrative. Competitors will have approximately 5 days to rank their assigned submissions. This process should take no more than 10 minutes per submission. If a competitor fails to participate in this peer-ranking process, they may be disqualified from the contest.

Competitors will be instructed to review only the following materials to make their determinations of rankings:

1. The first 90 seconds of the public video that was provided (ignore any material over the first 90 seconds, if applicable)
2. The first summary slide (ignore any material beyond the first slide, if applicable)
3. The first two pages of the Technical Assistance Request (TAR) form. (ignore any material beyond the first two pages, if applicable)
4. All other materials submitted should be ignored

Expert Reviewer Panel Scoring: The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

- Each bullet listed in the review criteria under the video submission and the four questions will receive a score between 1 and 6. The bullets have equal weight, therefore questions that have more review criteria bullets have a greater influence on the final score. The final score from an individual reviewer for a submission package equals the total sum of the scores for all the bullets. All reviewers' scores will then be averaged for a final reviewer score for the submission package. The final prize judge will consider reviewer scores when deciding the winners of the prize

Expert reviewers will also provide comments on the submissions they review. The Prize Administrator intends to provide comments to competitors after the winners are announced. These comments are intended to help competitors to continue to improve and iterate on their submissions. The comments are the opinions of the expert reviewers and do not represent the opinions of the U.S. Department of Energy.

- Interviews – The Prize Administrator, at its sole discretion, may decide to hold a short interview with a subset of the Ready! Contest competitors. The interviews would be held prior to the announcement of winners and would serve to help clarify questions the judge may have. Attending interviews is not required and interviews are not an indication of winning.

The Judge’s final determination of winners will take reviewer scores, interview findings (if applicable) and program policy factors listed in [section VI.14](#) into account.

8. WHO CAN WIN

To win the Ready! Contest, competitors must comply with the following eligibility requirements. By uploading a submission package, a competitor certifies that they comply with the eligibility requirements below. As soon as the Prize Administrator becomes aware that a competitor is not eligible to win the Ready! Contest, the competitor may be disqualified.

- A single competitor or team may only submit a maximum of three submissions. If more than three submissions are received from a single competitor or team, the three most recently submitted submissions will be considered.
- Individuals can compete alone or as a group. A representative of a private entity can also register the entity to compete.
 - An individual prize competitor (who is not competing as a member of a group), must be a United States citizen or a permanent resident.
 - A group of individuals, competing as one competitor, may win, provided that the online account holder of the submission is a United States citizen or a permanent resident.
- Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States.
- DOE employees and DOE support service contractors, individuals who have been employed by DOE, or working for DOE as a support service contractor within six months prior to the submission deadline of the Ready! Contest are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program.

- Non-DOE Federal entities and Federal employees are also not eligible to win any prize contests in this program.
- Employees of an organization that co-sponsors this program are not eligible to participate in any prize contest in this program.
- NREL employees directly involved in administration of this prize are not eligible to participate in any prize contest in this program; however, NREL and other national lab employees including laboratory researchers may participate. They can also win a prize contest provided they are not competing in their official capacity.
- If any team member is actively receiving funding from the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) at the Ready! submission deadline, SETO will review both any potential prize awards as well as other DOE funding and make a decision as to whether awarding a prize to individuals or entities already receiving funding is in line with the program policy factors stated later in these rules.
- Teams who won any contest in a previous round of the American-Made Solar Prize are discouraged from submitting the same or similar idea to a future round of the prize.

9. PROGRAM GOAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- The proposed solution is related to the solar power industry.
- Activities that are described in and support the submission package are performed in the U.S.
- The proposed solution represents an innovation that will move the industry beyond its current state.
- The proposed solution is not dependent on new, pending or proposed Federal, state or local government legislation, resolutions, appropriations, measures or policies.
- The proposed solution does not involve the lobbying of any Federal, state or local government office.
- The proposed solution is based on fundamental technical principles and is consistent with a basic understanding of the U.S. market economy.

- The submission content sufficiently confirms the competitor's intent to commercialize early-stage technology and establish a viable U.S.-based business in the near future with revenues that do not solely depend on licensing fees of intellectual property.

10. FIND HELP

Visit <https://americanmadechallenges.org/network.html> to review and contact the members of the American-Made Network that have signed up to help you succeed.

11. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Please read and comply with additional requirements in [Section VI](#). COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION VI MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

SET! CONTEST RULES

1. INTRODUCTION

The American-Made Solar Prize is a three-contest \$3 million cash prize competition designed to accelerate and sustain solar innovation by supporting entrepreneurs as they develop transformative technology ideas into concepts and then into early-stage prototypes ready for industry testing. It is the first step to set American entrepreneurs on a pathway of accelerated innovation so ideas can become products in months, not years.

The Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests are structured to provide the resources and environment necessary to create new solution concepts and develop them into early-stage prototypes in rapid learning cycles.

The Set! Contest is the second in this three-contest series and offers a total \$1 million in cash prizes. Only winners of the Ready! Contest can compete in the Set! Contest. These winners may be referred to as Ready! Contest winners or American-Made Solar Prize Semi-finalists. Winning the Set! Contest is required to compete in the Go! Contest. **The following rules are for competitors interested in the Set! Contest. “You” and “your” reference competitors in the contest.**

Set! Contest Prizes

- Up to 10 Winners
- \$1,000,000 in total cash prizes and \$750,000 in total vouchers. Each winner will receive a cash prize of \$100,000 and up to \$75,000 in vouchers.

