



Technology Commercialization Fund (TCF) Open Voucher Call Official Rules

MAY 2024

Preface

The Technology Commercialization Fund Open Voucher Call administrator reserves the right to modify this official rules document if necessary and will publicly post any such notifications as well as notify registered Technology Commercialization Fund Open Voucher Call participants.

Date	Modification

Contents

Preface	2
1 Introduction.....	4
1.1 Technical Commercialization Fund Open Voucher Call Summary	4
1.2 Key Dates.....	5
2 Background.....	6
3 Requirements and Guidelines.....	6
3.1 Eligibility and Submitters	6
3.2 Voucher Use Guidelines.....	7
3.3 Contracting Requirements.....	8
3.4 National Laboratory Capabilities	8
3.5 Program Goal Requirements	13
4 Voucher Awards	13
4.1 Goal.....	13
4.2 Participating National Laboratories.....	13
4.3 How To Enter.....	14
4.4 Voucher Awards Process.....	14
4.5 What to Submit.....	14
4.5.1 Technical Assistance Request Form	14
4.5.2 Letters of Support or Commitment (Optional)	18
4.6 How Submissions Are Evaluated	18
4.7 How We Determine and Award Vouchers	18
4.7.1 Interviews and Additional Questions.....	19
4.7.2 Final Determination.....	19
4.7.3 Announcement	19
4.8 Additional Terms and Conditions	19
Appendix 1: Additional Terms and Conditions	20
A.1 Requirements	20
A.2 Verification for Payments	20
A.3 Submission Rights	21
A.4 Copyright	21
A.5 Call Subject to Applicable Law.....	22
A.6 Resolution of Disputes	22
A.7 Publicity	22
A.8 Liability	22
A.9 Records Retention and Freedom of Information Act.....	22
A.10 Privacy.....	23
A.11 General Conditions.....	23
A.12 Program Policy Factors	23
A.13 National Environmental Policy Act Compliance.....	24
A.14 Return of Funds.....	24

1 Introduction

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the American-Made program are launching the American-Made Technology Commercialization Fund (TCF) Open Voucher Call with the support of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Technology Transitions (OTT) and TCF funding offices. The TCF Open Voucher Call aims to democratize access to cutting-edge research and innovation by providing the public with opportunities to receive technical assistance from researchers at DOE national laboratory facilities. This call seeks to bridge the gap between scientific expertise and public engagement, fostering a culture of curiosity and collaboration. By offering vouchers, DOE intends to empower individuals from diverse backgrounds to explore their scientific interests, contribute to meaningful research projects, and cultivate a deeper understanding of the scientific process.

The TCF Open Voucher Call is also designed to facilitate the commercialization of scientific discoveries by helping to identify pathways from laboratory breakthroughs to market-ready technologies. By providing access to cutting-edge facilities and national laboratory experts, participants are not only empowered to conduct research but also encouraged to explore avenues for translating their findings into real-world applications. This program aligns with the broader TCF goal of moving laboratory technologies to market while encouraging innovation, spurring economic growth, and providing societal benefits. Through this TCF Open Voucher Call, DOE hopes to inspire a new generation of researchers and instill a sense of shared responsibility for advancing knowledge and innovation within the scientific community.

1.1 Technical Commercialization Fund Open Voucher Call Summary

The TCF Open Voucher Call offers selected teams a voucher of up to \$100,000 to be redeemed at one of these eight national laboratories:

- National Renewable Energy Laboratory
- Sandia National Laboratory
- Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
- Los Alamos National Laboratory
- Ames National Laboratory
- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
- Argonne National Laboratory
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

There are 21 vouchers available, and each team may only win one voucher per technology area. All vouchers will require the submitting teams to provide a minimum cost share of \$25,000, which could be either in-kind or cash. The submitting teams will not receive funds directly, but rather will use the entire voucher amount at the assigned national laboratory. If the value of the \$100,000 is not used in its entirety at the end of the project, DOE will retain the remaining funds rather than distribute them to the submitting team. Additionally, teams may only work with one national laboratory per voucher. All vouchers will have a maximum project time of one year.

