Tribal Energy Capacity Expansion Prize

Rules

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* ENERGY

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

Integrated Energy Systems Office

Application due: December 4, 2026, 11:59 p.m. AKT

Modifications

Mod. No.	Date	Description of Modification
3	November 2026	The official rules have been modified to correct formatting errors and to provide clarity and consistency throughout the document. No material changes have been made to the prize structure, awards, eligibility, requirements, timelines, etc. Further details can be found in the modification table on page 5.

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I. Preface

The U.S. Department of Energy's Tribal Energy Capacity Expansion Prize will be governed by 15 U.S.C. §3719 and this official rules document. This is not a procurement under the Federal Acquisition Regulation and will not result in a grant or cooperative agreement under 2 CFR 200. DOE reserves the right to modify this official rules document if necessary and will publicly post any such modifications as well as notify registered prize participants.

The following table describes changes that will be implemented in this rules document:

Date	Modification(s)
09/29/2026	The official rules are being reissued to improve readability, address updated requirements, and to ensure alignment with Administration and departmental priorities, and the U.S. Department of Energy's statutory authorities. This modification includes a substantial rewrite of the official prize rules. For ease of readability, the rules below are provided as a clean version. A red-lined version of the rules is available upon request by emailing TECEPrize@nlr.gov
October 2026	The official rules have been modified to correct formatting errors and to provide clarity and consistency throughout the document. No material changes have been made to the prize structure, awards, eligibility, requirements, timelines, etc. The changes made include: • Heading and subheading alphanumerical and roman numeral structure corrections • Removed highlights from Key Dates section (p.6) • Corrected fragmented sentence in representation claim within All-Phase Eligibility under Section II.D. (p.11) • Removed incorrect reference to online public video submission in Section IV.E. (p.19) • Corrected typo in subheader to correctly read "Phase 2 Goal" in Section V.A. (p.23) • Corrected typo in Table 10. Question 6 Criteria column (p.34) • Inserted phase name to "Phase 3 – Implementation" header in Section VI. (p.35) • Corrected typos incorrectly referencing Phase "2" and Phase 2 Bonus Prize cash award within the Phase 3 Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize description in Section VI.E. (p.36) • Corrected incorrect internal reference to VII.O. "Use of Artificial Intelligence" in Section VII.E.A. (p.51)
November 2026	The official rules have been modified to correct formatting errors. No material changes have been made to the prize structure, awards, eligibility, requirements, timelines, etc.

II. Basic Information

A. Key Dates

Issuing Agency	U.S. Department of Energy, Integrated Energy Systems Office
Prize Title	Tribal Energy Capacity Expansion Prize
Prize Issue Date	September 2026
Expected Total Available Funding	$6 million
Prize Description	The Tribal Energy Capacity Expansion prize will award cash prizes and technical assistance to Tribes and Tribal organizations across three phases in support of their efforts to build capacity to engage in energy infrastructure decision-making, permitting, and development processes.
Prize Goals and Objectives	The goal of the prize is to assist Tribes in expanding the internal capacities that are necessary to represent Tribal priorities in energy development processes. The prize aims to assist participants in identifying key capacity needs and focus areas, build a comprehensive plan to build capacity to address those priorities, and implement that plan.
Phases	• Phase 1: Capacity Needs • Phase 2: Capacity Development • Phase 3: Implementation
Key Dates: Phase 1B ***All deadlines are 11:59 p.m. AKT unless indicated otherwise.***	Phase 1 Submission Opens: September 2026 Phase 1 Submission Closes: December 4, 2026 Phase 1 Winners Announced: February-March 2027 (anticipated)
Key Dates: Phase 2 ***All deadlines are 11:59 p.m. AKT unless indicated otherwise.***	Phase 2 Submission Opens: upon announcement of Phase 1B winners Phase 2 Submission Closes: August 2027 Phase 2 Winners Announced: September-October 2027 (anticipated)
Key Dates: Phase 3 ***All deadlines are 11:59 p.m. AKT unless indicated otherwise.***	Phase 3 Submission Opens: upon announcement of Phase 2 winners Phase 3 Submission Closes: November 3, 2028 Phase 3 Winners Announced: January-February 2029 (anticipated)
Eligible Participants	• Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and intertribal organizations are eligible to apply. • See Section D for more information on eligibility.
URL and Helpdesk	HeroX URL: https://www.herox.com/TECEPrize Helpdesk email: TECEPrize@nlr.gov

B. Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is launching the Tribal Energy Capacity Expansion Prize (the prize). This prize aims to foster the vital role of Tribes in energy decision-making and permitting, expanding their capacity to participate in these processes by providing them with direct cash prizes and technical assistance. The prize has three phases that focus on (Phase 1) identifying capacity needs, (Phase 2) forming capacity development plans, and (Phase 3) implementing those plans to participate in energy decision-making and related activities.

C. Prize Overview

Up to $6 million in cash prizes and expert engagement in the form of technical assistance, will be provided to winning teams across the three-phase prize. Participants selected as winners in Phase 1 may continue to participate in the prize and receive awards in Phases 2 and 3, provided that they fulfill all eligibility criteria and satisfy the submission requirements for each phase.

Phase 1 consists of two distinct rounds, Phase 1A (concluded) and Phase 1B. In Phase 1, participants will identify their capacity-building needs to improve their Tribe's engagement in energy decision-making and permitting processes. Up to 14 winning participants across both rounds will receive $40,000 and 40 hours of technical assistance. Winners from both rounds Phase 1A and 1B are eligible to submit to Phase 2.

In Phase 2, winning teams will prepare detailed capacity development and energy action plans. At the end of Phase 2, up to 14 winning teams will receive $200,000 each in cash and 150 hours of technical assistance. Teams representing multiple Tribal entities will be eligible to compete for a bonus prize of $150,000 each in cash, with up to 4 bonus prize winners in this phase. Winning teams from Phase 2 will be eligible to compete in Phase 3.

In Phase 3, winning teams will work to implement their capacity building and energy action plans. At the end of Phase 3, up to 14 winning teams will receive $125,000 each in cash. Teams representing multiple Tribal entities will be eligible to compete for a bonus prize of $50,000 each in cash, with up to 4 bonus prize winners in this phase.

Table 1. Prize Phase Structure

Phase	Number of Winners	Award per Winner	Technical Assistance
Phase 1—Capacity Needs Consisting of two rounds: 1. Phase 1A (Concluded) 2. Phase 1B	Up to 14 winners (total for two rounds)	$40,000	40 hours
Phase 2—Capacity Development	Up to 14 winners Up to 4 winners may receive a bonus prize for	$200,000 Bonus: $150,000	150 hours

Phase	Number of Winners	Award per Winner	Technical Assistance
	collaboration among multiple Tribes.		
Phase 3—Implementation	Up to 14 winners Up to 4 winners may receive a bonus prize for collaboration among multiple Tribes.	$125,000 Bonus: $50,000	No technical assistance

D. Eligibility

The prize is intended to support capacity development for Tribes that are considering or may participate in energy decision-making and permitting. All participating teams must include a federally recognized Tribal entity (see the definition below) and may also include support organizations. All project plans must be focused on expanding the capacity of Tribe(s) or Tribal communities in a way that is relevant to energy development processes.

In line with Executive Order 14153, "Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential," signed January 20, 2025, this prize encourages participation from Alaska Native Villages and regional and Village corporations; however, participation is open to all Tribal participants and multi-Tribe collaborative teams as outlined in the eligibility requirements in the following sections.

Definitions and Team Roles related to eligibility:

The following are key terms that clarify how teams are structured and how submissions may be scoped. These roles and terms are subject to the eligibility criteria outlined in these official rules.

Participant Team (or "Team"): The team that participates in the prize by entering a submission. Membership in a team may shift from one phase to another as outlined in the eligibility criteria below. A team must include at least one federally recognized Tribal entity (as defined directly below) and may also include non-Tribal members.

Tribal Entity: An Indian Tribe, Tribal organization, or intertribal organization, as defined in this section.

Indian Tribe: As defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304, the term "Indian Tribe" means any Indian Tribe, Band, Nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native Village or regional or Village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (85 Stat. 688) [43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.], which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

Tribal Organization: An organization having the meaning given the term in Section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. § 5304). Specifically, per 25 U.S.C. §5304, "Tribal organization" means the recognized governing body of any Indian

Tribe; any legally established organization of Indians which is controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by such governing body or which is democratically elected by the adult members of the Indian community to be served by such organization and which includes the maximum participation of Indians in all phases of its activities.

Provided that, in any case where a contract or a grant is awarded to an organization to perform services benefiting more than one Indian Tribe, the approval of each such Indian Tribe shall be a required before the contract or grant is awarded.

Intertribal Organization: As defined for the purposes of this prize, any organization comprising two or more Indian Tribes established under congressional, state, or Tribal law to act on behalf of the participating Indian Tribes. Intertribal organizations may include, but are not limited to, intertribal councils, regional Tribal organizations or associations, Alaska regional development organizations, and Tribal federations.

Lead Participant: The lead participant will be the Tribal entity or organization responsible for managing correspondence, reporting, and distributing the award to the team members. Every team, including multi-Tribe collaborative teams, will need to designate a lead participant, which must be either a federally recognized Tribe or a supporting organization, provided that a written explanation of the relationship between the supporting organization and the federally recognized Tribe is clearly outlined in the submission package.

Supporting Organization: An organization that is not a Tribal entity and is a member of the participant team supporting the capacity-building and energy engagement efforts of the team's Tribal entity(ies). This category does not include Tribal and intertribal organizations, as defined above, which are eligible to apply on their own.

Multi-Tribe Collaborative Team: A team representing two or more Tribal entities or Tribal communities (which may belong to the same Tribe or different Tribes) that are pursuing shared capacity-building and energy engagement objectives.

Tribal Community: A community of Tribal members in a defined location, which may or may not have distinct government representation, with shared interests and capacity-building needs. A Tribal community may include locations with residents belonging to multiple federally recognized Indian Tribes who share a unified interest; these communities may be represented by regional organizations, such as Alaska Native corporations, when appropriate.

