

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY



ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY – ENERGY (ARPA-E)  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

**PLANT ENGINEERING TO REVOLUTIONIZE SUSTAINABLE  
ENERGY PRODUCTION AND HEIGHTEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
NOVEL EFFICIENCY (PERSEPHONE)**

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement  
Notice of Funding Opportunity No. DE-FOA-0003551  
Assistance Listing Number 81.135

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**BASIC INFORMATION**

<b>KEY DATES:</b>	
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Issue Date:	January 17, 2025
Deadline for Full Application Questions to <a href="mailto:ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov">ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov</a> :	5 PM ET, February 21, 2025
Submission Deadline for Full Applications:	9:30 AM ET, March 4, 2025
Expected Reviewer Comment Release Date:	5 PM ET, March 27, 2025
Submission Deadline for Replies to Reviewer Comments:	5 PM ET, April 1, 2025
Anticipated Timeframe for Selection Notifications:	May 2025
Anticipated Timeframe for Award:	August 2025
Anticipated Period of Performance:	August 2025 – August 2028

<b>BASIC INFORMATION:</b>	
Total Amount to Be Awarded	Approximately \$15 million, subject to the availability of appropriated funds to be shared between NOFOs DE-FOA-0003551 and DE-FOA-0003552.
Anticipated Number and Value of Awards	ARPA-E anticipates making approximately 5-7 awards between NOFOs DE-FOA-0003551 and DE-FOA-0003552. ARPA-E may issue one, multiple, or no awards under this NOFO. The Federal share of awards under this NOFO may vary between \$250,000 and \$4 million.
Agency Contact Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions and answers (Q&amp;As) about ARPA-E and this specific NOFO: <a href="http://arpa-e.energy.gov/faq">http://arpa-e.energy.gov/faq</a>.</li> <li>• Send other questions about the NOFO to: <a href="mailto:ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov">ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov</a>.</li> <li>• Send questions about use of ARPA-E eXCHANGE to: <a href="mailto:ExchangeHelp@hq.doe.gov">ExchangeHelp@hq.doe.gov</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Upon the issuance of a NOFO, only the Grants Officer via <a href="mailto:ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov">ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov</a> may communicate with Applicants. This “quiet period” remains in effect until ARPA-E’s public announcement of project selections. Emails sent to other email addresses will be disregarded.</p>

The goal of the PERSEPHONE program is to develop disruptive new technologies for bioenergy crop genetic engineering. Bioenergy provides about 5% of domestic energy consumption and has the potential to provide 5-10% more. Agriculture also could revolutionize the energy sector in other ways, such as providing precursors for chemicals and materials that are currently derived from petroleum. However, bioenergy crops may not maintain their current utility, much less achieve their potential, without transformative advances in tools to engineer them. Genetic engineering is an essential strategy to realize U.S. bioenergy potential and security.

The PERSEPHONE program will develop high-performance tools for bioenergy crop engineering, create novel genetic engineering modalities, and spur adoption by supporting innovative research on biocontainment. Specifically, PERSEPHONE aims to support the development of tools that could lead to an annual impact of the production of at least 1 quad of energy or mitigation of more than 60 MT of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e).

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The program will support projects in three areas:

- Technical Category A will develop robust, high-performing tools for the genetic engineering of bioenergy crops that overcome transformation genotype dependence, increase throughput 10x, and/or reduce cost and timeline by 4x and 2x, respectively.
- Technical Category B will support the creation of radically new technologies for plant genetic engineering that have a pathway to achieve metrics well beyond the targets established in Category A.
- Technical Category C will support adoption of genetically engineered bioenergy crops by developing technologies to reduce the risks of invasiveness to less than 0.1 percent and eliminate the flow of transgenes into the environment.

The program encourages the formation of multidisciplinary teams with expertise in relevant areas such as synthetic biology, bioengineering, plant genomics and genetics, materials, robotics, and machine learning. If PERSEPHONE is successful, the new genetic engineering tools will enable the rapid development and commercialization of bioenergy applications in areas as diverse as Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), nitrogen management, and energy-efficient materials.

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## I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### A. AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy (ARPA-E), an organization within the Department of Energy (DOE), is chartered by Congress in the America COMPETES Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-69), as amended by the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-358), as further amended by the Energy Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-260):

- “(A) to enhance the economic and energy security of the United States through the development of energy technologies that—
- (i) reduce imports of energy from foreign sources;
  - (ii) reduce energy-related emissions, including greenhouse gases;
  - (iii) improve the energy efficiency of all economic sectors;
  - (iv) provide transformative solutions to improve the management, clean-up, and disposal of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel; and
  - (v) improve the resilience, reliability, and security of infrastructure to produce, deliver, and store energy; and
- (B) to ensure that the United States maintains a technological lead in developing and deploying advanced energy technologies.”

ARPA-E issues this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) under its authorizing statute codified at 42 U.S.C. § 16538. The NOFO and any cooperative agreements or grants made under this NOFO are subject to 2 C.F.R. Part 200 as supplemented by 2 C.F.R. Part 910.

ARPA-E funds research on, and the development of, transformative science and technology solutions to address the energy and environmental missions of the Department. The agency focuses on technologies that can be meaningfully advanced with a modest investment over a defined period of time in order to catalyze the translation from scientific discovery to early-stage technology. For the latest news and information about ARPA-E, its programs and the research projects currently supported, see: <http://arpa-e.energy.gov/>.

**ARPA-E funds transformational research.** Existing energy technologies generally progress on established “learning curves” where refinements to a technology and the economies of scale that accrue as manufacturing and distribution develop drive improvements to the cost/performance metric in a gradual fashion. This continual improvement of a technology is important to its increased commercial deployment and is appropriately the focus of the private sector or the applied technology offices within DOE. In contrast, ARPA-E supports transformative research that has the potential to create fundamentally new learning curves. ARPA-E technology projects typically start with cost/performance estimates well above the level of an incumbent technology. Given the high risk inherent in these projects, many will fail to progress, but some may succeed in generating a new learning curve with a projected cost/performance metric that is significantly better than that of the incumbent technology. ARPA-E will provide support at the highest funding level only for submissions with significant

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technology risk, aggressive timetables, and careful management and mitigation of the associated risks.

**ARPA-E funds technology with the potential to be disruptive in the marketplace.** The mere creation of a new learning curve does not ensure market penetration. Rather, the ultimate value of a technology is determined by the marketplace, and impactful technologies ultimately become disruptive – that is, they are widely adopted and displace existing technologies from the marketplace or create entirely new markets. ARPA-E understands that definitive proof of market disruption takes time, particularly for energy technologies. Therefore, ARPA-E funds the development of technologies that, if technically successful, have clear disruptive potential, e.g., by demonstrating capability for manufacturing at competitive cost and deployment at scale.

**ARPA-E funds applied research and development (R&D).** The Office of Management and Budget defines “applied research” as an “original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge...directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective” and defines “experimental development” as “creative and systematic work, drawing on knowledge gained from research and practical experience, which is directed at producing new products or processes or improving existing products or processes.”<sup>1</sup> Applicants interested in receiving financial assistance for basic research (defined by the Office of Management and Budget as “experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena and observable facts”)<sup>1</sup> should contact the DOE’s Office of Science (<http://science.energy.gov/>). Office of Science national scientific user facilities (<http://science.energy.gov/user-facilities/>) are open to all researchers, including ARPA-E Applicants and awardees. These facilities provide advanced tools of modern science including accelerators, colliders, supercomputers, light sources and neutron sources, as well as facilities for studying the nanoworld, the environment, and the atmosphere. Projects focused on early-stage R&D for the improvement of technology along defined roadmaps may be more appropriate for support through the DOE applied energy offices including: the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (<http://www.eere.energy.gov/>), the Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management (<https://www.energy.gov/fecm/office-fossil-energy-and-carbon-management>), the Office of Nuclear Energy (<http://www.energy.gov/ne/office-nuclear-energy>), and the Office of Electricity (<https://www.energy.gov/oe/office-electricity>).

ARPA-E encourages submissions stemming from ideas that still require proof-of-concept R&D efforts as well as those for which some proof-of-concept demonstration already exists. Submissions can propose a project with the end deliverable being an extremely creative, but partial solution.

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<sup>1</sup> OMB Circular A-11 ([https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/a11\\_web\\_toc.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/a11_web_toc.pdf)), Section 84, pg. 3.

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## **B. PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **1. PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

The goal of the Plant Engineering to Revolutionize Sustainable Energy Production and Heighten Opportunities for Novel Efficiency (PERSEPHONE) program is to develop disruptive new technologies for bioenergy crop genetic engineering.<sup>2</sup> Bioenergy provides the U.S. with approximately 5 quadrillion British Thermal Units (quads)—about 5% of domestic energy consumption—and it has the potential to provide 6-11 additional quads through the cultivation of dedicated bioenergy crops.<sup>3</sup> Beyond the production of biofuels, agriculture has the potential to revolutionize the energy sector by: providing precursors for chemicals and materials (e.g., polymers and building materials) that can complement petroleum-based products, capturing and utilizing atmospheric carbon dioxide, and accumulating critical minerals through phytomining. Moreover, bioenergy plays an important role in increasing energy security and reducing energy imports.<sup>4</sup> However, bioenergy crops may not maintain their current utility, much less achieve their potential, without transformative advances in tools to engineer them.

Breeding and management practices have led to dramatic improvements in agriculture with crop yields increasing by 135% from 1961 to 2005.<sup>5</sup> However, over the next decade U.S. yields are projected to increase more slowly (in the case of corn) or even decline (in the case of soybeans) due to changing patterns of temperature and precipitation.<sup>6</sup> Looking ahead to the end of the century, corn yields across much of the U.S. may eventually decline by 10% or more.<sup>7</sup> As a result, up to 5% of the U.S. energy supply is under threat unless new crops with increased resilience are developed. Meanwhile, demand for biofuels is increasing to meet the growing market for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). The Department of Energy's SAF Grand Challenge has set a SAF production target of 35 billion gallons per year by 2050, which requires

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<sup>2</sup> Bioenergy crops, as defined in this NOFO, include current bioenergy crops (e.g., corn, soybeans, and grain sorghum) as well as emerging bioenergy crops (e.g., miscanthus, poplar, biomass sorghum, sugarcane, and switchgrass). Other crops may be considered if they can be shown to meet the targets of the NOFO and be relevant to bioenergy.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. DOE. 2024. "2023 Billion-Ton Report: An Assessment of U.S. Renewable Carbon Resources." U.S. Department of Energy Bioenergy Technologies Office. <https://doi.org/10.2172/2441098>.

<sup>4</sup> US. DOE. 2013. "Replacing the Whole Barrel to Reduce U.S. Dependence on Oil." U.S. Department of Energy Bioenergy Technologies Office. <https://www.osti.gov/biblio/1220022/>.

<sup>5</sup> Jennifer A. Burney, Steven J. Davis, and David B. Lobell, "Greenhouse Gas Mitigation by Agricultural Intensification," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107, no. 26 (June 15, 2010): 12052–57, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0914216107>.

<sup>6</sup> Jayson Beckman, Maros Ivanic, and Noé J. Nava, "Estimating Market Implications From Corn and Soybean Yields Under Climate Change in the United States," October 1, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.32747/2023.8134358.ers>.

<sup>7</sup> Jonas Jägermeyr et al., "Climate Impacts on Global Agriculture Emerge Earlier in New Generation of Climate and Crop Models," *Nature Food* 2, no. 11 (November 1, 2021): 873–85, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-021-00400-y>.

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60 billion gallons of ethanol to meet the target due to ethanol's lower energy density.<sup>8,9</sup> This is more than three times the combined production of ethanol and bio-based diesel in 2022, and will therefore require a step change in agricultural productivity and technology development.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond SAF, the potential 6-11 quad increase in available bioenergy depends upon rapid improvements in bioenergy crops other than corn, such as switchgrass, sorghum and miscanthus. Production of corn and soybeans is regionally concentrated with two-thirds of corn grown in seven Midwestern states.<sup>11</sup> A greater diversity of bioenergy crops will expand the geographic range of production and impart greater resiliency to changing temperature and precipitation patterns.<sup>12</sup> Many emerging bioenergy crops have favorable productivity or stress tolerance traits, including sorghum (drought tolerance), miscanthus (flood tolerance), oil seeds (cold tolerance), switchgrass (ability to cycle nutrients effectively), and poplar (high biomass productivity). These crops could add substantial genetic and geographic diversification to the U.S. bioenergy portfolio, but they have not been widely cultivated in the U.S. and are likely to require genetic engineering to meet their potential. Moreover, some of the greatest opportunities for bioenergy crops to impact energy involve traits that do not currently exist within the plant kingdom, such as nitrogen fixation and the accumulation of polymer precursors.<sup>13,14</sup> Genetic engineering is an essential strategy to realize U.S. bioenergy potential and security.

Current tools for bioenergy crop genetic engineering suffer from severe limitations of speed, throughput, and generalizability. The PERSEPHONE program will develop high-performance tools for bioenergy crop engineering, create novel genetic engineering modalities, and spur adoption by supporting innovative research on biocontainment. These advances will enable the rapid innovation necessary for agriculture to enhance the economic and energy security of the U.S. and decrease American reliance on imported energy.

The downstream energy impact of the tools developed through the PERSEPHONE program can be illustrated through three main examples.

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. DOE, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2022. SAF Grand Challenge Roadmap: Flight Plan for Sustainable Aviation Fuel. <https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/beto-saf-gc-roadmap-report-sept-2022.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations International Civil Aviation Organization, "SAF Rules of Thumb," n.d., [https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Pages/SAF\\_RULESOFTHUMB.aspx](https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Pages/SAF_RULESOFTHUMB.aspx).

<sup>10</sup> United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, U.S. Bioenergy Statistics, n.d., <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/u-s-bioenergy-statistics/>.

<sup>11</sup> [Crop Acreage Data | Farm Service Agency](#).

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Garland and Helen Anne Curry, "Turning Promise into Practice: Crop Biotechnology for Increasing Genetic Diversity and Climate Resilience," *PLOS Biology* 20, no. 7 (July 26, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3001716>.

<sup>13</sup> Robert S. Allen et al., "Expression of 16 Nitrogenase Proteins Within the Plant Mitochondrial Matrix," *Frontiers in Plant Science* 8 (March 3, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpls.2017.00287>.

<sup>14</sup> Chien-Yuan Lin et al., "In-Planta Production of the Biodegradable Polyester Precursor 2-Pyrone-4,6-Dicarboxylic Acid (PDC): Stacking Reduced Biomass Recalcitrance with Value-Added Co-Product," *Metabolic Engineering* 66 (July 2021): 148–56, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ymben.2021.04.011>.