We encourage teams to submit ideas related to national laboratory intellectual property development and commercialization because teams that have voucher requests that leverage national laboratory intellectual property will be more likely to be selected. We also encourage teams to reach out to the TCF Open Voucher Call administrator at openvoucher@nrel.gov with descriptions of their voucher ideas related to the national laboratory intellectual property they wish to co-develop, further develop,

commercialize, or leverage. The TCF Open Voucher Call administrator will attempt to facilitate communication between the teams and relevant researchers at national laboratories in order to help the teams further develop their submissions. We cannot guarantee that these conversations will be possible, but we will try to facilitate them as best we can. If a national laboratory staff member meets with a team regarding national laboratory intellectual property, that staff member will not be involved in the proposal selection and review process. If a team's idea doesn't incorporate national laboratory intellectual property, there will be no attempt to connect them with a national lab researcher during the proposal stage of this open voucher call.

Teams that win awards shall be ready and willing to work with the technology transfer organizations within the eight participating national laboratories. Prior to the beginning of any work, all vouchers will require the team to complete agreements, which will include intellectual property terms and conditions. Successful teams must also attend any meetings related to the development of the statement of work and the contracting of the voucher.

1.2 Key Dates

- **Submission opens:** May 23, 2024
- **Overview webinar:** Mid-July 2024
- **Submission closes:** October 3, 2024, at 5 p.m. Eastern Time
- **Selected voucher announcement:** November 2024 (anticipated)
- **Selected voucher teams to co-develop the statement of work with the national laboratory:** November 2024 (anticipated)
- **Selected voucher teams to finalize contracting with the national laboratory:** January 2025 (anticipated)
- **Work to begin on the selected vouchers:** February 2025/March 2025 (anticipated).

2 Background

The TCF Open Voucher Call is part of the American-Made program, which serves as a fast track to the clean energy revolution. Funded by DOE, we incentivize innovation through these open voucher calls, training, teaming, and mentoring, connecting the nation's entrepreneurs and innovators to America's national labs and the private sector.

The TCF Open Voucher Call is sponsored by DOE's OTT with a goal of accelerating the commercialization of national laboratory intellectual property and getting the intellectual property into the hands of qualified innovators who are ready to take the technology solutions to the next level. The specific goals of this call include:

- Enable a pathway to develop new intellectual property that is co-developed by the external innovators and the DOE national laboratories
- Foster collaboration between private sector innovators and the DOE national laboratories
- Build internal ecosystems of national laboratory researchers interested in working with external individuals to conduct quality technical work.

3 Requirements and Guidelines

3.1 Eligibility and Submitters

A single submitter or team may submit a maximum of one submission per technology area. If more than one submission per technology area is received from a single submitter or team, the most recently submitted submission will be considered.

The TCF Open Voucher Call is open only to private entities (for-profits and nonprofits); non-federal government entities such as states, counties, tribes, and municipalities; academic institutions; and individuals, subject to the following requirements:

- Private entities must be U.S. owned and controlled. The participating group must also commit to manufacture any inventions conceived or reduced to practice in connection with the program in the United States in accordance with U.S. competitiveness provisions. These domestic requirements must be maintained throughout the program.
- An individual submitter or group of submitters who are not submitting as part of an incorporated private entity must all be U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents.
- Individuals submitting as part of an incorporated private entity may participate if they are legally allowed to work in the United States.
- Academic institutions must be based in the United States.
- DOE employees, employees of sponsoring organizations, members of their immediate families (e.g., spouses, children, siblings, or parents), and persons living in the same household as such persons, whether or not related, are not eligible to participate in the prize.
- Individuals who worked at DOE (federal employees or support service contractors) within six months prior to the submission deadline of any call are not eligible to participate in the TCF Open Voucher Call.
- Federal entities and federal employees are not eligible to participate in any portion of the TCF Open Voucher Call.
- DOE national laboratory employees cannot compete in the TCF Open Voucher Call.