All-Phase Eligibility

This competition is open only to private entities (for-profit and nonprofit organizations) and non-Federal government entities such as States and local governmental entities, Indian Tribes, and Institutions of Higher Education, subject to the following requirements:

- All participant teams must include a Tribal entity. (See the above definition.)
- Teams participating in the prize must have been established to serve the interests of Tribal Nations. In addition to eligible Tribal entities, other potential team members may include supporting organizations that have been formed or contracted to support Tribal interests, Tribal business entities, non-federally recognized Tribes, nongovernmental organizations, private entities, and academic institutions.
- The holder of the online registration account submitting on behalf of a team in the case of a private entity, must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the

United States, and in the case of an individual, whether participating singly or in a group, must be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States.

- Individuals competing as part of a team must be legally authorized to work in the United States.
- Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States.
- Academic institutions must be based in the United States and have Federally-recognized accreditation.
- DOE employees and DOE support service contractors, 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 compete in the prize.
- Individuals who worked at DOE (Federal employees or support service contractors) within six months prior to the submission deadline of any prize competition are not eligible to compete in the prize.
- Federal entities and Federal employees are not eligible to compete in any portion of the prize.
- DOE National Laboratory employees cannot compete in the prize.
- Entities and individuals publicly banned from doing business with the United States government, such as entities and individuals debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in Federal programs, are not eligible to compete.
- Individuals participating in a malign foreign talent recruitment program[1] (MFTRP) and teams that include such individuals are not eligible to compete. If the participant passes the first phase/round of the prize competition, they must exercise ongoing due diligence to reasonably ensure that no individuals participating on the prize team are participating in an MFTRP. Consequences for violations of this prohibition will be determined according to applicable law, regulations, and policy. Further, the authorized representative of the prize team must notify DOE within five (5) business days upon learning that an individual on the prize team is or is believed to be participating in an MFTRP. DOE may modify and add requirements related to this prohibition to the extent required by law.
- Entities owned by, controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of a government of a foreign country of concern[2] are not eligible to compete.
- Entities and individuals identified on one of the following Prohibited Entity lists are not eligible to complete.

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[1]Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program is defined in P.L. 117-167, section 10638(4) Federal.

[2] The term "foreign country of concern" means the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Belarus, or any other country determined to be a country of concern by the Secretary of State, and including countries of risk designated by the Department of Energy. This list is subject to change. Foreign countries of concern are not the same as Countries of Particular Concern. Countries of Particular Concern is a designation by the Secretary of State, which refers to countries that have engaged in or tolerated “particularly severe violations of religious freedom” as outlined in the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998.

  - The list published in the Federal Register by the Department of War of Chinese military companies (CMC) operating in the United States pursuant to section 1260H of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (10 U.S.C. 113 note) (commonly known as the "DoW 1260H list" or the "1260H CMC List");
  - The list maintained by the Department of Homeland Security pursuant to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (Public Law 117-78); or
  - The Entity List maintained by the Bureau of Industry and Security of the Department of Commerce and set forth in Supplement No. 4 to part 744 of title 15, Code of Federal Regulations.
  - The list of telecommunications companies of the People's Republic of China designated under section 889 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (Public Law 115– 232; 41 U.S.C. note prec. 3901) as posing national security risks to the United States.
- Proposals where the concept will use equipment from any entity named on any of the Prohibited Entity Lists identified above.
- To be eligible, an individual authorized to represent the participant must agree to and sign the following statement upon registration with HeroX:

  I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that the information contained in this submission will be relied on by the Federal government to determine whether to issue a prize to the named competitor. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the official rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true, complete, and accurate. I understand that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information, misrepresentations, half-truths, or omissions of any material fact, may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties or fraud, false statements, false claims or otherwise. (18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287, and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733 and 3801-3812).

  I further certify that the team members have been made aware of the Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program prohibition and the team members have complied with their responsibilities to certify they are not party to a Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program.

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

  Phase 1A Eligibility

- Phase 1A has concluded and is no longer open to registration.

  Phase 1B Eligibility

- A team for which the lead participant is not a Tribal entity must provide a written explanation of the relationship between the lead participant and participating Tribal entity(ies), including how the lead participant organization has been engaged to serve the expressed interests of the Tribe(s) or Tribal communities, in the submission package.
- Any teams that previously submitted to Phase 1A are not eligible to submit in Phase 1B. This includes, but is not limited to, teams that have the same membership as a winning team from Phase 1A, as well as winning teams from Phase 1A that are seeking to submit to Phase 1B with a new concept or submission topic. The prize administrator will screen all Phase 1B submissions and DOE will determine if any submissions shall be disqualified based on this eligibility requirement.
- A Tribal entity may only submit one application to Phase 1B as the lead participant but can be included in the team on other applications.

Phase 2 Eligibility

- Only winning teams under Phase 1A or Phase 1B are eligible to submit proposals in Phase 2.
- The composition of a team may change between winning Phase 1 and participating in Phase 2, but the team must include a Tribal entity that was part of the team in Phase 1.
- A Tribal entity may only submit one application to Phase 2 as the lead participant but can be included in the team on other applications.
- To be eligible for consideration under the Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize, at least one of a team's participating Tribal entities must have been part of a winning team in Phase 1.

Phase 3 Eligibility

- Only winning teams under Phase 2 are eligible to submit proposals in Phase 3.
- The composition of a team may change between winning Phase 2 and participating in Phase 3, but the team must include a Tribal entity that was part of the team in Phase 1.
- A Tribal entity may only submit one application to Phase 3 as the lead participant but can be included in the team on other applications.
- To be eligible for consideration under the Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize, at least one of a team's participating Tribal entities must have been part of a winning team in Phase 2.

III. Background

A. Prize Background

The Tribal Energy Capacity Expansion Prize is part of the American-Made program, which is your fast track to energy innovation. Powered by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the American-Made program transforms innovative ideas into real energy solutions through prizes, collegiate competitions, technical assistance, and opportunities to work with a network of experts.

Unleashing American energy requires the participation of Tribal Nations across the country, and many Tribal governments and support organizations have called for additional resources to engage in energy infrastructure permitting and decision-making processes. In response, DOE seeks to promote the vital work that Tribal Nations and Tribal-supporting organizations do to support Tribal participation in energy decision-making processes that affect their communities, cultural resources, economic opportunities, and the homelands and spaces that they steward.

The Tribal Energy Capacity Expansion Prize (the prize), part of the American-Made program, is funded by the DOE Integrated Energy Systems Office and administered by the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR). This prize supports the involvement of Tribal Nations in decision-making processes for the development of all types of energy infrastructure. Participation in the prize is not an indication of support for any specific energy technology or project but rather an opportunity to build up resources and capabilities to engage in decision-making processes.

Developing energy infrastructure is essential for providing abundant, reliable, and secure domestic energy. Energy planning and permitting are intensive processes that must balance the competing needs of availability, technology, economy, environment, and society. It is important that Tribal perspectives are represented and heard during planning efforts; however, increasing development can strain Tribal resources, creating an urgent need for Tribes to build internal capacity for effective participation in decision-making processes.

Key areas of capacity building that this prize could support include, but are not limited to:

- Expanding capacity and internal expertise to participate in energy infrastructure permitting and related energy processes, including those associated with large energy loads (e.g. data centers).
- Increasing understanding and developing resources to ensure that potential economic benefits of energy and associated infrastructure development will flow to Tribal communities, including through Tribal benefit agreements.
- Developing Tribal energy education and workforce training programs, such as setting up or attaining registered apprenticeship standards and expanding apprenticeship readiness training opportunities for Tribal members.
- Adopting new tools and technology, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), to improve permitting processes, reduce costs and capacity needs, or shorten project timelines.

- Advancing understanding of workforce, cultural, and economic considerations relevant to Tribal participation in permitting and development processes.
- Pursuing the capacity development needed to engage in energy permitting and decision-making considerations that are relevant to other federal funding opportunities, such as those administered by the DOE Office of Indian Energy.

These examples include only a sample of Tribal needs and priorities. The prize is designed to build Tribal capacity in ways that reflect the priorities of participants and support a wide range of efforts and expertise that Tribes may want to develop to enhance effective participation in energy decision-making. Increased internal capacity within Tribes can be pursued in a myriad of ways, including but not limited to direct hiring, employing trusted subcontractors, attending conferences, supporting research, developing workforce training, and engaging in development processes. Teams can include Tribal entities from all geographies and focus on any energy technology or combination of technologies, including associated activities and infrastructure such as transmission infrastructure, large energy end-user projects (e.g., data centers), and energy technology supply chain development.

While the prize may facilitate participation in permitting, regulatory processes, and government-to-government consultation, the prize is independent from these processes. The prize is also not connected to any specific energy projects or to any community or Tribal benefit agreements; however, teams may choose to pursue involvement in specific decision-making processes, engagement around specific energy projects, or the identification of potential advantages of energy development that relate to proposed or existing community and Tribal benefits agreements.

Technical assistance will be made available to provide winning teams access to experts and the best available information to support their work. The technical assistance is designed to be responsive to the specific needs of each team as they develop and implement their capacity development plans. Technical assistance will be provided by technical and subject-matter experts from the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR). Technical assistance providers will not provide support in writing or editing any materials that will form the basis for future Tribal Energy Capacity Expansion Prize submissions. There will also be opportunities for peer-to-peer learning among the participating Tribal entities.

B. Prize Phases

The Tribal Energy Capacity Expansion Prize contains three phases: Phase 1—Capacity Needs, Phase 2—Capacity Development, and Phase 3—Implementation, respectively (Figure 1). Any future phases of this prize are at the sole discretion of DOE.

1. Phase 1 – Capacity Needs

In Phase 1, each team submits an application focused on a federally recognized Tribe or Tribal community. The application must describe the existing capacity needs of that Tribe or Tribal community to engage in energy decision-making. A team submitting to Phase 1B must include the Tribal entity that is the subject of the application. A team may also include other eligible support organizations.

Teams submit a short summary of areas of highest-priority need or concern to the Tribe related to energy decision-making or permitting, current capabilities to address these needs or concerns, and anticipated internal capacity building efforts.