2. GOAL

Build a proof-of-concept, perform a rigorous customer discovery process to prove the market demand for your innovation, show the viability of the business case, and establish an effective approach to validate and pilot test the innovation’s prototype.

3. PRIZES TO WIN

The Set! Contest offers up to ten cash prizes for \$100,000.

Competitors will also win up to \$75,000 in vouchers. Two thirds of voucher funds must be spent at a national lab and the remaining third may be spent at a national lab or a private facility of the winners’ choice. Winners will negotiate the scope of work to be performed under a voucher and can choose which national lab and/or private facility will perform the work. For additional information on how the voucher program will work, see <https://americanmadechallenges.org/vouchers.html>.

4. HOW TO ENTER

Complete a submission package online before the contest closes at <https://www.herox.com/SolarPrize>

5. SET! CONTEST PROCESS

The Set! Contest consists of five important steps:

1. **Progress and Submission** – Competitors work with the American-Made Network⁴ to advance their solution as much as possible. Competitors then update their Ready! Contest submission packages and submit online before the Set! Contest Demo Day.
2. **Preliminary Review** – All completed submissions will be assigned to subject matter expert reviewers. Reviewers will independently review each submission and then attend the demo day event and provide feedback.
3. **Demo Day** – Competitors will provide a live, in-person presentation to a panel of expert reviewers and members of the public. The details and agenda for the event will be provided 30 days in advance of the event. Reviewers' scores will be informed by the written materials as well as their assessments at demo day.
4. **Selection** – The Prize Administrator will select up to 10 winners. In assigning their scores, expert judges consider the following competitor activities prior to demo day.
 - **Proof-of-Concept:** Develop a proof-of-concept, which proves critical solution functionality, that can be demonstrated in a video, presentation and/or in person
 - **Customer Discovery:** Perform a rigorous customer discovery process to uncover key insights from entities that would be the eventual customers or end users of the product.
 - **Network Activation:** Cultivate a network of mentors and partners to help advance the proposed solution which can include national labs, members of the American-Made Network, funders, and private partners.
5. **Announcement** – On demo day the Prize Administrator will announce winners. After receiving the Set! Contest prize, winners can develop their solutions in accordance with their plan to compete in the Go! Contest.

⁴ The Prize Administrator has dedicated approximately \$1 million to recognize members of the American-Made Network who help competitors advance through the contests.

6. WHAT TO SUBMIT

A complete submission for the Set! Contest should include the following items.

Item	Content
Submission Package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120-second video (public) • Cover page content • Narrative answers to four questions about the <i>problem, solution, team, and plan</i> • Technical Assistance Request (public) • Summary power point slide (public) • Voucher Work Slide • Letters of commitment or support (optional)
Demo Day Pitch and Demo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set! Demo Day event live pitch, demonstration of your innovation's proof-of-concept, and judges Q&A

All documents must be uploaded as a PDF.

The following details provide more guidance on what information to provide and how judges evaluate and score your submission. Judges will evaluate your submissions by agreeing or disagreeing with assigned statements on a 1-6 scale, as shown below. These statements are the judging criteria.

1	2	3	4	5	6
strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree

Online public video - Your innovation's proof-of-concept in 120 seconds	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The real-world problem you are solving • Features and demonstration of your innovation's proof-of-concept • Who you are and why you have a competitive edge 	<p>Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The video explains a compelling real-world problem • The video demonstrates a proof-of-concept for an exciting innovation • The video shows a knowledgeable and skillful team

Videos must be posted publicly (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, etc.). Be creative and produce a video that conveys the required information in exciting and interesting ways but do not focus on time-consuming activities that only improve production values (i.e. technical elements such as décor,

lighting, and cinematic techniques). The American-Made Network may be able to help you with creating your video.

Cover page – List basic information about your submission	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project name • Innovation’s tagline (e.g. your mission in a few words) • Link to your 120-second video online • Key project members (e.g. names, contacts, and links to their LinkedIn profiles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keywords that best describe your solution (e.g., CdTe deposition, Microinverters) • Your city and state • The Connectors (up to 3) that significantly helped you advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable)⁵ • Other partners (if any)

You should answer each of the following four questions. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide a competitor’s responses. Competitors should exercise their own judgment on where to focus their 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 2,500 words. Up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs may also be included.

Narrative	
Question 1: <i>Problem</i> - What is the problem and why is solving it important?	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the problem, quantify its significance with metrics, and explain why now is the right time to solve it. • Explain why existing solutions are inadequate. Show how you know this is a significant problem using evidence-based validation (e.g. interviews with users and experts). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale The competitor quantifies a critical problem using important metrics and a compelling analysis of why now is the right time to address it. • The competitor’s assessment of current solutions and their limitations show a comprehensive understanding of the problem-solution space. • The competitor uses real-world evidence to validate key assumptions about the industry need.

⁵ Competitors may identify their Connectors up to two weeks after the close of the Set! Contest by sending an email to the prize administrator. This is only allowed if they did not identify their supporting Connector organizations in their cover page.

