



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

American-Made Solar Prize 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 April 14, 2021, for Round 4 of the Solar Prize.

These rules reflect an update in IV. Go! Contest Rules, 8. Who Can Win regarding the legally binding commitment requirement.

Note: These Round 4 rules have been changed and updated since previous rounds of the Solar Prize. You should read them to ensure you have the most up-to-date information.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	PROGRAM SUMMARY	4
1.	INTRODUCTION: A TWO-PRONGED APPROACH	4
2.	BACKGROUND	4
3.	CONTESTS: READY! – SET! – GO!	5
4.	AMERICAN-MADE NETWORK	7
5.	IMPORTANT DATES.....	9
II.	READY! CONTEST RULES	10
1.	INTRODUCTION.....	10
2.	GOAL.....	10
3.	PRIZES TO WIN	10
4.	HOW TO ENTER	10
5.	READY! CONTEST PROCESS	10
6.	WHAT TO SUBMIT	11
7.	HOW WE SCORE	16
8.	WHO CAN WIN.....	17
9.	PROGRAM GOAL REQUIREMENTS.....	20
10.	FIND HELP	20
11.	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS	20
III.	SET! CONTEST RULES	21
1.	INTRODUCTION.....	21
2.	GOAL.....	21
3.	PRIZES TO WIN	21
4.	HOW TO ENTER	22
5.	SET! CONTEST PROCESS	22
6.	WHAT TO SUBMIT	22
7.	HOW WE SCORE	29
8.	WHO CAN WIN.....	29
9.	PROGRAM GOAL REQUIREMENTS.....	31
10.	FIND HELP	32
11.	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS	32
IV.	GO! CONTEST RULES	33
1.	INTRODUCTION.....	33
2.	GOAL.....	33

3.	PRIZES TO WIN	34
4.	HOW TO ENTER	34
5.	GO! CONTEST PROCESS	34
6.	WHAT TO SUBMIT	35
7.	HOW WE SCORE	41
8.	WHO CAN WIN.....	41
9.	PROGRAM GOAL REQUIREMENTS.....	44
10.	FIND HELP.....	44
11.	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS	45
V.	APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS	46
1.	UNIVERSAL CONTEST REQUIREMENTS	46
2.	VOUCHER PAIRING SYSTEM.....	47
3.	VERIFICATION FOR PAYMENTS	47
4.	TEAMS AND SINGLE-ENTITY AWARDS.....	48
5.	SUBMISSION RIGHTS	48
6.	COPYRIGHT	48
7.	CONTEST SUBJECT TO APPLICABLE LAW	49
8.	RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES.....	49
9.	PUBLICITY	49
10.	LIABILITY	49
11.	RECORDS RETENTION AND FOIA	50
12.	PRIVACY	50
13.	GENERAL CONDITIONS	50
14.	PROGRAM POLICY FACTORS	51
15.	DEFINITIONS	52
VI.	APPENDIX 2: FOREIGN WORK REQUIREMENT	53

I. PROGRAM SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION: A TWO-PRONGED APPROACH

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

Competitors in the Ready!, Set!, and 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 American-Made Network will support competitors' efforts by connecting them with the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) national laboratories, including their world-class research facilities and experts, as well as private-sector stakeholders that are already actively assisting entrepreneurs to bring innovative ideas and concepts to market. This community includes incubators, investors, philanthropists, fabrication facilities, and seasoned industry leaders, all of whom will provide technical insight, business development expertise, product validation, and other support. Throughout the competition, these diverse entities 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 energize 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 the 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 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, but they will also be connected with mentoring, training, and other services from the American-Made Network community, resulting in the long-term success of 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 an impactful product and business.

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 laboratories, 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 their proof-of-concept will solve an important problem in the solar industry and that it will also have a significant demand when 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 \$75,000 in vouchers that may be redeemed at national laboratories and qualified fabrication facilities to further develop their solution. They will then be eligible to compete in the Go! Contest. 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 an additional \$75,000 in vouchers redeemable at national laboratories and qualified fabrication facilities. Winners of the Go! Contest will be chosen by a panel of reviewers during a national 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 \$100,000 in cash and \$75,000 in vouchers
3. Go!	2	\$1,000,000 in cash prizes and \$150,000 in vouchers with each winner receiving \$500,000 in cash and \$75,000 in vouchers

To learn more and sign up, go to <https://www.herox.com/SolarPrizeRound4>.

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 people, resources, financing, perspectives, 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 (NREL):** DOE has partnered with NREL to administer the American-Made Solar Prize. NREL, as the administrator, will help competitors locate and leverage the vast array of national laboratory 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 they may use to fund work at national laboratories and other facilities to accelerate the production, improvement, or validation of their prototypes. Entities interested in helping competitors through the voucher program can visit the following site for details:
<https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/connect.html#vouchers>.
3. **Connectors:** Connectors are entities capable of identifying and recruiting contest participants as well as supporting competitors on their innovation journey. 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 nonfederal 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 that support participants that win the Ready! or compete in the 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
Mobilize	Up to 1 per team and 20 teams for Ready!	\$100,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that recruit and/or support competitors who go on to win the Ready! Contest.
Set! Mentor	Up to 3 per team and 10 teams for Set!	\$75,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by competitors who win the Set! Contest.
	Up to 3 per team and 10 teams for Set!	\$25,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by competitors who do not win the Set! Contest.
Go! Mentor	Up to 3 per team and 2 teams for Go!	\$20,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that are identified as significant supports by competitors who win the Go! Contest.
	Up to 3 per team and 8 teams for Go!	\$40,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by competitors who do not 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 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 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

- Providing repeated support of contests with an increasingly robust American-Made Network and expanded funding from nongovernmental 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 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.

II. READY! CONTEST RULES

1. INTRODUCTION

The American-Made Solar Prize is a three-contest series with up to \$3 million in cash prizes 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.