Based on the summary of needs and capabilities, up to 14 selected winners from Phase 1 (total across both rounds) will each be awarded $40,000 cash and 40 hours of technical assistance. This technical assistance can be used to build or investigate capacity in areas of interest and develop plans related to the second phase of this effort. Unused hours can be rolled over to Phase 2 if they are not depleted before the Phase 2 submission deadline. The total prize pool for Phase 1 is a combined $560,000 across all rounds. Winning teams in Phase 1 will be encouraged to submit to Phase 2, which will focus on developing a capacity development plan.

2. Phase 2 – Capacity Development

The winning teams from Phase 1 will be eligible to compete in Phase 2. Teams draft detailed capacity development and energy action plans that align with the needs identified in Phase 1. To develop their plans, teams refine their priority focus areas, identify possible impact(s) related to energy development, and engage with Tribal and other community members. Teams use the information they gather to further define the types of capacity building that will enable the Tribal entity(ies) to effectively engage in energy development opportunities, ultimately creating a capacity development plan to expand efforts in these areas.

In the energy action component of their plans, teams will define the types of energy decision-making and development activities they are planning to engage in with their expanded capacity. These activities may include, but are not limited to, conducting environmental, workforce, or cultural assessments; developing partnerships; improving permitting process engagement; or pursuing potential benefits and opportunities from energy development. In Phase 2 teams are encouraged to expand to include multiple Tribes if intertribal collaboration would be relevant to their capacity-building and energy goals. Up to 4 teams may receive a bonus prize for demonstrating collaboration among multiple Tribes (explained in more detail in Section III).

A maximum of 14 Phase 2 winners will be awarded cash prizes of $200,000. DOE may also award up to 4 teams an additional bonus cash prize of $150,000 for the Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize. All awarded teams will be offered 150 hours of technical assistance that winning teams can use to conduct capacity building and continue direct engagement. All technical assistance hours (Phase 1 and Phase 2) must be used prior to 4 weeks following the Phase 3 submission deadline. The total maximum prize pool for Phase 2 is a combined $3,400,000.

3. Phase 3 – Implementation

In Phase 3, teams will begin implementing their capacity development and energy action plans, building resources to engage in existing, proposed, or future energy development projects, or associated energy infrastructure projects (e.g., large energy end users or transmission). Activities during this phase include, but are not limited to:

- Expanding capacity and internal expertise to participate in energy infrastructure permitting and related processes, such as siting or transmission interconnection.
- Increasing understanding and developing resources to ensure that potential economic benefits of energy and associated infrastructure development will flow to Tribal communities, including through Tribal benefit agreements.

- Developing Tribal energy education and workforce training programs, including setting up or attaining registered apprenticeship standards and expanding apprenticeship readiness training opportunities for Tribal members.
- Adopting new tools and technologies, including the use of AI and ML, to improve permitting processes, reduce costs and capacity needs, or shorten project timelines.
- Advancing understanding of workforce, cultural, and economic considerations relevant to Tribal participation in permitting and development processes.
- Pursuing the capacity development needed to engage in energy permitting and decision-making considerations that are relevant to other federal funding opportunities, such as those administered by the DOE Office of Indian Energy.

Phase 3 teams evaluate their capacity development and energy action plans against their long-term energy development goals and update their plans to reflect an ongoing strategy for involvement in energy decision-making and development. Over time and throughout the three phases, capacity-building needs, plans, and implementation are expected to evolve and be refined as they are implemented.

A maximum of 14 Phase 3 winners will be awarded cash prizes of $125,000. As in Phase 2, DOE may also award up to 4 teams an additional bonus cash prize of $50,000 for the Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize. The maximum total prize pool for Phase 3 is a combined $1,950,000.

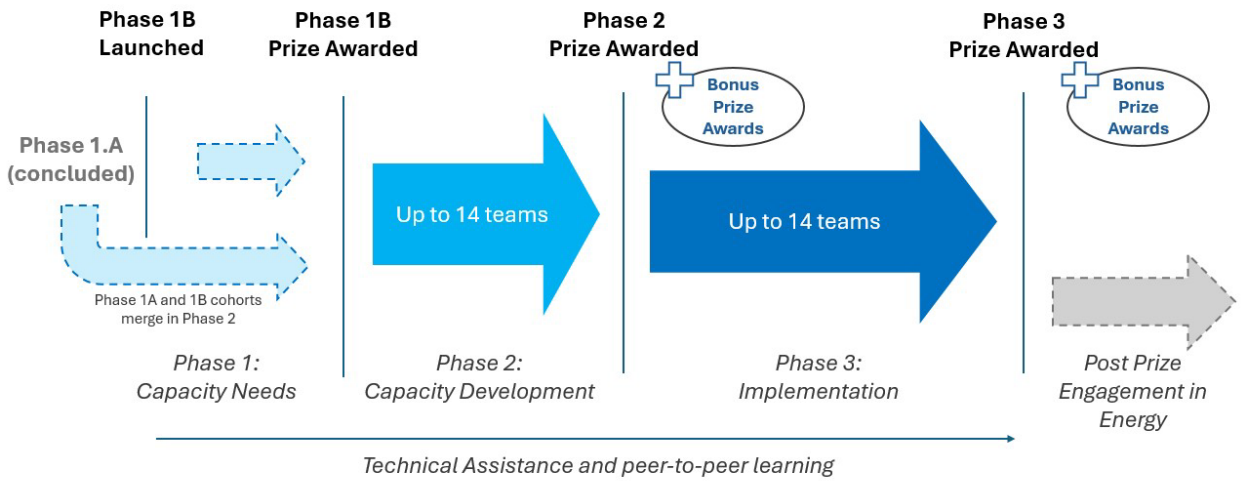

Figure 1. The prize follows a timeline of three phases, with winners from each phase invited to join the subsequent phase. Winners from both Phase 1A and Phase 1B are eligible to compete in a single Phase 2.

C. Prize Goal Requirements

Only submissions relevant to the goals of this program are eligible to compete. The prize is designed to support Tribal sovereignty and self-determination. The structure of the prize is flexible and broad in its requirements, so Tribes may address the specific needs of their communities and realize their vision for their future. However, only submissions relevant to the goals of this program are eligible to compete.

DOE must conclude that all the following statements are true when applied to your submission:

- The proposed solution addresses key capacity needs/gaps in Tribes engaging or seeking to engage in decision-making processes for energy or associated infrastructure.
- The majority of activities that are described in and support the submission package are performed on Tribal Lands, or other parts of the United States.
- 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 does not include the support of lawsuits, though it may provide for other forms of legal counsel.
- DOE does not intend to make public the information provided in the proposal narratives and technical assistance forms submitted during the prize, but teams should not submit proprietary or sensitive information. Outside of the proposal narrative, there are no additional deliverables, reports, or requirements to share information or data associated with the prize.

D. Find Help: The American-Made Network

The American-Made Network cultivates resources and builds connections that enhance, accelerate, and amplify teams' efforts. The objective is to link participants with the people, resources, financing, perspectives, and industry expertise necessary for long-term success.

The network is composed of the following elements:

Prize Administrator – The prize administrator will plan to host an informational webinar at each phase of the prize, monitor and engage on the HeroX forum page, and be available to participants via email at TECEPrize@nlr.gov. The prize administrator will also work with the winning teams of Phases 1 and 2 to provide opportunities for networking and peer learning as well as facilitating the requested technical assistance.

HeroX – This platform provides resources and updates related to the prize. In addition, it features a forum space where parties who are interested in collaborating can post information about themselves and learn about others who are interested in partnering[3].

[3] When you submit a request to be included on the Teaming platform, the requesting organization consents to publication of the registration information. By facilitating the Teaming platform, DOE is not endorsing, sponsoring, or otherwise evaluating the qualifications of the individuals and organizations that ask to be placed on the Teaming platform. DOE will not pay for any information you provide, nor will it compensate any participants or requesting organizations for developing such information.

IV. Phase 1—Capacity Needs

A. Phase 1B Goal

The goal of Phase 1B of the prize is for participants to identify the "focus areas" of greatest need or concern for the Tribe related to energy decision making, development, or permitting. Teams describe how anticipated internal capacity building efforts will enable them to effectively address these focus areas and assess current capabilities to implement these efforts.

B. Phase 1 Prizes

In Phase 1, up to 14 winners combined from all rounds (i.e., Phase 1A and Phase 1B) will receive $40,000 cash each based on their needs assessment and capacity development concept. Up to 40 hours of technical assistance will also be provided to each winner. The awarded technical assistance can be used to support development of a detailed capacity development and energy action plan, and the awarded cash prize funds may be used towards this goal or other efforts.

C. How to Enter

Go to HeroX[4] and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all the required materials before the deadline. Participants also can form teams or find partners through the HeroX platform.

D. Process Overview

Phase 1B consists of the following steps:

Activation and Submission – Teams summarize the focus areas of potential impact from energy development, likely capacity-building needs to effectively engage around these impacts, and their team's ability to develop a capacity-building plan. Teams complete their submission packages and submit online before the Phase 1B submission deadline closes.

Assessment – The prize administrator screens submissions for eligibility and completion. Subject-matter expert reviewers are assigned to independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers' criteria assess the following team activities:

Impacts and Outcomes – Describe how the existing, proposed, or future development of energy generation projects, or associated infrastructure, may impact the Tribe. Define focus areas that highlight the real-world priorities of the Tribe in considering impacts and opportunities related to energy development.

Capacity Building Needs – Identify credible capacity development needs to address the defined focus areas of the Tribe in considering the impacts of energy development.

[4] www.herox.com/TECEPrize

Team Capabilities – Form a committed team, including the identification of relevant partners, that can lead or support near-term energy capacity building and engagement.

Winner Notification – After the winners are notified, the prize administrator requests the necessary information to distribute the cash prizes.

E. What to Submit

A complete submission package for Phase 1 should include the following items:

- Cover page and proposal narrative
- Technical assistance interest form.

