



Request for Information on Domestic Manufacturing Conversion Grants for Electrified Vehicles: State Partnerships for Small- and Medium-Sized Manufacturers (SMMs)

RFI DE-FOA-0003360

ISSUE DATE: April 17, 2024
PROGRAM AREA: The Office of Manufacturing & Energy and Supply Chains, U.S. Department of Energy
RESPONSES DUE: May 20, 2024
SUBJECT: Request for Information

Description

This is a Request for Information (RFI) issued by the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Manufacturing & Energy Supply Chains Office (MESC). This RFI seeks public input to help inform DOE's implementation of the Domestic Manufacturing Conversion Grants Program for Electrified Vehicles focusing on small- and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) via state-federal partnerships. The program will support domestic manufacturing facility conversion for electrified vehicles as a continuation of Funding Opportunity Announcement 3106.¹ This program will focus on small- and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) via state-federal partnerships. This RFI contains 24 questions in the Purpose section. Respondents are not required to answer all questions.

On August 16, 2022, President Joseph R. Biden signed the landmark Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) into law.² The law includes \$391 billion to support the Administration's energy and climate goals by deploying clean energy, strengthening domestic manufacturing, and investing in workers and communities.

IRA section 50143 appropriated \$2 billion for programs under Section 712 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005,³ which includes the domestic manufacturing conversion grant program to provide grants to clean vehicle manufacturers and suppliers, including component manufacturers for domestic production of efficient hybrid, plug-in electric hybrid, plug-in electric drive, and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (EVs). Section 712 states that "priority shall be given to the

¹ <https://infrastructure-exchange.energy.gov/Default.aspx#Foaldf9eb1c8a-9922-46b6-993e-78972d823cb2>

² Public Law 117-169 (August 16, 2022). More information on the Inflation Reduction Act can be found at <https://www.cleanenergy.gov/>.

³ Energy Policy Act of 2005 § 712, 42 U.S.C. § 16062.

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refurbishment and retooling of manufacturing facilities that have recently ceased operation or will cease operation in the near future.”⁴

Building on Section 712, IRA Section 50143 makes funding for such grants available through September 30, 2031, and provides that the Secretary of Energy shall require a recipient of a grant to provide not less than 50 percent of the cost of the project carried out using the grant.

On August 30, 2023, DOE released a Funding Opportunity Announcement for the first round of Domestic Manufacturing Conversion Grants, with intent to make selections in Spring 2024.⁵ This RFI will inform an additional round of funding from these same appropriated funds that will specifically support SMMs.⁶ SMMs account for approximately 99 percent of U.S. manufacturing enterprises, contribute more than \$1 trillion in gross revenue, and provide more than five million U.S. jobs.⁷ However, SMMs often fall behind larger firms in technology and other capital investments due to financing and knowledge challenges. By providing financial assistance that enables SMMs to strengthen domestic manufacturing of electrified vehicles and electric vehicle components, DOE seeks to catalyze follow-on private investment and retain high-paying motor vehicle production jobs, particularly benefiting small and medium-sized manufacturers via state-federal partnerships, in the U.S. as the industry transitions away from internal combustion engine vehicles (ICEVs) towards EVs.

DOE is exploring partnerships with state entities to design this continuation of grant funding. DOE believes that state partnerships will allow for effective SMM targeting as state entities often work directly with SMMs. DOE is seeking feedback on how best to implement state-federal partnership grants in support of SMM ICEV-to-EV conversions.

To help inform DOE’s implementation of the IRA provision referenced above, this RFI seeks input on:

- Anticipated Program Scope and Details
- Worker and Community Benefits

⁴ § 16062(a)(3).

⁵ [DE-FOA-0003106](#): Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) 50143: Domestic Manufacturing Conversion Grants

⁶ For the purposes of this RFI, the term “small- and medium-sized manufacturers” means manufacturing firms that a) are classified in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) as any of sectors 31 through 33; and b) have a total number of employees within 165% of the size standard limits established by the Small Business Administration, based on the firm’s associated NAICS sector as set forth in 13 CFR Part 121.201.

⁷ U.S. Small Business Administration Manufacturing Office, <https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/organization/sba-initiatives/support-manufacturing-businesses>

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- Equity, Environmental, and Energy Justice (EEEJ) Priorities, including implementation of the Justice40 Initiative⁸

Information collected from this RFI will be used by DOE for planning purposes only, and this RFI is not a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). DOE is not accepting applications to this RFI, nor will DOE reimburse any of respondents' costs in preparing a response. Information collected in response to this RFI may be used in the development of future FOAs or other solicitations related to IRA Section 50143.