Ready! Contest Prizes

- Up to 20 Winners
- Up to \$1,000,000 distributed equally among each winner with \$50,000 per winner

The Ready! Contest is the first in this three-contest series with a total of \$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 Semifinalists) 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.**

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/SolarPrizeRound4> 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 Network to gain help

and support, leveraging the potential for recognition payments to the helping entities.¹ 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, which 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** – After the Semifinalists are publicly announced, the Prize Administrator notifies winners and requests the necessary information to distribute cash prizes. 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:

Note: Portions of the submission package are made available to the public. These have been denoted as such, and DOE does not intend to release the remaining parts of the submission to the public. See [Appendix 1](#) for additional details.

- 90-second video (public)
- Cover page content
- Narrative answers four questions about the *problem, solution, team, and plan* (not to exceed 2,500 words)
- Technical assistance request (public)
- One summary PowerPoint slide (public)
- Letters of commitment or support (optional).

All documents must be uploaded as a PDF.

¹ The Prize Administrator has dedicated approximately \$260,000 to recognize members of the American-Made Network that help competitors advance through the contests.

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?	
Suggested content you provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The real-world problem you are solving • Your solution and why it is transformational • Who you are and why you have a competitive edge. 	Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale <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. Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you with creating your video.

Cover Page – List basic information about your submission <i>Template²: https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround4/resources</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project name • Innovation tagline (e.g., your mission in a few words) • Link to your 90-second video online • Key project members (names, contacts, and links to their LinkedIn profiles) • Keywords that best describe your solution (e.g., perovskite deposition, microinverters) • Your city and state • The partners, affiliates, and Connector³ that significantly helped you⁴ advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable).

² Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.

³ See description of Connector in [I. Program Summary](#).

⁴ Remember that you can incentivize Connectors help by agreeing to identify them here to receive a cash reward for that help if you win the Ready! competition. See the description of Recognition Rewards in [I. Program Summary](#) and the [Connector Guidelines](#) for details.

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**, not including captions, figures/graphs, or references. A word count must be included at the end of your submission (see template for details). You may also include **up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs**. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

Narrative Max 2,500 Words and 5 Supporting Images or Figures (PDF) Template⁵ : https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround4/resources	
Question 1: <i>Problem</i> - What is the problem and why is solving it important?	
Suggested content you provide <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. Be specific to the problem space that your innovation addresses.⁶ Explain why existing solutions are inadequate. Be as technically specific as possible to your innovation area, providing examples where possible. Show how you know this is a significant problem using evidence-based validation (e.g., interviews with users, case studies, literature). 	Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 shows 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?	
Suggested content you provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how your solution is better than the existing products or emerging solutions described in Question 1. Describe your innovation in as much detail as possible. 	Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient technical detail was provided to understand the underlying principles of operation of the innovation. The solution represents an innovative approach built on reasonable assumptions, valid technical foundations, and lessons learned from other notable efforts in this

⁵ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.

⁶ It is suggested to avoid providing general motivation around the rapid growth of the solar industry or other high-level trends with which the reviewers are well versed in.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how your technical innovation compares against the current state-of-the-art or commercially relevant competition. • 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>space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Question 3: <i>Accomplishments and Team</i> - What have you done to date and what qualities give you a competitive edge?</p>	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your efforts to advance your solution concept since the announcement of the Prize contest or prior and highlight key milestones achieved. • Explain why winning the Ready! Contest will substantively change the likely outcome for the proposed solution. • 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 and its track record that makes it likely to succeed in the Prize Competition. What experience do you have 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. 	<p>Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A considerable amount of high-quality effort was put into defining and advancing the proposed solution. • Winning the Ready! Contest will significantly increase the team's chances of creating a viable business based on this solution. • The team's track record demonstrates notable entrepreneurial qualities such as adaptability, creativity, decisiveness, and resourcefulness. • This team has the knowledge, experience, and determination to transform their proposed solution into a viable business in the near future.
<p>Question 4: <i>Plan</i> – What is your plan to achieve your goals?</p>	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <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.5) and a one-year goal (see special instructions below). • Describe your team's readiness to meet your 	<p>Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale</p> <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 toward developing, testing,

<p>goals and if your team requires additional talent and resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). 	<p>and validating the functionality and market demand of this innovation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
 - For example: Demonstrate a definitive achievement of progress (e.g., “X letters of interest signed” or “achieve X% efficiency”), **not** describe 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 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, and entities that would be the eventual customers or end users of the product.).
- Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you formulate your SMART goals.

Technical Assistance Request (two-page PDF, including images, will be made public)
<p>Provide a two-page description of the areas where you need assistance to realize your solution. Consider the unique capabilities that the national laboratories, a private facility, and/or members of the American-Made Network could provide to you to resolve these barriers. 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.</p>

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 or strategic manufacturing partners) 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 multipage letters.

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

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

7. HOW WE SCORE

1. Peer-Ranking:

In this contest, each competitor is expected to rank 10 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 are seeking community input into the judging process.

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

The HeroX platform will randomly assign 2 sets of 5 submissions (total of 10) to each competitor who completed a submission. Competitors will only be able to view the publicly facing portion of the submission packages and will not have access to the 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 90-second public video (ignore any material over the first 90 seconds, if applicable)

2. The Summary Slide (ignore any material beyond the first slide, if applicable)
3. The Technical Assistance Request (ignore any material beyond the first two pages, if applicable)
4. All other materials submitted should be disregarded.

2. 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 narrative 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.

Note: 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 DOE.

- 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 [Appendix 1](#) 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.

In keeping with the goal of growing a community of innovators, competitors are encouraged to form multidisciplinary teams while developing their concept. The HeroX platform provides a space where parties interested in collaboration can post information about themselves and learn about others who are also interested in competing in this contest.

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.