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- **Production of SAF.** The hydrotreated esters and fatty acids (HEFA) pathway, which uses vegetable oils and waste grease as a feedstock, is currently the dominant SAF production route and is expected to remain so into the 2030s.<sup>15</sup> However, it is limited by the cost and availability of oil feedstocks. PERSEPHONE can help meet the demand for SAF by making it possible to engineer triacylglycerol (TAG) production into high-yield bioenergy crops like biomass sorghum. The model plant tobacco has been engineered to accumulate up to 30% TAG by dry weight in its leaves, and a similar accumulation in biomass sorghum would allow production of 10 billion gallons of SAF (equal to 1 quad of energy) on roughly 20 million (M) acres.<sup>16</sup> Compared to current sorghum acreage (6.4M) and corn acreage (90M), this is ambitious but feasible.<sup>17</sup> However, biomass sorghum is difficult to engineer today, necessitating the creation of new engineering tools.
- **Advances in nitrogen management.** Roughly 2% of global energy is devoted to ammonia synthesis, and approximately 70% of emissions from the production of corn for ethanol are due to the Haber-Bosch process or on-field N<sub>2</sub>O emissions.<sup>18,19</sup> Recent progress in understanding how legumes form symbioses with nitrogen-fixing microbes strengthens the possibility of engineering this trait into bioenergy crops, and introducing *in planta* nitrogen fixation remains a lofty goal of plant engineering.<sup>20</sup> Either path will likely require engineering large numbers of heterologous genes into crops with stringent regulatory control, a task which would be very difficult with present crop engineering technology.
- **Production of wood for building materials.** Wood can be transformed into a material with strength comparable to steel, but with less embodied energy by weight and negative emissions.<sup>21</sup> However, the cost and scale of feedstock production will make it difficult to displace the roughly 46 megatons (MT) of steel used for construction in the U.S.<sup>22</sup> Improved photosynthetic pathways could boost yield by 24%, but they have only been demonstrated in amenable cultivars.<sup>23</sup> The PERSEPHONE program could enable researchers to rapidly engineer improved photosynthesis into diverse varieties of poplar, willow, and other short-rotation woody crops. If such an effort displaced 50% of U.S. crude steel, it would save 0.55 quads of energy per year. However, engineering such complex traits into diverse woody crops is not feasible with today's tools.

<sup>15</sup> RMI. 2024. "Sustainable Aviation Fuel Market Outlook." Accessed November 2024. <https://saf.rmi.org/>.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Vanhercke et al., "Step Changes in Leaf Oil Accumulation via Iterative Metabolic Engineering," *Metabolic Engineering* 39 (January 2017): 237–46, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ymben.2016.12.007>.

<sup>17</sup> Aaron Ates and Olga Liefert, "Feed Outlook: April 2024." United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=108981>.

<sup>18</sup> IEA. 2021. "Ammonia Technology Roadmap." <https://www.iea.org/reports/ammonia-technology-roadmap/executive-summary>.

<sup>19</sup> Calculated using the 2024 GREET Model.

<sup>20</sup> Min-Yao Jhu and Giles E. Oldroyd, "Dancing to a Different Tune, Can We Switch from Chemical to Biological Nitrogen Fixation for Sustainable Food Security?," *PLOS Biology* 21, no. 3 (March 14, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3001982>.

<sup>21</sup> Jianwei Song et al., "Processing Bulk Natural Wood into a High-Performance Structural Material," *Nature* 554, no. 7691 (February 2018): 224–28, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature25476>.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Commodity Summaries, January 2023.

<sup>23</sup> Paul F. South et al., "Synthetic Glycolate Metabolism Pathways Stimulate Crop Growth and Productivity in the Field," *Science* 363, no. 6422 (January 4, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aat9077>.

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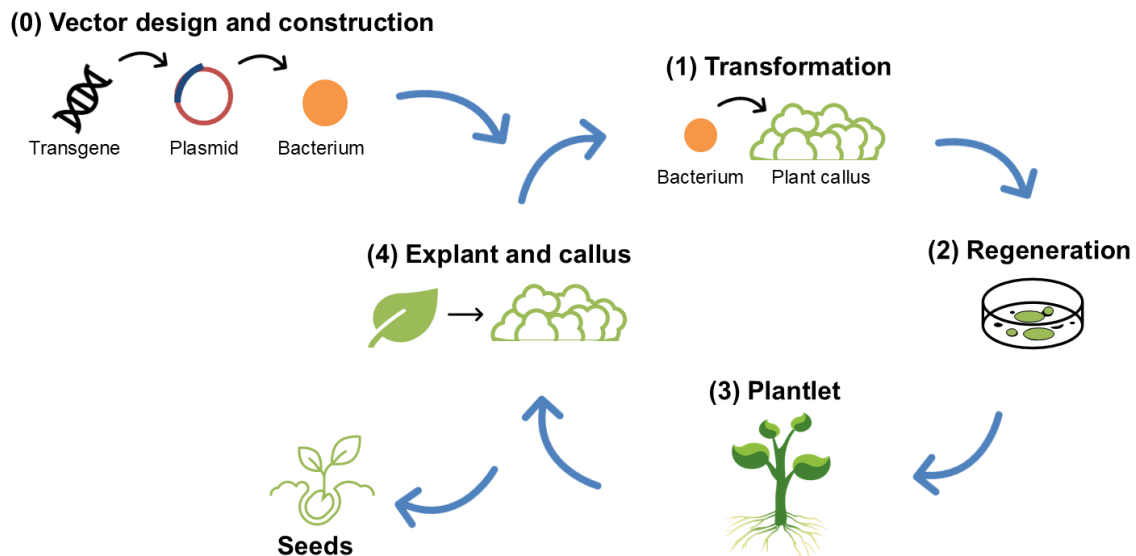
By developing high-performing genetic engineering tools for bioenergy crops, the PERSEPHONE program will enable quad-scale energy and substantial greenhouse gas mitigation impacts in these diverse areas and beyond.

## 2. TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Alongside breeding and management, plant genetic engineering is a complementary strategy that may further transform agriculture into a sustainable source of energy and materials. A typical plant genetic engineering workflow is illustrated in Figure 1 and involves the following steps:

0. Preparation of the transgene and vector;
1. Transformation of DNA into undifferentiated plant cells known as calli;
2. Regeneration of the cells into a plantlet via tissue culture;
3. Transplantation of the plantlet into soil in a greenhouse; and
4. Generation of explant and callus to iterate.

If the engineering targets have been reached, seeds can be harvested at the end of Step 3 and the workflow can cease there.



**Figure 1.** A typical plant genetic engineering workflow.

Challenges to plant engineering are particularly severe for bioenergy crops, as described in the recent DOE report, “Overcoming Barriers in Plant Transformation: A Focus on Bioenergy Crops.”<sup>24</sup> Although a large majority of corn and soy grown in the U.S. is genetically modified, a

<sup>24</sup> U.S. DOE. 2024. “Overcoming Barriers in Plant Transformation: A Focus on Bioenergy Crops,” DOE/SC-0215. U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science. <https://doi.org/10.2172/2335710>.

limited number of cultivars can be routinely transformed.<sup>25</sup> The primary methods for plant transformation utilize disarmed *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* or biolistic DNA delivery. *Agrobacterium*-based protocols have higher levels of transformation efficiency (up to 50% in optimized maize genotypes) but are effective on limited varieties of plants.<sup>26</sup> Even when successful, the process of stably regenerating a transformed plant is lengthy and labor-intensive, especially for bioenergy crops such as sorghum, miscanthus, and poplar.

The challenges facing bioenergy crop engineering are summarized as follows:

- Low transformation efficiency;
- Lengthy and unreliable regeneration through tissue culture;
- Genotype-dependent techniques and recalcitrant varieties;
- Labor-intensive practices with low reproducibility;
- Regulatory uncertainty and biocontainment risk;
- Limitations on the size and complexity of genetic constructs;
- Excessive time, labor, and space to generate and maintain transformable material; and
- Difficulty controlling the genomic location and expression of trans-genes.

As a result, the rapid “Design-Build-Test-Learn” loops employed in other engineering fields to iterate and innovate remain out of reach in plant engineering.

On a national level, the consequences of this bottleneck are severe. Most labs lack the capacity to engineer relevant bioenergy crops, leaving them reliant on a dwindling number of centralized transformation facilities. U.S. laboratories deliver only 5,000-10,000 DNA designs into crops per year across *all species*, with only about 200 in bioenergy crops beyond corn and soybeans.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the cost of each design can range from \$6,000 to \$10,000.<sup>28</sup> For comparison, the sorghum genome contains roughly 30,000 genes.<sup>29</sup> The mismatch between current engineering capabilities and the scale of crop genomes makes it unlikely that the U.S. will achieve transformative advances in bioenergy crops using currently available technology.

In addition to the challenges described above, advanced bioenergy crop engineering leads to unique regulatory and social considerations. Crops like sorghum and poplar have native relatives near likely areas of deployment, leading to concerns about the flow of transgenes into

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<sup>25</sup> USDA Economic Research Service. 2024. “Adoption of genetically engineered crops in the United States, 1996-2024.” [USDA ERS - Recent Trends in GE Adoption](#).

<sup>26</sup> Yuji Ishida, Yukoh Hiei, and Toshihiko Komari, “*Agrobacterium*-Mediated Transformation of Maize,” *Nature Protocols* 2, no. 7 (June 21, 2007): 1614–21, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nprot.2007.241>.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. DOE. 2024. “Overcoming Barriers in Plant Transformation: A Focus on Bioenergy Crops,” DOE/SC-0215. U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science. <https://doi.org/10.2172/2335710>.

<sup>28</sup> Wisconsin Crop Innovation Center Pricing. Accessed 12/2/24. <https://cropinnovation.cals.wisc.edu/pricing-2/>. For each design, it is typical to produce 6-10 distinct transformed plant lines to compensate for random DNA integration. The price quoted is for one design.

<sup>29</sup> Andrew H. Paterson et al., “The Sorghum Bicolor Genome and the Diversification of Grasses,” *Nature* 457, no. 7229 (January 2009): 551–56, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature07723>.

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native populations.<sup>30,31</sup> The introduction of new bioenergy crops into an area also could raise concerns around invasiveness and ecosystem impacts.<sup>32</sup> Widespread deployment of engineered bioenergy crops will require innovative biocontainment technologies to prevent environmental damage and facilitate regulatory compliance.

### 3. EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Recent advances both inside and outside the field of plant biotechnology have the potential to dramatically improve the ability of researchers to efficiently generate engineered plants. For example, expression of developmental regulatory genes can reduce the time and genotype-dependence of monocot transformation and regeneration.<sup>33</sup> Similar genetic technologies have augmented biolistics-mediated, tissue culture-free editing through meristem induction.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, advances in molecular genetics such as transposase-based gene insertion and “CRISPR-Combo” systems for simultaneous gene editing and activation have led to greater control and expanded possibilities for genome engineering; and rapid progress in fields such as drug delivery, nucleic acid medicine, machine learning, and robotics holds great promise for translation to the field of plant engineering.<sup>35,36</sup> Table 1 illustrates some representative recent advances.

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<sup>30</sup> Wenqian Kong et al., “Transmission Genetics of a Sorghum Bicolor × *S. Halepense* Backcross Populations,” *Frontiers in Plant Science* 11 (April 30, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpls.2020.00467>.

<sup>31</sup> Amy L. Klocko et al., “Phenotypic Expression and Stability in a Large-Scale Field Study of Genetically Engineered Poplars Containing Sexual Containment Transgenes,” *Frontiers in Bioengineering and Biotechnology* 6 (August 3, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fbioe.2018.00100>.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/tech/science/environment/2015/05/05/volunteers-battle-yellow-tuft-alyssum-in-southern-oregon/26926521/>.

<sup>33</sup> Keith Lowe et al., “Morphogenic Regulators *Baby Boom* and *Wuschel* Improve Monocot Transformation,” *The Plant Cell* 28, no. 9 (September 2016): 1998–2015, <https://doi.org/10.1105/tpc.16.00124>.

<sup>34</sup> Michael F. Maher et al., “Plant Gene Editing through de Novo Induction of Meristems,” *Nature Biotechnology* 38, no. 1 (December 16, 2019): 84–89, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41587-019-0337-2>.

<sup>35</sup> Peng Liu et al., “Transposase-Assisted Target-Site Integration for Efficient Plant Genome Engineering,” *Nature* 631, no. 8021 (June 26, 2024): 593–600, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-07613-8>.

<sup>36</sup> Changtian Pan et al., “Boosting Plant Genome Editing with a Versatile CRISPR-Combo System,” *Nature Plants* 8, no. 5 (May 20, 2022): 513–25, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41477-022-01151-9>.

**Table 1.** Standard and emerging technologies for crop engineering.

Crop	Metric	Value	Notes
<b>Representative state of practice</b>			
Maize B104 (traditional <i>Agro</i> + tissue culture) <sup>37</sup>	Time from immature embryo to soil transplant	22 weeks	Does not include 10 weeks to obtain immature embryos from seed stock
Sorghum bicolor <sup>38</sup>	Time from immature embryo to soil transplant	28 weeks	Does not include 12 weeks to obtain immature embryos from seed stock; highly genotype dependent
<b>Emerging technologies</b>			
Maize B73/Mo17/W22 (Developmental Regulators) <sup>39</sup>	Time from immature embryo to soil transplant	5-7 weeks	Does not include 11-14 weeks to obtain immature embryos from seed stock
Wheat ‘Haruyokoi’ cultivar <sup>40</sup>	Time from bombardment of seed-excised Shoot Apical Meristem (SAM) to soil transplant	2-3 weeks	Does not include time to confirm heritability ( $\geq 15$ weeks <sup>41</sup> ); transformation efficiency of 0.8%

Many challenges remain, however, even for the most promising new technologies. For example, the use of developmental regulators still requires labor-intensive tissue culture, and meristem transformation suffers from low efficiencies and heritability issues. More generally, most new technologies remain at the proof-of-concept stage. As a result, bioenergy crop engineering remains out of reach for most labs, preventing innovation at the scale and level of control necessary to transform U.S. bioenergy.

### C. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The PERSEPHONE program is seeking fundamentally disruptive technologies to improve the genetic engineering of bioenergy crops. Specifically, PERSEPHONE aims to support the development of genetic engineering tools that could lead to an annual impact of the production of at least 1 quad of energy or mitigation of more than 60 MT of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e). Genetic engineering has the potential to create dramatic increases in the supply,

<sup>37</sup> Minjeong Kang et al., “An Improved Agrobacterium-Mediated Transformation and Genome-Editing Method for Maize Inbred B104 Using a Ternary Vector System and Immature Embryos,” *Frontiers in Plant Science* 13 (May 4, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpls.2022.860971>.