Question 2: *Innovation* - What is your solution and why will it be successful?

<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe your innovation and how it's better than existing products or emerging solutions.• Describe your innovation's unique value propositions and how it leads to a sustainable business with paying customers.• Describe your proof-of-concept, what it can demonstrate, and the critical failures that you resolved.• Describe who gave feedback on your proof-of-concept, why it's important, and what you learned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale The solution represents an innovative approach built on reasonable assumptions, valid technical foundation, and lessons learned from experience gained.• The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution that will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers.• The proof-of-concept resolves critical technical risks.• A rigorous customer discovery process was performed to uncover key insights and relevant feedback on the proof-of-concept.
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Question 3: *Team* - What have you done to date and what qualities give you a competitive edge?

<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce your team, explain how it came together and highlight the knowledge and skills that make it uniquely capable of achieving success.• Highlight your team's experience trying new things, solving difficult problems, and overcoming barriers to bring ideas to reality.• Describe what drives your team to realize this innovation despite difficulties.• Explain why winning the Set! Contest will substantively change the likelihood of your success.• Describe your efforts to create your proof-of-concept over the contest period and highlight key engagements, relationships and milestones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale The team's track record demonstrates notable entrepreneurial qualities such as adaptability, creativity, decisiveness and resourcefulness.• The team's drive, knowledge, and complementary skillsets provide a strong competitive edge towards realizing this solution in the near future.• Winning the Set! Contest significantly increases the team's chances of creating a viable business based on this solution.• A considerable amount of high-quality effort was put into building a proof-of-concept and advancing the innovation.• The team strives to get help and input from people with a broad range of experiences.
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Question 4: *Plan* – What is your plan to achieve your goals?

Suggested content you provide	Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the goals submitted in the Ready! Contest submission package and describe the actual outcomes. Update goals for the Go! Demo Day and define goals for the next 180 and 365 days (see special instructions below).• Describe your team’s readiness to meet your goals and the need for additional talent and/or resources.• Describe the specific functional improvements your prototype will demonstrate at the next demo day.• Provide a high-level budget plan to meet your goals for the next 180 days including the how you will leverage program resources, members of the American-Made Network, or other entities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The competitors are successfully meeting prior goals and demonstrating continued critical progress towards testing and validating the functionality and market demand of this innovation.• Stated Go! Contest Demo Day goals and 180- and 365-day goals are ambitious, risk-reducing and show a commitment to an accelerated solution development cycle.• The competitors’ approach to complete their proposed plan is well-reasoned and feasible.• The proposed plan effectively uses resources available in this program to advance the innovation.• This innovation, team, and plan should be strongly considered for a Set! Contest Prize (score a 1 or a 6).

Special instructions for Question 4

- Use only specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely (SMART) outcome-based goals, so that a neutral third-party can validate them (if possible).
 - For example: Demonstrate a definitive achievement of progress (e.g., ‘X letters on interest signed’ or ‘achieve X% efficiency’) **not** describing how you spent your time (e.g., ‘provide a report,’ ‘talk to customers,’ or ‘perform experiments’).
- SMART goals for the Go! Contest Demo Day should include demonstrating a functional prototype based on prior progress and learning and the identification of at least one committed pilot test partner.
- In defining your SMART goals, include quantified, risk-reducing, meaningful, practical, and testable interim milestones leading up to your Go! Contest Demo Day and 180- and 365-day goals.
- SMART goals should include assessment and feedback from many relevant stakeholders (e.g. possible investors, customers and experts in the solution space).
- The American-Made Network may be able to help you to formulate your SMART goals.

See [Section VI](#) for additional requirements. COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION VI MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

Technical Assistance Request (2 pages, including images, will be made public)

Provide a two page description of the unique challenges and needs a national lab, private facility, and/or member of the American-Made Network could potentially help resolve if you win the Go! Contest. The Prize Administrator will make this request broadly available so members of the American-Made Network can understand your needs and assist you through the voucher program or otherwise.

Submission Summary Slide (a PowerPoint slide, as a PDF, will be made public)

Make your own public-facing one-slide submission summary that contains technically specific details but can be understood by most people. There is no template so feel free to present the information as you see fit. Please make any text readable in a standard printout and conference room projection.

Voucher Work Slide (a PowerPoint slide, as a PDF)

Describe how you will use your voucher funds including the entities you hope to engage and what they will do with the voucher funds. Provide one slide per entity you hope to engage. No limit on the number of slides. Provide a slide for the national lab voucher and the private facility voucher if applicable.

Letters of Commitment or Support (optional)

Attach one-page letters (of support, intent, or commitment) from other relevant entities (e.g. potential users of the proposed innovation) to provide context. Letters of Support from partners or others that are critical to the success of your proposed solution will likely increase your score. General letters of support from parties that are not critical to the execution of your solution will likely not factor into your score. Please do not submit multi-page letters.

Demo Day Pitch and Demo

You are required to present and demonstrate your innovation's proof-of-concept, and answer questions in front of a panel of judges during a public demo day event. Judges review your submitted material before demo day and, based on your performance, finalize their scoring and select winners on demo day. Competitors are required to organize their own travel and accommodations to participate in the in-person demo day. Presence of at least one representative of team at the demo day is mandatory to be considered for a Set! Prize.