The following subsections provide more guidance on what information to provide in each document and how reviewers will evaluate and score your submission. Reviewers will evaluate your submissions by assigning a single score, on a scale of 0–6 (Table 2), for each of the three scored submission sections: Question 1, Question 2, and Question 3 (see Table 4 below). Reviewers will also provide a single score on a scale of 0-6 that represents their overall reviewer recommendation about the submission, for a total of four scores per submission. Reviewers' scores will be based on their level of agreement with a series of statements about how well a proposal narrative meets the criteria for each section (Table 4).

Table 2. Graded Scoring System

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-responsive	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

All submission materials should be submitted as a PDF.

1. Cover Page

List basic information about your submission, including:

- Project title
- Team name
- Short description
- Lead participant organization or entity (name, organization type, and address)
    - Note: If the lead participant is not the Tribal entity, be sure that the submission package contains a written explanation of the relationship between the Tribe(s) and the lead participant organization, including how the lead participant organization has been engaged to serve the expressed interests of the Tribe(s) or Tribal communities. This information may be included either in the proposal narrative or in a letter of commitment.
- Lead participant point of contact (name, organization, and title. Contact phone, email, and address)

- Project team members (names, organizations, contacts, and if applicable, links to their professional online profiles)
- Other partners (if any)
- Team location (city, state, and nine-digit zip code).

2. Narrative

In the narrative, teams should answer each of the three questions in Table 4. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide your responses; each team decides where to focus its answers. The reviewers will use the guiding statements in the righthand column of Table 4 to score the responses to the questions. The individual answers to the three questions do not have a word limit. However, **the aggregate response to these three questions must not exceed 1,500 words,** not including captions, figures/graphs, or references. A word count must be included at the end of the submission. The narrative may also include **up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs**.

DOE may offer a template to show what information is needed for evaluation, but teams can submit in any format they prefer.

Table 3. Phase 1B Proposal Narrative

1B Proposal Narrative Maximum 1,500 words and five supporting images or figures (PDF). Elective Template can be found in the Resources tab on HeroX: https://www.herox.com/TECEPrize/resources
Question 1 – Impacts and Outcomes How do you anticipate your Tribe being impacted by energy development?
• What types of energy infrastructure impacts do you need additional capacity to address? Describe how an existing, proposed, or future energy infrastructure development project could impact your Tribal entity(ies). • What topic areas or actions do you want to focus on to better engage with the energy infrastructure you've identified? Define and describe focus areas (e.g., "environmental considerations," or "comments in permitting processes") that highlight the real-world priorities of the Tribal entity(ies) in considering impacts and opportunities related to energy development.
Question 2 – Capacity-Building Needs In what areas would your team like to build capacity to allow better engagement in energy development, decision-making, and/or permitting processes?
• How do you imagine that additional capacity will equip the Tribal entity(ies) to address the focus areas you've identified? Explain what types of capacity-building activities you anticipate could help to promote the priorities of the Tribal entity(ies) in energy development and decision-making processes.

• What capacity-related challenges have you faced in trying to address energy development in the past? Describe how the previous efforts of the Tribal entity(ies) to engage in energy development or decision-making processes were hindered by a lack of capacity.
Question 3 – Team Capabilities What staff or partners are available to support this and future phases of the project?
• What skills, experience, and dedication will your team bring to your capacity-building efforts? Describe how you will use existing resources to form a committed team. • Will you work with partners? If relevant, identify partners that can lead or support near-term energy capacity building and engagement.

3. Technical Assistance Interest

As part of the Phase 1 submission package, participants must also submit a technical assistance interest form indicating any topics and type(s) of technical assistance that they may be interested in requesting should they be selected as a winner from Phase 1. A profile of the National Laboratory of the Rockies capabilities that are available to participants will be shared with teams, as well as a template request form that can be completed for submission. Any requests for technical assistance will be reviewed and matched with technical experts. The technical assistance request form template may be found on HeroX[5]. Teams are encouraged to use it; however teams may use any form or format of their choosing. The provided template outlines the content to be included in the technical interest request form submission.

The prize administrator will connect teams with direct technical assistance and will also provide general resources, assistance, networking, and learning opportunities for all winners.

4. Transparency of Foreign Connections Disclosure (for Private Entities and Academic Institutions only)

If the application includes a private entity or an academic institution, the transparency of foreign connections disclosure is required. See instructions here: https://www.energy.gov/ia/transparency-foreign-connections.

F. How We Determine and Award Winners

The prize administrator screens all submissions to determine they are complete and the participants are eligible. Subject-matter-expert reviewers are assigned to independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers may be composed of Federal and non-Federal subject-matter experts and with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the participant's submission package according to the criteria below.

[5] www.herox.com/TECEPrize/resources

1. Reviewer Scoring

Reviewers will score submissions as follows:

Table 4. Phase 1B Reviewer Criteria

Criteria	Judge Considerations	Scoring Rubric
Question 1: The identified existing, proposed, or future energy development and/or associated infrastructure is likely to have an impact on the participant. The participant identifies potential impacts and focus areas that would significantly affect the wellbeing of the Tribal entity.	Level of agreement with the statements.	0-6
Question 2: The participant identifies capacity building efforts that would help to meaningfully address the impacts identified in Question 1. The participant identifies challenges to previous efforts to engage in energy development or decision-making processes.	Level of agreement with the statements.	0-6
Question 3: The team supporting the participant's efforts demonstrates commitment and relevant skills and/or experience.	Level of agreement with the statement.	0-6

Criteria	Judge Considerations	Scoring Rubric
Reviewer recommendation: The impacts, team, need, and overall motivation of the Tribe should be strongly considered for a Phase 1 award.	Level of agreement with the statement.	0-6
Total Available Points		**24 Points**

2. Interviews

DOE may decide to interview a subset of teams. The interviews would be held prior to the notification of the winners and would help clarify questions DOE may have. Participating in interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of a team's likelihood of winning.

3. Final Determination

DOE will designate a Federal employee as the judge. The judge will determine the winner(s) taking into account the reviewers' scores and comments (if applicable) application of program policy factors, and the interview findings (if applicable). The judge may determine no team is a winner.

4. Winner Notification

Approximately 60 days after the prize competition closes, the prize administrator will notify the winners and request the necessary information to distribute the prize(s).

G. Additional Terms and Conditions

See Additional Terms and Conditions for additional requirements.

PARTICIPANTS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN APPENDIX A MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

V. Phase 2—Capacity Development

A. Phase 2 Goal

In Phase 2, teams will work to create a detailed capacity development and energy action plan. This will include refining their capacity needs assessments through engagement with Tribal and other community members and validating how the capacity-building efforts they have identified will enable Tribal entity(ies) to effectively engage in the consideration of energy or associated infrastructure. Engagement can be done by Tribal members or with the help of outside organizations and can include public or focused meetings. Teams will use the information they have gathered through engagement to develop an integrated plan for expanded

efforts in high-priority areas of capacity building and future action in energy decision-making and development activities (see Figure 2). Beginning in this phase, participants are also encouraged to expand their teams to include collaboration among multiple Tribes if collaboration would be relevant to their capacity-building and energy goals.

Capacity-building needs, plans, and engagement are expected to evolve and be refined over time. Phase 2 proposals may deviate from Phase 1 proposals, but they must be led by a team that was selected as a winner of Phase 1.

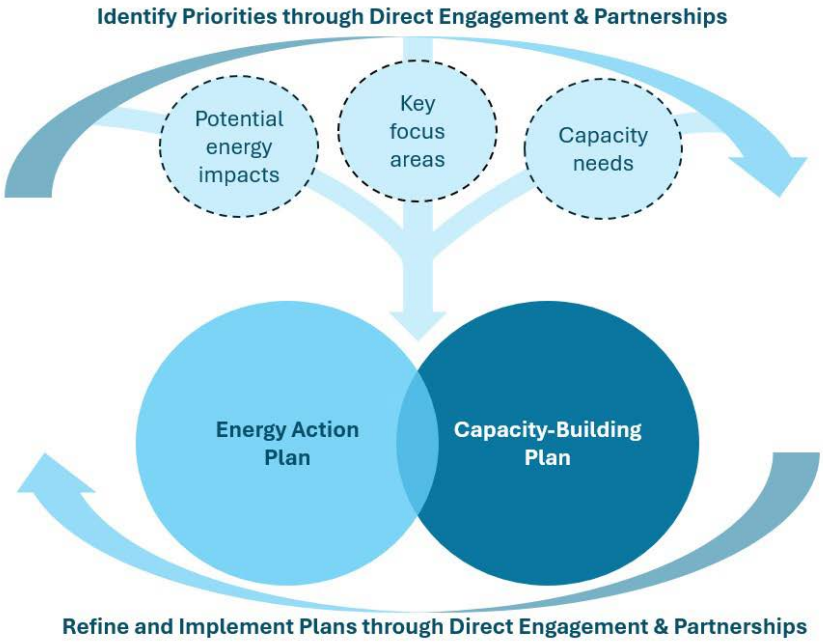

Figure 2. Direct engagement and partnerships support the identification, refinement, and implementation of key content included in the integrated energy action and capacity development plan.

B. Phase 2 Prizes

Phase 2 will award a maximum of 14 winners cash prizes of $200,000 each, and up to 4 of the winning teams will receive an additional $150,000 cash prize each for the Phase 2 Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize. Up to 150 hours of technical assistance will be provided to each winner. Teams may also use any unused technical assistance hours carried over from Phase 1.

C. How to Enter

Go to HeroX and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the deadline. Participants also have the ability to form teams or find partners through the prize HeroX platform's Forum[6] page.

[6] www.herox.com/TECEPrize/forum

D. Process Overview

Phase 1 consists of the following steps:

Activation and Submission – Teams develop a detailed capacity development and energy action plan. The plan will include a revised summary of the target focus areas, along with an explanation of the capacity-building actions needed to improve involvement in energy development related to those areas. Teams will also update the introductory needs assessment and identify important voices and participants that will be engaged in potential future prize phases. Teams must complete their submission packages and submit online before the Phase 2 submission deadline closes.

Assessment – The prize administrator screens submissions for eligibility and completion and assigns subject-matter-expert reviewers to independently score the content of each submission. The reviewer criteria assess the following team activities:

Focus Areas for Capacity Development: Identify credible capacity development needs to address defined priorities of the Tribal entity(ies) in considering energy or associated infrastructure development. Perform sufficient due diligence on proposed development needs and validate how capacity building will enable the Tribal entity(ies) to engage constructively to address the identified impacts and opportunities related to energy development.