Eligibility Requirements

- Individuals, private entities (for-profits and nonprofits), nonfederal government entities (such as states, counties, tribes, municipalities, and academic institutions) are subject to the following requirements:
 - An individual prize competitor (who is not competing as a member of a group) must be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident.
 - A group of individuals competing as one team may win, provided that the online account holder of the submission is a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident. Individuals competing as part of a team may participate if they are legally authorized to work in the United States.
 - Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States with majority domestic ownership and control.
 - If an entity seeking to compete does not have majority domestic ownership and control, EERE may consider issuing a waiver of that eligibility requirement where (1) the entity submits a compelling justification; (2) the entity is incorporated in and maintains a primary place of business in the United States; and (3) the entity otherwise meets the eligibility requirements. EERE may require additional information before making a determination on the waiver request. There are no rights to appeal DOE's decision on the waiver request. See [Appendix 2](#) for more information on the waiver process.
 - Academic institutions must be based in the United States.
- DOE employees, employees of sponsoring organizations, members of their immediate families (i.e., spouses, children, siblings, or parents), and persons living in the same household as such persons, whether or not related, are not eligible to participate in the Prize.
- Employees of an organization that cosponsors this program are not eligible to participate in any portion of the Prize.
- Federal entities and federal employees, acting within the scope of their employment, are also not eligible to participate in any portion of the Prize.
- DOE national laboratory employees, acting within the scope of their employment, cannot compete in the Prize. NREL employees directly involved in administration of this Prize are not eligible to participate in any prize contest in any program.
- Entities and individuals publicly banned from doing business with the U.S. government, such as entities and individuals debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in federal programs, are not eligible to compete.

- Entities identified on a Department of Homeland Security Binding Operational Directives as an entity publicly banned from doing business with the U.S. government are not eligible to compete. See <https://cyber.dhs.gov/directives/>.
- Entities and individuals identified as a restricted party on one or more screening lists of Department of Commerce, State, and the Treasury are not eligible to compete. See Consolidated Screening List.
- This Prize is expected to positively impact U.S. economic competitiveness. Participation in a foreign government talent recruitment program⁷ could conflict with this objective by resulting in unauthorized transfer of scientific and technical information to foreign government entities. Therefore, individuals participating in foreign government talent recruitment programs of foreign countries of risk⁸ are not eligible to compete. Further, teams that include individuals participating in foreign government talent recruitment programs of foreign countries of risk are not eligible to compete.
- To be eligible, an individual authorized to represent the competitor must agree to and sign the following statement upon registration with HeroX:
 - I am submitting this submission package as part of my participation in this Prize. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this Prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the Official Rules document. I understand false statements or misrepresentations may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

⁷ In general, foreign government talent recruitment programs include any foreign-state-sponsored attempt to acquire U.S. scientific-funded research or technology through foreign government-run or funded recruitment programs that target scientists, engineers, academics, researchers, and entrepreneurs of all nationalities working or educated in the United States. These recruitment programs are often part of broader whole-of-government strategies to reduce costs associated with basic research while focusing investment on military development or dominance in emerging technology sectors.

Distinguishing features of a foreign government talent recruitment program include:

(a) Compensation provided by the foreign state to the targeted individual in exchange for the individual transferring their knowledge and expertise to the foreign country. The compensation can take several forms, such as cash, research funding, honorific titles, career advancement opportunities, promised future compensation, or other types of remuneration or consideration.

(b) Recruitment in this context refers to the foreign-state sponsor's active engagement in attracting the targeted individual to join the foreign-sponsored program and transfer their knowledge and expertise to the foreign state. The targeted individual may be employed and located in the United States or in the foreign state. Recruitment would not necessarily include any invitation for engagement extended by the foreign state, for example, an invitation to attend or present work at an international conference.

(c) Many, but not all, programs aim to incentivize the targeted individual to physically relocate to the foreign state. Of particular concern are those programs that allow for continued employment at U.S. research facilities or receipt of DOE research funds while concurrently receiving compensation from the foreign state.

⁸ Currently, the list of countries of risk includes Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China.

9. PROGRAM GOAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- The proposed solution is related to the solar power industry.
- The proposed solution includes a hardware component. Solutions that are solely software or a business model innovation without being part of a hardware package are discouraged.
- Most activities that are described in and support the submission package are performed in the United States.
- 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 [Appendix 1](#).

COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

III. SET! CONTEST RULES

1. INTRODUCTION

The American-Made Solar Prize is a three-contest series with up to \$3 million in cash prizes, 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.

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 \$75,000 in vouchers.

The Set! Contest is the second in this three-contest series and offers a total of \$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 Semifinalists. 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” refer to competitors in the contest.**

2. GOAL

The goal of the Set! contest period is focused around three key areas:

- **Proof-of-Concept:** Develop a proof-of-concept, which proves critical solution functionality that can be demonstrated in a video and 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 laboratories, members of the American-Made Network, funders, and private partners.

Additionally, competitors will prove the market demand for your innovation, show the viability of their 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 10 cash prizes of \$100,000.

Competitors will also win \$75,000 in vouchers. Two-thirds of voucher funds must be spent at a national laboratory, and the remaining third may be spent at a national laboratory 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 laboratory and/or private facility will perform the work. For additional information on how the voucher program will work, see <https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/connect.html#vouchers>.

4. HOW TO ENTER

Complete a submission package online at <https://www.herox.com/SolarPrizeRound4> before the contest closing date.

5. SET! CONTEST PROCESS

The Set! Contest consists of five important steps:

1. **Progress and Submit** – Competitors work with the American-Made Network⁹ to advance their solution as much as possible. Competitors then create their Set! 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 and score each submission and then participate in the demo day event and provide feedback.
3. **Demo Day**¹⁰ – Competitors will participate in a demo day event with 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.
4. **Selection** – The Prize Administrator will select up to 10 winners. Expert reviewers will review and consider both the written submission and the performance at the demo day.
5. **Announcement** – As a part of the 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.

6. WHAT TO SUBMIT

A complete submission for the Set! Contest must include the following items:

⁹ The Prize Administrator has dedicated approximately \$260,000 to recognize members of the American-Made Network that help competitors advance through the contests.

¹⁰ This event will be held virtually. If circumstances allow for this event to be held in person, the decision will be made and communicated to competitors in advance of the scheduled demo day date.

Note: Portions of the submission package are made available to the public. These have been denoted as such and DOE does not intend to release the remaining parts of the submission to the public. See [Appendix 1](#) for additional details.

Item	Content
Submission Package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-minute pitch and technical demonstration video (public) • Cover page content • Narrative answers four questions about the <i>problem & solution, innovation, team, and plan</i> (not to exceed 2,500 words) • Summary PowerPoint slide (public) • Voucher work slide • Technical assistance request (public) • Letters of commitment or support (optional).
Virtual Demo Day ¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set! Demo Day 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 criteria.