- Entities owned by, controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of a government of a country of risk are not eligible to compete.¹
- Entities and individuals publicly banned from doing business with the U.S. government such as entities and individuals debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in federal programs are not eligible to compete.
- Entities and individuals identified as a restricted party on one or more screening lists of the Departments of Commerce, State, and the Treasury are not eligible to compete. See [Consolidated Screening List](#).
- This TCF Open Voucher Call is expected to positively impact U.S. economic competitiveness. Participation in a foreign government talent recruitment program² could conflict with this objective by resulting in unauthorized transfer of scientific and technical information to foreign government entities. Therefore, individuals participating in foreign government talent recruitment programs of foreign countries of risk are not eligible to compete. Further, teams that include individuals participating in foreign government talent recruitment programs of foreign countries of risk are not eligible to compete.
- DOE may conduct a review, using government resources, of the submitter and project personnel for foreign interference. The result of the risk review may result in the submission being deemed ineligible in the TCF Open Voucher Call competition. This risk review, and potential determination of ineligibility, can occur at any time during the TCF Open Voucher Call. The results of a risk review are not appealable.

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

In keeping with the goal of growing a community of innovators, submitters are encouraged to form multidisciplinary teams while developing their concept. The [HeroX platform](#) provides a space where parties interested in collaboration can post information about themselves and learn about others interested in competing in this TCF Open Voucher Call.

3.2 Voucher Use Guidelines

- A team may only win one voucher per technology area during this round of the program.
- Successful teams must provide a minimum cost-share of \$25,000, either cash or in-kind.

¹ Currently, the list of countries of risk includes Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China.

² Foreign government talent recruitment program is defined as an effort directly or indirectly organized, managed, or funded by a foreign government to recruit science and technology professionals or students (regardless of citizenship or national origin, and whether having a full-time or part-time position). Some foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment programs operate with the intent to import or otherwise acquire from abroad, sometimes through illicit means, proprietary technology or software, unpublished data and methods, and intellectual property to further the military modernization goals and/or economic goals of a foreign government. Many, but not all, programs aim to incentivize the targeted individual to physically relocate to the foreign state for the above purpose. Some programs allow for or encourage continued employment at U.S. research facilities or receipt of Federal research funds while concurrently working at and/or receiving compensation from a foreign institution, and some direct participants not to disclose their participation to U.S. entities. Compensation could take many forms including cash, research funding, complimentary foreign travel, honorific titles, career advancement opportunities, promised future compensation, or other types of remuneration or consideration, including in-kind compensation.

- Teams will not receive the voucher funds directly; DOE has already provided all funds for these activities to the national laboratories.
- Voucher funds may only be applied toward national laboratory expenses. Teams must cover all of their own costs, time, and any associated travel for the voucher work (but this can be considered as the required cost share).
- If a team completes the voucher statement of work for less than the \$100,000 value of the voucher:
 - The team and the laboratory researcher may scope additional work if more than \$15,000 remains.
 - DOE will retain the remaining funds if less than \$15,000 remains.
- When considering whether work will advance a particular innovation, the voucher call administrator will look to tangible and measurable outcomes related to advancing the innovation. Costs of the work must be reasonable and may not include alcohol, food, travel, or other personal expenses.

3.3 Contracting Requirements

For each project, the participant and each national laboratory conducting work for the project may enter into an agreement that best suits the needs of the project. Agreements may include cooperative research and development agreements, user agreements, or other agreement types, depending on the work scope and agreement mechanisms available at the supporting national laboratory.

Only non-substantive changes can be made to the cooperative research and development agreement. No changes are allowed to the [U.S. Competitiveness Provision](#). If the participant fails to agree to the terms of the agreement with the national laboratories within sixty (60) days from selection, DOE may rescind the selection. Applicants can visit the links below to learn more. Each laboratory will execute agreements with its partners using its own forms. Participating national laboratories include:

- [Argonne National Laboratory](#)
- [Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory](#)
- [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#)
- [Sandia National Laboratory](#)
- [Los Alamos National Laboratory](#)
- [Pacific Northwest National Laboratory](#)
- [Ames National Laboratory](#)
- [Oak Ridge National Laboratory](#)

Submitters should provide the required cost share within the contracting documentation, either in cash or through efforts made and documented by the team. These efforts may be audited, so please keep thorough documentation of cost share activities.

3.4 National Laboratory Capabilities

All the participating national laboratories have provided the following technology areas and capabilities they are able to support as it relates to this TCF Open Voucher Call. It is possible that the administrator could select a voucher that does not fall within any of the areas of focus below, but vouchers that do fall within these areas are most likely to be selected. The “National Laboratory’s Capabilities” column denotes specific areas of interest for each laboratory within the technology area.