Community Engagement: Teams will have completed enough direct engagement with Tribal community members, industry representatives, organizations, or others to support the creation of the capacity development and energy action plan for advancing Tribal participation in energy decision-making.

Capacity Development and Energy Action Plan: Compile the information from engagement and other scoping activities into a capacity development and energy action plan that can be implemented by the Tribal entity(ies). This plan should outline key focus areas for expanding capacity, describing how the expanded capacity will enable the Tribal entity(ies) to improve their involvement in energy decision-making, permitting, and/or development processes.

Team Capabilities: The team has demonstrated competency in Tribal community engagement and plan development. If needed, identify partners that can support capacity building and engagement.

Multi-Tribe Collaboration: If relevant, cultivate relationships with other Tribal Nations engaging in energy development, public or private organizations working in energy development, and/or other entities that are likely to assist the Tribal entity(ies) in identifying the capacity-building needs relating to energy development.

Winner Notification – After the winners are notified, the prize administrator requests the necessary information to distribute the cash prizes. The designated lead participant will be responsible for communication with the prize administrator and distribution of the prize funds among the team members. After winning Phase 2, teams develop their solutions in accordance with their plan to compete in Phase 3.

E. Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize

Starting in Phase 2, teams may add members to form a multi-Tribe collaborative team that includes more than one Tribal entity (i.e., Indian Tribe, Tribal organization, intertribal organization, or Tribal community) in its membership, including at least one Tribal entity from a winning Phase 1 team. Up to 4 cash prizes of $150,000 each will be awarded for the Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize in Phase 2. To be considered for the bonus prize, a team must submit an additional bonus prize narrative.

Within the multi-Tribe collaborative team, there must be a designated lead participant, which will be responsible for managing correspondence, reporting, and distributing the award among members of the multi-Tribe collaborative team.

The lead participant may be one of the Tribal entities in the multi-Tribe collaborative team or a supporting organization. If the lead participant is a supporting organization, the submission package must include a written explanation of the relationship between the supporting organization and participating Tribal entities, including how the lead participant organization has been engaged to serve the expressed interests of the Tribe(s) or Tribal communities. New Tribal entities joining the multi-Tribe collaborative team do not need to have participated in Phase 1.

There is no upper limit on the number of Tribes or partner organizations that may be part of the team. Teams may add or subtract additional eligible Tribes or partner members between Phase 2 and Phase 3, and a multi-Tribe collaborative team may change the lead participant between Phase 2 and Phase 3. However, the team must continue to include at least one Tribal entity from a winning Phase 1 team.

F. What to Submit

A complete submission package for Phase 2 should include the following items:

- Cover page and proposal narrative
- Bonus prize narrative (optional; include if applicable)
- Summary PowerPoint slide (update on work performed thus far) (will be made public)
- Technical assistance interest form
- Letters of commitment or support.

The following details provide more guidance on what information to provide and how reviewers evaluate and score submissions. Reviewers will evaluate your submissions by determining whether the minimum criteria are met as outlined for each of the four narrative submission sections: Question 1, Question 2, Question 3, and Question 4 (see Table 7). Unlike in Phase 1, these sections will be scored on a binary scale of 0–1 (Table 5). Reviewers will also assign a binary score of 0–1 for the letters of commitment or support (as applicable). A score of 0 from all reviewers for any one of these five binary criteria may result in ineligibility to proceed from Phase 2 to Phase 3 at the discretion of the judge. Finally, reviewers will also provide a single score on a scale of 0–6 (Table 2) that represents their overall reviewer recommendation about the submission. All components for each Phase 2 submission total up to nine scores per submission. Each submission will receive a total score out of a maximum of 11 points.

Optional: Teams also have the option to submit an additional bonus prize narrative for consideration for the Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize. Reviewers will evaluate bonus prize narratives by assigning scores for Question 5 and Question 6 (Table 8). The reviewer scores will be based on their level of agreement, rated on a scale of 0–6 (Table 2), with a series of statements about how well a narrative meets the bonus prize criteria outlined in Question 5 and Question 6. Reviewers will also provide a single score on a scale of 0–6 that represents their overall reviewer recommendation for the bonus prize submission.

All submission materials should be submitted as a PDF.

Table 5. Binary Scoring System

0	1
Criteria Not Met	Criteria Met

Table 6. Scored Components in Phase 2

Scored Components in Phase 2	Type of Scoring	Maximum Possible Score
Letters of commitment or support	Binary	1
Proposal narrative, Question 1	Binary	1
Proposal narrative, Question 2	Binary	1
Proposal narrative, Question 3	Binary	1
Proposal narrative, Question 4	Binary	1
Reviewer comments	Gradient	6
Optional: Bonus narrative, Question 5	Gradient	6
Optional: Bonus narrative, Question 6	Gradient	6
As applicable: Bonus narrative reviewer comments	Gradient	6

1. Cover Page

List basic information about your submission. Responses to questions with an asterisk (*) may be made public.

- Project title*
- Team name*
- Short description*
- Lead participant organization or entity (name, organization type, and address)
    - Note: If the lead participant is not the Tribal entity, be sure that the submission package contains a written explanation the relationship between the Tribe and the lead participant organization, including how the lead participant organization has been engaged to serve the expressed interests of the Tribe(s) or Tribal

communities. This information may be included either in the proposal narrative or in a letter of commitment.

- Lead participant point of contact (name, organization, and title; contact phone, email, and address)
- Project team members (names, organizations, contacts, and, if applicable, links to their professional online profiles)
- Other partners (if any)
- Team location (city, state, and nine-digit zip code).

2. Narrative

You should answer each of the following questions. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide your responses. You decide where to focus your answers. The individual answers to the questions do not have a word limit; however, **the aggregate response to these questions must not exceed 4,000 words,** not including captions, figures/graphs, or references. A word count must be included at the end of your submission (see template for details). You may also include **up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs**. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

DOE may provide an elective template to illustrate the types of information needed to evaluate whether teams meet the scored criteria. Teams are not required to use this elective template and may submit using any form or format of their choosing. All submissions should address the substantive measures included in the elective template outlined and described in this official rules document.

Table 7. Phase 2 Narrative

Phase 2 Narrative Maximum 4,000 words and five supporting images or figures (PDF). Elective Template in the Resources tab on HeroX: https://www.herox.com/TECEPrize/resources
Question 1 – Focus Areas for Capacity Development How do you anticipate your Tribe(s) and Tribal communities will be impacted by energy development?
• How has your understanding of your focus areas evolved since Phase 1? Elaborate on the focus areas you identified in Phase 1, including any new or emerging considerations related to the energy development or associated infrastructure under consideration.
Question 2 – Community Engagement How did you validate that the impacts that have been identified are priorities for further capacity development?
• How did you engage Tribal communities and other relevant parties to validate your focus areas? Describe the engagement efforts and learnings that helped you identify, refine, or validate the focus areas of your capacity building and energy action efforts. • What steps did you take to capture a range of relevant perspectives on the energy infrastructure and impacts you're considering? In addition to a wide range of community members, this could include engagement with organizations, governments, or industry members. • How are the takeaways from your engagement activities reflected in your capacity development and energy action plan? Connect what you learned during engagement to the structure, content, or focus of the plan.

Question 3 – Capacity Development and Energy Action Plan How do you plan to build capacity within to address the energy focus areas that have been identified and validated through engagement?
• What actions will your capacity development plan encompass? Provide a detailed outline of your proposed capacity development plan, including what skills and/or resources will be developed or further considered. • How will the expanded capacity enable the Tribal entity(ies) to take action on Tribal priorities related to energy development? Provide a detailed outline of your proposed energy action plan, including, but not limited to, the approaches that will be used to participate in activities around the identified energy development.
Question 4 – Team What staff or partners are available to support the implementation of this and future project phases?
• How has your team prepared to move from planning to implementation? Describe the skills or staffing preparations that will enable your team to move into the next phase of the prize. • Has your team changed or expanded? If relevant, provide details about any new support you've added, whether internally or from external partners.

3. Bonus Prize Narrative (Optional)

If you are competing in the Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize, attach a brief narrative that details your team's eligibility.

Table 8. Bonus Prize Narrative for Phase 2

Bonus Prize Narrative Maximum 1,000 words and two supporting images or figures (PDF).
Question 5 – Multi-Tribe Collaboration How do your team's structure and capacity development plans support collaboration among multiple Tribes?
• What Tribal entities are part of your team? Introduce all of the Tribal entities (i.e., Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, intertribal organizations, or Tribal communities) that are part of the team. • What is the basis for your collaboration? Provide background information that explains the collaborative interests and relationships of the participating Tribal entities, with a focus on their shared energy development context.

Question 6 – Shared Meaningful Benefit How do your capacity development and energy action plans create benefits that meet the needs of all participating Tribal entities?
• How have you ensured that all of the Tribal entities involved in the team will meaningfully engage in and benefit from the capacity development and energy action plans? Describe how each Tribal entity in the team is anticipated to participate in implementing the plans. • How do your plans and approach to collaboration help to meet the capacity needs and energy development priorities of all of the participating Tribal entities? Explain how the Tribal entities' shared (or independent but related) goals are reflected in your plans.

4. Submission Summary Slide (Will Be Made Public)

Make a public-facing, one-slide submission summary that introduces your team and/or organization and your mission. There is no template, so teams are free to present the information in any format. Any text must be readable on a standard printed page (8 ½ by 11 inches) and a conference room projection and should be in at least 14-point font.

5. Letters of Support or Commitment

Attach one-page letters (of support, intent, or commitment) from Tribal entities, other organizations, and other relevant entities that are part of the team to provide context. A letter of commitment from the appropriate governing body of each Tribal entity must be provided; others may be provided as desired by the participant. Letters of support from partners or others that are critical to the success of your proposed solution will likely increase your score. General letters of support from parties that are not critical to the execution of your solution will likely not factor in your score but do help demonstrate the importance of the proposed work. Please do not submit multipage letters. All letters should be combined into a single PDF file for submission.