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

Note: This submission package is being reviewed by solar industry and entrepreneurial professionals. Cumulatively, they represent decades of experience assessing novel ideas and solutions. However, their background may not be specifically in the problem you are solving. Build quickly from general background into the details of your problem, solution, and plan.

Pitch and Demo Video – 5-minute pitch on your innovation, company, and proof-of-concept demonstration (public)	
Suggested content you provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the real-world problem you are solving. • Describe your solution and why it is transformational as compared to existing 	Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The video explains a compelling real-world problem and solution. • The video demonstrates a proof-of-concept for an exciting innovation.

¹¹ If the demo day is held in person, the requirements for the submission package will likely change. This will be communicated to competitors in advance of the scheduled demo day date.

<p>solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the features of your proof-of-concept and how it works. Demonstrate its functionality or testing of its known possible failure modes. • What progress has been made over the competition period? • What is the scale of the opportunity and what is your target market? • Who are you and why do you have a competitive edge? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proof-of-concept has retired significant technical risk. • Progress has been demonstrated during the competition period. • The video identifies a reasonable target market and a path to making a significant impact on the U.S. solar industry. • 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. Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you with creating your video.

<p>Cover Page – List basic information about your submission. Template¹²: https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround4/resources¹³</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project name • Innovation's tagline (e.g., your mission in a few words) • Link to your online pitch video • Key project members (names, contacts, and links to their LinkedIn profiles) • Keywords that best describe your solution (e.g., perovskite deposition, microinverters) • Your city and state and 9-digit zip code • The partners, affiliates, and Connectors¹⁴ that significantly helped you¹⁵ advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable).

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**, not including captions, figures/graphs, or references. **A word count must be included** at the end of your submission (see template for details). You may also include up

¹² Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.

¹³ **Important:** Templates from the Ready! competition have been updated for Set!.

¹⁴ See description of Connector in [I. Program Summary](#)

¹⁵ Remember that you can incentivize Connectors help by agreeing to identify them here (up to 3) to receive a cash reward for that help, regardless of if you win the Set! competition. See the description of Recognition Rewards in [I. Program Summary](#) and the [Connector Guidelines](#) for details.

to five supporting images, figures, or graphs. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

Note: If your concept/innovation has substantially pivoted from what was originally submitted in the Ready! phase, an explanation of how and why this happened must be provided. It is understood that innovation and entrepreneurship are not usually a linear path, but major changes in direction should always be well rationalized. You were selected on the strengths of the idea submitted at Ready! and significant changes without justification are unlikely to be successful.

Narrative (PDF) Max 2,500 Words and 5 Supporting Images or Figures Template¹⁶: https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround4/resources	
Question 1: <i>Problem & Solution</i> – What is the problem and how are you solving it?	
Suggested content you provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the problem, being specific to the problem space that your innovation addresses¹⁷ and why existing solutions are inadequate. Describe your innovation and how it is better than existing products or emerging solutions. Show how you know this, using evidence-based validation (e.g., interviews with users and experts). Describe your innovation's unique value propositions and how these lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. 	Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competitor quantifies a critical problem, and their assessment of current solutions shows a comprehensive understanding of the problem-solution space. The solution represents an innovative approach built on reasonable assumptions, a valid technical foundation, and lessons learned from experience gained. The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution, which will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers.
Question 2: <i>Innovation</i> – What progress have you made to prove your solution will be successful?	
Suggested content you provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the current state of development of your proof-of-concept, its technical specifications, and sufficient underlying details on how it works to facilitate external 	Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient technical detail was provided to understand the underlying principles of operation of the innovation.

¹⁶ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own. The provided template has been updated from the Ready! competition.

¹⁷ It is suggested to avoid providing general background around the rapid growth of the solar industry or other high-level trends with which the reviewers are well versed.

<p>evaluation of the performance claims you make.¹⁸</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the progress made over the contest period and highlight key engagements, relationships, and milestones. Describe how you have validated your technical performance assumptions. Describe who gave feedback on your proof-of-concept, why it is important, and changes you made as a result of that feedback. Describe your business model, cost model, and potential price points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proof-of-concept is grounded in real-world assumptions and resolves critical technical risks. A considerable amount of high-quality effort was put into building a proof-of-concept and advancing the innovation. A rigorous customer discovery process was performed to uncover key insights and relevant feedback on the proof-of-concept. The assumptions around the business model and pricing are reasonable, achievable, and competitive.
<p>Question 3: <i>Team</i> – What qualities give you a competitive edge and how have you grown?</p>	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce your team and highlight the knowledge and skills that make the team uniquely capable of achieving success. Describe how your team has evolved during the competition, including any strategic hires or partnerships. Explain why winning the Set! Contest will substantively change the likelihood of your success. 	<p>Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team's drive, knowledge, and complementary skill sets provide a strong competitive edge toward realizing this solution in the near future. The team identified skill gaps and brought in the right people or partners to fill those gaps. Winning the Set! Contest significantly increases the team's chances of creating a viable business based on this solution.
<p>Question 4: <i>Plan</i> – What is your plan to achieve your goals?</p>	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <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. 	<p>Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competitors are successfully meeting prior goals and demonstrating continued critical progress toward 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 and risk-reducing, and they show a commitment to an accelerated solution development cycle.

¹⁸ It is suggested to avoid characterizing core innovations as proprietary and thus preventing independent evaluation by the expert judges. It is the intent of the Prize Administrator that, unless otherwise noted, no parts of the submitted materials be released to the public (see [Appendix 1](#) for more details).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 how you will leverage program resources—specifically the voucher funds, members of the American-Made Network, or other entities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competitors' approach to complete their proposed plan is well-reasoned and makes good use of the program resources available to them (such as national laboratories and the American-Made Network).
--	---

Reviewer Recommendation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for this score. Rather, it is an overall assessment of all materials submitted in HeroX. 	<p>Statement is scored as a 1 or 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This innovation, team, and plan should be strongly considered for a Set! Contest Prize.

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 of 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 at least one committed pilot test 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, and entities that would be the eventual customers or end users of the product.).
- Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you to formulate your SMART goals.