Background

The transportation sector is the largest source of anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the United States, accounting for 28 percent of domestic GHG emissions in 2021.⁹ Transportation also is a major source of smog-forming nitrogen oxides and particulate matter, which can trigger asthma attacks and other health problems for the most vulnerable among us.¹⁰ President Biden set a goal that at least 50 percent of all new passenger cars and light trucks sold in 2030 be zero-emission vehicles, including battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric, or fuel cell electric vehicles (EVs).

The Inflation Reduction Act tackles these priorities comprehensively, by combining incentives for consumers and businesses to purchase clean vehicles with programs to expand domestic manufacturing and production of EV components, batteries, battery cells and materials and to increase domestic sourcing of vehicle components and critical minerals.

The investments in the Inflation Reduction Act [build on](#) the \$7.5 billion provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law¹¹ to deploy a national network of 500,000 electric vehicle chargers; more than \$7 billion to expand battery materials production in the U.S. and ensure domestic manufacturers have the critical minerals and other components necessary to make EV batteries; and \$10 billion for clean transit and school buses at the [Department of](#)

⁸ The [Justice40 Initiative](#), created by [Executive Order 14008](#) on *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*, establishes a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments—including investments in climate change; clean energy and energy efficiency; clean transit; affordable and sustainable housing; training and workforce development; the remediation and reduction of legacy pollution; and the development of critical clean water infrastructure—flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. Pursuant to [M-21-28](#) and [M-23-09](#), issued by the White House Office of Management and Budget, White House Council on Environmental Quality, and White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy, DOE recognizes disadvantaged communities as the census tracts that are identified as disadvantaged by the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#), as well as all Federally Recognized Tribes and Tribal entities.

⁹ <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

¹⁰ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Inflation-Reduction-Act-Guidebook.pdf>

¹¹ Also called the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act, Public Law 117-58 (November 15, 2021).

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[Transportation](#) and [Environmental Protection Agency](#). The CHIPS and Science Act¹² invests in expanding America’s manufacturing capacity for the semiconductors used in electric vehicles and chargers. Together, this package of legislation will create good-paying, high-quality jobs along the full supply chain for the automotive sector, from components to assembly.

Issuing Organization

The **Office of Manufacturing & Energy Supply Chains (MESC)** is responsible for strengthening and securing manufacturing and energy supply chains to modernize the nation’s energy infrastructure and support a clean and equitable energy transition. MESC manages programs that develop clean domestic manufacturing and workforce capabilities, with an emphasis on opportunities for small and medium enterprises and communities in energy transition. Visit <https://www.energy.gov/mesc> to learn more.

Supporting Organizations

Additional support for strengthening domestic manufacturing and transportation technologies is provided by the following DOE programs:

The **Loan Programs Office (LPO)** provides loans to support the manufacture of eligible vehicles and qualifying components under the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Loan Program (ATVM). To date, the ATVM program has loaned \$8 billion for projects that have supported the production of more than 4 million advanced technology vehicles. Visit <https://www.energy.gov/lpo/atvm> to learn more.

The **Vehicle Technologies Office (VTO)** supports research, development, and deployment of efficient and sustainable transportation technologies to improve energy efficiency and fuel economy while enabling less petroleum use and harmful emissions. These technologies, including advanced batteries and electric drive systems, vehicle charging and integration with the grid, lightweight materials, alternative low carbon fuels, and efficient mobility systems, will increase energy security, economic vitality, and quality of life. Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/vehicles> to learn more.

The **Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies Office (HFTO)** coordinates hydrogen and fuel cell research, development, demonstration, and deployment (RDD&D) across DOE to secure U.S. leadership in clean energy technologies and advance U.S. economic competitiveness and scientific innovation. The HFTO works to overcome technical barriers of hydrogen production, delivery, storage, transportation, and distribution; address safety issues and develop model codes and standards; and validate and demonstrate hydrogen and fuel cells in real-world

¹² Public Law 117-167 (August 9, 2022).

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conditions. Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/fuelcells/hydrogen-and-fuel-cell-technologies-office> and <https://www.hydrogen.energy.gov> to learn more.

The **Office of Technology Transitions (OTT)** develops and oversees delivery of DOE's strategic vision and goals for technology commercialization and engagement with business and industrial sectors. OTT's mission is to expand the public impact of the department's research, development, demonstration, and deployment (RDD&D) portfolio to advance the economic, energy and national security interests. Visit <https://www.energy.gov/technologytransitions/office-technology-transitions> to learn more.