<sup>38</sup> U.S. DOE. 2024. “Overcoming Barriers in Plant Transformation: A Focus on Bioenergy Crops,” DOE/SC-0215. U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science. <https://doi.org/10.2172/2335710>.

<sup>39</sup> Alicia Masters et al., “Agrobacterium-Mediated Immature Embryo Transformation of Recalcitrant Maize Inbred Lines Using Morphogenic Genes,” *Journal of Visualized Experiments*, no. 156 (February 14, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3791/60782-v>.

<sup>40</sup> Haruyasu Hamada et al., “An in Planta Biolistic Method for Stable Wheat Transformation,” *Scientific Reports* 7, no. 1 (September 13, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-017-11936-0>.

<sup>41</sup> Yuelin Liu et al., “In Planta Genome Editing in Commercial Wheat Varieties,” *Frontiers in Plant Science* 12 (March 15, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpls.2021.648841>.

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resilience, and sustainability of bioenergy, along with entirely new capabilities for agricultural production.

However, due to limitations described in Section I.B.2, bioenergy crop engineering is currently a multiyear process that can only be pursued by a handful of researchers or large facilities, and only for a small fraction of crop species and varieties. Moreover, uncertainty about ecosystem impacts and regulatory pathways inhibits commercial investment in the space. PERSEPHONE aims to transform bioenergy crop engineering into a routine procedure accessible to a wide group of innovators. This will allow researchers to rapidly translate biological knowledge into energy applications, e.g., by introducing oil production pathways into biomass sorghum or increasing nitrogen efficiency in elite corn cultivars. In the same ways that the personal computer transformed software, and CRISPR transformed mammalian cell biology, the democratization of plant genetic engineering will usher in a new period of progress and innovation in bioenergy.

#### **D. TECHNICAL CATEGORIES OF INTEREST**

Applicants may propose submissions that respond to only one category or a combination of several of the following three categories. Submissions to multiple categories should identify the combination of categories and have the potential to achieve the targets of each category.

##### **1. CATEGORY A: TOOL DEVELOPMENT**

The goal of Category A is to develop robust, high-performing tools for the genetic engineering of bioenergy crops. Submissions should identify a specific bioenergy crop where progress in genetic engineering is essential to achieving the PERSEPHONE program objectives described above.

Projects in Category A will enable the following improvements:

- Speed: development of engineered bioenergy crops in months instead of years;
- Throughput: the ability of a single technician to generate thousands of heritable events<sup>42</sup>;
- Generalizability: genotype-independent methods that can be applied to recalcitrant varieties with minimal optimization; and
- Cost: the ability to generate events<sup>43</sup> with costs a fraction of the current state of the art (SOA).

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<sup>42</sup> A heritable event is defined in this NOFO as a specific instance of a desired change to the genome, confirmed to have been incorporated into the germline. A chimeric plantlet would not qualify without additional justification for heritability. This heritable event is the endpoint for the “Iteration time” metric in Table 3.

<sup>43</sup> An event is defined in this NOFO as a specific instance of a desired change to the genome, realized in a plantlet in soil. This is the endpoint for the “Throughput” metric in Table 3.

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## 2. CATEGORY B: NOVEL TOOLS

The goal of Category B is to create radically new tools for plant genetic engineering. These may include technologies that have been demonstrated in isolated contexts but have been limited by inconsistent results. Work may be performed in model organisms to develop the tool, so long as it is shown to be reliable, predictable, and reproducible, with a transformative potential once translated to bioenergy crops.

Technologies of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Floral dip generalized to new organisms;
- Nanoparticle-mediated delivery of DNA to germplasm;
- Pollen transformation; and
- Other technologies capable of revolutionizing plant genetic engineering workflows.

## 3. CATEGORY C: BIOCONTAINMENT

The goal of Category C is to develop technologies that will spur adoption of genetically engineered bioenergy crops by minimizing the risk of invasiveness, biodiversity loss, and flow of transgenes into the environment. Submissions should identify a specific bioenergy crop, trait, and target environment, and propose a technological toolkit (biological, ecological, molecular, etc.) to mitigate the risks associated with deployment.

Technologies of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Gene-use restriction technologies which are stringent but reversible, to allow continued breeding cycles; and
- Technologies which limit gene flow and invasiveness but do not decrease yield or otherwise negatively impact crop end-uses.

### E. TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS

All technologies developed under the program should have the potential to meet the following program-level target:

Table 2. Program-level Target.

Metric	Target
Energy and emissions impact	Develop a tool that, if applied to one or more specific crops and traits, can lead to an annual impact of the production of $\geq 1$ quad of energy or mitigation of $\geq 60$ MT of CO <sub>2</sub> e.

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Submissions must describe specific energy applications of the proposed technology and estimate their impact. The following information is expected to be helpful in justifying the analysis:

- A specific crop and target product (e.g., SAF, biologically available nitrogen, materials<sup>44</sup>);
- A Technology-to-Market analysis defining necessary crop performance and acreage to achieve the target impact, as well as relevant technoeconomic factors;
- Specific traits affecting crop performance and acreage;
- Genetic engineering approaches to modifying the traits; and
- A comparison of the feasibility of the genetic engineering approaches using SOA tools versus those developed during the program.

The analysis should be quantitative wherever possible. For projects in Category B (Novel Tools), the analysis may use targets for eventual deployment in bioenergy crops.

In addition to the program-level metric, projects in each category should show potential to achieve the category-specific metrics below.

### 1. CATEGORY A: TOOL DEVELOPMENT

Projects in Category A should show potential to achieve one or more of the following performance targets:

**Table 3.** Category A Targets.

Metric	Target	Rationale/Description
<b>Iteration time</b>	3 months <i>or</i> 1/2 the SOA	Defined as the time from a seed to a heritable event. Includes generation of transformable material, if applicable.
<b>Throughput</b>	10,000 <i>or</i> 10X the SOA	Defined as events per technician per year.
<b>Genotype independence</b>	2	Number of recalcitrant varieties engineered with iteration time and throughput comparable to amenable crop.
<b>Cost per event</b>	<\$200	Estimated for a mature protocol at a facility doing transformations in bulk (>1,000 events per year), including labor, reagents, and capital amortization.

The selected target metric(s) must be achieved in a bioenergy crop by the end of the period of performance. For targets relative to the SOA, applicants must define the SOA workflow and justify their choice. By the end of the program, the procedure must be documented in a detailed protocol that can be reproduced robustly with video or other documentation as appropriate. Submissions must describe the SOA and end-of-project goals for all four metrics, regardless of which target(s) are chosen.

<sup>44</sup> These are given only as examples and do not restrict the scope of the program.

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## 2. CATEGORY B: NOVEL TOOLS

Projects in Category B should have the potential to achieve the following target for robustness and consistency:

**Table 4.** Category B Required Target.

Metric	Target
Number of independent, sequence-confirmed heritable events	5

Applicants must also define their own targets for the metrics defined in Table 3 by filling out Table 5 and comparing the targets to the current SOA.

**Table 5.** Category B Applicant-defined Targets.

Metric	SOA	Target (end of program)	Target (deployment in bioenergy crops)
Iteration time			
Throughput			
Genotype independence			
Cost per event			

Work may be performed in model organisms, but the submission must describe how these tools could be deployed in bioenergy crops and what the impact of that deployment would be. Submissions should quantify this potential in the last column of Table 5 and provide justification for how the technology is expected to perform when translated to bioenergy crops. Translation is not required during the program. By the end of the program, the procedure must be documented in a detailed protocol that can be reproduced robustly with video or other documentation as appropriate. Submissions in Category B must document the novelty of the technological approach being proposed, including a detailed discussion of the differences from the most similar SOA engineering methodology (e.g., biolistics, *Agrobacterium* infiltration, and tissue-culture regeneration) and the theoretical advantages of such differences. Evidence could include, for example, a similar procedure and a clear statement that the proposed procedure has been used for transient expression only. Approaches that have been used successfully in animal or fungal cells, but not yet produced heritable events in plants, would be considered novel in the context of this NOFO.

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### 3. CATEGORY C: BIOCONTAINMENT

Projects in Category C should have the potential to achieve all of the following performance targets:

Table 6. Category C Targets.

Metric	Target	Rationale/Description
Gene flow	0%	Probability of genetically engineered DNA being transmitted to non-engineered organisms.
Invasiveness	<0.01%	Probability that a community of genetically engineered organisms will establish outside the deployment area.
Yield penalty	0%	Difference in yield between a crop with and without the biocontainment trait, defined for the most agronomically relevant product.

The metrics in Table 6 are defined for a realistic deployment (e.g., a typical field) over the course of a field trial. Metrics may be calculated using small-scale field trials and/or models parametrized by laboratory or greenhouse data generated during the project. Greenhouse trials should include the engineered plant within a consortium of the plant species representative of the likely deployment areas. Should no escape events be observed in trials, statistical analysis should be used to bound the probability of escape given the finite size of experiments.

#### F. STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

Congress directed ARPA-E to “establish and monitor project milestones, initiate research projects quickly, and just as quickly terminate or restructure projects if such milestones are not achieved.”<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, ARPA-E is substantially involved in the direction of projects from inception to completion. For the purposes of an ARPA-E project, substantial involvement means:

- Project Teams must adhere to ARPA-E’s agency-specific and programmatic requirements.
- ARPA-E may intervene at any time in the conduct or performance of work under an award.
- ARPA-E does not limit its involvement to the administrative requirements of an award. Instead, ARPA-E has substantial involvement in the direction and redirection of the technical aspects of the project as a whole.
- ARPA-E may, at its sole discretion, modify or terminate projects that fail to achieve predetermined Go/No Go decision points or technical milestones and deliverables.
- During award negotiations, ARPA-E Program Directors and Recipients mutually establish an aggressive schedule of quantitative milestones and deliverables that must be met

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Congress, Conference Report to accompany the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competitiveness Act of 2007, H. Rpt. 110-289 at 171-172 (Aug. 1, 2007).

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every quarter. In addition, ARPA-E will negotiate and establish “Go/No-Go” milestones for each project. If the Recipient fails to achieve any of the “Go/No-Go” milestones or technical milestones and deliverables as determined by the ARPA-E Grants Officer, ARPA-E may – at its discretion - renegotiate the statement of project objectives or schedule of technical milestones and deliverables for the project. In the alternative, ARPA-E may suspend or terminate the award in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.339 – 200.343.

- ARPA-E may provide guidance and/or assistance to the Recipient to accelerate the commercialization of ARPA-E-funded technologies. Guidance and assistance provided by ARPA-E may include coordination with other Government agencies and nonprofits<sup>46</sup> to provide mentoring and networking opportunities for Recipients. ARPA-E may also organize and sponsor events to educate Recipients about key barriers to the commercialization of their ARPA-E-funded technologies. In addition, ARPA-E may establish collaborations with private and public entities to provide continued support for the development and commercialization of ARPA-E-funded technologies.

## **G. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS**

### **1. ALLOWABLE COSTS**

All expenditures must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable in accordance with the applicable Federal cost principles. Pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 910.352, the cost principles in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (48 C.F.R. Part 31.2) apply to for-profit entities. The cost principles contained in 2 C.F.R. Part 200; Subpart E apply to all entities other than for-profits.

### **2. PRE-AWARD COSTS**

ARPA-E will not reimburse any pre-award costs incurred by Applicants before they are selected for award negotiations. Please refer to Section VI.A of the NOFO for guidance on award notices.

Upon selection for award negotiations, Applicants may incur pre-award costs at their own risk, consistent with the requirements in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, as modified by 2 C.F.R. Part 910, and other Federal laws and regulations. All submitted budgets are subject to change and are typically reworked during award negotiations. ARPA-E is under no obligation to reimburse pre-award costs if, for any reason, the Applicant does not receive an award or the award is made for a lesser amount than the Applicant expected, or if the costs incurred are not allowable, allocable, or reasonable.

### **3. PATENT COSTS**

For Subject Inventions disclosed to DOE under an award, ARPA-E will reimburse the Recipient –

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<sup>46</sup> “Nonprofits” or “nonprofit organizations” has the meaning set forth at 2 C.F.R. § 200.70.

in addition to allowable costs associated with Subject Invention disclosures - up to \$30,000 of expenditures for filing and prosecution of United States patent applications, including international applications (PCT application) submitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

The Recipient may request a waiver of the \$30,000 cap. Note that patent costs are considered to be Technology Transfer & Outreach (TT&O) costs (see Section I.G.8 of the NOFO below) and should be requested as such.

#### **4. CONSTRUCTION**

ARPA-E generally does not fund projects that involve major construction. Recipients are required to obtain written authorization from the Grants Officer before incurring any major construction costs.

#### **5. FOREIGN TRAVEL**

ARPA-E generally does not fund projects that involve foreign travel. Recipients are required to obtain written authorization from the ARPA-E Program Director before incurring any foreign travel costs and provide trip reports with their reimbursement requests.

#### **6. PERFORMANCE OF WORK IN THE UNITED STATES**

ARPA-E requires all work under ARPA-E funding agreements to be performed in the United States. However, Applicants may request a waiver of this requirement where their project would materially benefit from, or otherwise requires, certain work to be performed overseas.

Applicants seeking this waiver must include an explicit request in the Business Assurances & Disclosures Form. Such waivers are granted where ARPA-E determines there is a demonstrated need.

#### **7. PURCHASE OF NEW EQUIPMENT**

All equipment purchased under ARPA-E funding agreements must be made or manufactured in the United States, to the maximum extent practicable. This requirement does not apply to used or leased equipment. The Recipients are required to notify the ARPA-E Grants Officer reasonably in advance of purchasing any equipment that is not made or manufactured in the United States with a total acquisition cost of \$250,000 or more. Purchases of foreign equipment with a total acquisition cost of \$1,000,000 or more require the approval of the Head of Contracting Activity (HCA). The ARPA-E Grants Officer will provide consent to purchase or reject within 30 calendar days of receipt of the Recipient's notification.

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## 8. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND OUTREACH

ARPA-E is required to contribute a percentage of appropriated funds to Technology Transfer and Outreach (TT&O) activities. In order to meet this mandate, every Project Team must spend at least 5% of the Federal funding (i.e., the portion of the award that does not include the recipient's cost share) provided by ARPA-E on TT&O activities to promote and further the development and eventual deployment of ARPA-E-funded technologies. Project Teams must seek a waiver from ARPA-E, located in the Business Assurances & Disclosures Form, to spend less than the minimum 5% TT&O expenditure requirement.