Blank sections within the “National Laboratory’s Capabilities” column denotes that the national laboratory has not specified a particular area of focus for the technology area, but the technology area remains of interest to the national laboratory.

We request that you do not reach out to laboratory staff regarding your voucher requests. We recommend basing these requests on the National Laboratory’s Capabilities listed below. We also recommend researching the laboratory capabilities from the [Lab Partnering Service website](#).

Technology Area	National Laboratory	National Laboratory's Capabilities
Analysis	Argonne National Laboratory	- Energy analysis - Environmental analysis - Economic systems analysis
Analytical Instruments	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	- Life sciences - Security - Environment - Industrial - Research - Materials characterization - Food and beverage
	Los Alamos National Laboratory	- Life sciences - Security - Environment - Research
Battery	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	- Battery loss - Life modeling
Bio-Based Products	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	- Biochemical conversion
	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	- Biological conversion and thermochemical conversion
Biofuels	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	- Life cycle assessment (greenhouse gas emissions, global warming potential, net energy value, water use, fossil fuel requirements, other potentially harmful effluents) - Techno-economic analysis - Thermochemical conversion (gasification, fuels synthesis, pyrolysis, thermochemical process integration, conversion of CO₂ to fuels and chemicals)
	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	- Thermochemical and electrochemical conversion (hydrothermal liquefaction, oxygenates to fuels and chemicals, syngas to olefins, CO₂, and/or methanol conversion, aqueous organic electrolysis)

		- Techno-economic analysis
	Los Alamos National Laboratory	-Integrated assessment of algae strains, cultivation conditions, and productivity -Algae strain characterization -Multi-scale, multi-omics systems -Techno-economic analysis -Algae test beds, photobioreactors -Plant growth chambers, greenhouse, test beds -Microbial community and systems analysis -High throughput screening for root phenotype to assess effects of plant growth promoting microorganisms on bioenergy crops -Soil amendment test bed for assessing climate impacts of microbial and other soil amendments
Buildings	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	- Geocoding - Energy efficiencies - Sustainability
	Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory	- Energy-efficient technologies (e.g., envelope, glazing, HVAC, lighting, plug load controls) -Electrification and decarbonization enabling technologies (e.g.. smart electrical panels, controls platforms, smart breakers) -Building automation systems (controls) -Industrial process efficiency -Combustion technology (e.g., gas appliances and woodstoves)
Concentrating Solar Power	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	
Demand Flexibility and Controls (Includes Demand Response and Other Grid Services)	Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory	- Distributed energy resources, including, but not limited to, batteries, photovoltaics, water heaters, HVAC, electric vehicles, and lighting and their related controls - Demand flexibility controls systems
	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	- Real-time dispatch and control software for energy storage systems
Electric Vehicles	Sandia National Laboratory	- Infrastructure Integration - Vehicle integrated photovoltaics
Energy	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	- Conversion - Renewables - Chemistry - Catalysts
	Los Alamos National Laboratory	- Conversion - Renewables

		- Chemistry - Catalysts
Energy Storage	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	- Long duration energy storage
	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	- Stationary storage (zinc-based batteries, flow batteries, sodium-based batteries, high-throughput materials assessment) - Anodes and electrolytes for lithium batteries
	Sandia National Laboratory	- Security - Interoperability - Grid support functionality - Reliability - Real-time simulation - Microgrids
Hydrogen	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	- Safety and sensor evaluation - Systems analysis - Technology validation and demonstration - Techno-economic analysis
	Los Alamos National Laboratory	- Hydrogen safety sensor development - Hydrogen production: hydrocarbon reforming - Electrolysis component development and testing - Fuel cell component development and testing
	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	- Safety - Material compatibility - Storage - High-temperature electrolysis
Hydropower	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	
Manufacturing	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	- Advanced machining - Additive manufacturing - Digital manufacturing
	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	- Advanced manufacturing for transportation, energy conversion, aerospace, infrastructure, medical
	Los Alamos National Laboratory	- Advanced machining - Additive manufacturing - Digital manufacturing
Marine Energy	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	