The **Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Technologies Office (AMMTO)** researches, develops, and demonstrates next-generation materials and manufacturing technologies needed to increase U.S. industrial competitiveness and to drive economy-wide decarbonization. AMMTO supports the national plan to revitalize American manufacturing, secure critical supply chains, and develop diverse innovation ecosystems leading to new manufacturing jobs and increased economic strength of the nation. Visit <https://www.energy.gov/eere/ammto> to learn more.

The **Office of Energy Jobs** focuses on supporting the creation of jobs in the energy sector, particularly jobs that guarantee high standards and the right to collective bargaining. Energy Jobs works collaboratively across DOE and with other federal agencies and regulatory bodies to ensure the successful transition to a zero-emissions economy while creating meaningful job opportunities for all Americans. Visit <https://www.energy.gov/policy/energy-jobs> to learn more.

The **Office of Energy Justice and Equity** works with minority communities, businesses, and students to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers, ensuring that minorities are afforded opportunities to participate in the important mission areas of the Department. Visit <https://www.energy.gov/justice/office-energy-justice-and-equity> to learn more.

The **Office of State and Community Energy Programs (SCEP)** works with State Energy Offices, Tribal nations, territories, local governments, K – 12 schools, nonprofit organizations, and community-serving organizations to serve, and provide funding and other resources to implement clean energy projects and programs. Visit <https://www.energy.gov/scep/office-state-and-community-energy-programs> to learn more.

Purpose

The purpose of this RFI is to solicit feedback from state, local, and government entities on issues related to design and implementation of the manufacturing conversion program to assist small and medium manufacturers (SMMs). The information requested seeks to inform how DOE

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can best partner with state and local entities to aid SMMs in the ICEV-to-EV transition. This is solely a request for information and not a funding opportunity.

You may answer as few or as many of the questions below as you would like, but please focus on the areas that are most pertinent to your expertise. When responding, please use the category letters and sub-numbers as headings in your response to the greatest extent possible and refer to the questions (e.g., A.1., A.2., A.3., ...) in the body of your responses. This helps save time for the responder and the reviewers.

Especially where noted, respondents should think in terms of potential projects undertaken by SMMs that would fall within the purpose and scope of IRA section 50143, which includes domestic production of efficient hybrid, plug-in electric hybrid, plug-in electric drive, and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles, as well as components of those vehicles, with a priority for projects that refurbish or retool manufacturing facilities that have recently ceased operation or will do so in the near future.

DOE is requesting input on the following categories and questions:

A. Anticipated Program Scope and Details

For the purposes of this RFI, the term “small- and medium-sized manufacturers” means manufacturing firms that a) are classified in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) as any of sectors 31 through 33; and b) have a total number of employees within 165% of the size standard limits established by the Small Business Administration, based on the firm’s associated NAICS sector.

Small and Medium Manufacturers

1. How does your state classify small- and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs)? How does your state define an automotive SMM? Which NAICS code(s) do you consider relevant for this program?
2. How many SMMs are located in your state? How many of the SMMs are in the auto supply chain? What are the total number of workers for SMMs and SMMs in the auto supply chain? What proportion are these totals of the workforce and manufacturing workforce in your state?

Funding

3. Given statutory authority for the Department to work in partnership with states, what office(s) within your state are poised to administer such a partnership program? What resources do the administering office(s) have to manage federal funding, and what additional resources might be needed?

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4. Do any of your current programmatic offerings have a matching federal component? Are any programs federally funded? Does the administering office have federal funding, specifically including DOE funding? Does the administering office have any experience complying with Davis-Bacon, federal funding cost share requirements, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Build America, Buy America (BABA) requirements? Does the office have a current federal indirect rate agreement from the cognizant agency?

ICEV-to-EV Conversion

5. Describe existing internal combustion engine vehicle (ICEV), powertrain, and components manufacturing in your state, and any existing electrified vehicle (EV), battery, and components manufacturing in your state.
6. Are there ICEV SMMs in your state that have recently ceased operations or will cease operations in the near future? Please describe the scale of this problem. How would you recommend that grant funding be allocated to prioritize SMMs that have recently ceased operation or will cease operation in the near future?
7. Describe any state or local programs to incentivize manufacturing in general and EV manufacturing—including hybrid, plug-in hybrid, electric, and fuel cell vehicles—in particular. Describe potential impacts on the EV supply chain resulting from conversion of ICEV manufacturing to EV manufacturing. Are SMMs in the automotive sector in your state currently utilizing any relevant federal technical assistance programs such as DOE's Industrial Assessment Centers, DOC's Manufacturing Extension Partnership, or DOL's Adult and Dislocated Workers Program?
8. What non-financial obstacles do SMMs in your state face in the ICEV-to-EV transition? What risk do these obstacles pose in helping SMMs transition to EV manufacturing? These obstacles could pertain to supply chain partnerships and validation, workforce, technical assistance, strategic planning, permitting, or others.
9. If the primary obstacles are financial, what would you estimate is the approximate scale of investment an individual SMM or cluster of SMMs might need to make to shift from supplying ICEVs to EVs?
10. DOE is interested in minimizing the grant application burden. How could state programs streamline the application process for SMMs and align application and reporting requirements with requirements for existing programs? What are the reports your state agency currently provides to federal funding agencies? What scale of funding does your state recommend for program effectiveness?
11. What additional recommendations do you have or input would you like to share that could inform program scope and details?