All TT&O expenditures are subject to the applicable Federal cost principles (i.e., 2 C.F.R. 200 Subpart E and 48 C.F.R. Subpart 31). Examples of TT&O expenditures are as follows:

- Documented travel and registration for the ARPA-E Energy Innovation Summit and other energy-related conferences and events;
- Documented travel to meet with potential suppliers, partners, or customers;
- Documented work by salaried or contract personnel to develop technology-to-market models or plans;
- Documented costs of acquiring industry-accepted market research reports; and
- Approved patent costs.

## 9. LOBBYING

Recipients and Subrecipients may not use any Federal funds, directly or indirectly, to influence or attempt to influence, directly or indirectly, congressional action on any legislative or appropriation matters pending before Congress, other than to communicate to Members of Congress as described in 18 U.S.C. § 1913. This restriction is in addition to those prescribed elsewhere in statute and regulation.

Recipients and Subrecipients are required to complete and submit SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" (<https://www.gsa.gov/forms-library/disclosure-lobbying-activities>) if any non-Federal funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence any of the following in connection with your application:

- An officer or employee of any Federal agency,
- A Member of Congress,
- An officer or employee of Congress, or
- An employee of a Member of Congress.

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## 10. CONFERENCE SPENDING

Recipients and Subrecipients may not use any Federal funds to:

- Defray the cost to the United States Government of a conference held by any Executive branch department, agency, board, commission, or office which is not directly and programmatically related to the purpose for which their ARPA-E award is made and for which the cost to the United States Government is more than \$20,000; or
- To circumvent the required notification by the head of any such Executive Branch department, agency, board, commission, or office to the Inspector General (or senior ethics official for any entity without an Inspector General), of the date, location, and number of employees attending such a conference.

## 11. INDEPENDENT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COSTS

ARPA-E does not fund Independent Research and Development (IR&D) as part of an indirect cost rate under its Grants and Cooperative Agreements. IR&D, as defined at FAR 31.205-18(a), includes cost of effort that is not sponsored by an assistance agreement or required in performance of a contract, and that consists of projects falling within the four following areas: (i) basic research, (ii) applied research, (iii) development, and (iv) systems and other concept formulation studies.

ARPA-E's goals are to enhance the economic and energy security of the United States through the development of energy technologies and ensure that the United States maintains a technological lead in developing and deploying advanced energy technologies. ARPA-E accomplishes these goals by providing financial assistance for energy technology projects and has well recognized and established procedures for supporting research through competitive financial assistance awards based on merit review of proposed projects. Reimbursement for independent research and development costs through the indirect cost mechanism could circumvent this competitive process.

To ensure that all projects receive similar and equal consideration, eligible organizations may compete for direct funding of independent research projects they consider worthy of support by submitting proposals for those projects to ARPA-E. Since proposals for these projects may be submitted for direct funding, costs for independent research and development projects are not allowable as indirect costs under ARPA-E awards. IR&D costs, however, would still be included in the direct cost base that is used to calculate the indirect rate so as to ensure an appropriate allocation of indirect costs to the organization's direct cost centers.

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## 12. BUY AMERICA REQUIREMENT FOR PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Projects funded through this NOFO that are for, or contain, construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of public infrastructure in the United States undertaken by applicable recipient types, require that:

- All iron, steel, and manufactured products used in the infrastructure project are produced in the United States; and
- All construction materials used in the infrastructure project are manufactured in the United States.

However, ARPA-E does not anticipate soliciting for or selecting projects that propose project tasks that are for, or contain, construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of public infrastructure. If a project selected for award negotiations includes project tasks that may be subject to the Buy America Requirement, those project tasks will be removed from the project before any award is issued – i.e., no federal funding or Recipient cost share will be available for covered project tasks.

This “Buy America” requirement does not apply to an award where the Recipient is a for-profit entity.

## 13. REQUIREMENT FOR FINANCIAL PERSONNEL

ARPA-E requires Small Business or Nonprofit applicants to identify a finance/budget professional (employee or contracted support) with an understanding of Federal contracting and/or financial assistance and cost accounting (including indirect costs, invoicing, and financial management systems) that will support the team in complying with all applicable requirements.

## 14. PARTICIPANTS, COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS, AND CURRENT AND PENDING SUPPORT

If selected for award negotiations the selected applicant must submit, before the award is issued, an updated list of Covered Individuals<sup>47</sup> who are proposed to work on the project, both at the Recipient and subrecipient level, and a list of all participating<sup>48</sup> organizations. Further, the selectee must submit 1) current and pending support disclosures and resumes for any new Covered Individuals, and 2) updated disclosures if there have been any changes to the current and pending support submitted with the application.

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<sup>47</sup> See Section IX, Glossary, for the definition of Covered Individual.

<sup>48</sup> For a definition of “participation” please see footnote 57.

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Throughout the life of the award, recipients have an ongoing responsibility to notify DOE of changes to the Covered Individuals and collaborating organizations, within 30 days of such change, and to submit 1) current and pending support disclosure statements and resumes for any Covered Individuals; and 2) updated disclosures if there are changes to the current and pending support previously submitted to ARPA-E. Recipients must certify on an annual basis that no such changes have occurred since their most recent certification.

Note that foreign participation is treated separately and may require a Foreign Entity Waiver, per Section II.A.5.

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## II. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This NOFO is open to U.S. Institutions of Higher Education, national laboratories, industry and individuals.

#### 1. INDIVIDUALS

U.S. citizens or permanent residents may apply for funding in their individual capacity as a Standalone Applicant,<sup>49</sup> as the lead for a Project Team,<sup>50</sup> or as a member of a Project Team. However, ARPA-E will only award funding to an entity formed by the Applicant.

#### 2. DOMESTIC ENTITIES

For-profit entities (which includes large businesses and small businesses), educational institutions<sup>51</sup>, and nonprofits<sup>52</sup> that (A) are organized, chartered, or incorporated (or otherwise formed) under the laws of a particular state or territory of the United States; (B) have majority domestic ownership and control; and (C) have a physical place of business in the United States, including U.S. territories, are eligible to apply for funding as a Standalone Applicant, as the lead organization for a Project Team, or as a member of a Project Team.

Entities that do not meet the above criteria may still be eligible to apply as a Standalone Applicant, lead organization or member of a Project Team, but must either (1) designate in the Full Application a subsidiary or affiliate that meets the above criteria to receive funding (the Full Application must state the nature of the corporate relationship between the foreign entity and domestic subsidiary or affiliate); or (2) request a Foreign Entity Waiver via the Business Assurances & Disclosures Form.

- If a Foreign Country of Concern<sup>53</sup> or individual citizen(s) of a Foreign Country of Concern has any ownership interest in any of the entities included in a proposal, then the Full Application must include a Foreign Entity Waiver request for each such entity in order for ARPA-E to consider the participation of such entities.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> A Standalone Applicant is an Applicant that applies for funding on its own, not as part of a Project Team.

<sup>50</sup> A Project Team consists of the Project Team Lead, Subrecipients, and others performing or otherwise supporting work under an ARPA-E funding agreement.

<sup>51</sup> Institutions of Higher Education (or educational institutions): Has the meaning set forth at 20 U.S.C. 1001.

<sup>52</sup> Nonprofit organizations described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that engaged in lobbying activities after December 31, 1995 are not eligible to apply for funding as a Recipient or Subrecipient.

<sup>53</sup> "Foreign Countries of Concern", [as defined by the State Department](#), include (as of December 29, 2023) Burma, People's Republic of China, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

<sup>54</sup> The contents of a Foreign Entity Waiver request can be found in the Business Assurances & Disclosures Form.

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- All work under the ARPA-E award must be performed in the United States unless a separate Foreign Work Waiver request is granted.<sup>55</sup>

FFRDCs/DOE Labs are eligible to apply for funding as the lead organization for a Project Team or as a member of a Project Team that includes Institutions of Higher Education, companies, research foundations, or trade and industry research collaborations, but not as a Standalone Applicant.

State, local, and tribal government entities are eligible to apply for funding as a member of a Project Team, but not as a Standalone Applicant or as the lead organization for a Project Team.

Federal agencies and instrumentalities (other than DOE) are eligible to apply for funding as a member of a Project Team, but not as a Standalone Applicant or as the lead organization for a Project Team.

### 3. CONSORTIA

Consortia, which may include domestic and foreign entities, must designate one member of the consortium as the consortium representative to the Project Team. The consortium representative must be incorporated in the United States. The eligibility of the consortium will be determined by reference to the eligibility of the consortium representative under Section II.A of the NOFO. Each consortium must have an internal governance structure and a written set of internal rules. Upon request, the consortium entity must provide a written description of its internal governance structure and its internal rules to the Grants Officer ([ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov)).

Unincorporated consortia must provide the Grants Officer with a collaboration agreement, commonly referred to as the articles of collaboration, which sets out the rights and responsibilities of each consortium member. This collaboration agreement binds the individual consortium members together and shall include the consortium's:

- Management structure;
- Method of making payments to consortium members;
- Means of ensuring and overseeing members' efforts on the project;
- Provisions for members' cost sharing contributions; and
- Provisions for ownership and rights in intellectual property developed previously or under the agreement.

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<sup>55</sup> The contents of a Foreign Work Waiver can also be found in the Business Assurances & Disclosures Form.

#### **4. FOREIGN NATIONAL PARTICIPATION FROM COUNTRIES OF CONCERN**

All applicants selected for an award under this NOFO and project participants (including subrecipients and contractors) who anticipate involving foreign nationals from Foreign Countries of Concern<sup>56</sup> in the performance of an award may be required to provide ARPA-E with specific information about each foreign national to satisfy requirements for foreign national participation. A “foreign national” is defined as any person who is not a United States citizen by birth or naturalization. The volume and type of information collected may depend on various factors associated with the award. ARPA-E approval is required before a foreign national can participate in the performance of any work under an award.

ARPA-E may elect to deny a foreign national’s participation in the award. Likewise, ARPA-E may elect to deny a foreign national’s access to ARPA-E site, information, technologies, equipment, programs or personnel.

#### **5. FOREIGN PARTICIPATION CONSIDERATIONS**

Foreign participation<sup>57</sup> in a project requires a Foreign Entity Waiver (see Waiver Request – Foreign Entity Participation in the Business Assurances & Disclosure Form). Awardees have an ongoing obligation to report new foreign participation in a project and may be required to obtain a waiver before new foreign participation can occur. A Foreign Work Waiver may also be required (see Section I.G.6 and the Business Assurances & Disclosures Form).

##### **B. COMPLIANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS**

Submissions that are noncompliant or nonresponsive to the NOFO as described in Sections IV.D and V.A are not eligible.

##### **C. LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS**

ARPA-E is not limiting the number of submissions from Applicants. Applicants may submit more than one application to this NOFO, provided that each application is scientifically distinct.

Small business Applicants that qualify as a “Small Business Concern”<sup>58</sup> may apply to only one of the two ARPA-E PERSEPHONE NOFOs: DE-FOA-0003552 (PERSEPHONE SBIR/STTR), or DE-FOA-

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<sup>56</sup> Please see footnote 53 for list of Foreign Countries of Concern.

<sup>57</sup> “Participation” includes any activities performed under an ARPA-E award, including, but not limited to, all work described in the milestone schedule of an award (commonly referred to as “Attachment 3” or the “Statement of Project Objectives (SOPO)”) and any services that include testing, including services performed by vendors or consultants. Participation also includes activities that involve the procurement of foreign equipment or supplies.

<sup>58</sup> Please refer to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) website. A Small Business Concern is a for-profit entity that: (1) maintains a place of business located in the United States; (2) operates primarily within the United

000 3551 (PERSEPHONE). Small businesses that qualify as “Small Business Concerns” are strongly encouraged to apply under the former (SBIR/STTR NOFO). To determine eligibility as a “Small Business Concern” under DE-FOA-0003552 (SBIR/STTR), please review the eligibility requirements in Sections II.A - II.C of that NOFO.

ARPA-E will accept only new submissions under this NOFO. Applicants may not seek renewal or supplementation of their existing awards through this NOFO.

## **D. COST SHARING**

Applicants are bound by the cost share proposed in their Full Applications.

### **1. BASE COST SHARE REQUIREMENT**

ARPA-E generally uses Cooperative Agreements to provide financial and other support to Recipients (see Section VI.D.1 of the NOFO). Under a Cooperative Agreement or Grant, the Recipient must provide at least 20% of the Total Project Cost<sup>59</sup> as cost share, except as provided in Sections II.D.2 or II.D.3.<sup>60</sup>

### **2. INCREASED COST SHARE REQUIREMENT**

Large businesses<sup>61</sup> are strongly encouraged to provide more than 20% of the Total Project Cost as cost share.

Under an “other transaction” agreement, the Recipient is normally expected to provide at least 50% of the Total Project Cost as cost share. ARPA-E may reduce this cost share requirement, as appropriate.

### **3. REDUCED COST SHARE REQUIREMENT**

ARPA-E has reduced the base cost share requirement for the following types of projects:

- A domestic educational institution or domestic nonprofit applying as a Standalone Applicant is required to provide at least 5% of the Total Project Cost as cost share.

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States or makes a significant contribution to the United States economy through payment of taxes or use of American products, materials or labor; (3) is an individual proprietorship, partnership, corporation, limited liability company, joint venture, association, trust, or cooperative; and (4) meets the size eligibility requirements set forth in 13 C.F.R. § 121.702. Where the entity is formed as a joint venture, there can be no more than 49% participation by foreign business entities in the joint venture.

<sup>59</sup> The Total Project Cost is the sum of the Applicant’s share and the Federal Government share of total allowable costs. The Federal Government share generally includes costs incurred by GOGOs and FFRDCs.

<sup>60</sup> Energy Policy Act of 2005, Pub.L. 109-58, sec. 988(c)

<sup>61</sup> See Section IX.

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- Project Teams composed exclusively of domestic educational institutions, domestic nonprofits, and/or FFRDCs/DOE Labs/Federal agencies and instrumentalities (other than DOE) are required to provide at least 5% of the Total Project Cost as cost share. Small businesses – or consortia of small businesses – may provide 0% cost share from the outset of the project through the first 12 months of the project (hereinafter the “Cost Share Grace Period”).<sup>62</sup> If the project is continued beyond the Cost Share Grace Period, then at least 10% of the Total Project Cost (including the costs incurred during the Cost Share Grace Period) will be required as cost share over the remaining period of performance.
- Project Teams where a small business is the lead organization and small businesses perform greater than or equal to 80% of the total work under the funding agreement (as measured by the Total Project Cost) are entitled to the same cost share reduction and Cost Share Grace Period as provided above to Standalone small businesses or consortia of small businesses.
- Project Teams where domestic educational institutions, domestic nonprofits, small businesses, and/or FFRDCs perform greater than or equal to 80% of the total work under the funding agreement (as measured by the Total Project Cost) are required to provide at least 10% of the Total Project Cost as cost share. However, any entity (such as a large business) receiving patent rights under a class waiver, or other patent waiver, that is part of a Project Team receiving this reduction must continue to meet the statutory minimum cost share requirement (20%) for its portion of the Total Project Cost.
- Projects that do not meet any of the above criteria are subject to the base cost share requirements described in Sections II.D.1 and II.D.2 of the NOFO.

