



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
TECHNOLOGY TRANSITIONS

Energy Program for Innovation Clusters (EPIC) Prize Overview

Marcos Gonzales Harsha, U.S. Department of Energy
Katherine Harsanyi, U.S. Department of Energy
Melissa Monk, U.S. Department of Energy
Emily Evans, National Renewable Energy Laboratory
August 4, 2020

AGENDA

- Prize Overview, Goals, and Eligibility
- Key Submission Elements and Scoring
- HeroX and How to Upload your Submission
- Q&A

PRIZE OVERVIEW, GOALS, AND ELIGIBILITY



OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSITIONS (OTT) BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

- OTT's primary focus is to develop and oversee the delivery of DOE's strategic vision and goals for technology commercialization and engagement with the business and industrial sectors across the United States.
- OTT's mission is to expand the commercial impact and public benefit of DOE's research and development portfolio to advance the economic, energy, and national security interests of the Nation.

GOALS

- The EPIC prize is a single-phase prize competition awarding up to 20 winners with \$50,000 each.
- The EPIC prize seeks to recognize the most novel, comprehensive, and impactful incubator plans that focus on developing strong innovation clusters, connections, and support for energy-related technology and entrepreneurial innovation.
- The EPIC prize supports the national advancement of energy entrepreneurship and commercialization.

EPIC PRIZE: PROBLEM / SOLUTION

Energy startups and innovative technologies are critical to the growth of the energy economy in the United States and abroad. Startups drive technology development, business model innovation, and job creation.



Problem

The private sector has had difficulty providing sufficient capital, business development services, and entrepreneurial training to early-stage, high-risk, longer-term, capital-intensive technologies, like those required for transforming the nation's energy systems.



Audience

Incubators / Accelerators provide direct support for early-stage startups, and have the potential to de-risk the startups for follow-on investors.

EPIC PRIZE: PROBLEM / SOLUTION

Energy startups and innovative technologies are critical to the growth of the energy economy in the United States and abroad. Startups drive technology development, business model innovation, and job creation.



Solution

The EPIC Prize seeks to:

- Address a capital gap to support incubators/accelerators supporting early stage energy entrepreneurs
- Encourage incubators/accelerators to think more expansively about the role of incubators in the broader regional and national innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Enable winners of this prize to enhance their organization's resilience and operational sustainability.

DESIRED COMPETITOR CHARACTERISTICS

Competitors in this prize should include most, if not all, of the following elements (not listed in order of importance):

- A significant portion of the entity's efforts are focused on the formation and growth of startups
- A selective process to choose participating start-ups
- Regular networking opportunities for startups
- Introductions to customers, partners, suppliers, advisory boards, and other players
- High-growth and tech-driven startup mentorship and commercialization assistance
- Resource sharing and arrangements for startups
- Virtual Tools/Telework capabilities
- Physical spaces to operate.
- Opportunities to pitch ideas and startups to investors along with other capital formation avenues for startups
- Angel money, seed capital, or structured loans for member startups

IMPORTANT DATES/ DEADLINES

- **Submission Open:**
Monday, July 20, 2020
- **Submission Deadline:**
Thursday, 5:00 p.m. ET September 10, 2020
- **Winner Notification:**
Wednesday, September 30, 2020 (anticipated)

ELIGIBILITY

In general, the EPIC Prize is open to:

- Private entities (for-profits and nonprofits), non-federal government entities such as states, counties, tribes, and municipalities, and academic institutions subject to the following requirements:
 - Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States with majority domestic ownership and control.
 - Academic Institutions must be based in the United States.

The following groups are not eligible:

- DOE employees, employees of sponsoring organizations, members of their immediate families (i.e., spouses, children, siblings, or parents), and persons living in the same household as such persons, whether or not related, are not eligible to participate in the Prize.
- Federal entities and federal employees, acting within the scope of their employment, are also not eligible to participate in any portion of the Prize. DOE national laboratory employees cannot compete in the Prize

No organization may submit as the lead entity more than one entry to the prize. If an entity is the lead organization on multiple submissions, DOE will accept the most recent submission submitted before the deadline and determine other submissions ineligible.

For complete eligibility guidelines, please refer to the rules document.

KEY SUBMISSION ELEMENTS AND SCORING



WHAT TO SUBMIT

For the EPIC Prize, teams will submit:

- A Cover Page
- 90-Second Video
- Submission Slides
- Letters of Commitment or Support (Optional)

At the end of the EPIC Prize, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) anticipates selecting as many as 20 winning teams for cash prizes of \$50,000 each.

COVER PAGE

The cover page content is used as reference information about the overall team. The cover page will not be scored.