See [Section VI](#) for additional requirements. COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION VI MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

7. HOW WE SCORE

A qualified panel of judges, comprised of subject matter experts selected by the Prize Administrator, will score submissions according to the judging criteria defined in Section IV.6 'What to Submit.' In order to select winning teams, judges may not have personal or financial interests in, or be an employee, officer, director, or agent of any entity that is a registered participant in this contest; or have a familial or financial relationship with an individual who is a registered competitor.

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

Judges will consider the submission package and the demo day performance of each team. The judge will then score each bullet listed in the judging criteria under the video submission and the four questions. Each judging criteria bullet has equal weight, therefore, questions that have more bullets have a greater influence on the final score. The score from an individual judge for a submission package will be the total sum of the scores for all the bullets. All judges' scores will then be averaged for a final score for the submission package.

Final determination of winners will take judges scores and program policy factors listed in section VI.14 into account.

8. WHO CAN WIN

To be eligible to win the Set! Contest all competitors must comply with the following eligibility requirements. By uploading a submission package, a team certifies that it is in compliance with the eligibility requirements below. If the Prize Administrator becomes aware that a team or individual is not eligible to win the Set! Contest, that team may be removed from competition.

- Only winners of the Ready! Contest are eligible to compete in the Set! Contest.⁶
- Competitors must be a for-profit business entity, such as a corporation or other organization that is formed in and maintains a primary place of business in the United States. Individuals or groups of individuals are not eligible to compete. A for-profit business entity is only eligible to compete if it includes a winner of the Ready! Contest as an employee or owner.
- At least one representative from a competitor organization must be physically present at the competition demo day
- DOE employees and DOE support service contractors, individuals who have been employed by DOE, or working for DOE as a support service contractor within six months prior to the

⁶ For purposes of this requirement, winners are defined as the Key project members listed on the cover page of the team's winning Ready! submission package.

submission deadline of the Ready! Contest are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program.

- Non-DOE Federal entities and Federal employees, are also not eligible to win any prize contest in this program.
- Employees of an organization that co-sponsors this program are not eligible to participate in any prize contest in this program.
- NREL employees directly involved in administration of this prize are not eligible to participate in any prize contest in this program; however, NREL and other national lab employees including laboratory researchers may participate. They can also win a prize contest provided they are not competing in their official capacity.

9. PROGRAM GOAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- The proposed solution is related to the solar power industry.
- Activities that are described in and support the submission package are performed in the U.S.
- The proposed solution represents an innovation that will move the industry beyond its current state.
- The proposed solution is not dependent on new pending or proposed Federal, state or local government legislation, resolution, appropriation, measure or policy.
- The proposed solution does not involve the lobbying of any Federal, state or local government office.
- The proposed solution is based on fundamental technical principles and is consistent with a basic understanding of the U.S. market economy.
- The submission content sufficiently confirms the competitor's intent to commercialize early-stage technology and establish a viable U.S.-based business in the near future with revenues that do not solely depend on licensing fees of intellectual property.

10. FIND HELP

Visit <https://americanmadechallenges.org/network.html> to review and contact the members of the American-Made Network that have signed up to help you succeed.

11. ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

See [Section VI](#) for additional requirements. COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN THE SECTION VI MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

GO! CONTEST RULES

1. INTRODUCTION

The American-Made Solar Prize is a three-contest up to \$3 million cash prize competition designed to accelerate and sustain solar innovation by supporting entrepreneurs as they develop transformative technology ideas into concepts and then into early-stage prototypes ready for industry testing. It is the first step to set American entrepreneurs on a pathway of accelerated innovation so ideas can become products in months, not years.

Go! Contest Prizes

- Up to 2 Winners
- \$500,000 in cash prizes and up to \$75,000 in vouchers per winner

The Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests are structured to provide the resources and environment necessary to create new solution concepts and develop them into early-stage prototypes in rapid learning cycles.

The Go! Contest is the third in this three-contest series offering a total \$1 million in cash prizes. Only winners of the Set! Contest can compete in the Go! Contest. These winners are referred to as Set! Contest winners or American-Made Solar Prize Finalists. Winning the Set! Contest is required to be eligible to compete in the Go! Contest. **The following guidelines are for competitors interested in the Go! Contest. “You” and “your” reference competitors in the contest.**

2. GOAL

Competitors will identify pilot test partner(s) and use continual customer and stakeholder feedback to substantially advance their solution from proof-of-concept to a prototype.

3. PRIZES TO WIN

The Go! Contest offers two \$500,000 cash prizes and two \$75,000 vouchers.

\$50,000 of the voucher funds must be spent at a national lab and the remaining \$25,000 may be spent at a national lab or a private facility of the winners’ choice. Winners will negotiate the scope of work to be performed under a voucher and can choose which national lab and/or private facility will perform the work. For additional information on how the voucher program will work, see <https://americanmadechallenges.org/vouchers.html>.