#### **4. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Although the cost share requirement applies to the Project Team as a whole, the funding agreement makes the Recipient legally responsible for paying or ensuring payment of the entire cost share. The Recipient’s cost share obligation is expressed in the funding agreement as a static amount in U.S. dollars (cost share amount) and as a percentage of the Total Project Cost (cost share percentage). If the funding agreement is terminated prior to the end of the period of performance, the Recipient is required to contribute at least the cost share percentage of total expenditures incurred through the date of termination.

The Recipient is solely responsible for managing cost share contributions by the Project Team and enforcing cost share obligations assumed by Project Team members in subawards or related agreements.

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<sup>62</sup> The term “small business” is defined in Section IX.

## 5. COST SHARE ALLOCATION

Each Project Team is free to determine how much each Project Team member will contribute towards the cost share requirement. The amount contributed by individual Project Team members may vary, as long as the cost share requirement for the project as a whole is met.

## 6. COST SHARE TYPES AND ALLOWABILITY

Every cost share contribution must be allowable under the applicable Federal cost principles, as described in Section I.G of the NOFO. Upon selection for award negotiations, the Recipient must confirm in writing that the proposed cost share contribution is allowable in accordance with applicable Federal cost principles.

Project Teams may provide cost share in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Cash contributions may be provided by the Recipient or Subrecipients. Allowable in-kind contributions include but are not limited to personnel costs, indirect costs, facilities and administrative costs, rental value of buildings or equipment, and the value of a service, other resource, or third-party in-kind contribution. Project Teams may use funding or property received from state or local governments to meet the cost share requirement, so long as the funding or property was not provided to the state or local government by the Federal Government.

The Recipient may not use the following sources to meet its cost share obligations:

- Revenues or royalties from the prospective operation of an activity beyond the period of performance;
- Proceeds from the prospective sale of an asset of an activity;
- Appropriated Federal funding or property (e.g., Federal grants, equipment owned by the Federal Government); or
- Expenditures that were reimbursed under a separate Federal program.

In addition, Project Teams may not use independent research and development (IR&D) funds<sup>63</sup> to meet their cost share obligations under Cooperative Agreements. However, Project Teams may use IR&D funds to meet their cost share obligations under “other transaction” agreements.

Project Teams may not use the same cash or in-kind contributions to meet cost share requirements for more than one project or program.

Cost share contributions must be specified in the project budget, verifiable from the Recipient’s records, and necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of the project.

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<sup>63</sup> As defined in Federal Acquisition Regulation Subsection 31.205-18.



Every cost share contribution must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Grants Officer and incorporated into the project budget before the expenditures are incurred.

Applicants may wish to refer to 2 C.F.R. Parts 200 and 910, and 10 C.F.R Part 603<sup>64</sup> for additional guidance on cost sharing, specifically 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.306 and 910.130, and 10 C.F.R. §§ 603.525-555.

## **7. COST SHARE CONTRIBUTIONS BY FFRDCs AND GOGOS**

Because FFRDCs are funded by the Federal Government, costs incurred by FFRDCs generally may not be used to meet the cost share requirement. FFRDCs may contribute cost share only if the contributions are paid directly from the contractor's Management Fee or a non-Federal source.

Because GOGOs/Federal Agencies are funded by the Federal Government, GOGOs/Federal Agencies may not provide cost share for the proposed project. However, the GOGO/Agency costs would be included in Total Project Costs for purposes of calculating the cost-sharing requirements of the applicant.

## **8. COST SHARE VERIFICATION**

The Recipient is required to provide cost share commitment letters from Subrecipients or third parties that are providing cost share, whether cash or in-kind, in their Full Application. Each Subrecipient or third party that is contributing cost share must provide a letter on appropriate letterhead that is signed by an authorized corporate representative.

Upon selection for award negotiations, Applicants are required to provide information and documentation regarding their cost share contributions. Please refer to Section II.D of the NOFO for guidance on the requisite cost share information and documentation.

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<sup>64</sup> <sup>64</sup> In the case of Technology Investment Agreements under 42 USC §7256(g).

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### **III. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT**

#### **A. GENERAL APPLICATION CONTENT REQUIREMENTS**

##### **1. MARKING OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

ARPA-E will use data and other information contained in Full Applications and Replies to Reviewer Comments strictly for evaluation purposes.

Full Applications, Replies to Reviewer Comments, and other submissions containing confidential, proprietary, or privileged information should be marked as described below. Failure to comply with these marking requirements may result in the disclosure of the unmarked information under the Freedom of Information Act or otherwise. The U.S. Government is not liable for the disclosure or use of unmarked information and may use or disclose such information for any purpose.

The cover sheet of the Full Application, Reply to Reviewer Comments, or other submission must be marked as follows and identify the specific pages containing confidential, proprietary, or privileged information:

Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data:

Pages [\_\_\_] of this document may contain confidential, proprietary, or privileged information that is exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes or in accordance with a financial assistance or loan agreement between the submitter and the Government. The Government may use or disclose any information that is not appropriately marked or otherwise restricted, regardless of source.

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

##### **2. EXPORT CONTROL INFORMATION**

Do not include information subject to export controls in any submissions, including Full Applications and Replies to Reviewer Comments – whether marked as subject to U.S. export control laws/regulations or otherwise. Such information may not be accepted by ARPA-E and may result in a determination that the application is non-compliant, and therefore not eligible for selection. This prohibition includes any submission containing a general, non-determinative statement such as “The information on this page [or pages \_ to\_] may be subject to U.S.

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export control laws/regulations”, or similar. Under the terms of their award, awardees shall be responsible for compliance with all export control laws/regulations.

## **B. FULL APPLICATIONS**

Full Applications must conform to the following formatting requirements:

- Each document must be submitted in the file format prescribed below and/or written in the document template at <https://arpa-e-foa.energy.gov>.
- The Full Application must be written in English.
- All pages must be formatted to fit on 8-1/2 by 11-inch paper with margins not less than one inch on every side. Single space all text and use Times New Roman typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 12 point or larger (except in figures and tables).
- The ARPA-E assigned Control Number, the Lead Organization Name, and the Principal Investigator’s Last Name must be prominently displayed on the upper right corner of the header of every page. Page numbers must be included in the footer of every page.

**Fillable Full Application template documents are available on ARPA-E eXCHANGE at <https://arpa-e-foa.energy.gov>.**

Full Applications found in any component to be noncompliant or nonresponsive may not be merit reviewed or considered for award (see Section II.B of the NOFO).

ARPA-E provides detailed guidance on the content and form of each component below.

### **1. FIRST COMPONENT: TECHNICAL VOLUME**

The Technical Volume is the centerpiece of the Full Application. The Technical Volume must be submitted in Adobe PDF format. The Technical Volume must conform to the content and form requirements included within the template, including maximum page lengths. If Applicants exceed the maximum page lengths specified for each section, or add any additional sections not requested, ARPA-E may review only the authorized number of pages and disregard any additional pages or sections.

Applicants must provide sufficient citations and references to the primary research literature to justify the claims and approaches made in the Technical Volume. ARPA-E and reviewers may review primary research literature in order to evaluate applications. However, all relevant technical information should be included in the body of the Technical Volume.

### **2. SECOND COMPONENT: SF-424**

The SF-424 must be submitted in Adobe PDF format using the available template. An instructional document is also available on ARPA-E eXCHANGE. Applicants must complete all

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required fields in accordance with the instructions. Applicants may identify and include in Block 14 the entities, their addresses, and corresponding census tract numbers for any project activities that will occur within any designated Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ). To locate QOZ, go to: <https://www.cdfifund.gov/opportunity-zones>.

Recipients and Subrecipients are required to complete SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities), also available on ARPA-E eXCHANGE, if any non-Federal funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any Federal agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with your application or funding agreement. The completed SF-LLL must be appended to the SF-424.

ARPA-E provides the following supplemental guidance on completing the SF-424:

- Each Project Team should submit only one SF-424 (i.e., a Subrecipient should not submit a separate SF-424).
- The list of certifications and assurances in Block 21 can be found at <https://www.energy.gov/management/articles/certifications-and-assurances-use-sf-424>.
- The dates and dollar amounts on the SF-424 are for the entire period of performance, not a portion thereof.
- Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the proposed costs listed in eXCHANGE match those listed on forms SF-424 and the Budget Justification Workbook/SF-424A. Inconsistent submissions may impact ARPA-E's final award determination.

### **3. THIRD COMPONENT: BUDGET JUSTIFICATION WORKBOOK/SF-424A**

Applicants are required to complete the Budget Justification Workbook/SF-424A Excel spreadsheet using the available template. Recipients must complete each tab of the Budget Justification Workbook for the project as a whole, including all work to be performed by the Recipient and its Subrecipients and Contractors. The SF-424A form included with the Budget Justification Workbook will “auto-populate” as the Applicant enters information into the Workbook. Applicants should carefully read the “Instructions and Summary” tab provided within the Budget Justification Workbook, and all instructions at the top of each category tab. For more information, an ARPA-E Budget Justification Guidance document is also available on ARPA-E eXCHANGE.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.332 Requirements for pass-through entities, the Recipient must ensure the Subrecipients' proposed costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable.

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#### **4. FOURTH COMPONENT: SUMMARY FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**

Applicants are required to provide a 250-word maximum Summary for Public Release following the instructions in the available template. The Summary for Public Release must be submitted in Adobe PDF format. For applications selected for award negotiations, the Summary may be used as the basis for a public announcement by ARPA-E; therefore, this summary should not include any confidential, proprietary, or privileged information. This summary may not include any graphics, figures, or tables. The summary should be written for a lay audience (e.g., general public, media, Congress) using plain English.

#### **5. FIFTH COMPONENT: SUMMARY SLIDE**

Applicants are required to provide a single PowerPoint slide summarizing the proposed project. The slide must be submitted in Microsoft PowerPoint format and must follow the provided template with minimal adjustment. This slide will be used during ARPA-E's evaluation of Full Applications. A summary slide template is available on ARPA-E eXCHANGE. Summary Slides must conform to the content and format requirements described in the template.

#### **6. SIXTH COMPONENT: BUSINESS ASSURANCES & DISCLOSURES FORM**

Applicants are required to provide the information requested in the Business Assurances & Disclosures Form. The information must be submitted in Adobe PDF format and digitally signed by all required parties. The fillable Business Assurances & Disclosures Form template on ARPA-E eXCHANGE includes instructions for items the Applicant is required to disclose, describe, or request a waiver for.

Applicants should submit separate Business Assurances & Disclosures Forms for each member of the Project Team. eXCHANGE will allow multiple PDF documents to be submitted under the Business Assurances & Disclosures Forms file name. Any additional documents submitted under this file name will be disregarded.

#### **C. REPLIES TO REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Written feedback on Full Applications is made available to Applicants before the submission deadline for Replies to Reviewer Comments. Applicants have a brief opportunity to prepare a short Reply to Reviewer Comments responding to one or more comments or supplementing their Full Application. A fillable Reply to Reviewer Comments template is available on ARPA-E eXCHANGE (<https://arpa-e-foa.energy.gov>).

Replies to Reviewer Comments must conform to the following requirements:

- The Reply to Reviewer Comments must be submitted in Adobe PDF format.
- The Reply to Reviewer Comments must be written in English.

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- All pages must be formatted to fit on 8-1/2 by 11-inch paper with margins not less than one inch on every side. Use Times New Roman typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 12 points or larger (except in figures and tables).
- The Reply to Reviewer Comments must be a maximum of 3 pages – 2 pages maximum for text, and 1 page maximum for images (e.g., graphics, charts, or other data).
- The Control Number must be prominently displayed on the upper right corner of the header of every page. Page numbers must be included in the footer of every page.

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#### **IV. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES**

All documents, templates, and instructions required to apply to this NOFO are either linked in this document or available on ARPA-E eXCHANGE at <https://arpa-e-foa.energy.gov>.

Full Applications and Replies to Reviewer Comments must be submitted through ARPA-E eXCHANGE. ARPA-E will not review or consider applications submitted through other means (e.g., fax, hand delivery, email, postal mail).

ARPA-E expects to retain copies of all Full Applications, Replies to Reviewer Comments, and other submissions. No submissions will be returned. By applying to ARPA-E for funding, Applicants consent to ARPA-E's retention of their submissions.

##### **A. UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER AND SAM REGISTRATION**

Applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at [www.sam.gov/SAM](http://www.sam.gov/SAM) prior to submitting an application, at which time the system will assign (if newly registered) a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Applicants should commence this process as soon as possible. Registering with SAM and obtaining the UEI could take several weeks.

Recipients must:

- Maintain a current and active registration in SAM.gov at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency, including (if applicable) information on its immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries and on all predecessors that have been awarded a Federal contract or financial assistance award within the last three years.;
- Remain registered in SAM.gov after the initial registration;
- Update its information in SAM.gov as soon as it changes;
- Review its information in SAM.gov annually from the date of initial registration or subsequent updates to ensure it is current, accurate and complete;
- Include its UEI in each application it submits; and
- Not make a subaward to any entity unless the entity has provided its UEI.

Subrecipients are not required to complete a full registration in SAM.gov but must obtain a UEI.

ARPA-E may not execute a funding agreement with the Recipient until it has obtained a UEI and completed its SAM registration.

##### **B. USE OF ARPA-E eXCHANGE**

To apply to this NOFO, Applicants must register with ARPA-E eXCHANGE (<https://arpa-e-foa.energy.gov/Registration.aspx>). For detailed guidance on using ARPA-E eXCHANGE, please

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refer to the “ARPA-E eXCHANGE Applicant Guide” (<https://arpa-e-foa.energy.gov/Manuals.aspx>).

Applicants are encouraged to log in to eXCHANGE using Enhanced Identity Proofing. ARPA-E eXCHANGE offers both Login.gov and ID.me as methods to authenticate identities. Login.gov and ID.me may require some users to go through a validation process that can take up to 10 days. Applicants can still use the legacy Login.gov option.

Upon creating an application submission in ARPA-E eXCHANGE, Applicants will be assigned a Control Number. If the Applicant creates more than one application submission, a different Control Number will be assigned for each application.