Materials	AMES National Laboratory	- High-temperature alloys - Lightweight structural alloys - Magnetic materials
	Argonne National Laboratory	- Material characterization and functionality in devices
	Oak Ridge National Laboratory	- Advanced composites
Nuclear	Sandia National Laboratory	- Spent fuel - Waste science and technology - Integrated waste management systems
Photovoltaics	Sandia National Laboratory	- Climate optimization - System and component reliability - Module and cell characterization - Field performance/performance modeling - New applications (e.g., vehicle and building integrated photovoltaics)
Power Grid	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	- Analytics - Optimization - Transactive control - Cybersecurity
	Los Alamos National Laboratory	- Advanced modeling and simulation - Large-scale computation - Optimization - Machine learning/artificial intelligence techniques - Analytics
Security	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory	- Sensors - Data analytics - Cybersecurity - Research computing
	Los Alamos National Laboratory	- Sensors - Data analytics - Cybersecurity - Research computing
Solar Photovoltaic Module Mounting	Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory	- Solar photovoltaic module mounting fastener stacks, clamps, through bolting, and module frame lip systems - Strength testing under dynamic loading of module mounting fasteners
	Sandia National Laboratory	- Community microgrids

Technical Energy Assistance	Los Alamos National Laboratory	- Community microgrids
Water Power	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	
Wave Energy Conversion	National Renewable Energy Laboratory	

3.5 Program Goal Requirements

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

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

4 Voucher Awards

4.1 Goal

This TCF Open Voucher Call aims to democratize access to cutting-edge research and innovation by providing the public with opportunities to receive technical assistance at national laboratory facilities with the assistance of national laboratory researchers. This call seeks to link scientific expertise and public engagement, fostering a culture of curiosity and collaboration. Through these open voucher calls, DOE aims to empower individuals from diverse backgrounds to explore their scientific interests, contribute to meaningful research projects, and cultivate a deeper understanding of the scientific process. Through this TCF Open Voucher Call, DOE intends to inspire a new generation of researchers and instill a sense of shared responsibility for advancing knowledge and innovation within the scientific community.

4.2 Participating National Laboratories

The OTT TCF Open Voucher Call offers selected teams a single \$100,000 voucher to be redeemed at one of the eight national laboratories listed below:

- National Renewable Energy Laboratory
- Sandia National Laboratory
- Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
- Los Alamos National Laboratory

- Ames National Laboratory
- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
- Argonne National Laboratory
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

4.3 How To Enter

Go to [HeroX](#) and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the submission deadline. Submitters can also form teams or find partners through the HeroX platform.

4.4 Voucher Awards Process

The OTT TCF Open Voucher Call consists of the following steps:

- **Submission.** Submitters will develop their submission packages and submit their package to the HeroX platform before the deadline.
- **Assessment.** The TCF Open Voucher Call administrator and the participating national laboratories, in consultation with DOE, will review all the submissions and DOE will make the final decisions.
- **Announcement.** DOE will publicly announce the voucher awardees, and voucher awardees begin contracting with the identified national laboratory.
- **Contracting.** Teams will work with the identified national laboratory technology transfer office to negotiate the agreement including intellectual property terms and conditions. Work cannot commence until such time the agreement has been executed by both parties. The teams must also attend any meetings relating to the development of the statement of work and the contracting of the voucher.
- **Reporting.** The submitters will work with staff from the national laboratory that worked on the voucher to develop a final report, which describes the work completed as well as the next steps for the technology or solution(s).

4.5 What to Submit

A complete submission package should include the following items:

- Technical assistance request form
- Letters of commitment or support (optional).

The following details provide more guidance on what information to provide and how reviewers will evaluate your submission.

4.5.1 Technical Assistance Request Form

Your proposal should clearly outline the technical assistance/voucher you seek, the facilities and resources you need for your project, and the national laboratory staff and expertise that is necessary for your project. It should also include details on your cost share and reference to any prior work or partnerships with national laboratories related to this request. This technical assistance request form is **not to exceed 2,500 words in total**. The template below is an example of the Microsoft Form that your team will complete via HeroX.

We request that you do not reach out to laboratory staff regarding your voucher requests. We recommend basing these requests on the national laboratory capabilities in Section 3.4. We also recommend researching the laboratory capabilities from the [Lab Partnering Service website](#).