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B. Worker and Community Benefits

12. What percentage of SMMs in your state are unionized? Please describe how your state partners with unions and/or what gaps you see in unionized workforce support at SMMs. What are the union and non-union wages and benefits for SMM auto workers in your state? Does your state track or have the ability to track this data?
13. Please describe the quality of jobs for SMM auto workers in your state, including access to unions, wages, benefits, and safety and health standards. What are the primary gaps in job quality that you see? What program requirements or review criteria would you recommend to ensure that grants to SMMs support quality jobs?
14. Please describe how the SMM automotive supply chain supports disadvantaged communities¹³ as well as underrepresented workers and disadvantaged businesses in your state.
15. Please describe any types of workers that are underrepresented in your state's SMM auto workforce. Please describe any systemic barriers that people face in getting access to SMM auto jobs. What program requirements or review criteria would you recommend to ensure that grants to SMMs support equitable access to jobs?
16. Please describe existing programs in place in your state to support automotive SMMs. These could include, e.g., public-private partnerships, workforce development programs, partnerships between manufacturers and educational institutions, labor-management training and registered apprenticeship programs, regional development entities, county and local governments, Tribal entities, and others.
17. What challenges has your state experienced attracting, training, and retaining a skilled workforce for automotive manufacturing? What challenges apply specifically to EV manufacturing? How are SMMs affected by these challenges?
18. In what ways, if any, do you anticipate grants to automotive SMMs impacting the workforce? To what extent do you anticipate the ICEV-to-EV transition impacting manufacturing job creation or changes in job quality in your state? To what extent do you anticipate the creation of construction jobs, operations and maintenance jobs, and other jobs across the supply chain?
19. What additional recommendations do you have or input would you like to share that could inform aspects of the program related to worker and community benefits?

C. Equity, Environmental, and Energy Justice (EEEJ) Priorities, including implementation of the Justice40 Initiative

EEEJ principles and priorities will be central to the successful implementation of the IRA. Equity requires the consideration of existing barriers that disadvantaged communities and

¹³ See footnote 8.

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underrepresented workers face when accessing federal programs or resources. Environmental and energy justice principles include procedural justice, distributive justice, recognition justice, and restorative justice. For the purposes of this RFI, DOE has identified the following non-exhaustive list of policy priorities as examples to guide [DOE's implementation of the Justice40 Initiative](#) in disadvantaged communities:

- Decrease energy burden in disadvantaged communities.
- Decrease environmental exposure and burdens for disadvantaged communities.
- Increase parity in clean energy technology (e.g., solar, storage) access and adoption in disadvantaged communities.
- Increase access to low-cost capital in disadvantaged communities.
- Increase clean energy enterprise creation and contracting by businesses majority owned or controlled by residents of disadvantaged communities, underrepresented persons, or groups of underrepresented persons.
- Increase clean energy jobs, job pipeline, and job training for individuals from disadvantaged communities.
- Increase energy resiliency in disadvantaged communities.
- Increase energy democracy in disadvantaged communities.

Environmental justice (EJ)¹⁴ is the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in agency decision-making and other Federal activities that affect human health and the environment so that people:

- (i) are fully protected from disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects (including risks) and hazards, including those related to climate change, the cumulative impacts of environmental and other burdens, and the legacy of racism or other structural or systemic barriers; and
- (ii) have equitable access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment in which to live, play, work, learn, grow, worship, and engage in cultural and subsistence practices.

DOE is committed to ensure that the principles of EJ are applied to all the DOE's programs, policies, and activities. In pursuit of our mission and goals, we treat people fairly and achieve early and meaningful involvement by our affected communities and broader stakeholder populations.

In furtherance of these goals, please consider the following and how it applies in your state:

¹⁴ See Executive Order 14096, Sec. 2(b)

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20. Which disadvantaged communities in your state have SMMs pertinent to this RFI?¹⁵
What kind of benefits could be provided by these investments to disadvantaged communities?
 21. What program requirements or review criteria would you recommend to ensure that regional jobs and economic growth flowing from funded projects will be shared with disadvantaged communities?
 22. How are adverse impacts of manufacturing facilities currently measured or monitored?
What opportunities exist to minimize such impacts, particularly during facility conversion?
 23. How will Tribal communities or lands potentially be impacted by design and implementation of the domestic manufacturing conversion grant program?
 24. What additional recommendations do you have or input you would like to share that could inform aspects of the program related to EEEJ priorities?