Once logged in to ARPA-E eXCHANGE (<https://arpa-e-foa.energy.gov/login.aspx>), Applicants may access their submissions by clicking the “Submissions” and then “My Submissions” links in the navigation on the left side of the page. Every application that the Applicant has submitted to ARPA-E and the corresponding Control Number is displayed on that page. If the Applicant submits more than one application to a particular NOFO, a different Control Number is shown for each application.

Applicants are responsible for meeting each submission deadline in ARPA-E eXCHANGE. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications at least 48 hours in advance of the submission deadline.** Under normal conditions (i.e., at least 48 hours in advance of the submission deadline), Applicants should allow at least 1 hour to submit a Full Application. In addition, Applicants should allow at least 15 minutes to submit a Reply to Reviewer Comments. Once the application is submitted in ARPA-E eXCHANGE, Applicants may revise or update their application until the expiration of the applicable deadline.

**Applicants should not wait until the last minute to begin the submission process.** During the final hours before the submission deadline, Applicants may experience server/connection congestion that prevents them from completing the necessary steps in ARPA-E eXCHANGE to submit their applications. **ARPA-E will not extend the submission deadline for Applicants that fail to submit required information and documents due to server/connection congestion.**

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**C. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST AND DEADLINES**

The following table outlines the required documents and their submission deadlines.

SUBMISSION	COMPONENTS	OPTIONAL/ MANDATORY	NOFO SECTION	DEADLINES
Full Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Volume (Adobe PDF format):                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cover Page (1 page max.)</li> <li>○ Executive Summary (1 page max.)</li> <li>○ Sections 1-5 (20 pages max.)</li> <li>○ Bibliographic References (no page limit)</li> <li>○ Personal Qualification Summaries (each summary limited to 5 pages in length, no cumulative page limit)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Signed SF-424 (Adobe PDF format);</li> <li>• Budget Justification Workbook/SF-424A (Microsoft Excel format);</li> <li>• Summary for Public Release (250 words max., Adobe PDF format);</li> <li>• Summary Slide (1 slide limit, Microsoft PowerPoint format); and</li> <li>• Signed Business Assurances &amp; Disclosures Form(s) (no page limit, Adobe PDF format).</li> </ul>	Mandatory	III.B	9:30 AM ET, March 4, 2025
Reply to Reviewer Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reply to Reviewer Comments (3 page max., Adobe PDF format)</li> </ul>	Optional	III.C	5 PM ET, April 1, 2025

**D. COMPLIANCE**

**ARPA-E may not review or consider incomplete applications and applications received after the deadline stated in the NOFO.** Such applications may be deemed noncompliant (see Section II.B of the NOFO). The following errors could cause an application to be deemed “incomplete” and thus noncompliant:

- Failing to comply with the form and content requirements in Section III of the NOFO;
- Failing to enter required information in ARPA-E eXCHANGE;
- Failing to upload required document(s) to ARPA-E eXCHANGE;
- Failing to click the “Submit” button in ARPA-E eXCHANGE by the deadline stated in the NOFO;
- Uploading the wrong document(s) or application(s) to ARPA-E eXCHANGE; and
- Uploading the same document twice but labeling it as different documents. (In the latter scenario, the Applicant failed to submit a required document.)

ARPA-E urges Applicants to carefully review their applications and to allow sufficient time for the submission of required information and documents.

Questions about this NOFO? Check the Frequently Asked Questions available at <https://arpa-e.energy.gov/faqs>. For questions that have not already been answered, email [ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov) (with NOFO name and number in subject line). Problems with ARPA-E eXCHANGE? Email [ExchangeHelp@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ExchangeHelp@hq.doe.gov) (with NOFO name and number in subject line).

**E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW**

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs).

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## **V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **A. RESPONSIVENESS**

#### **1. TECHNICAL RESPONSIVENESS REVIEW**

ARPA-E performs a preliminary technical review of Full Applications.

The following types of submissions may be deemed nonresponsive and may not be reviewed or considered:

- Submissions that fall outside the technical parameters specified in this NOFO.
- Submissions that have been submitted in response to currently issued ARPA-E NOFOs.
- Submissions that are not scientifically distinct from applications submitted in response to currently issued ARPA-E NOFOs.
- Submissions for basic research aimed solely at discovery and/or fundamental knowledge generation.
- Submissions for large-scale demonstration projects of existing technologies.
- Submissions for proposed technologies that represent incremental improvements to existing technologies.
- Submissions for proposed technologies that are not based on sound scientific principles (e.g., violates a law of thermodynamics).
- Submissions for proposed technologies that are not transformational, as described in Section I.A of the NOFO.
- Submissions for proposed technologies that do not have the potential to become disruptive in nature, as described in Section I.A of the NOFO. Technologies must be scalable such that they could be disruptive with sufficient technical progress.
- Submissions that are not distinct in scientific approach or objective from activities currently supported by or actively under consideration for funding by any other office within Department of Energy.
- Submissions that are not distinct in scientific approach or objective from activities currently supported by or actively under consideration for funding by other government agencies or the private sector.
- Submissions that do not propose a R&D plan that allows ARPA-E to evaluate the submission under the applicable merit review criteria provided in Section V.B of the NOFO.

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## 2. SUBMISSIONS SPECIFICALLY NOT OF INTEREST

Submissions that propose the following will be deemed nonresponsive and will not be merit reviewed or considered:

- Submissions that propose to develop transient expression technologies only.
- Submissions that propose to improve transformation technologies in plants that are not likely to provide bioenergy resources.
- Submissions that propose to develop technologies that will be primarily used for genomic description.
- Submissions to Category A that propose to achieve the targets in a model plant rather than a bioenergy crop.

### B. REVIEW CRITERIA

ARPA-E considers a mix of quantitative and qualitative criteria in determining whether to select a Full Application for award negotiations.

#### 1. CRITERIA FOR FULL APPLICATIONS

Full Applications are evaluated based on the following criteria:

(1) *Impact of the Proposed Technology* (30%) - This criterion involves consideration of the following:

- The potential for a transformational and disruptive (not incremental) advancement in one or more energy-related fields;
- Thorough understanding of the current state-of-the-art and presentation of an innovative technical approach to significantly improve performance over the current state-of-the-art;
- Awareness of competing commercial and emerging technologies and identification of how the proposed concept/technology provides significant improvement over these other solutions; and
- A reasonable and effective strategy for transitioning the proposed technology from the laboratory to commercial deployment.

(2) *Overall Scientific and Technical Merit* (30%) - This criterion involves consideration of the following:

- Whether the proposed work is unique and innovative;
- Clearly defined project outcomes and final deliverables;
- Substantiation that the proposed project is likely to meet or exceed the technical performance targets identified in this NOFO;

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- Feasibility of the proposed work based upon preliminary data or other background information and sound scientific and engineering practices and principles;
- A sound technical approach, including appropriately defined technical tasks, to accomplish the proposed R&D objectives; and
- Management of risk, to include identifying major technical R&D risks and feasible, effective mitigation strategies.

(3) *Qualifications, Experience, and Capabilities of the Proposed Project Team* (30%) - This criterion involves consideration of the following:

- The PI and Project Team have the skill and expertise needed to successfully execute the project plan, evidenced by prior experience that demonstrates an ability to perform R&D of similar risk and complexity; and
- Access to the equipment and facilities necessary to accomplish the proposed R&D effort and/or a clear plan to obtain access to necessary equipment and facilities.

(4) *Soundness of Management Plan* (10%) - This criterion involves consideration of the following:

- Plausibility of plan to manage people and resources;
- Allocation of appropriate levels of effort and resources to proposed tasks;
- Reasonableness of the proposed project schedule, including major milestones; and
- Reasonableness of the proposed budget to accomplish the proposed project.

Submissions will not be evaluated against each other since they are not submitted in accordance with a common work statement.

## **2. CRITERIA FOR REPLIES TO REVIEWER COMMENTS**

ARPA-E has not established separate criteria to evaluate Replies to Reviewer Comments. Instead, Replies to Reviewer Comments are evaluated as an extension of the Full Application.

### **C. PROGRAM POLICY FACTORS**

In addition to the above criteria, ARPA-E may consider the following program policy factors in determining which Full Applications to select for award negotiations:

- I. **ARPA-E Portfolio Balance.** Project balances ARPA-E portfolio in one or more of the following areas:
  - a. Diversity of technical personnel in the proposed Project Team;
  - b. Technological diversity;
  - c. Organizational diversity;
  - d. Geographic diversity;

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- e. Technical or commercialization risk; or
  - f. Stage of technology development.
- II. **Relevance to ARPA-E Mission Advancement.** Project contributes to one or more of ARPA-E's key statutory goals:
- a. Reduction of U.S. dependence on foreign energy sources;
  - b. Stimulation of U.S. manufacturing and/or software development
  - c. Reduction of energy-related emissions;
  - d. Increase in U.S. energy efficiency;
  - e. Enhancement of U.S. economic and energy security; or
  - f. Promotion of U.S. advanced energy technologies competitiveness.
- III. **Synergy of Public and Private Efforts.**
- a. Avoids duplication and overlap with other publicly or privately funded projects;
  - b. Promotes increased coordination with nongovernmental entities for demonstration of technologies and research applications to facilitate technology transfer; or
  - c. Increases unique research collaborations.
- IV. **Low likelihood of other sources of funding.** High technical and/or financial uncertainty that results in the non-availability of other public, private or internal funding or resources to support the project.
- V. **High Project Impact Relative to Project Cost.**
- VI. **Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ).** Whether the entity is located in an urban and economically distressed area including a Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ) or the proposed project will occur in a QOZ or otherwise advance the goals of QOZ. The goals include spurring economic development and job creation in distressed communities throughout the United States. For a list or map of QOZs go to: <https://www.cdfifund.gov/opportunity-zones>.

## D. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

### 1. FULL APPLICATIONS

ARPA-E performs a preliminary review of Full Applications to determine whether they are compliant and responsive. Full Applications found to be noncompliant or nonresponsive may not be merit reviewed or considered for award. ARPA-E makes an independent assessment of each compliant and responsive Full Application based on the criteria and program policy factors in Sections V.B.1 and V.C of the NOFO.

Questions about this NOFO? Check the Frequently Asked Questions available at <https://arpa-e.energy.gov/faqs>. For questions that have not already been answered, email [ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov) (with NOFO name and number in subject line). Problems with ARPA-E eXCHANGE? Email [ExchangeHelp@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ExchangeHelp@hq.doe.gov) (with NOFO name and number in subject line).

## **2. REPLY TO REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Once ARPA-E has completed its review of Full Applications, reviewer comments on compliant and responsive Full Applications are made available to Applicants via ARPA-E eXCHANGE. ARPA-E may also provide more direct feedback at this time. Applicants may submit an optional Reply to Reviewer Comments, which must be submitted by the deadline stated in the NOFO.

ARPA-E performs a preliminary review of Replies to determine whether they are compliant, as described in Section III.C of the NOFO. ARPA-E will review and consider compliant Replies only.

## **3. PRE-SELECTION CLARIFICATIONS AND “DOWN-SELECT” PROCESS**

Once ARPA-E completes its review of Full Applications and Replies to Reviewer Comments, it may, at the Grants Officer’s discretion, conduct a pre-selection clarification process and/or perform a “down-select” of Full Applications. Through the pre-selection clarification process or down-select process, ARPA-E may obtain additional information from select Applicants through pre-selection meetings, webinars, videoconferences, conference calls, written correspondence, or site visits that can be used to make a final selection determination. ARPA-E will not reimburse Applicants for travel and other expenses relating to pre-selection meetings or site visits, nor will these costs be eligible for reimbursement as pre-award costs.

ARPA-E may select applications for award negotiations and make awards without pre-selection meetings and site visits. Participation in a pre-selection meeting or site visit with ARPA-E does not signify that Applicants have been selected for award negotiations.

## **4. SELECTION FOR AWARD NEGOTIATIONS**

ARPA-E carefully considers all of the information obtained through the application process and makes an independent assessment of each compliant and responsive Full Application based on the criteria, risk reviews, and program policy factors in Sections V.B, V.G, and V.C of the NOFO. ARPA-E considers a mix of quantitative and qualitative criteria in determining whether to select an application for award negotiation.

The Selection Official may select all or part of a Full Application for award negotiations. The Selection Official may also postpone a final selection determination on one or more Full Applications until a later date, subject to availability of funds and other factors. ARPA-E will enter into award negotiations only with selected Applicants.

ARPA-E expects to announce selections for negotiations in approximately May 2025 and to execute funding agreements in approximately August 2025.

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## **E. ARPA-E REVIEWERS**

By submitting an application to ARPA-E, Applicants consent to ARPA-E's use of Federal employees, contractors, and experts from educational institutions, nonprofits, industry, and governmental and intergovernmental entities as reviewers. ARPA-E selects reviewers based on their knowledge and understanding of the relevant field and application, their experience and skills, and their ability to provide constructive feedback on applications.

ARPA-E requires all reviewers to complete a Conflict-of-Interest Certification and Nondisclosure Agreement through which they disclose their knowledge of any actual or apparent conflicts and agree to safeguard confidential information contained in Full Applications and Replies to Reviewer Comments. In addition, ARPA-E trains its reviewers in proper evaluation techniques and procedures.

Applicants are not permitted to nominate reviewers for their applications. Applicants may contact the Grants Officer by email ([ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ARPA-E-CO@hq.doe.gov)) if they have knowledge of a potential conflict of interest or a reasonable belief that a potential conflict exists.

## **F. ARPA-E SUPPORT CONTRACTORS**

ARPA-E utilizes contractors to assist with the evaluation of applications and project management. To avoid actual and apparent conflicts of interest, ARPA-E prohibits its support contractors from submitting or participating in the preparation of applications to ARPA-E.

By submitting an application to ARPA-E, Applicants represent that they are not performing support contractor services for ARPA-E in any capacity and did not obtain the assistance of ARPA-E's support contractor to prepare the application. ARPA-E will not consider any applications that are submitted by or prepared with the assistance of its support contractors.

## **G. RISK REVIEW**

If selected for award negotiations, ARPA-E may evaluate the risks posed by the Applicant using the criteria set forth at 2 CFR §200.206(b)(2). ARPA-E may require special award terms and conditions depending upon results of the risk analysis.

Further, as DOE invests in critical infrastructure and funds critical and emerging technology areas, DOE also considers possible vectors of undue foreign influence in evaluating risk. If high risks are identified and cannot be sufficiently mitigated, DOE may elect to not fund the applicant. As part of the research, technology, and economic security risk review, DOE may contact the applicant and/or proposed project team members for additional information to inform the review.