Technical Assistance Request Form Template

Project Overview

1. Project Title:

2. Brief non-proprietary project description:

3. Please select a stage of readiness for your innovation:

(Research and Development Stage, Field Validation & Demonstration Stage, Scale-Up and Commercial Launch Stage, Deployment Stage, Market Transformation Stage)

4. Team captain (name, email address, and link to their professional online profiles):

5. Key project members (names, email addresses, and links to their professional online profiles):

6. Other partners (if any):

7. Your city, state, and nine-digit zip code:

8. Requested national lab(s):

9. National lab intellectual property to be incorporated as part of this request: Yes/No

If yes, please provide details:

Alignment With National Laboratory

1. Specific expertise needed:

- What specific expertise within the national laboratory do you believe is crucial for the success of your project, and how will it complement your team's skills?

Facilities and Equipment

- *List the facilities and/or equipment at the national laboratories that you would like to leverage for your project. (It is understood that you may not be aware of the exact equipment that is available, so it is acceptable to generalize.)*
- *Describe how these facilities and/or equipment align with your research/business objectives.*

Enhancement of Technical Aspects

- *How do you anticipate the national laboratory's expertise and/or facilities will enhance the technical aspects and outcomes of your proposed project?*

Addressing Challenges

- *List any specific challenges or bottlenecks in your project that you believe the national laboratory's expertise and/or facilities could help address.*

Cost Share Commitment

- *Describe how your team will provide the requested minimum \$25,000 cost share, specifying whether it will be in-kind or cash.*

Connection to Energy Justice (engaging with, or developing solutions for, underserved communities)

- *Describe if your team has team members or partners with diverse backgrounds.*
- *Does your technology have relevance to helping build solutions and capacity in underserved communities? If so, please describe how the technology will improve energy justice by expanding technology development, building capacity, or engaging people in underserved and underrepresented communities.*

Team Member Experience or Competency

- *Provide a description of the related experience or competency of the team members relevant to this project.*

U.S. Department of Energy National Laboratory Partnership History

- *Describe any prior or current partnership with national laboratories on this work.*

National Laboratory Intellectual Property Commercial Potential/Innovation Acceleration (not to be answered if the request doesn't incorporate national laboratory intellectual property)

- *If your voucher request incorporates laboratory intellectual property, how will this work accelerate the commercialization of national laboratory intellectual property and advance energy innovation? (Focusing not only on the technical aspect but, if successful, also explaining how this work will enable commercialization or advance innovation.)*

WORD COUNT:

4.5.2 Letters of Support or Commitment (Optional)

Attach one-page letters (of support, intent, or commitment) from other relevant entities to provide context. Letters of support from partners or others that are critical to the success of your proposed voucher will likely increase your likelihood of receiving a voucher. General letters of support from parties that are not critical to the execution of your voucher submission will likely not factor into your score. Please do not submit multipage letters. Please do not include letters of support from national laboratories. Again, we request that you do not reach out to the national laboratories about these voucher requests.

There is a section to attach letters of support in the Microsoft Form submission; please be sure to follow all instructions there. If you do not attach the letters of support as described in the Microsoft Form, we will not consider them.

4.6 How Submissions Are Evaluated

The voucher administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures the teams are eligible. National laboratory staff and DOE will then review the requests based on the following criteria:

- Inclusion of the national laboratory intellectual property to be advanced or commercialized due to the voucher request (while inclusion of national lab intellectual property is preferred, all submissions will be accepted)
- Assessment of the overall feasibility and viability of the project
- Assessment of the general capabilities, diversity, experiences, and past successes of the team
- Relevance and clarity of how the project aligns with the specific expertise available at the national laboratory
- Demonstrated understanding and effective use of national laboratory facilities and/or equipment for the project
- Clear alignment between the facilities and/or equipment at the national laboratories and the research/business objectives of the project
- Potential for the national laboratory's expertise and facilities to significantly enhance the technical aspects and outcomes of the proposed project
- Potential for the technology and/or solution to help advance energy justice in underserved and underrepresented communities.
- Clear plan and commitment for providing the requested minimum of \$25,000 cost share, whether in-kind or cash
- Clarity and coherence in presenting information, including a well-structured and articulate voucher request form.