Disclaimer and Important Notes

This RFI is not a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA); therefore, DOE is not accepting funding applications at this time. DOE may issue a FOA in the future based on or related to the content and responses to this RFI; however, DOE may also elect not to issue a FOA. There is no guarantee that a FOA will be issued as a result of this RFI. Responding to this RFI does not provide any advantage or disadvantage to potential applicants if DOE chooses to issue a FOA regarding the subject matter. Final details, including the anticipated award size, quantity, and timing of DOE-funded awards, will be subject to Congressional appropriations and direction.

Any information obtained as a result of this RFI is intended to be used by the Government on a non-attribution basis for planning and strategy development; this RFI does not constitute a formal solicitation for proposals or abstracts. Your response to this notice will be treated as information only. DOE will review and consider all responses in its formulation of program strategies for the program identified in this request. DOE will not provide reimbursement for costs incurred in responding to this RFI. Respondents are advised that DOE is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information received or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted under this RFI. Responses to this RFI do not bind DOE to any further actions related to this topic.

Freedom of Information Act

Responses received under this RFI are subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Because information received in response to this RFI may be used to structure

¹⁵ DOE recognizes disadvantaged communities as the census tracts that are identified by the [CEJST](#), as well as all Federally Recognized Tribes and Tribal entities. See also footnote 8.

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future programs and funding opportunity announcements and/or otherwise be made available to the public, **respondents are strongly advised to NOT include any information in their responses that might be considered business sensitive (e.g., commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential), trade secrets, proprietary, or otherwise confidential.**

Confidential Business Information

Consistent with 10 CFR 1004.11, DOE requires that any person submitting information that they believe to be confidential and exempt by law from public disclosure should submit **two well-marked copies**: one copy of the document marked “confidential” which must clearly and conspicuously identify the business sensitive, trade secrets, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information, and one copy of the document marked “non-confidential” with the information believed to be confidential deleted. **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.

If you choose to provide business sensitive, trade secrets, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information, you must include a cover sheet marked as follows identifying the specific pages containing business sensitive, trade secrets, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information:

Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data: Pages [List Applicable Pages] of this response may contain business sensitive, trade secrets, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information that is exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for the purposes described in RFI DE-FOA-0003360. The Government may use or disclose any information that is not appropriately marked or otherwise restricted, regardless of source.

In addition, (1) the header and footer of every page that contains business sensitive, trade secrets, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information must be marked as follows: “Contains Business Sensitive, Trade Secrets, Proprietary, or Otherwise Confidential Information Exempt from Public Disclosure” and (2) every line and paragraph containing such information must be clearly marked with double brackets or highlighting. DOE will make its own determination about the confidential status of the information and treat it according to its determination.

Evaluation and Administration by Federal and Non-Federal Personnel

Federal employees are subject to the non-disclosure requirements of a criminal statute, the Trade Secrets Act, 18 USC 1905. The Government may seek the advice of qualified non-Federal personnel. The Government may also use non-Federal personnel to conduct routine,

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nondiscretionary administrative activities. The respondents, by submitting their response, consent to DOE providing their response to non-Federal parties. Non-Federal parties given access to responses must be subject to an appropriate obligation of confidentiality prior to being given the access. Submissions may be reviewed by support contractors and private consultants.

Request for Information Response Guidelines

Responses to this RFI must be submitted electronically to RFI-DE-FOA-0003360@netl.doe.gov no later than 5:00pm ET on May 20, 2024. Responses must be provided as attachments to an email. It is recommended that attachments with file sizes exceeding 25MB be compressed (i.e., zipped) to ensure message delivery. Responses must be provided as a Microsoft Word (.docx) or PDF attachment to the email, and no more than 9 pages in length, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Only electronic responses will be accepted.

For ease of replying and to aid categorization of your responses, **please copy and paste the RFI questions, including the question numbering, and use them as a template for your response.**

Respondents may answer as many or as few questions as they wish.

DOE will not respond to individual submissions or publish publicly a compendium of responses. A response to this RFI will not be viewed as a binding commitment to develop or pursue the project or ideas discussed.

Respondents are requested to provide the following information at the start of their response to this RFI:

- Company / institution / agency name
- Company / agency institution contact
- Contact's address, phone number, and e-mail address.

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