6. Technical Assistance Interest

As part of the Phase 2 submission package, participants must also submit an updated technical assistance interest form indicating the topics and type(s) of technical assistance that they may be interested in requesting should they be deemed an eligible winner from Phase 2. These technical assistance requests may build upon technical assistance work already completed following Phase 1, or they can be a new request for other topics or types of assistance.

The prize administrator will connect teams with direct technical assistance and will also provide general resources, assistance, and networking and learning opportunities for all participants. A profile of the National Laboratory of the Rockies capabilities that are available to participants will be shared with teams, as well as a template request form that may be completed for submission. Following a review of these technical assistance capabilities, participants should complete and submit a technical assistance interest form on which they identify the areas where they need assistance.

The technical assistance request form template may be found on HeroX[7]. Teams are encouraged to be use the template; however teams may use any form or format of their choosing. The provided template outlines the content to be included in the technical interest request form submission. Requests will be reviewed and matched with technical experts.

7. Transparency of Foreign Connections Disclosure (for Private Entities and Academic Institutions only)

If the application includes a private entity or an academic institution, the transparency of foreign connections disclosure is required. See instructions here: https://www.energy.gov/ia/transparency-foreign-connections.

G. How We Determine and Award Winners

The prize administrator screens all submissions to determine they are complete and the teams are eligible. Subject-matter-expert reviewers are assigned to independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers may be composed of Federal and non-Federal subject-matter experts and with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the team's submission package according to the criteria below.

1. Reviewer Scoring

Reviewers will score submissions as follows:

Table 9. Phase 2 Reviewer Criteria

Criteria	Judge Considerations	Scoring Rubric
Submission requirement: The submission contains the relevant letters of commitment.	Agreement with the statement.	0-1
Question 1: The team offers a detailed discussion of the focus areas for the capacity development and energy action plan.	Agreement with the statement.	0-1

[7] www.herox.com/TECEPrize/resources

Question 2: The team has completed enough direct engagement with Tribal community members, industry representatives, organizations, or others to support the creation of the capacity development and energy action plan.	Agreement with the statement.	0-1
Question 3: The team outlines plans for capacity development and energy action in the next phase.	Agreement with the statement.	0-1
Question 4: The team itself has prepared for the implementation of the plan.	Agreement with the statement.	0-1
Reviewer recommendation: The impacts, team, need, and overall motivation of the Tribal entity(ies) should be strongly considered for a Phase 2 award.	Agreement with the statement.	0-6
Total Available Points		**11 Points**

Table 10. Reviewer Criteria for the Phase 2 Bonus Prize

Criteria	Judge Considerations	Scoring Rubric
Question 5: The team demonstrates meaningful collaboration among multiple Tribal entities in pursuit of shared capacity-building and energy development priorities.	Agreement with the statement.	0-6

Question 6: The team describes how the capacity development and energy action plans will provide benefits for all participating Tribal entities in service of their goals.	Agreement with the statement.	0-6
Reviewer recommendation: The impacts, team, need, and overall motivation of the Tribal entity(ies) should be strongly considered for a Multi-Tribe Collaborative bonus award.	Agreement with the statement.	0-6
Total Available Points		**18 Points**

2. Interviews

DOE may decide to interview a subset of teams. The interviews would be held prior to the notification of the winners and would help clarify questions DOE may have. Participating in interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of a team's likelihood of winning.

3. Final Determination

DOE will designate a Federal employee as the judge. The judge will determine the winner(s) taking into account the reviewers' scores and comments (if applicable) application of program policy factors, and the interview findings (if applicable). The judge may determine no team is a winner.

4. Winner Notification

Approximately 60 days after the prize competition closes, the prize administrator will notify the winners and request the necessary information to distribute the prize(s).

H. Additional Terms and Conditions

See Additional Terms and Conditions for additional requirements.

PARTICIPANTS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN APPENDIX A MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

VI. Phase 3—Implementation

A. Phase 3 Goal

In Phase 3, teams will begin to implement their capacity development and energy action plans. Teams will take steps to build the capacities they have identified to participate in decision-making, permitting, and/or development processes for energy projects or associated infrastructure. Activities during this phase may include, but are not limited to, engagement in permitting processes, participation in environmental monitoring and research efforts, or efforts to ensure that potential economic or workforce benefits flow to Tribal communities. Participants will also update their plans to reflect a long-term strategy to maintain, expand, or scale back the capacities they have developed, as appropriate for their context.

It is expected that capacity-building needs, plans, engagement, and implementation will evolve and be refined over time. Phase 3 proposals may deviate from Phase 2 proposals, but they must be led by a team that was selected as a winner of Phase 2.

B. Phase 3 Prizes

Phase 3 will award a maximum of 14 winners cash prizes of $125,000 each, and up to 4 of the winning teams may receive an additional $50,000 cash prize each for the Phase 3 Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize.

C. How to Enter

Go to HeroX and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the deadline. Participants also can form teams or find partners through the prize HeroX platform's Forum[8] page.

D. Process Overview

Phase 3 consists of the following steps:

Progress and Submission – Participants implement their capacity development and energy action plan focusing on a single or multiple Tribes (based on a single-Tribe pathway or a multi-Tribe collaborative pathway selected in Phase 2). It is generally accepted that the capacity development needs identified in Phase 2 may change during implementation. Participants will also finalize and initiate their plan, collaborating with other partners as appropriate. Teams will also complete their submission packages and submit them online before the phase closes.

Assessment – The prize administrator screens submissions for eligibility and completion and assigns subject-matter-expert reviewers to independently score the content of each submission. The reviewer criteria assess the following team activities:

> **Capacity Development**: Demonstrate the steps that have been taken to implement the capacity development efforts specified in the capacity development

[8] www.herox.com/TECEPrize/forum

and energy action plan. Describe and justify how any modifications to the plan enable the Tribal entity(ies) to address considerations related to local energy and/or related infrastructure development.

Energy Action: Describe how the expanded capacity is being used to engage in energy decision-making and development activities. Describe approaches for continuing involvement in priority activities and processes that are responsive to the evolving needs of the Tribal entity(ies).

Team Capabilities: The team has evolved to effectively implement the plans developed in previous phases and has demonstrated competency overall.

Multi-Tribe Collaboration: If relevant, cultivate relationships with other Tribal entities engaging in energy development processes to support Tribal capacity building. It may also be helpful to engage other public or private organizations.

Winner Notification – After the winners are notified, the prize administrator requests the necessary information to distribute the cash prizes. The designated lead participant will be responsible for communication with the prize administrator and distribution of the prize funds among the team members.

E. Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize

Starting in Phase 2, teams may add members to form a multi-Tribe collaborative team that includes more than one Tribal entity (i.e., Indian Tribe, Tribal organization, intertribal organization, or Tribal community) in its membership and representing at least one Tribal entity from a winning Phase 1 team. Up to 4 cash prizes of $50,000 each will be awarded for the Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize in Phase 3. To be considered for the bonus prize in Phase 3, a team must submit an additional bonus prize narrative.

Within the multi-Tribe collaborative team, there must be a designated lead participant, which will be responsible for managing correspondence, reporting, and distributing the award among members of the multi-Tribe collaborative team. The lead participant may be one of the Tribal entities in the multi-Tribe collaborative team or a supporting organization. If the lead participant is a supporting organization, the submission package must include a written explanation of the relationship between the supporting organization and participating Tribal entities, including how the lead participant organization has been engaged to serve the expressed interests of the Tribe(s) or Tribal communities. Any new Tribal entities joining the multi-Tribe collaborative team in Phase 3 do not need to have participated in Phase 1 or Phase 2.

There is no upper limit on the number of Tribes or partner organizations that may be part of the team. Teams may add or subtract additional eligible Tribes or partner members between Phase 2 and Phase 3, and a multi-Tribe collaborative team may change the lead participant between Phase 2 and Phase 3. The team must continue to include at least one Tribal entity from a winning Phase 1 team.

F. What to Submit

A complete submission package for Phase 3 should include the following items:

- Cover page and proposal narrative
- Bonus prize narrative (optional; include if applicable)
- Detailed capacity development and energy action plan
- Summary PowerPoint slide (update on work performed thus far)
- Letters of commitment or support.

The following guidance offers more information on what to provide and how reviewers will evaluate and score submissions. Reviewers will evaluate your submissions to determine that a proposal narrative meets the minimum criteria for each section (Table 12), assigning scores on a binary scale of 0–1 (Table 5). Reviewers determine whether the minimum criteria are met as outlined for each of the four narrative submission sections: Question 1, Question 2, and Question 3 (see Table 12).

Reviewers will also assign a binary score of 0–1 for the letters of commitment or support (as applicable). A score of 0 from all reviewers for any one of these five binary criteria may result in ineligibility for a Phase 3 award at the discretion of the judge. Finally, reviewers will also provide a single score on a scale of 0–6 that represents their overall reviewer recommendation about the submission. All components for each Phase 3 submission total up to six scores per submission. Each submission will receive a total score out of a maximum of 11 points.

Optional: Teams also have the option to submit an additional bonus prize narrative for consideration for the Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize. Reviewers will evaluate bonus prize narratives by assigning scores for Question 4 and Question 5 (Table 13). The reviewer scores will be based on their level of agreement, rated on a scale of 0–6 (Table 2), with a series of statements about how well a narrative meets the bonus prize criteria outlined in Question 4 and Question 5. Reviewers will also provide a single score on a scale of 0–6 that represents their overall reviewer recommendation for the bonus prize submission.

All submission materials should be submitted as a PDF.

Table 11. Scored Components in Phase 3

Scored Components in Phase 3	Type of Scoring	Maximum Possible Score
Letters of commitment or support	Binary	1
Detailed capacity development and energy action plan	Binary	1
Proposal narrative, Question 1	Binary	1
Proposal narrative, Question 2	Binary	1
Proposal narrative, Question 3	Binary	1
Reviewer comments	Gradient	6
Optional: Bonus narrative, Question 4	Gradient	6
Optional: Bonus narrative, Question 5	Gradient	6
As applicable: Bonus narrative reviewer comments	Gradient	6

1. Cover Page Content

List basic information about the team. Responses to questions with an asterisk (*) may be made public.