Submission Summary Slide (a PowerPoint slide as a PDF will be made public)
<p>Make your own public-facing, one-slide submission summary, which 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.</p>

Voucher Work Slide (a PowerPoint slide as a PDF)
Template : <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround4/resources>

Using the Voucher Work Slide template, describe how you will use your voucher funds, including the entities you plan to engage and what they will do with the voucher funds. Provide one slide per entity—national laboratory and/or private facility—that you plan to engage. Include a maximum of two slides.

Technical Assistance Request (a two-page PDF will be made public)

Provide a maximum of two pages to describe areas where you need technical assistance to realize your solution. Each challenge area should include a description of the specific type of assistance being requested from a national laboratory or member of the American-Made Network.

The challenges being addressed in the Voucher Work Slide **do not** need to be addressed in detail here as well. Instead, focus on the challenges for which you do not yet have a plan or expertise to address.

The Prize Administrator will make this request broadly available, so members of the American-Made Network can understand your needs and potentially help you in the Go! Contest.

Letters of Commitment or Support (optional, as a PDF)

Submit one-page letters (of support, intent, or commitment) from 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 multipage letters.

Demo Day Event¹⁹

You are required to participate in a demo day event with a panel of judges that may involve a pitch, a closed-door question-and-answer session, and/or a technical demonstration. Judges review and score your submitted material before the demo day and then, based on your demo day performance and deliberation with the other judges, will finalize their recommendations for winners on the demo day. Presence of at least one representative of each team at the demo day is mandatory to be considered for a Set! Prize.

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

COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

¹⁹ This event will be held virtually. If circumstances allow for this event to be held in person, the decision will be made and communicated to competitors in advance of the scheduled demo day date. If it is held in person, competitors are required to organize their own travel and accommodations to participate in the demo day.

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 scoring criteria defined in [Section III.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:

The judge will score each bullet listed in the scoring criteria under the video submission and the four narrative questions. Each scoring 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 is made by DOE and will take judges’ scores, team performance on the demo day, judge deliberation, and program policy factors listed in [Appendix 1](#) into account.

Note: Expert judges will 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 DOE.

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. Eligibility is subject to verification before prizes are awarded. The registered competitor is the individual or entity that registers to compete in HeroX.

Eligibility Requirements

- Only winners of the Ready! Contest are eligible to compete in the Set! Contest.²⁰
- 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 with majority domestic ownership and control.²¹ Individuals or groups of individuals are not eligible to

²⁰ 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.

²¹ EERE will consider issuing a waiver of the domestic ownership and control eligibility requirement. See [Appendix 2](#) for details.

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.

- Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States with majority domestic ownership and control.
- If an entity seeking to compete does not have majority domestic ownership and control, EERE may consider issuing a waiver of that eligibility requirement where (1) the entity submits a compelling justification; (2) the entity is incorporated in and maintains a primary place of business in the United States; and (3) the entity otherwise meets the eligibility requirements. EERE may require additional information before making a determination on the waiver request. There are no rights to appeal DOE's decision on the waiver request. See [Appendix 2](#) for more information on the waiver process.
- At least one representative from a competitor organization must be present at the competition demo day.
- Non-DOE federal entities and federal employees are not eligible to win any prize contests in this program.
- Employees of an organization that co-sponsors this program with DOE are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program.
- Individuals who worked at DOE (federal employees or support service contractors) within six months prior to the submission deadline of any contest are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program. Members of their immediate families (i.e., spouses, children, siblings, or parents), and persons living in the same household as such persons, whether or not related, are not eligible to participate in the Prize either.
- National Renewable Energy Laboratory (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 Laboratory employees, including laboratory researchers, may participate. They can also win a prize contest, provided they are not competing in their official capacity.
- Entities and individuals publicly banned from doing business with the U.S. government such as entities and individuals debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in Federal programs are not eligible to compete.
- Entities identified on a Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Binding Operational Directives (BOD) as an entity publicly banned from doing business with the United States government are not eligible to compete. See <https://cyber.dhs.gov/directives/>.
- Entities and individuals identified as a restricted party on one or more screening lists of the Department of Commerce, State and the Treasury are not eligible to compete. See Consolidated Screening List.

- This prize competition is expected to positively impact U.S. economic competitiveness. Participation in a foreign government talent recruitment program²² could conflict with this objective by resulting in unauthorized transfer of scientific and technical information to foreign government entities. Therefore, individuals participating in foreign government talent recruitment programs of foreign countries of risk are not eligible to compete. Further, teams that include individuals participating in foreign government talent recruitment programs of foreign countries of risk²³ are not eligible to compete.
- As part of your submission to this prize program, you will be required to sign the following statement:
 - I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that I am providing this submission to the Federal Government. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the Official Rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the Federal Government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287.

9. PROGRAM GOAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- The proposed solution is related to the solar power industry.
- The proposed solution includes a hardware component. Solutions that are solely software or a business model innovation without being part of a hardware package are discouraged.

²² Foreign government talent recruitment program is defined as an effort directly or indirectly organized, managed, or funded by a foreign government to recruit science and technology professionals or students (regardless of citizenship or national origin, and whether having a full-time or part-time position). Some foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment programs operate with the intent to import or otherwise acquire from abroad, sometimes through illicit means, proprietary technology or software, unpublished data and methods, and intellectual property to further the military modernization goals and/or economic goals of a foreign government. Many, but not all, programs aim to incentivize the targeted individual to physically relocate to the foreign state for the above purpose. Some programs allow for or encourage continued employment at U.S. research facilities or receipt of Federal research funds while concurrently working at and/or receiving compensation from a foreign institution, and some direct participants not to disclose their participation to U.S. entities. Compensation could take many forms including cash, research funding, complimentary foreign travel, honorific titles, career advancement opportunities, promised future compensation, or other types of remuneration or consideration, including in-kind compensation.

²³ Currently, the list of countries of risk includes Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China.

- Most activities that are described in and support the submission package are performed in the United States.
- 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 [Appendix 1](#).

COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

IV. GO! CONTEST RULES

1. INTRODUCTION

The American-Made Solar Prize is a three-contest series with up to \$3 million in cash prizes 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.