On the cover page, you should list basic information about your submission:

- Title
- Short Description
- Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data
- Key project members (names, contact information, and links to their professional online profiles)
- Your city, and state
- Other partners (if any)

90 – SECOND VIDEO

A video of not more than 90 seconds that:

- Describes the Competitor's organization and how it is uniquely qualified to address the needs of the entrepreneurs and energy technologies it serves.
- Describes the organization's proposed regional engagement plan. Examples of items to highlight include the competitor's leadership, facilities, and overall philosophy

DOE, the prize administrator, and any other third parties supporting DOE will use the video to feature the prize winners.

The video must be made publicly available on either YouTube or Vimeo.

SUBMISSION SLIDES

Competitors can submit up to a ten (10) slide presentation. There is no template, so competitors are free to present the information in any format.

The slide deck should fully describe you and your idea while being responsive to the evaluation criteria in the following topic areas:

- Mission and Operations
- Strategic Plan
- Team

SUBMISSION SLIDES - CRITERION 1: MISSION AND OPERATIONS

Suggested Content You Should Provide

- The mission and objectives of the organization.
- Discuss the energy-related technologies your organization supports.
- The competitor's past performance in helping startups successfully commercialize their technologies.
- How the organization meets the Desired Competitor Characteristics.
- Describe your organizations track-record of successfully assisting entrepreneurs launch or grow business ventures
- Any partnerships/working relationships with regional entities—including state and local government as well as private sector entities (including other incubators), either local or distant, that you would like to highlight.
- Discuss how the competitor leverages other available resources to support the organization's entrepreneurs.
- Discuss how the organization ensures participation of a broad and diverse community of entrepreneurs.
- Discuss any plans for engagement of economically challenged communities (e.g., Qualified Opportunity Zones).
- The unique value proposition and structural advantages of the organization (i.e., how the organization is built to be successful within a respective region).
- Amount of capital raised for entrepreneurs last year (approximate).

Each Statement Scored on a 1-6 Scale

- The overall submission presents a cohesive plan to attract and support new entrepreneurs to the energy space.
- The submission describes an innovative and comprehensive mission and set of objectives that align with DOE's portfolio of energy-related missions.
- The submission describes how it fulfills most if not all of the Desired Competitor Characteristics.
- Competitor has a successful track record of supporting entrepreneurs launch or grown business ventures.
- The submission demonstrates an ability to create a collaborative environment and a plan to enable participation of a diverse community of entrepreneurs, including in historically underserved and economically challenged communities.

SUBMISSION SLIDES - CRITERION 2: STRATEGY

Suggested Content You Should Provide:

- Where the organization plans to be in two years with respect to regional engagement.
- The Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, Time-bound (SMART) goals of your strategy to develop regional innovation clusters.
- The primary risk factors the competitor anticipates mitigating or overcoming to successfully implement the regional engagement plan.
- Discuss how the plan will improve the operational sustainability of your organization, including developing new or enhancing existing financial or in-kind support.
- Discussion of partners in implementing the plan: these may include state and local entities, private partners—both for- and non-profit, as well as academic institutions. Mention any partnerships with other incubators.
- Does the plan have the potential to be transferable to other incubators/regions?
- What is the competitor's plan for the prize funds if awarded a prize?
- Estimated number of clients/entrepreneurs the competitor anticipates assisting with the plan.

Each Statement Scored on a 1-6 Scale

- The proposed plan addresses an identified problem or opportunity, which is clearly and thoroughly described.
- There is a clear multi-year partnership strategy to develop regional innovation clusters.
- The submission identifies a strong constellation of partners to successfully implement its plan.
- There is a strong discussion of risks and mitigation measures.
- The impact metrics for the program are well articulated and understood—they include clear SMART goals for the program.
- The plan will yield an improvement to the organization's offerings as a resource to local regional entrepreneurs and innovators and boost the regional innovation ecosystem.

SUBMISSION SLIDES – CRITERION 3: TEAMS

Suggested Content You Should Provide:

- Describe your staff or team.
- Describe your external advisors or advisory board, if applicable.
- What makes the competitor staff uniquely qualified to implement the plan?

Each Statement Scored on a 1-6 Scale

- There is a qualified team with credible and relevant experience.

HOW WE SCORE

All statements are scored on a 1-6 Scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Criteria Questions	Number of Scored Statements	Percentage of Total Score	Total Possible Points
Criteria 1: Mission and Operations	5	42%	30
Criteria 2: Strategic Plan	6	50%	36
Criteria 3: Team	1	8%	6
TOTAL	12	100%	72

HEROXX AND HOW TO UPLOAD YOUR SUBMISSION



HeroX



American-Made Challenges



Website: <https://www.herox.com/epic>

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

1,297

Share

Follow (107)

Energy Program for Innovation Clusters (EPIC) Prize

Create impactful plans to develop strong connections and support for entrepreneurs whose businesses focus on energy technologies.

Energy, Environment & Resources

Technology

Stage:
Enter

Prize:
\$1,000,000

SOLVE THIS CHALLENGE

QUESTIONS





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
TECHNOLOGY TRANSITIONS

THANK YOU!

americanmadechallenges.org
EPICPrize@nrel.gov