- Project title*
- Team name*
- Short description*
- Lead participant organization or entity (name, organization type, and address)
    - Note: If the lead participant is not the Tribal entity, be sure that the submission package contains a written explanation the relationship between the Tribe and the lead participant organization, including how the lead participant organization has been engaged to serve the expressed interests of the Tribe(s) or Tribal communities. This information may be included either in the proposal narrative or in a letter of commitment.
- Lead participant point of contact (name, organization, and title; contact phone, email, and address)
- Project team members (names, organizations, contacts, and, if applicable, links to their professional online profiles)
- Other partners (if any)
- Team location (city, state, and nine-digit zip code).

2. Narrative

You should answer each of the following questions. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide your responses. You decide where to focus your answers. The individual answers to the questions do not have a word limit; however, **the aggregate response to these questions must not exceed 4,500 words,** not including captions, figures/graphs, or references. A word count must be included at the end of your submission (see template for details). You may also include **up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs**. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

DOE may provide an elective template to illustrate the types of information needed to evaluate whether teams meet the scored criteria. Teams are not required to use this elective template and may submit using any form or format of their choosing. All submissions should address the substantive measures included in the elective template outlined and described in this official rules document.

Table 12. Phase 3 Proposal Narrative

Narrative Maximum 4,500 words and five supporting images or figures (PDF). Elective Template in the Resources tab on HeroX: https://www.herox.com/TECEPrize/resources
Question 1 – Capacity Development How does the implemented capacity development address the identified focus area(s)?
• What have you done to implement capacity development that helps address your focus areas? Discuss the capacity-building steps that the Tribal entity(ies) has take, including a justification of how any modifications to the plan enabled the Tribal entity(ies) to address considerations related to local energy and/or related infrastructure development. • How have you ensured that the capacity development remains responsive to evolving needs? Describe how ongoing engagement with or feedback from Tribal members and other contacts has influenced how the capacity development plan has been implemented or modified. • What challenges have you encountered in implementing the capacity development plan? Describe any issues you've already experienced or anticipate in the future.
Question 2 – Energy Action How is your expanded capacity being used to participate in energy decision-making, development, or permitting processes?
• How is the expanded capacity being used to engage in energy decision-making, permitting, and development processes? Describe the actions that the Tribal entity(ies) or trusted partners have been able to take to address priorities in energy development decision-making and related processes.

• How can you leverage the capacity you've built to continue to respond to evolving energy action priorities? Explain your approach to navigating new challenges or changing contexts in energy infrastructure decision-making.
Question 3 – Team Capabilities What staff or partners are available to continue supporting the implementation of the plan and future strategies?
• How has your team evolved to effectively implement the plans developed in previous phases? Describe the ways in which your team has worked to accomplish key activities in the implementation of the plans.

3. Bonus Prize Narrative (Optional)

If you are competing in the Multi-Tribe Collaborative Bonus Prize, attach a brief narrative that details your team's eligibility.

Table 13. Bonus Prize Narrative for Phase 3

Bonus Prize Narrative Maximum 1,000 words and two supporting images or figures (PDF).
Question 4 – Multi-Tribe Collaboration How do your team's structure and capacity development plans support collaboration among multiple Tribes?
• What Tribal entities are part of your team? Introduce all of the Tribal entities (i.e., Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, intertribal organizations, or Tribal communities) that are part of the team. • What is the basis for your collaboration? Provide background information that explains the collaborative interests and relationships of the participating Tribal entities, with a focus on their shared energy development context.
Question 5 – Shared Meaningful Benefit How do your capacity development and energy action plans create benefits that meet the needs of all participating Tribal entities?
• How have you ensured that all of the Tribal entities involved in the team will meaningfully engage in and benefit from the capacity development and energy action plans? Describe how each Tribal entity in the team is anticipated to participate in implementing the plans. • How do your plans and approach to collaboration help to meet the capacity needs and energy development priorities of all of the participating Tribal entities? Explain how the Tribal entities' shared (or independent but related) goals are reflected in your plans.

4. Detailed Capacity Development and Energy Action Plan

Attach the detailed capacity development and energy action plan that has been developed and updated throughout the prize. The proposal narrative may refer to and/or cite this capacity development and energy action plan; however, it is intended to be a stand-alone document outlining your team's plan to increase capacity to successfully participate in decision-making around current, proposed, or future energy development. The plan should define the types of energy decision-making and development activities that your team is building capacity to engage in, which may include specific energy projects if relevant. This document is intended as a long-term and strategic plan for your team and the Tribal entity(ies) you represent. It should include actions you have already begun to implement as well as goals, approaches, and real expectations for the future. While this document should be attached as part of your submission package, the document does not need to meet any specific formatting or length requirements. This is intended to be a separate document to your proposal narrative. Instead of being scored on a scale, the capacity development and energy action plan will be assessed simply on whether it is included in the submission package.

5. Submission Summary Slide (Will Be Made Public)

Make a public-facing, one-slide submission summary that introduces your team and/or organization and your mission. There is no template, so participants are free to present the information in any format. Any text must be readable on a standard printed page (8 ½ by 11 inches) and a conference room projection and should be in at least 14-point font.

6. Letters of Support or Commitment

Attach one-page letters (of support, intent, or commitment) from other relevant entities to provide context. An updated letter of commitment from the appropriate Tribal government(s) must be provided; others may be provided as desired by the participant. Letters of support from partners or others that are critical to the success of your proposed solution will likely increase your score. General letters of support from parties that are not critical to the execution of your solution will likely not factor in the score but do help demonstrate the importance of the proposed work. Please do not submit multipage letters.

7. Transparency of Foreign Connections Disclosure (for Private Entities and Academic Institutions only)

If the application includes a private entity or an academic institution, the transparency of foreign connections disclosure is required. See instructions here: https://www.energy.gov/ia/transparency-foreign-connections.

G. How We Determine and Award Winners

The prize administrator screens all submissions to determine they are complete and the teams are eligible. Subject-matter-expert reviewers are assigned to independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers may be composed of Federal and non-Federal subject-matter experts and with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the team's submission package according to the criteria below.

1. Reviewer Scoring

Reviewers will score submissions as follows:

Table 14. Reviewer Criteria for Phase 3

Criteria	Judge Considerations	Scoring Rubric
Submission requirement: The submission contains the relevant letters of commitment.	Agreement with the statement.	0-1
Submission requirement: The submission contains the detailed Capacity Development and Energy Action Plans.	Agreement with the statement.	0-1
Question 1: The team describes how the capacity development completed to date helps address the previously identified focus areas, as well as relevant modifications and challenges.	Agreement with the statement.	0-1
Question 2: The team describes how the Tribal entity(ies) and partners have undertaken activities related to previously identified focus areas, as well as how these activities are enabling responsive participation in energy decision-making, development, or permitting processes.	Agreement with the statement.	0-1
Question 3: Overall, the team has demonstrated the ability to support capacity development and engage in external energy development processes.	Agreement with the statement.	0-1

Criteria	Judge Considerations	Scoring Rubric
Reviewer recommendation: the impacts, team, need, and overall motivation of the Tribe should be strongly considered for a Phase 3 prize.	Agreement with the statement.	0-6
Total Available Points		**11 Points**

Table 15. Reviewer Criteria for the Phase 3 Bonus Prize

Criteria	Judge Considerations	Scoring Rubric
Question 4: The team demonstrates meaningful collaboration among multiple Tribal entities in pursuit of shared capacity-building and energy development priorities.	Agreement with the statement.	0-6
Question 5: The team describes how the capacity development and energy action plans will provide benefits for all participating Tribal entities in service of their goals.	Agreement with the statement.	0-6
Reviewer recommendation: The impacts, team, need, and overall motivation of the Tribal entity(ies) should be strongly considered for a Multi-Tribe Collaborative bonus award.	Agreement with the statement.	0-6
Total Available Points		**18 Points**

2. Interviews

DOE may decide to interview a subset of teams. The interviews would be held prior to the notification of the winners and would help clarify questions DOE may have. Participating in interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of a team's likelihood of winning.

3. Final Determination

DOE will designate a Federal employee as the judge. The judge will determine the winner(s) taking into account the reviewers' scores and comments (if applicable) application of program policy factors, and the interview findings (if applicable). The judge may determine no team is a winner.

4. Winner Notification

Approximately 60 days after the prize competition closes, the prize administrator will notify the winners and request the necessary information to distribute the prize(s).

H. Additional Terms and Conditions

See Additional Terms and Conditions for additional requirements.

PARTICIPANTS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN APPENDIX A MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

VII. Additional Terms and Conditions

A. Requirements

Your submission for the prize is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- You must post the final content of your submission or upload the submission form online by 11:59 p.m. AKT on the prize submission deadline date. Late submissions or any other form of submission may be rejected.
- You must include all the required elements in your submission. The prize administrator may disqualify your submission after an initial screening if you fail to provide all required submission elements. At the sole discretion of DOE, participants may be given an opportunity to rectify submission errors due to technical challenges.
- Your submission must be in English and in a format readable by Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. Scanned handwritten submissions will be disqualified.
- Submissions will be disqualified if they contain any matter that, in the sole discretion of the DOE is indecent, obscene, defamatory, libelous, and/or lacking in professionalism.
- If you click "Accept" on the HeroX platform and proceed to register for any of the prizes described in this document, these rules will form a valid and binding agreement between you and DOE and are in addition to the existing HeroX Terms of Use for all purposes relating to these prize competitions. You should print and keep a copy of these rules.
- The provisions in the Official Rules document only apply to the prize described here and no other prize on the HeroX platform or anywhere else.
- At the sole discretion of DOE participants may be provided an opportunity to fix non-substantive mistakes or errors in their submission packages.

- As part of your submission to this prize, you will be required to sign the following statement:

  > I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that the information contained in this submission will be relied on by the Federal government to determine whether to issue a prize to the named competitor. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the official rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true, complete and accurate. I understand that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information, misrepresentations, half-truths, or omissions of any material fact, may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties or fraud, false statements, false claims or otherwise. (18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287, and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733 and 3801-3812).
  >
  > I further certify that the team and/or organization members have been made aware of the Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program prohibition and the team and/or organization members have complied with their responsibilities to certify they are not party to a Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program.