These criteria aim to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the voucher request, taking into account the project's technical aspects, alignment of national laboratory resources, financial commitment, and the team's capability to execute the proposed project.

DOE will make all final decisions on the voucher requests that receive awards.

4.7 How We Determine and Award Vouchers

The TCF Open Voucher Call administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures that the teams are eligible. The administrator and the participating national laboratories, in consultation with DOE, will review all the submissions.

4.7.1 Interviews and Additional Questions

DOE may decide to interview or provide additional questions to a subset of submitters. The interviews would be held prior to the announcement of the voucher recipients and would serve to help clarify questions that the TCF Open Voucher Call administrator, the participating national laboratories, and DOE may have. Further, there may be additional questions posed by DOE in email format. DOE may consider the interviews and questions part of the submission package and they could be used to determine whether the submitter receives a voucher award.

4.7.2 Final Determination

DOE will make the final decision about whether the submission receives a voucher.

4.7.3 Announcement

Approximately 60 days after the call closes, the TCF Open Voucher Call administrator will notify the voucher recipients and request the necessary information to distribute the TCF Open Voucher Calls. The administrator will then publicly announce the TCF Open Voucher Call recipients.

4.8 Additional Terms and Conditions

See Appendix 1 for additional requirements.

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

Appendix 1: Additional Terms and Conditions

A.1 Requirements

Your submission for the Technical Commercialization Fund (TCF) Open Voucher Call is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- All submissions that you wish to protect from public disclosure must be marked according to the instructions in Section 9 of Appendix 1 (Section A.9). Unmarked or improperly marked submissions will be deemed to have unlimited rights and may be used in any manner and for any purpose whatsoever.
- You must include all the required elements in your submission. The voucher call administrator may disqualify your submission after an initial screening if you fail to provide all required submission elements. Submitters may be given an opportunity to rectify submission errors due to technical challenges.
- Submissions will be disqualified if they contain any matter that, at the sole discretion of DOE or the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, is indecent, obscene, defamatory, libelous, and/or lacking in professionalism, or demonstrates a lack of respect for people or life on this planet.
- If you click "Accept" on the HeroX platform and register for any of the vouchers described in this document, these rules will form a valid and binding agreement between you and DOE, in addition to the existing HeroX Terms of Use for all purposes relating to these calls. You should print and keep a copy of these rules. These provisions only apply to the call described here and no other call on the HeroX platform or anywhere else.
- The voucher call administrator, when feasible, may give submitters an opportunity to fix non-substantive mistakes or errors in their submission packages.
- As part of your submission to this call, you will be required to sign the following statement:

I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this call. I understand that I am providing this submission to the federal government. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named submitter meets the eligibility requirements for this voucher call and complies with all other terms contained in the TCF Open Voucher Call official rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the federal government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

A.2 Verification for Payments

The voucher call administrator will verify the identity and role of all submitters before distributing any vouchers. Receiving a voucher is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements contained herein. The voucher call administrator will notify successful submitters using the email contact information for the individual or entity responsible for the submission. At the sole discretion of the voucher call administrator, an awarded submitter will be disqualified from the competition and will not receive a voucher if: (i) the person/entity does not respond to notifications; (ii) the notification is returned as undeliverable; (iii) the submission or person/entity is disqualified for any other reason.

In the event of a dispute, the voucher call administrator will consider the authorized account holder of the email address used to register the project to be the submitter. The "authorized account holder" is the natural person or legal entity assigned an email address by an Internet access provider, online service provider, or other organization responsible for assigning email addresses for the domain associated with

the submitted address. All submitters may be required to show proof that they are the authorized account holder.

A.3 Submission Rights

By making a submission and consenting to the rules of the call, a submitter is granting to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the voucher call administrator, and any other third parties supporting DOE in the call, a license to display publicly and use the parts of the submission that are designated as “public” for government purposes. This license includes posting or linking to the public portions of the submission on the voucher call administrator or HeroX applications, including the call website, DOE websites, and partner websites, and the inclusion of the submission in any other media worldwide. The submission may be viewed by DOE, the voucher call administrator, and participating national laboratories for purposes of the call, including but not limited to screening and evaluation purposes. The voucher call administrator and any third parties acting on their behalf will also have the right to publicize submitters’ names and, as applicable, the names of submitters’ team members and organization that participated in the submission, on the call website indefinitely.