4. HOW TO ENTER

Complete a submission package online before the contest closes at <https://www.herox.com/SolarPrize>

5. GO! CONTEST PROCESS

The process to compete for, and win, the Go! Contest consists of six important steps:

1. **Progress and Submission** – Competitors work with the American-Made Network⁷ to advance their solution as much as possible and identify a pilot test partner. Competitors then update their Ready! or Set! Contest submission packages and submit online before the Go! Demo Day.
2. **Preliminary Review** – All completed submissions will be assigned to subject matter expert judges. Judges will independently review each submission and then attend the demo day event and judge.
3. **Demonstration** – Competitors will provide a live, in-person presentation to a panel of expert judges and members of the public. The details and agenda for the event will be provided 30 days in advance of the event.
4. **Demo Day Assessment** – Judges will apply the judging criteria not only to the submitted materials, but also to the performance during the live demo and their assessment of the prototype demonstration. Their scores will be informed by the written materials as well as their assessments at demo day. In assigning their scores, expert judges consider the following competitor activities prior to demo day.
 - **Prototype Development:** The completion of a prototype that incorporates lessons learned and feedback from potential users that can be demonstrated in a video, presentation and/or in person.
 - **Pilot-Test Partnering:** The development of committed pilot partner as evidenced by a legally binding agreement to conduct a pilot test. ^{8,9}
 - **Network Development:** The solidification of a core network of mentors and partners to work with to help advance the proposed solution which can include national labs, members of the American-Made Network, funders, and private partners.

⁷ The Prize Administrator has dedicated approximately \$1 million to recognize members of the American-Made Network who help competitors advance through the contests.

⁸ Enforceability of the pilot test agreement between the competitor and the pilot test partner may be contingent on the competitor winning the Go! Contest.

⁹ 'Pilot test' is not rigidly defined. It is up to the Go! Competitors to produce the most compelling submission possible to show a real world test of the proposed solution with a relevant third party customer or user in need of the solution.

- **Post-Contest Planning:** The development of a long term plan for the ongoing success of the effort. Specifically a compelling case that there is, or will soon be, sufficient funding in place to keep the effort going beyond this prize contest.

5. **Selection** – During demo day, the scores will be tabulated and up to 2 winners will be selected.
6. **Announcement** – On demo day the Prize Administrator will announce winners. After receiving the Go! Contest prize, winners can develop their solutions in accordance with their plan to compete in the Go! Contest.

6. WHAT TO SUBMIT

A complete submission package for the Go! Contest should include the following items:

Item	Content
Submission Package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120-second video (public) • Cover page content • Narrative answers to four questions about the <i>problem, solution, team, and plan</i> • Summary Power Point slide (public) • Voucher Work Slide • Letters of commitment (mandatory) and support (optional)
Demo Day Pitch and Demo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go! Demo Day event live pitch, demonstration of your innovation’s prototype, and judges Q&A

All documents must be uploaded as a PDF.

The following details provide more guidance on what information to provide and how judges evaluate and score your submission. Judges will evaluate your submissions by agreeing or disagreeing with assigned statements on a 1-6 scale, as shown below. These statements are the judging criteria.

1	2	3	4	5	6
strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree

Online public video – Your innovation’s prototype in 120 seconds

<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The real-world problem you are solving • Demo of your innovation’s prototype features • Who you are and why you have a competitive edge 	<p>Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The video explains a compelling real-world problem • The video features a prototype for an exciting innovation • The video shows a knowledgeable and skillful team
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Videos must be posted publicly (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, etc.). Be creative and produce a video that conveys the required information in exciting and interesting ways but do not focus on time-consuming activities that only improve production values (i.e. technical elements such as décor, lighting, and cinematic techniques). The American-Made Network may be able to help you with creating your video.

Cover page – List basic information about your submission	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project name • Solution’s tagline (e.g. your mission in a few words) • Link to your 120-second video online • Key project members (e.g. names, contacts, and links to their LinkedIn profiles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keywords that best describe your solution (e.g., CdTe deposition, Microinverters) • Your city and state • The Connectors (up to 3) that significantly helped you advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable)¹⁰ • Other partners (if any)

You should answer each of the following four questions. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide a competitor’s responses. Competitors should exercise their own judgment on where to focus their 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 2,500 words. Up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs may also be included.

Narrative
Question 1: <i>Problem</i> – What is the problem and why is solving it important?

¹⁰ Competitors may identify their Connectors up to two weeks after the close of the Go! Contest by sending an email to the prize administrator. This is only allowed if they did not identify their supporting Connector organizations in their cover page.

<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the problem, quantify its significance with metrics, and explain why now is the right time to solve it. • Explain why existing solutions are inadequate. Show how you know this is a significant problem using evidence-based validation (e.g. interviews with users and experts). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale The competitor quantifies a critical problem using important metrics and a compelling analysis of why now is the right time to address it. • The competitor’s assessment of current solutions and their limitations show a comprehensive understanding of the problem-solution space. • The competitor uses real-world evidence to validate key assumptions about the industry need.
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Question 2: *Innovation* – What is your solution and why will it be successful?

<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your innovation and how it’s better than existing products or emerging solutions. • Describe your innovation’s unique value propositions and how it leads to a sustainable business with paying customers. • Describe your prototype, how it is different from your proof-of-concept, and critical failures that you resolved. • Describe who gave feedback on your prototype, why it’s important, and what you learned. • Describe your committed pilot test partner(s), their interest in your solution, level of commitment, and expected pilot testing outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale The solution represents an innovative approach built on reasonable assumptions, valid technical foundation, and lessons learned from experience gained. • The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution that will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. • The prototype is a significant improvement from the proof-of-concept, resolves critical risks, and incorporates lessons learned. • Significant and relevant feedback was provided on the prototype. • The committed pilot test partner has the need for, and capability to, pilot test and potentially utilize this innovation.
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Question 3: *Team* – What have you done to date and what qualities give you a competitive edge?