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ARPA-E will not make an award if ARPA-E has determined that:

- The entity submitting the proposal or application:
  - has an owner or Covered Individual that is party to a malign foreign talent recruitment program of the People’s Republic of China or another foreign country of concern;<sup>27</sup>
  - has a business entity, parent company, or subsidiary located in the People’s Republic of China or another foreign country of concern; or
  - has an owner or Covered Individual that has a foreign affiliation with a research institution located in the People’s Republic of China or another foreign country of concern; and
- The relationships and commitments described above:
  - interfere with the capacity for activities supported by the Federal agency to be carried out;
  - create duplication with activities supported by the Federal agency;
  - present concerns about conflicts of interest;
  - were not appropriately disclosed to the Federal agency;
  - violate Federal law or terms and conditions of the Federal agency; or
  - pose a risk to national security.

If high risks are identified and cannot be sufficiently mitigated, ARPA-E may elect to not fund the applicant.

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## **VI. AWARD NOTICES AND AWARD TYPES**

### **A. AWARD NOTICES**

Recipients should register with FedConnect in order to receive notification that their funding agreement has been executed by the Grants Officer and to obtain a copy of the executed funding agreement. Please refer to <https://www.fedconnect.net/FedConnect/> for registration instructions.

#### **1. REJECTED SUBMISSIONS**

Noncompliant and nonresponsive Full Applications are rejected by the Grants Officer and are not merit reviewed or considered for award. The Grants Officer sends a notification email to the technical and administrative points of contact designated by the Applicant in ARPA-E eXCHANGE. The notification states the basis upon which the Full Application was rejected.

#### **2. FULL APPLICATION NOTIFICATIONS**

ARPA-E promptly notifies Applicants of its determination to select, postpone a final decision until a later date, or not select a Full Application for award negotiation. ARPA-E sends a notification letter by email to the technical and administrative points of contact designated by the Applicant in ARPA-E eXCHANGE.

Written feedback on Full Applications is only made available to Applicants in the Replies to Reviewer Comments process. ARPA-E does not offer or provide debriefings.

ARPA-E may stagger its selection determinations. As a result, some Applicants may receive their notification letter in advance of other Applicants.

##### ***a. SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS***

ARPA-E has discretion to select all or part of a proposed project for negotiation of an award. A notification letter selecting a Full Application for award negotiations does not authorize the Applicant to commence performance of the project. **ARPA-E selects Full Applications for award negotiations, not for award.** Applicants do not receive an award until award negotiations are complete and the Grants Officer executes the funding agreement. The notice of Federal award signed by the Grants Officer is the official document that obligates funds. ARPA-E may terminate award negotiations at any time for any reason.

The Grants Officer is the only individual who can make awards on behalf of ARPA-E or obligate ARPA-E to the expenditure of public funds. A commitment or obligation by any individual other than the Grants Officer, either explicit or implied, is invalid.

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ARPA-E awards may not be transferred, assigned, or assumed without the prior written consent of a Grants Officer.

***b. POSTPONED SELECTION DETERMINATIONS***

A notification letter postponing a final selection determination until a later date does not authorize the Applicant to commence performance of the project. ARPA-E may ultimately determine to select or not select the Full Application for award negotiations.

***c. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS***

By not selecting a Full Application, ARPA-E intends to convey its lack of programmatic interest in the proposed project. Such assessments do not necessarily reflect judgments on the merits of the proposed project. ARPA-E hopes that unsuccessful Applicants will submit innovative ideas and concepts for future NOFOs.

**B. PRE-AWARD COSTS**

ARPA-E will not reimburse any pre-award costs incurred by Applicants before they are selected for award negotiations. Please refer to Section VI.A of the NOFO for guidance on award notices.

Upon selection for award negotiations, Applicants may incur pre-award costs at their own risk, consistent with the requirements in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, as modified by 2 C.F.R. Part 910, and other Federal laws and regulations. All submitted budgets are subject to change and are typically reworked during award negotiations. ARPA-E is under no obligation to reimburse pre-award costs if, for any reason, the Applicant does not receive an award or the award is made for a lesser amount than the Applicant expected, or if the costs incurred are not allowable, allocable, or reasonable.

**C. RENEWAL AWARDS**

At ARPA-E's sole discretion, awards resulting from this NOFO may be renewed by adding one or more budget periods, extending the period of performance of the initial award, or issuing a new award. Renewal funding is contingent on: (1) availability of funds appropriated by Congress for the purpose of this program; (2) substantial progress towards meeting the objectives of the approved application; (3) submittal of required reports; (4) compliance with the terms and conditions of the award; (5) ARPA-E approval of a renewal application; and (6) other factors identified by the Agency at the time it solicits a renewal application.

**D. FUNDING AGREEMENT TYPES**

Through cooperative agreements, other transactions, and similar agreements, ARPA-E provides financial and other support to projects that have the potential to realize ARPA-E's statutory mission. ARPA-E does not use such agreements to acquire property or services for the direct

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benefit or use of the U.S. Government.

## 1. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

ARPA-E generally uses Cooperative Agreements to provide financial and other support to Recipients.

Cooperative Agreements involve the provision of financial or other support to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute. Under Cooperative Agreements, the Government and Recipients share responsibility for the direction of projects.

ARPA-E encourages Recipients to review the Model Cooperative Agreement, which is available at <https://arpa-e.energy.gov/technologies/project-guidance>.

## 2. FUNDING AGREEMENTS WITH FFRDCs/DOE LABS, GOGOS, AND FEDERAL INSTRUMENTALITIES

Any Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC) involved as a member of a Project Team must provide the information requested in the “FFRDC Lab Authorization” and “Field Work Proposal” section of the Business Assurances & Disclosures Form, which is submitted with the Applicant’s Full Application.

When a FFRDC/DOE Lab (including the National Energy Technology Laboratory or NETL) is the *lead organization* for a Project Team, ARPA-E executes a funding agreement directly with the FFRDC/DOE Lab and a single, separate Cooperative Agreement with another entity on the Project Team. Notwithstanding the use of multiple agreements, the FFRDC/DOE Lab is the lead organization for the entire project, including all work performed by the FFRDC/DOE Lab and the rest of the Project Team.

When a FFRDC/DOE Lab is a *member* of a Project Team, ARPA-E executes a funding agreement directly with the FFRDC/DOE Lab and a single, separate Cooperative Agreement with the Recipient, as the lead organization for the Project Team. Notwithstanding the use of multiple agreements, the Recipient under the Cooperative Agreement is the lead organization for the entire project, including all work performed by the FFRDC/DOE Lab and the rest of the Project Team.

Funding agreements with DOE/NNSA FFRDCs take the form of Work Authorizations issued to DOE/NNSA FFRDCs through the DOE/NNSA Field Work Proposal system for work performed under Department of Energy Management & Operation Contracts. Funding agreements with non-DOE/NNSA FFRDCs, GOGOs (including NETL), and Federal instrumentalities (e.g., Tennessee Valley Authority) will be consistent with the sponsoring agreement between the U.S. Government and the Laboratory. Any funding agreement with an FFRDC or GOGO will have

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similar terms and conditions as ARPA-E's Model Cooperative Agreement (<https://arpa-e.energy.gov/technologies/project-guidance/pre-award-guidance/funding-agreements>).

Non-DOE GOGOs and Federal agencies may be proposed to provide support to the Project Team members on an applicant's project, through a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) or similar agreement.

### **3. OTHER TRANSACTIONS AUTHORITY**

ARPA-E may use its "other transactions" authority under the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 and DOE's other transactions authority as codified at 42 USC §7256(a) and (g) to enter into an other transaction agreement with Recipients on a case-by-case basis.

ARPA-E may negotiate an other transaction agreement when it determines that the use of a standard cooperative agreement, grant, or contract is not feasible or appropriate for a project.

The federal share of other transactions agreements should meet or exceed \$3,000,000. In general, an other transaction agreement normally requires a minimum cost share of 50%. See Section II.D.2 of the NOFO.

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## **VII. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Recipient is the responsible authority regarding the settlement and satisfaction of all contractual and administrative issues, including but not limited to disputes and claims arising out of any agreement between the Recipient and a FFRDC contractor. Recipients are required to flow down these requirements to their Subrecipients through subawards or related agreements.

### **A. NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

The following national policy requirements apply to Recipients.

- If an award is made to a DOE/NNSA National Laboratory, all Disputes and Claims will be resolved in accordance with the terms and conditions of the DOE/NNSA National Laboratory's management and operating (M&O) contract, as applicable, in consultation between DOE and the Recipient.
- If an award is made to another Federal agency or its FFRDC contractor, all Disputes and Claims will be resolved in accordance with the terms and conditions of the interagency agreement in consultation between DOE and the Recipient.

#### **1. NATIONAL POLICY ASSURANCES**

Project Teams, including Recipients and Subrecipients, are required to comply with the National Policy Assurances in effect on the date of award located at <https://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/rtc.jsp> in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.300.

#### **2. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT QUESTIONNAIRE**

By law, ARPA-E is required to evaluate the potential environmental impact of projects that it is considering for funding. In particular, ARPA-E must determine before funding a project whether the project qualifies for a categorical exclusion under 10 C.F.R. § 1021.410 or whether it requires further environmental review (i.e., an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement).

To facilitate and expedite ARPA-E's environmental review, Recipients are required to complete an Environmental Impact Questionnaire during award negotiations. This form is available at <https://arpa-e.energy.gov/technologies/project-guidance/pre-award-guidance/required-forms-and-templates>. Each Recipient must wait to complete the Environmental Impact Questionnaire (EIQ) until after ARPA-E has notified them that Attachment 3 Statement of Program Objectives is in final form. The completed EIQ is then due back to ARPA-E within 14 calendar days.

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## **B. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. COST SHARE PAYMENTS<sup>65</sup>**

All proposed cost share contributions must be reviewed in advance by the Grants Officer and incorporated into the project budget before the expenditures are incurred.

The Recipient is required to pay the “Cost Share” amount as a percentage of the total project costs in each invoice period for the duration of the period of performance. Small Businesses should refer to Section II.D.3 of the NOFO.

ARPA-E may deny reimbursement requests, in whole or in part, or modify or terminate funding agreements where Recipients (or Project Teams) fail to comply with ARPA-E’s cost share payment requirements.

### **2. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND DATA MANAGEMENT PLANS**

ARPA-E requires every Project Team to negotiate and establish an Intellectual Property Management Plan for the management and disposition of intellectual property arising from the project. The Recipient must submit a completed and signed Intellectual Property Management plan to ARPA-E within six weeks of the effective date of the ARPA-E funding agreement. All Intellectual Property Management Plans are subject to the terms and conditions of the ARPA-E funding agreement and its intellectual property provisions, and applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies, all of which take precedence over the terms of Intellectual Property Management Plans.

ARPA-E has developed a template for Intellectual Property Management Plans (<https://arpa-e.energy.gov/technologies/project-guidance/post-award-guidance/project-management-reporting-requirements>) to facilitate and expedite negotiations between Project Team members. ARPA-E does not mandate the use of this template. ARPA-E and DOE do not make any warranty (express or implied) or assume any liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of the template. ARPA-E and DOE strongly encourage Project Teams to consult independent legal counsel before using the template.

Awardees are also required, post-award, to submit a Data Management Plan (DMP) that addresses how data generated in the course of the work performed under an ARPA-E award will be preserved and, as appropriate, shared publicly. The Recipient must submit a completed and signed DMP - as part of the Team’s Intellectual Property Management Plan - to ARPA-E within six weeks of the effective date of the ARPA-E funding agreement.

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<sup>65</sup> Please refer to Section II.D of the NOFO for guidance on cost share requirements.

### 3. U.S. COMPETITIVENESS

A primary objective of DOE's multi-billion-dollar research, development and demonstration investments – including ARPA-E awards - is advancement of new energy technologies, manufacturing capabilities, and supply chains for and by U.S. industry and labor. Therefore, in exchange for receiving taxpayer dollars to support an applicant's project, the applicant must agree to the following U.S. Competitiveness Provision as part of an award under this NOFO.

#### U.S. Competitiveness

The Contractor (Recipient in ARPA-E awards) agrees that any products embodying any subject invention or produced through the use of any subject invention will be manufactured substantially in the United States unless the Contractor can show to the satisfaction of DOE that it is not commercially feasible. In the event DOE agrees to foreign manufacture, there will be a requirement that the Government's support of the technology be recognized in some appropriate manner, e.g., alternative binding commitments to provide an overall net benefit to the U.S. economy. The Contractor agrees that it will not license, assign or otherwise transfer any subject invention to any entity, at any tier, unless that entity agrees to these same requirements. Should the Contractor or other such entity receiving rights in the invention(s): (1) undergo a change in ownership amounting to a controlling interest, or (2) sell, assign, or otherwise transfer title or exclusive rights in the invention(s), then the assignment, license, or other transfer of rights in the subject invention(s) is/are suspended until approved in writing by DOE. The Contractor and any successor assignee will convey to DOE, upon written request from DOE, title to any subject invention, upon a breach of this paragraph. The Contractor will include this paragraph in all subawards/contracts, regardless of tier, for experimental, developmental or research work.

A subject invention is any invention of the contractor conceived or first actually reduced to practice in the performance of work under an award. An invention is any invention or discovery which is or may be patentable. The contractor includes any awardee, recipient, sub-awardee, or sub-recipient.

As noted in the U.S. Competitiveness Provision, at any time in which an entity cannot meet the requirements of the U.S. Competitiveness Provision, the entity may request a modification or waiver of the U.S. Competitiveness Provision. For example, the entity may propose modifying the language of the U.S. Competitiveness Provision in order to change the scope of the requirements or to provide more specifics on the application of the requirements for a particular technology. As another example, the entity may request that the U.S. Competitiveness Provision be waived in lieu of a net benefits statement or U.S. manufacturing plan. The statement or plan would contain specific and enforceable commitments that would be beneficial to the U.S. economy and competitiveness. Commitments could include manufacturing specific products in the U.S., making a specific investment in a new or existing U.S. manufacturing facility, keeping certain activities based in the U.S. or supporting a certain number of jobs in the

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U.S. related to the technology. If DOE, in its sole discretion, determines that the proposed modification or waiver promotes commercialization and provides substantial U.S. economic benefits, DOE may grant the request and, if granted, modify the award terms and conditions for the requesting entity accordingly.

The U.S. Competitiveness Provision is implemented by DOE pursuant to a Determination of Exceptional Circumstances (DEC) under the Bayh-Dole Act and DOE Patent Waivers. See Section VIII.A, "Title to Subject Inventions", of this NOFO for more information on the DEC and DOE Patent Waiver.