Go! Contest Prizes

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

The Go! Contest is the third in this three-contest series offering a total of \$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

The goal of the Go! contest period is focused around four key areas:

- **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.^{24, 25}
- **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.
- **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

²⁴ Enforceability of the pilot test agreement between the competitor and the pilot test partner may be contingent on the competitor winning the Go! Contest.

²⁵ ‘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.

place to keep the effort going beyond this prize contest.

Additionally, 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.

Competitors also win \$75,000 in vouchers. Two-thirds of voucher funds must be spent at a national laboratory, and the remaining third may be spent at a national laboratory 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 laboratory and/or private facility will perform the work. For additional information on how the voucher program will work, see <https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/connect.html#vouchers>.

4. HOW TO ENTER

Complete a submission package online at <https://www.herox.com/SolarPrizeRound4> before the contest closing date.

5. GO! CONTEST PROCESS

The Go! Contest consists of five important steps:

1. **Progress and Submit** – Competitors work with the American-Made Network²⁶ to advance their solution as much as possible and identify a pilot partner. Competitors then create their Go! Contest submission packages and submit online before the Go! Contest Demo Day.
2. **Preliminary Review** – All completed submissions will be assigned to subject matter expert reviewers. Reviewers will independently review and score each submission and then participate in the demo day event and provide feedback.
3. **Demo Day**²⁷ – Competitors will participate in a demo day event with 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.
4. **Selection** – The Prize Administrator will select 2 winners. Expert reviewers will review and consider both the written submission and the performance at the demo day.

²⁶ The Prize Administrator has dedicated approximately \$260,000 to recognize members of the American-Made Network that help competitors advance through the contests.

²⁷ This event will be held virtually. If circumstances allow for this event to be held in person, the decision will be made and communicated to competitors in advance of the scheduled demo day date.

5. **Announcement** – As a part of the demo day, the Prize Administrator will announce winners. After receiving the Go! Contest prize, winners can develop their solutions in accordance with the plan submitted as a part of the Go! Contest.

6. WHAT TO SUBMIT

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

Note: Portions of the submission package are made available to the public. These have been denoted as such and DOE does not intend to release the remaining parts of the submission to the public. See [Appendix 1](#) for additional details.

Item	Content
Submission Package	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6-minute pitch and technical demonstration video (public)• Cover page content• Narrative answers four questions about the <i>problem & solution, innovation, team, and plan</i> (not to exceed 2,500 words)• Summary PowerPoint slide (public)• Voucher work slide• Technical assistance request (public)• Letters of commitment (mandatory) or support (optional)
Virtual Demo Day ²⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go! Demo Day 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 criteria.

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

Note: This submission package is being reviewed by solar industry and entrepreneurial professionals. Cumulatively, they represent decades of experience assessing novel ideas and solutions. However, their background may not be specifically in the problem you are solving. Build quickly from general background into the details of your problem, solution, and plan.

²⁸ If the demo day is held in person, the requirements for the submission package will likely change. This will be communicated to competitors in advance of the scheduled demo day date.

Pitch and Demo Video – 6-minute pitch on your innovation, company, and prototype demonstration (public)	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the real-world problem you are solving. • Describe your solution and why it is transformational as compared to existing solutions. • Explain the features of your prototype and how it works. Demonstrate its functionality or testing of its known possible failure modes. • What progress has been made over the competition period? • What is the scale of the opportunity and what is your target market? • Who are you and why do 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 and solution. • The video demonstrates a prototype for an exciting innovation. • The prototype has retired significant technical risk. • Progress has been demonstrated during the competition period. • The video identifies a reasonable target market and a path to making a significant impact on the U.S. solar industry. • 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. Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you with creating your video.

Cover Page – List basic information about your submission. <i>Template²⁹: https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround4/resources³⁰</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project name • Innovation's tagline (e.g., your mission in a few words) • Link to your online pitch video • Key project members (names, contacts, and links to their LinkedIn profiles) • Keywords that best describe your solution (e.g., perovskite deposition, microinverters) • Your city and state and 9-digit zip code

²⁹ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.

³⁰ **Important:** Templates from the Set! competition have been updated for Go!.

- The partners, affiliates, and Connectors³¹ that significantly helped you³² advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable).

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**, not including captions, figures/graphs, or references. **A word count must be included** at the end of your submission (see template for details). You may also include **up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs**. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

Narrative (PDF) Max 2,500 Words and 5 Supporting Images or Figures Template³³ : https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround4/resources	
Question 1: Problem & Solution – What is the problem and how are you solving it?	
Suggested content you provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the problem, being specific to the problem space that your innovation addresses³⁴ and why existing solutions are inadequate. • Describe your innovation and how it is better than existing products or emerging solutions. Show how you know this, using evidence-based validation (e.g., interviews with users and experts). • Describe your innovation's unique value propositions and how these lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. 	Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor quantifies a critical problem, and their assessment of current solutions shows a comprehensive understanding of the problem-solution space. • The solution represents an innovative approach built on reasonable assumptions, a valid technical foundation, and lessons learned from experience gained. • The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution, which will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers.
Question 2: Innovation – What progress have you made to prove your solution will be successful?	
Suggested content you provide	Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale

³¹ See description of Connector in [I. Program Summary](#)

³² Remember that you can incentivize Connectors help by agreeing to identify them here (up to 3) to receive a cash reward for that help, regardless of if you win the Go! competition. See the description of Recognition Rewards in [I. Program Summary](#) and the [Connector Guidelines](#) for details.

³³ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own. The provided template has been updated from the Set! competition.