B. Federal Verification for Payments

The prize administrator will verify the identity and role of participants before distributing any prizes. Receiving a prize payment is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements contained herein. The prize administrator will notify winning participants using provided email contact information for the individual or entity that was responsible for the submission. Each participant will be required to sign and return to the prize administrator, within 30 days of the date on the notice, a completed Request for ACH Banking Information form and a completed W-9 form (https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf). In the sole discretion of the prize administrator, a winning participant will be disqualified from the competition and receive no prize funds if: (i) the person/entity does not respond to notifications, (ii) the person/entity fails to sign and return the required documentation within the required time period, (iii) the notification is returned as undeliverable, (iv) the submission or person/entity is disqualified for any other reason.

In the event of a dispute as to any registration, the authorized account holder of the email address used to register will be deemed to be the participant. 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 participants may be required to show proof of being the authorized account holder.

C. Teams and Single-Entity Awards

The prize administrator will disburse a single dollar amount to the designated main point of contact, whether the participant consists of a single entity or multiple entities. The main point of contact is solely responsible for allocating any prize funds among its member participants or teammates as they deem appropriate. Neither DOE nor the prize administrator will arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters or disputes between team members or participants.

D. Treatment of Submission Materials

The elements of the submission that are designated as public will become publicly available as part of this prize. Therefore, these elements must not include trade secrets or business-sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information.

If it is necessary to share trade secrets or business-sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information, it should only be done in an element that is NOT designated as public. Any 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 any applicable Federal law or regulation.

The submission must be marked as follows and 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 or 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 or 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.

DOE, the prize administrator, and any other third-party supporting DOE in the prize competition assume no liability for the public disclosure of any information in the elements designated public and for any unmarked information any element NOT designated as public.

The entire submission may be viewed by DOE, prize administrator, and judges and reviewers for purposes of the prize competition. By making a submission and consenting to the rules of the prize competition, each participant grants to DOE, the prize administrator, and any other third parties supporting DOE in the prize competition, an unlimited license to display publicly and to use any part(s) of the submission that are designated as "public" in the Official Rules and any unmarked information in the elements of the submission that are NOT designated as public for any government purpose. This license includes posting or linking to the public portions of the submission on the prize administrator or HeroX submissions, including the prize competition website, DOE websites, and partner websites, and the inclusion of the submission in any other media worldwide.

The participant grants to DOE, the Prize Administrator, and other third parties supporting DOE in the prize competition a limited license to use or disclose any properly marked information, provided that such information is held in confidence and used solely for evaluation purposes

E. Representation and Warranties

By entering, the participant represents and warrants that:

A. The participant's entire submission is an original work by the participant but may have used artificial intelligence (AI) to generate parts of the submission in accordance with article VII.O., "Use of Artificial Intelligence." The participant has not included third-party content (such as writing, text, graphics, artwork, logos, photographs, likeness of any third party, musical recordings, clips of videos, television programs, or motion pictures) in or in connection with the submission, unless (i) otherwise requested by the prize administrator or disclosed by the participant in the submission, and (ii) the participant has acquired the necessary rights to use and to authorize others, including DOE, to use the submission, as specified throughout the rules.

B. To the best of the participant's knowledge, the use of the submission in the prize, including any use by DOE or the prize administrator, does not and will not infringe upon 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.

C. All persons who were engaged by the participant to work on the submission or who appear in the submission in any manner have:

    A. Provided the participant 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;
    B. Provided written permission to include their name, image, or pictures in or with the submission (or, if a minor who is not the participant's child, the participant must have the permission of the minor's parent or legal guardian) and the participant may be asked by the prize administrator to provide permission in writing; and
    C. 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.

D. The submission is free of malware.

F. Prize Subject to Applicable Law

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

G. Resolution of Disputes

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

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

H. Publicity

By making a submission and consenting to the rules of the prize, each participant grants DOE, the prize administrator, and third parties supporting DOE in the prize the right to publicize the name of the participant, including the individuals and organizations that make up the participant.

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

Except where prohibited by law, winning participants grant DOE, the prize administrator, and third parties supporting DOE in the prize competition the right to use the participant, including the individuals and organizations that make up the participant, names, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions, hometown, and state for promotional purposes across any media worldwide, without further permission, payment, or consideration. Additionally, upon request by the prize administrator, winning participants agree to provide a written publicity release to document this consent.

I. Liability

Upon registration, all participants agree to assume all risks of injury or loss in connection with or in any way arising from participation in this prize competition. Upon registration, except in the case of willful misconduct, all participants agree to and waive and release 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 prize competition, whether the claim or cause of action arises under contract or tort.

In accordance with the authority of the judge to run this prize the judge has determined that no liability insurance naming DOE as an insured will be required of participants to compete in this competition per 15 U.S.C. § 3719(i)(2). It is the responsibility of the participants to assess the risks associated with their proposed activities and adequately insure themselves against possible losses. Participants shall indemnify the Federal Government against third party claims for damages arising from or related to prize competition activities.

J. 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. Where necessary, materials should be marked as noted in Treatment of Submission Materials. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law.

Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, DOE will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for review of the application or as otherwise authorized by law. This restriction does not limit the Government's right to use the information obtained from another source.

Participants will be notified of any Freedom of Information Act requests for their submissions in accordance with 10 C.F.R1004. Participants 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."

However, as outlined in Requirements and Records Retention and Freedom of Information Act, DOE has unlimited rights in unmarked or improperly marked information and has limited rights to use properly marked information for evaluation purposes only.

K. Privacy

If you choose to provide HeroX with personal information by registering or completing the submission package through the prize 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 prize competition unless you choose to receive updates or notifications about other prize competitions or programs from DOE on an opt-in basis. DOE is not collecting any information for commercial marketing.

L. General Conditions

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

Although DOE may indicate that it will select up to several winners for each prize, DOE reserves the right to only select participants that are likely to achieve the goals of the program. If, in DOE's determination, no participants are likely to achieve the goals of the program, DOE will select no participants to be winners and will award no prize money.

All applications submitted to DOE are subject to a due diligence review.

DOE may conduct a research, technology, and economic security (RTES) due diligence review, using government resources, of the participant and project personnel for potential risks of undue foreign government influence. DOE may contact the participant and/or proposed project team members for additional information to inform the review. This review is conducted separately from the technical merit review. The RTES due diligence review may result in the submission being disqualified from the prize competition. This RTES due diligence review, and potential disqualification, can occur at any time during the prize competition.

Consistent with section 4(e) of the Presidential Memorandum on United States Government-Supported Research and Development National Security Policy-33 (NSPM-33), DOE may share information regarding the risks identified as part of the RTES due diligence review process or monitoring with other Federal agencies. A disqualification based on an RTES due diligence review is not appealable.

M. Program Policy Factors

While the scores of the expert reviewers will be carefully considered, it is the role of the prize judge to maximize the impact of prize funds. Some factors outside the control of participants and beyond the independent expert reviewer scope of review may need to be considered to accomplish this goal. The following is a list of such factors. In addition to the reviewers' scores, the below program policy factors may be considered in determining winners:

- Geographic and energy development area variety, with an emphasis on encouraging participation from Alaska Native villages or regional or village corporations
- The degree to which the project concepts, efforts undertaken, and learning can be applied to other projects, Tribes, and communities
- Variety of energy technology type and project stage of development
- The project's geographic diversity and potential economic impact
- Whether the use of additional DOE funds and provided resources are nonduplicative and compatible with the stated goals of this program and the DOE mission generally
- The degree to which the submission exhibits technological or programmatic diversity when compared to the existing DOE project portfolio and other participants
- 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 participants and recipients who have not been supported by DOE in the past
- The degree to which the submission enables new and expanding market segments

N. National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

DOE's administration of this prize may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq.). NEPA requires Federal agencies to consider the environmental effects of certain proposed actions as part of an agency's decision-making processes. NEPA applies when a proposed action constitutes a "major Federal action"; actions with no or minimal Federal involvement, e.g., where a Federal agency cannot control the outcome of the action, are not considered "major Federal actions" (42 U.S.C. § 4336e(10)(B)(i)). For additional background on NEPA, please see DOE's NEPA website at http://nepa.energy.gov/.

While NEPA compliance is a Federal agency responsibility and the ultimate decisions remain with the Federal agency, if DOE determines that this prize is subject to NEPA, all participants in this prize will be required to assist in the timely and effective completion of the NEPA process in the manner most pertinent to their participation in the prize competition. Participants may be asked to provide DOE with information on their planned activities such that DOE can conduct a meaningful evaluation of the potential environmental impacts.

O. Use of Artificial Intelligence

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technology in the development of a participant's prize submission is not prohibited. Participants must indicate in the submission (not included in the word count) the extent to which, if any, generative AI technology was used and how it was used to develop their submission (including all submission elements described in What to Submit). Participants are responsible for the accuracy, authenticity, and authorship representations of their submission, including content developed with the assistance of generative AI tools. Reliance on generative AI may introduce significant risks, including, but not limited to, research misconduct resulting from fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism when proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.

P. Definitions

Prize administrator – prize administrator means both the Alliance for Energy Innovation, operating in its capacity under the management and operating contract for the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Integrated Energy Systems Office (IESO). When the prize administrator is referenced in this document, it refers to staff from both Alliance for Energy Innovation and DOE staff. Ultimate decision-making authority regarding prize matters rests with the Director of the U.S. Department of Energy Integrated Energy Systems Office.

Technical Assistance – technical assistance hours are part of the prize and may only be used at the National Laboratory of the Rockies. Technical assistance hours will be allocated and relevant funds will be provided directly to the laboratory on behalf of the winner to conduct a mutually agreed-upon scope of work between the laboratory and the participant.

Q. Return of Funds

As a condition of receiving a prize, participants agree that if the prize was made in error, or based on fraudulent or inaccurate information provided by the participant to DOE, DOE has the right to demand that any prize funds or the value of other noncash prizes be returned to the government.

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