<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce your team, explain how it came together and highlight the knowledge and skills that make it uniquely capable of achieving success. • Highlight your team’s experience trying new things, solving difficult problems, and overcoming barriers to bring ideas to reality. • Describe what drives your team to realize this innovation despite difficulties. • Explain why winning the Go! Contest will substantively change the likelihood of your success. • Describe your efforts to create your prototype over the contest period and highlight key engagements, relationships, and milestones. • Describe how you identified your committed pilot test partner and discuss the rationale behind working with this partner versus others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale The team’s track record demonstrates notable entrepreneurial qualities such as adaptability, creativity, decisiveness and resourcefulness. • The team’s drive, knowledge, and complementary skillsets provide a strong competitive edge towards realizing this solution in the near future. • Winning the Go! Contest significantly boosts the team’s chances of creating a viable business based on this solution. • A considerable amount of high-quality effort was put into building a prototype and identifying a committed pilot test partner to rapidly advance the innovation. • The team strived to get help and input from people with a broad range of experiences.
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Question 4: *Plan* – What is your plan to achieve your goals?

<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide your previous contest goals and actual outcomes, and define goals for the next 90, 180, and 365 days (see special instructions below). • Describe the specific functional improvements your prototype will demonstrate at Go! Demo Day. • Describe the discrete improvements and functionality to the prototype you plan to implement over the next 90 and 180 days. • Describe the details of the pilot test (strategy, timeline, outcomes, critical test, etc.). • Provide a high-level budget plan to meet your goals for the next 180 days including how to leverage program resources, members of the American-Made Network, or other entities. 	<p>Each statement is scored on a 1-6 scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor is successfully meeting prior goals and achieving new stated goals, demonstrating continued critical progress towards testing and validating the functionality and market demand of this innovation. • Stated 90- and 180-day goals are ambitious, risk-reducing and show a commitment to an accelerated solution development cycle. • The approach to complete the planned pilot test, and advance the innovation forward beyond this contest, is well-reasoned and feasible. • The proposed plan effectively uses resources available in this program to advance the innovation. • This innovation, team, and plan should be strongly considered for a Go! Contest Prize (score a 1 or a 6).
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Special instructions for Question 4

- Use only specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely (SMART) outcome-based goals, so that a neutral third-party can validate them (if possible).
 - For example: Demonstrate a definitive achievement of progress (e.g., ‘X letters on interest signed’ or ‘achieve X% efficiency’) **not** describing how you spent your time (e.g., ‘provide a report,’ ‘talk to customers,’ or ‘perform experiments’).
- SMART goals for the next 90 and 180 days should include critical goals for the pilot test including plans to improve the prototype.
- SMART goals should include assessment and feedback from many relevant stakeholders (e.g., possible investors, customers and experts in the solution space).
- Seek help from members of the American-Made Network to help you to formulate your SMART goals.

Submission Summary Slide (a PowerPoint slide, as a PDF, public)

Make your own public-facing one-slide submission summary that contains technically specific details but is easily understood by most people. There is no template so feel free to present the information as you see fit. Please make any text readable in a standard printout and conference room projection.

Voucher Work Proposal Slide (a PowerPoint slide, as a PDF, public)

Describe how you will use your voucher funds including the entities you hope to engage and what they will do with the voucher funds. Provide one slide per entity you hope to engage. No limit on the number of slides. Provide a slide for the national lab voucher and the private facility voucher if applicable.

Letters of Commitment (mandatory) or Support (optional)

Competitors must attach letters commitment from relevant entities (i.e. end users of the proposed solution) as an appendix. A legally binding letter of commitment to pilot test is required and must be provided.

Demo Day Pitch and Demo

You are required to present and demonstrate your innovation's prototype, and answer questions in front of a panel of judges during a public demo day event. Judges review your submitted material before demo day and, based on your performance, finalize their scoring and select winners on demo day. Competitors are required to organize their own travel and accommodations to participate in the in-person demo day. Presence at the demo day is mandatory to be considered for a Go! Prize.

See [Section VI](#) for additional requirements. COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION VI MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

7. HOW WE SCORE

A qualified panel of judges, comprised of subject matter experts selected by the Prize Administrator, will score submissions according to the judging criteria defined in Section V.6 'What to Submit.' In order to select winning teams, judges may not have personal or financial interests in, or be an employee, officer, director, or agent of any entity that is a registered participant in this contest; or have a familial or financial relationship with an individual who is a registered competitor.

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

Judges will consider the submission package and the demo day performance of each team. The judge will then score each bullet listed in the judging criteria under the video submission and the four

questions. Each judging criteria bullet has equal weight, therefore, questions that have more bullets have a greater influence on the final score. The score from an individual judge for a submission package will be the total sum of the scores for all the bullets. All judges' scores will then be averaged for a final score for the submission package.