By entering, the submitter represents and warrants that:

- The submitter’s entire submission is an original work by the submitter and the submitter has not included third-party content (such as writing; text; graphics; artwork; logos; photographs; likenesses of any third party; musical recordings; and clips of videos, television programs, or motion pictures) in or in connection with the submission, unless (i) otherwise requested by the voucher call administrator and/or disclosed by the submitter in the submission, and (ii) the submitter has either obtained the rights to use such third-party content or the content of the submission is considered to be in the public domain without any limitations on use.
- Unless otherwise disclosed in the submission, the use thereof by the voucher call administrator, or the exercise by the voucher call administrator of any of the rights granted by the submitter under these rules, does not and will not infringe or violate any rights of any third party or entity, including, without limitation, patent, copyright, trademark, trade secret, defamation, privacy, publicity, false light, misappropriation, intentional or negligent infliction of emotional distress, confidentiality, or any contractual or other rights.
- All persons engaged by the submitter to work on the submission or who appear in the submission in any manner have:
 - Given the submitter their express written consent to submit the submission for exhibition and other exploitation in any manner and in any and all media, whether now existing or hereafter discovered, throughout the world
 - Provided written permission to include their name, image, or pictures in or with the submission (or, if a minor who is not submitter’s child, submitter must have the permission of the minor’s parent or legal guardian) and the voucher call administrator may ask the submitter to provide permission in writing
 - Not been and are not currently under any union or guild agreement that results in any ongoing obligations resulting from the use, exhibition, or other exploitation of the submission.

A.4 Copyright

Each submitter represents and warrants that the submitter is the sole author and copyright owner of the submission; that the submission is an original work of the submitter or that the submitter has acquired sufficient rights to use and to authorize others, including DOE, to use the submission, as specified

throughout the rules; that the submission does not infringe upon any copyright or any other third-party rights of which the submitter is aware; and that the submission is free of malware.

A.5 Call Subject to Applicable Law

All calls are subject to all applicable federal laws and regulations. Participation constitutes each participant's full and unconditional agreement to this official rules document and administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the call. This notice is not an obligation of funds; the voucher is contingent upon the availability of appropriations.

A.6 Resolution of Disputes

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

Neither DOE nor the voucher call administrator will arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters between team members or among submitters.

A.7 Publicity

The recipients of these vouchers (collectively, "voucher recipients") will be featured on DOE's and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's websites.

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

A.8 Liability

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

A.9 Records Retention and Freedom of Information Act

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

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

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

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

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

A.10 Privacy

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

A.11 General Conditions

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

Although DOE may indicate that it will select up to several recipients for the TCF Open Voucher Call, DOE reserves the right to only select submitters that are likely to achieve the goals of the program. If, in DOE's determination, no submitters are likely to achieve the goals of the program, DOE will select no submitters to be recipients and will award no vouchers.

A.12 Program Policy Factors

Although DOE will carefully consider the evaluations of the national laboratory reviewers, it is the role of DOE's Office of Technology Transitions to maximize the impact of the voucher awards. Some factors outside the control of submitters and beyond the national laboratory reviewers' scope of review may need to be considered to accomplish this goal. The following is a list of such factors. In addition to the reviewers' evaluations, DOE may consider the following program policy factors in determining voucher recipients:

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

A.13 National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

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

Although National Environmental Policy Act compliance is a federal agency responsibility and the ultimate decisions remain with the federal agency, all participants in the TCF Open Voucher Call will be required to assist in the timely and effective completion of the National Environmental Policy Act process in the manner most pertinent to their participation in the TCF Open Voucher Call. If applicable, DOE may ask participants to provide information on fabrication and testing of their device such that DOE can conduct a meaningful evaluation of the potential environmental impacts.

A.14 Return of Funds

As a condition of receiving a voucher award, submitters agree that if they receive the award based on fraudulent or inaccurate information provided by the submitter to DOE, DOE has the right to demand that value of any non-cash vouchers be returned to the government.

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