³⁴ It is suggested to avoid providing general background around the rapid growth of the solar industry or other high-level trends with which the reviewers are well versed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the current state of development of your prototype, its technical specifications, and sufficient underlying details on how it works to facilitate external evaluation of the performance claims you make.³⁵ • Describe the progress made over the contest period and highlight key engagements, relationships, and milestones. • Describe how you have validated your technical performance assumptions. • Describe how you utilized the voucher to get feedback on your prototype, why it is important, and changes you made as a result of that feedback. • Describe your business model, cost model, and potential price points. • 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"> • Sufficient technical detail was provided to understand the underlying principles of operation of the innovation. • The prototype is grounded in real-world assumptions and resolves critical technical risks. • A considerable amount of high-quality effort was put into building a prototype and advancing the innovation. • The voucher was effectively utilized to uncover key insights and provide relevant feedback on the prototype. • The assumptions around the business model and pricing are reasonable, achievable, and competitive. • The committed pilot test partner has the need for, and capability to, pilot test and potentially utilize this innovation.
<p>Question 3: <i>Team</i> – What qualities give you a competitive edge and how have you grown?</p>	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce your team and how it has evolved, highlighting the knowledge and skills that make the team uniquely capable of achieving success. • Describe how you identified your committed pilot test partner and discuss the rationale behind working with this partner versus others. • Explain why winning the Go! Contest will substantively change the likelihood of your success. 	<p>Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team's drive, knowledge, and complementary skill sets provide a strong competitive edge toward realizing this solution in the near future. • The committed pilot test partner is highly relevant to the identified path to market. • Winning the Go! Contest significantly increases the team's chances of creating a viable business based on this solution.
<p>Question 4: <i>Plan</i> – What is your plan to achieve your goals?</p>	

³⁵ It is suggested to avoid characterizing core innovations as proprietary and thus preventing independent evaluation by the expert judges. It is the intent of the Prize Administrator that, unless otherwise noted, no parts of the submitted materials be released to the public (see [Appendix 1](#) for more details).

Suggested content you provide	Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the previous contest goals and describe the actual outcomes. Define goals for the next 90, 180 and 365 days (see special instructions below). • Describe the discrete improvements and functionality to the prototype you plan to implement over the next 90 to 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 you will leverage program resources—specifically the voucher funds, 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 toward testing and validating the functionality and market demand of this innovation. • Stated 90- and 180-day goals are ambitious and risk-reducing, and they 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 competitors’ approach to complete their proposed plan is well-reasoned and makes good use of the program resources available to them (such as national laboratories and the American-Made Network).

Reviewer Recommendation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for this score. Rather, it is an overall assessment of all materials submitted in HeroX. 	<p>Statement is scored as a 1 or 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This innovation, team, and plan should be strongly considered for a Set! Contest Prize.

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 of 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 demonstrating a functional prototype based on prior progress and learning and at least one committed pilot test 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, and entities that would be the eventual customers or end users of the product.).

- Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you to formulate your SMART goals.

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

Make your own public-facing, one-slide submission summary, which 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)

Template : <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround4/resources>

Using the Voucher Work Slide template, describe how you will use your voucher funds, including the entities you plan to engage and what they will do with the voucher funds. Provide one slide per entity—national laboratory and/or private facility—that you plan to engage. Include a maximum of two slides.

Technical Assistance Request (a two-page PDF will be made public)

Provide a maximum of two pages to describe areas where you need technical assistance to realize your solution. Each challenge area should include a description of the specific type of assistance being requested from a national laboratory or member of the American-Made Network.

The challenges being addressed in the Voucher Work Slide **do not** need to be addressed in detail here as well. Instead, focus on the challenges for which you do not yet have a plan or expertise to address.

The Prize Administrator will make this request broadly available, so members of the American-Made Network can understand your needs and potentially help you in the Go! Contest.

Letters of Commitment (mandatory) or Support (optional, as a PDF)

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

Demo Day Event³⁶

You are required to participate in a demo day event with a panel of judges that may involve a pitch, a closed-door question-and-answer session, and/or a technical demonstration. Judges review and score

³⁶ This event will be held virtually. If circumstances allow for this event to be held in person, the decision will be made and communicated to competitors in advance of the scheduled demo day date. If it is held in person, competitors are required to organize their own travel and accommodations to participate in the demo day.

your submitted material before the demo day and then, based on your demo day performance and deliberation with the other judges, will finalize their recommendations for winners on the demo day. Presence of at least one representative of each team at the demo day is mandatory to be considered for a Go! Prize.

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

COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS 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 scoring 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:

The judge will score each bullet listed in the scoring criteria under the video submission and the four narrative questions. Each scoring 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 is made by DOE and will take judges’ scores, team performance on the demo day, judge deliberation, and program policy factors listed in [Appendix 1](#) into account.

Note: Expert judges will 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 DOE.

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. Eligibility is subject to verification before prizes are awarded. The registered competitor is the individual or entity that registers to compete in HeroX.

Eligibility Requirements

- Only the winning for-profit business entities 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. The legally binding commitment must be free of contingencies except it may be contingent on the competitor winning the Go! Contest. Letters indicating general support, future interest, and other contingencies on conducting a pilot test; 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.
- 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 with majority domestic ownership and control.³⁷ Individuals or groups of individuals are not eligible to compete.
 - Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States with majority domestic ownership and control.
 - If an entity seeking to compete does not have majority domestic ownership and control, EERE may consider issuing a waiver of that eligibility requirement where (1) the entity submits a compelling justification; (2) the entity is incorporated in and maintains a primary place of business in the United States; and (3) the entity otherwise meets the eligibility requirements. EERE may require additional information before making a determination on the waiver request. There are no rights to appeal DOE's decision on the waiver request. See [Appendix 2](#) for more information on the waiver process.
- At least one representative from a competitor organization must be present at the competition demo day.
- Non-DOE federal entities and federal employees are not eligible to win any prize contests in this program.
- Employees of an organization that co-sponsors this program with DOE are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program.
- Individuals who worked at DOE (federal employees or support service contractors) within six months prior to the submission deadline of any contest are not eligible to participate in any prize

³⁷ EERE will consider issuing a waiver of the domestic ownership and control eligibility requirement. See Section VI.17 for details.

contests in this program. Members of their immediate families (i.e., spouses, children, siblings, or parents), and persons living in the same household as such persons, whether or not related, are not eligible to participate in the Prize either.