Final determination of winners will take judges scores and program policy factors listed in [Section VI.14](#) into account.

8. WHO CAN WIN

To be eligible to win the Go! Contest all competitors must comply with the following eligibility requirements. By uploading a submission package, a team certifies that it is in compliance with the eligibility requirements below. If the Prize Administrator becomes aware that a team or individual is not eligible to win the Go! Contest, that team may be removed from competition.

- Only the winning for-profit business entity of the Set! Contest are eligible to compete in the Go! Contest.
- A committed pilot test partner must be part of the submission package as evidenced by the inclusion of a legally binding commitment in the submission package. The legally binding commitment must be from an entity that is not represented by a team member on the submission. DOE and NREL will not provide a preliminary review. Teams should submit the strongest possible documentation to meet this requirement, such as a signed contract, purchase order, or a signed letter from a pilot partner with a guaranteed commitment to pilot test without contingencies. Letters indicating general support, future interest, and contingencies on testing; MOUs; and unsigned agreements are unlikely to meet this requirement. A team will not be eligible to win the Go! contest if this requirement is deemed unfulfilled. An agreement will be considered if the agreement is contingent upon a party winning the Go! contest.
- Competitors must be a for-profit business entity, such as a corporation or other organization that is formed in and maintains a primary place of business in the United States. Individuals or groups of individuals are not eligible to compete.
- At least one representative from a competitor organization must be physically present at the competition demo day.
- DOE employees and DOE support service contractors, individuals who have been employed by DOE, or working for DOE as a support service contractor within six months prior to the submission deadline of the Ready! Contest are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program.
- Non-DOE Federal entities and Federal employees, are also not eligible to win any prize contest in this program.

- Employees of an organization that co-sponsors this program are not eligible to participate in any prize contest in this program.
- NREL employees directly involved in administration of this prize are not eligible to participate in any prize contest in this program; however, NREL and other national lab employees including laboratory researchers may participate. They can also win a prize contest, provided they are not competing in their official capacity.

9. PROGRAM GOAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- The proposed solution is related to the solar power industry.
- Activities that are described in and support the submission package are performed in the US
- The proposed solution represents an innovation that will move the industry beyond its current state.
- The proposed solution is not dependent on new pending or proposed Federal, state or local government legislation, resolution, appropriation, measure or policy.
- The proposed solution does not involve the lobbying of any Federal, state or local government office.
- The proposed solution is based on fundamental technical principles and is consistent with a basic understanding of the U.S. market economy.
- The submission content sufficiently confirms the competitor's intent to commercialize early-stage technology and establish a viable U.S.-based business in the near future with revenues that do not solely depend on licensing fees of intellectual property.

10. FIND HELP

Visit <https://americanmadechallenges.org/network.html> to review and contact the members of the American-Made Network that have signed up to help you succeed.

11. ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

See [Section VI](#).

ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. UNIVERSAL CONTEST REQUIREMENTS

Your submission for the Ready! Set! and Go! Contest is subject to following terms and conditions:

- You must post the final content of your submission or upload the submission form online at <https://www.herox.com/SolarPrize> before the Ready! Set and Go! Contests close. Late submissions or any other form of submission do not qualify.
- The video submission, summary slide, the technical assistance request will be made public.
- The cover page, narrative, and letters of commitment/support, are not intended to be made public, however, see section VI.11 regarding the Freedom of Information Act.
- You agree to release your submission video under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).
- You must include all the required submission's elements. 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. Scanned hand written submissions will be disqualified.
- Competitors will be disqualified if during any engagement with the Solar Prize, including but not limited to the submission, the online forum, e-mails to the Prize Administrator, or other forms of communication that contain any matter that, in the discretion of DOE, is indecent, 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 contests described in this document, these rules will form a valid and binding agreement between you and the U.S. Department of Energy and is in addition to the existing HeroX Terms of Use for all purposes relating to these contest. You should print and keep a copy of these rules. These provisions only apply to the contests described here and no other contests on the HeroX platform or anywhere else.
- The Prize Administrator, when feasible, may give competitors an opportunity to fix non-substantive mistakes or errors in their submission packages.
- Ready Contest competitors with completed submissions will be required to view the content of ten peer submissions and rank two sets of five submissions. Competitors will be asked to rank the submissions 1 through 5 based on the extent to which the submission represent an impactful solution to a real-world problem faced by the solar industry, with 1 being most

preferred submission and 5 being the least. Failure to comply may subject a competitor to disqualification.

2. VOUCHER PAIRING SYSTEM

The Prize Administrator will coordinate with the other DOE national laboratories and cultivate relationships with private fabrication facilities that are willing to work with competitors. All Ready! and Set! Contest winners will have their public materials (video pitch, technical assistance request and summary slide) distributed to these entities. Facilities in the American-Made Network that are interested in working with competitors may submit a one-slide proposal to the Ready! and Set! contest winners for consideration. Ready! and Set! Contest winners will then include their planned use of voucher funds as part of the Set! and Go! Contest submission. Winners of the Set! and Go! Contest will then be able to negotiate specifics with either their lab partner or private facility and quickly begin voucher work.