#### 4. NONDISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS REPRESENTATIONS

In submitting an application in response to this NOFO the Applicant represents that:

- (1) **It does not and will not** require its employees or contractors to sign internal nondisclosure or confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting its employees or contractors from lawfully reporting waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information.
- (2) **It does not and will not** use any Federal funds to implement or enforce any nondisclosure and/or confidentiality policy, form, or agreement it uses unless it contains the following provisions:
  - a. *"These provisions are consistent with and do not supersede, conflict with, or otherwise alter the employee obligations, rights, or liabilities created by existing statute or Executive order relating to (1) classified information, (2) communications to Congress, (3) the reporting to an Inspector General of a violation of any law, rule, or regulation, or mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, or (4) any other whistleblower protection. The definitions, requirements, obligations, rights, sanctions, and liabilities created by controlling Executive orders and statutory provisions are incorporated into this agreement and are controlling."*
  - b. The limitation above shall not contravene requirements applicable to Standard Form 312, Form 4414, or any other form issued by a Federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.
  - c. Notwithstanding the provision listed in paragraph (a), a nondisclosure confidentiality policy form or agreement that is to be executed by a person connected with the conduct of an intelligence or intelligence-related activity, other than an employee or officer of the United States Government, may contain provisions appropriate to the particular activity for which such document is to be used. Such form or agreement shall, at a minimum, require that the person will not disclose any classified

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information received in the course of such activity unless specifically authorized to do so by the United States Government. Such nondisclosure or confidentiality forms shall also make it clear that they do not bar disclosure to congress, or to an authorized official of an executive agency or the Department of Justice, that are essential to reporting a substantial violation of law.

## **5. INTERIM CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The DOE interim Conflict of Interest Policy for Financial Assistance (COI Policy) can be found at <https://www.energy.gov/management/financial-assistance-letter-no-fal-2022-02>. This policy is applicable to all non-Federal entities applying for, or that receive, DOE funding by means of a financial assistance award (e.g., a grant, cooperative agreement, or technology investment agreement or similar other transaction agreement) and, through the implementation of this policy by the entity, to each Investigator who is planning to participate in, or is participating in, the project funded wholly or in part under the DOE financial assistance award. DOE's interim COI Policy establishes standards that provide a reasonable expectation that the design, conduct, and reporting of projects funded wholly or in part under DOE financial assistance awards will be free from bias resulting from financial conflicts of interest or organizational conflicts of interest. The applicant is subject to the requirements of the interim COI Policy and within each application for financial assistance, the applicant must certify that it is, or will be by the time of receiving any financial assistance award, compliant with all requirements in the interim COI Policy. For applicants to any ARPA-E NOFO, this certification, disclosure of any managed or unmanaged conflicts of interest, and a copy of (or link to) the applicant's own conflict of interest policy must be included with the information provided in the Business Assurances & Disclosures Form. The applicant must also flow down the requirements of the interim COI Policy to any subrecipient non-Federal entities.

## **6. COMPLIANCE AUDIT REQUIREMENT**

A recipient organized as a for-profit entity expending \$1,000,000 or more of DOE funds in the entity's fiscal year (including funds expended as a Subrecipient) must have an annual compliance audit performed at the completion of its fiscal year. For additional information, refer to Subpart F of: (i) 2 C.F.R. Part 200, and (ii) 2 C.F.R. Part 910.

If an educational institution, non-profit organization, or state/local government has expended \$1,000,000 or more of Federal funds (including funds expended as a Subrecipient) in the entity's fiscal year, the entity must have an annual compliance audit performed at the completion of its fiscal year. For additional information refer to Subpart F of 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

## **7. RESEARCH SECURITY TRAINING REQUIREMENT**

Covered individuals listed on applications under this NOFO are required to certify that they have taken research security training consistent with Section 10634 of the CHIPS and Science

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Act of 2022. In addition, applicants who receive an award must maintain sufficient records (records must be retained for the time period noted in 2 CFR 200.334 and made available to DOE upon request) of their compliance with this requirement for covered individuals at the Recipient organization and they must extend this requirement to any and all Subrecipients. To fulfill this requirement, an applicant may utilize the four one-hour training modules developed by the National Science Foundation at <https://new.nsf.gov/research-security/training> or develop and implement their own research security training program aligned with the requirements in Section 10634(b) of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022. The submission of an application to this NOFO constitutes the applicant's acceptance of this requirement.

## **8. FRAMEWORK FOR NUCLEIC ACID SYNTHESIS SCREENING**

Entities who receive an award under this NOFO are required to obtain synthetic nucleic acids or devices capable of synthesizing them – from Providers or Manufacturers that attest to implementing 2024 OSTP Framework for Nucleic Acid Synthesis Screening. The attestation may be provided through: (1) a publicly posted statement (e.g., public website) or (2) directly to the Grants Officer and the Recipient/Subrecipient for subawards by the Provider or Manufacturer.

The Recipient shall incorporate the substance of this term in its terms and conditions, including this paragraph, in all subawards in support of the award that may involve the procurement of synthetic nucleic acids and benchtop nucleic acid synthesis equipment.

### **C. REPORTING**

Recipients are required to submit periodic, detailed reports on technical, financial, and other aspects of the project, as described in Attachment 4 to ARPA-E's Model Cooperative Agreement (<https://arpa-e.energy.gov/technologies/project-guidance/pre-award-guidance/funding-agreements>).

#### **1. FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE**

An applicant, recipient, or subrecipient must promptly disclose whenever in connection with the federal award (including any activities or subawards thereunder), it has credible evidence of the commission of a violation of Federal criminal law involving fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, or gratuity violations found in Title 18 of the United States Code or a violation of the civil False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. 3729-3733). The disclosure must be made in writing to the Federal agency, the agency's Office of Inspector General, and pass-through entity (if applicable.) Recipients and subrecipients are also required to report matters related to recipient integrity and performance in accordance with Appendix XII of this part. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 C.F.R. §200.339. (See also 2 C.F.R. part 180, 31 U.S.C. 3321, and 41 U.S.C. 2313.)

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For guidance on reporting such violations and information to the DOE Office of Inspector General (OIG), please visit <https://www.energy.gov/ig/ig-hotline>.

## **2. COMMERCIALIZATION PLAN AND SOFTWARE REPORTING**

If your project is selected and it targets the development of software, you may be required to prepare a Commercialization Plan for the targeted software and agree to special provisions that require the reporting of the targeted software and its utilization. This special approach to projects that target software mirrors the requirements for reporting that attach to new inventions made in performance of an award.

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## VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

### A. TITLE TO SUBJECT INVENTIONS

Ownership of subject inventions is governed pursuant to the authorities listed below:

- Domestic Small Businesses, Educational Institutions, and Nonprofits: Under the Bayh-Dole Act (35 U.S.C. § 200 et seq.), domestic small businesses, educational institutions, and nonprofits may elect to retain title to their subject inventions;
- All other parties: The federal Non-Nuclear Energy Act of 1974, 42 U.S.C. 5908, provides that the government obtains title to new subject inventions unless a waiver is granted (see below):
  - Class Patent Waiver for Domestic Large Businesses: DOE has issued a class patent waiver that applies to this NOFO. Under this class patent waiver, domestic large businesses may elect title to their subject inventions similar to the right provided to the domestic small businesses, educational institutions, and nonprofits by law. In order to avail itself of the class patent waiver, a domestic large business must agree to the U.S. Competitiveness Provision in accordance with Section VII.B.3 of this NOFO.
  - Advance and Identified Waivers: For applicants that do not fall under the class patent waiver or the Bayh-Dole Act, those applicants may request a patent waiver that will cover subject inventions that may be made under the award, in advance of or within 30 days after the effective date of the award. Even if an advance waiver is not requested or the request is denied, the recipient will have a continuing right under the award to request a waiver for identified inventions, i.e., individual subject inventions that are disclosed to DOE within the time frames set forth in the award's intellectual property terms and conditions. Any patent waiver that may be granted is subject to certain terms and conditions in 10 CFR 784.
- DEC: On June 07, 2021, DOE approved a DETERMINATION OF EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES (DEC) UNDER THE BAYH-DOLE ACT TO FURTHER PROMOTE DOMESTIC MANUFACTURE OF DOE SCIENCE AND ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES. In accordance with this DEC, all awards, including sub-awards, under this NOFO made to a Bayh-Dole entity (domestic small businesses and nonprofit organizations) shall include the U.S. Competitiveness Provision in accordance with Section VII.B.3 of this NOFO. A copy of the DEC may be found on the DoE website. Pursuant to 37 CFR § 401.4, any Bayh-Dole entity affected by this DEC has the right to appeal it by providing written notice to DOE within 30 working days from the time it receives a copy of the determination.
- Genetic modification is within the scope of this program. Should a new genetically modified material arise from the performance of an award, it must be reported in iEdison, the government-wide portal for reporting new inventions. iEdison allows for the reporting of biological materials that are going to be either patented by the awardee or not patented. If an awardee believes that patenting such new genetically modified materials is not appropriate, they should contact ARPA-E after the invention is reported

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in iEdison. Awards made under this NOFO will require follow-on reporting on the utilization of such materials whether they are patented or not.

## **B. GOVERNMENT RIGHTS IN SUBJECT INVENTIONS**

Where Recipients and Subrecipients retain title to subject inventions, the U.S. Government retains certain rights.

### **1. GOVERNMENT USE LICENSE**

The U.S. Government retains a nonexclusive, nontransferable, irrevocable, paid-up license to practice or have practiced for or on behalf of the United States any subject invention throughout the world. This license extends to contractors doing work on behalf of the Government.

### **2. MARCH-IN RIGHTS**

The U.S. Government retains march-in rights with respect to all subject inventions. Through “march-in rights,” the Government may require a Recipient or Subrecipient who has elected to retain title to a subject invention (or their assignees or exclusive licensees), to grant a license for use of the invention. In addition, the Government may grant licenses for use of the subject invention when Recipients, Subrecipients, or their assignees and exclusive licensees refuse to do so.

The U.S. Government may exercise its march-in rights if it determines that such action is necessary under any of the four following conditions:

- The owner or licensee has not taken or is not expected to take effective steps to achieve practical application of the invention within a reasonable time;
- The owner or licensee has not taken action to alleviate health or safety needs in a reasonably satisfactory manner;
- The owner has not met public use requirements specified by Federal statutes in a reasonably satisfactory manner; or
- The U.S. Manufacturing requirement has not been met.

## **C. RIGHTS IN TECHNICAL DATA**

Data rights differ based on whether data is first produced under an award or instead was developed at private expense outside the award.

- Background or “Limited Rights Data”: The U.S. Government will not normally require delivery of technical data developed solely at private expense prior to issuance of an award, except as necessary to monitor technical progress and evaluate the potential of proposed technologies to reach specific technical and cost metrics.

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- Generated Data: The U.S. Government normally retains very broad rights in technical data produced under Government financial assistance awards, including the right to distribute to the public. However, pursuant to special statutory authority, certain categories of data generated under ARPA-E awards may be protected from public disclosure for up to for up to ten years (or more, if approved by ARPA-E) in accordance with provisions that will be set forth in the award. In addition, invention disclosures may be protected from public disclosure for a reasonable time in order to allow for filing a patent application.

**D. PROTECTED PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION**

Applicants may not include any Protected Personally Identifiable Information (Protected PII) in their submissions to ARPA-E. Protected PII is defined as data that, if compromised, could cause harm to an individual such as identity theft. Listed below are examples of Protected PII that Applicants must not include in their submissions.

- Social Security Numbers in any form;
- Place of Birth associated with an individual;
- Date of Birth associated with an individual;
- Mother’s maiden name associated with an individual;
- Biometric record associated with an individual;
- Fingerprint;
- Iris scan;
- DNA;
- Medical history information associated with an individual;
- Medical conditions, including history of disease;
- Metric information, e.g., weight, height, blood pressure;
- Criminal history associated with an individual;
- Ratings;
- Disciplinary actions;
- Performance elements and standards (or work expectations) are PII when they are so intertwined with performance appraisals that their disclosure would reveal an individual’s performance appraisal;
- Financial information associated with an individual;
- Credit card numbers;
- Bank account numbers; and
- Security clearance history or related information (not including actual clearances held).

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## **IX. GLOSSARY**

**Applicant:** The entity that submits the application to ARPA-E. In the case of a Project Team, the Applicant is the lead organization listed on the application.

**Application:** The entire submission received by ARPA-E, including the Preliminary Application, Full Application, Reply to Reviewer Comments, and Small Business Grant Application (if applicable).

**ARPA-E:** The Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy, an agency of the U.S. Department of Energy.

**Covered Individual:** an individual who contributes in a substantive, meaningful way to the scientific development or execution of an R&D project proposed to be carried out with an award from ARPA-E. This includes, but is not limited to, the PI, Co-PI, Key Personnel, and technical staff (e.g., postdoctoral fellows/researchers and graduate students). ARPA-E may further designate covered individuals during award negotiations or the award period of performance.

**Deliverable:** A deliverable is the quantifiable goods or services that will be provided upon the successful completion of a project task or sub-task.

**DOE:** U.S. Department of Energy

**DOE/NNSA:** U.S. Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration.

**FFRDCs:** Federally Funded Research and Development Centers

**Foreign Affiliation:** A funded or unfunded academic, professional, or institutional appointment or position with a foreign government or government-owned entity, whether full-time, part-time, or voluntary (including adjunct, visiting, or honorary).

**For-Profit Organizations (or For-Profit Entities):** Entities organized for-profit that are Large Businesses or Small Businesses as those terms are defined elsewhere in this Glossary.

**GOCOs:** U.S. Government Owned, Contractor Operated laboratories.

**GOGOs:** U.S. Government Owned, Government Operated laboratories.

**Institutions of Higher Education (or educational institutions):** Has the meaning set forth at 20 U.S.C. 1001.

**Large Business:** Large businesses are entities organized for-profit other than small businesses as defined elsewhere in this Glossary.

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**Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program:** The meaning given such term in section 10638 of the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act (division B of Public Law 117–167) or 42 USC 19237, as of October 20, 2022.

**Milestone:** A milestone is the tangible, observable measurement that will be provided upon the successful completion of a project task or sub-task.

**PI:** Principal Investigator.

**Small Business:** Small businesses are domestically incorporated entities that meet the criteria established by the U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) “Table of Small Business Size Standards Matched to North American Industry Classification System Codes” (NAICS) (<http://www.sba.gov/content/small-business-size-standards>).

**Subject Invention:** Any invention conceived or first actually reduced to practice under an ARPA-E funding agreement.

**Task:** A task is an operation or segment of the work plan that requires both effort and resources. Each task (or sub-task) is connected to the overall objective of the project, via the achievement of a milestone or a deliverable.

**Total Project Cost:** The sum of the Recipient share and the Federal Government share of total allowable costs. The Federal Government share generally includes costs incurred by GOGOs, FFRDCs, and GOCOs.

**TT&O:** Technology Transfer and Outreach. (See Section I.G.8 of the NOFO for more information).

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