- National Renewable Energy Laboratory (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 Laboratory employees, including laboratory researchers, may participate. They can also win a prize contest, provided they are not competing in their official capacity.
- Entities and individuals publicly banned from doing business with the U.S. government such as entities and individuals debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in Federal programs are not eligible to compete.
- Entities identified on a Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Binding Operational Directives (BOD) as an entity publicly banned from doing business with the United States government are not eligible to compete. See <https://cyber.dhs.gov/directives/>.
- Entities and individuals identified as a restricted party on one or more screening lists of the Department of Commerce, State and the Treasury are not eligible to compete. See Consolidated Screening List.
- This prize competition is expected to positively impact U.S. economic competitiveness. Participation in a foreign government talent recruitment program³⁸ could conflict with this objective by resulting in unauthorized transfer of scientific and technical information to foreign government entities. Therefore, individuals participating in foreign government talent recruitment programs of foreign countries of risk are not eligible to compete. Further, teams that include individuals participating in foreign government talent recruitment programs of foreign countries of risk³⁹ are not eligible to compete.

³⁸ Foreign government talent recruitment program is defined as an effort directly or indirectly organized, managed, or funded by a foreign government to recruit science and technology professionals or students (regardless of citizenship or national origin, and whether having a full-time or part-time position). Some foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment programs operate with the intent to import or otherwise acquire from abroad, sometimes through illicit means, proprietary technology or software, unpublished data and methods, and intellectual property to further the military modernization goals and/or economic goals of a foreign government. Many, but not all, programs aim to incentivize the targeted individual to physically relocate to the foreign state for the above purpose. Some programs allow for or encourage continued employment at U.S. research facilities or receipt of Federal research funds while concurrently working at and/or receiving compensation from a foreign institution, and some direct participants not to disclose their participation to U.S. entities. Compensation could take many forms including cash, research funding, complimentary foreign travel, honorific titles, career advancement opportunities, promised future compensation, or other types of remuneration or consideration, including in-kind compensation.

³⁹ Currently, the list of countries of risk includes Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China.

- As part of your submission to this prize program, you will be required to sign the following statement:
 - I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that I am providing this submission to the Federal Government. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the Official Rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the Federal Government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287.

9. PROGRAM GOAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- The proposed solution is related to the solar power industry.
- The proposed solution includes a hardware component. Solutions that are solely software or a business model innovation without being part of a hardware package are discouraged.
- Most activities that are described in and support the submission package are performed in the United States.
- 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 [Appendix 1](#).

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

V. APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. UNIVERSAL CONTEST REQUIREMENTS

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

- If any team member is actively receiving funding from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) 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 ([Section V.14](#)).
- 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.
- You must post the final content of your submission or upload the submission form online at <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround4> before the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests close. Late submissions or any other form of submission do not qualify.
- The video submission, summary slide, and 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 V.11](#) regarding the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
- 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 handwritten 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, emails to the Prize Administrator, or other forms of communication 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 DOE and is in addition to the existing HeroX Terms of Use for all purposes relating to

these contests. You should print and keep a copy of these rules. These provisions only apply to the 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 nonsubstantive mistakes or errors in their submission packages.
- Ready! Contest competitors with completed submissions will be required to view the content of 10 peer submissions and rank 2 sets of 5 submissions. Competitors will be asked to rank the submissions 1 through 5 based on the extent to which the submission represents an impactful solution to a real-world problem faced by the solar industry, with 1 being the 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. 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 laboratory 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 laboratory, and the remaining third may be spent at a national laboratory or a private facility of the winners' choice. In the case of a national laboratory, the funds will be provided directly to the laboratory on behalf of the winners to conduct a mutually-agreed-on scope-of-work between the laboratory and the winners. 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/solarprize/connect.html#vouchers>.

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 National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) Request for ACH Banking Information form and a completed W9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>). At 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; or (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.

5. 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’s or HeroX’s applications, on the contest website, DOE websites, and partner websites, and the inclusion of the submission in any other media, worldwide. The submission may be viewed by DOE, the Prize Administrator, and judges 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 the competitors’ names and, as applicable, the names of competitors’ team members and organizations, which participated in the submission on the contest website indefinitely.

By entering, Competitor represents and warrants that:

The competitor is the sole, original author and copyright owner of the submission 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, trade secret, trademark, nondisclosure agreement, patent, or upon any other third-party rights; and that the submission is free of malware.

6. 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.

7. 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 are contingent upon the availability of appropriations.

8. RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

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

In the event of a dispute, 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.

9. PUBLICITY

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

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

10. 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 or 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 SETO, the Director has determined that no liability insurance will be required of competitors to compete in this competition, per 15 USC 3719(i)(2).

11. 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 privileged commercial or financial information 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 FOIA 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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 nonduplicative and compatible with the stated goals of this program and DOE's 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 that 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.

15. DEFINITIONS

Prize Administrator means both the Alliance for Sustainable Energy operating in its capacity under the Management and Operating Contract for NREL and 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 SETO.

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, and/or 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 earning 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 laboratory on behalf of the winner to conduct a mutually agreed upon scope of work between the laboratory 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/solarprize/connect.html#vouchers>.

VI. APPENDIX 2: FOREIGN WORK REQUIREMENT

Waiver

If an entity seeking to compete does not have majority domestic ownership and control, the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) may consider issuing a waiver of that eligibility requirement where (1) the entity submits a compelling justification; (2) the entity is incorporated in and maintains a primary place of business in the United States; and (3) the entity otherwise meets the eligibility requirements. EERE will not waive the eligibility requirement that all competing entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States. Entities seeking a waiver should include a justification along with their submission. EERE may require additional information before making a determination on the waiver request. There are no rights to appeal DOE's decision on the waiver request.

The justification must address the following waiver criteria and content requirements:

Waiver Criteria

Entities seeking a waiver must demonstrate to the satisfaction of EERE that its participation: (1) has a high likelihood of furthering the objectives of this Prize competition and (2) aligns with the best interest of the U.S. industry and U.S. economic development.

Content for Waiver Request

A waiver request must include the following information:

1. Entity's name and place of incorporation
2. The location of the entity's primary place of business
3. A statement describing the extent to which the entity is owned or controlled by a foreign government, agency, firm, corporation, or person who is not a citizen or permanent resident of the United States, including the applicable percentage of ownership/control
4. A compelling justification that addresses the waiver criteria stated above
5. A description of the project's anticipated contributions to the U.S. economy
6. A description of how the entity has benefitted U.S. research, development, and manufacturing, including contributions to employment in the United States and growth in new U.S. markets and jobs
7. A description of how the entity has promoted domestic manufacturing of products and/or services.