Although winners can choose where they spend their voucher funding, two thirds of voucher funds must be spent at a national lab and the remaining third may be spent at a national lab or a private facility of the winners' choice. In the case of a national laboratory, the funds will be provided directly to the lab on behalf of the winner to conduct a mutually-agreed-on scope-of-work between the lab and the winner. When vouchers are used at a non-national laboratory facility, the winners will be reimbursed after the voucher work is complete. Voucher funds may not be redeemed for cash or transferred.

Further details about the voucher process are provided at the vouchers website:
<https://americanmadechallenges.org/vouchers.html>

3. VERIFICATION FOR PAYMENTS:

The Prize Administrator will verify the identity and the role of a participant potentially qualified to receive the prizes. Receiving a prize payment is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements contained herein. The Prize Administrator will notify winning competitors using provided email contact information after the date that results are announced. Each competitor (or parent/guardian if under 18 years of age), will be required to sign and return to the Prize Administrator, within 30 days of the date the notice is sent, 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 cannot be contacted; (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.

4. 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 as they deem appropriate. SUBMISSION RIGHTS

The public videos in this contest must be submitted and released to the public under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

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 purpose. 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 the DOE, administrator, and judges 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 competitor’s name and, as applicable, the names of competitor’s team members and organization, which participated in the submission on the contest website indefinitely.

By entering, Competitor represents and warrants that:

1. Competitor’s entire submission is an original work by competitor and competitor has not included third-party content (such as writing, text, graphics, artwork, logos, photographs, dialogue from plays, 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 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 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 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 their parent or legal guardian) and competitor may be asked by 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.

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 applicant or that the applicant 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 upon any other third party rights of which the applicant is aware; and that the submission is free of malware.

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 Contest 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 awards is contingent upon the availability of appropriations.

7. RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

The U.S. Department of Energy is solely responsible for administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest.

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. Competitors and potential winners may be required to show proof of being the authorized account holder.

The Prize Administrator will not arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters between team members or any disputes between teams.

8. PUBLICITY

The winners of these prizes (collectively, "Winners") will be featured on the 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.

9. LIABILITY

Upon registration, all participants agree to assume and, thereby, have assumed any and all risks of injury or loss in connection with or in any way arising from participation in this contest, development of any submission. 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 Director of the Solar Energy Technology Office, the Director has determined that no liability insurance will be required of competitors to compete in this competition per 15 USC 3719(i)(2).

10. RECORDS RETENTION AND FOIA

All materials submitted to DOE as part of a submission become DOE records. Any confidential commercial information contained in a submission should be designated at the time of submission.

Applicants are encouraged to employ protective markings in the following manner:

The cover sheet of the submission must be marked as follows and identify the specific pages containing trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential:

Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data:

Pages [list applicable pages] of this document may contain trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential, and is exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes. The Government may use or disclose any information that is not appropriately marked or otherwise restricted, regardless of source. [End of Notice]

The header and footer of every page that contains trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged must be marked as follows: "May contain trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential and exempt from public disclosure."

In addition, each line or paragraph containing trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential must be enclosed in 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 FOIA representative prior to the release of materials.

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.

12. GENERAL CONDITIONS

DOE reserves the right to cancel, suspend, and/or modify the contest, 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 contests, as determined by DOE in its sole discretion, DOE may cancel the contest.

Although DOE indicates in the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests that it will select up to several winners for each contest, 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.

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

13. PROGRAM POLICY FACTORS

While the scores of the expert reviewers will be carefully considered, it is the role of the Prize Administrator to maximize the impact of contest 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 in a variety of solar markets.
- Whether the use of additional DOE funds and provided resources continue to be, 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 level of industry involvement and demonstrated ability to accelerate commercialization and overcome key market barriers.

- The degree to which the submission is likely to lead to increased employment and manufacturing in the United States or provide other economic benefit 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 efforts or projects, which, when taken together, will best achieve the research goals and objectives.
- 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 for the demonstration of technologies and research applications to facilitate technology transfer.

14. DEFINITIONS

Prize Administrator means both the Alliance for Sustainable Energy operating in its capacity under the Management and Operating Contract for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), and the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technology 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 contest matters rests with the Director of the Solar Energy Technology Office.

Connector or Connector Organization means an entity that seeks to support the efforts of the competitors. These must be U.S. based organizations that have the capacity to connect competitors to mentoring, business resources, manufacturing resources, or introduce them to possible sources of funding. This definition is intentionally broad so that many different types of entities are able to participate. Connectors will be earn recognition rewards based upon their support of the competitors. Further details can be found at: <https://americanmadechallenges.org/network.html>

Power Connector means a subset of Connectors that receive contracts from the Alliance for Sustainable Energy to play a more substantial role in the competition and receive funds to expand and amplify the American-Made Challenges: Solar Prize. Not only will these stakeholders work to identify talent and support participants in the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests, they will partner with NREL to envision and execute a long-term sustainable strategy for scaling the American-Made Challenges.

Voucher Funding – Vouchers are part of the Prizes for the Set! and Go! Contests. In the case of a national laboratory, the funds will be provided directly to the lab on behalf of the winner to conduct a mutually agreed upon scope of work between the lab and the winner. When vouchers are used at a

non-national laboratory facility, the winners will be reimbursed after the voucher work is complete. For further information please see: <https://americanmadechallenges.org/vouchers.html>.