

Proof-of-Concept Center Initiative Program Opportunity Notice (PON) 2537
Informational Webinar
May 23, 2012

Summary:

- It was stressed throughout the webinar that Letters of Intent to Propose (Attachment C) are due in NYSERDA's office on or before June 6, 2012 at 5:00 pm.
- Proposers are encouraged to carefully review the Proposal Evaluation material beginning on page 15 of the solicitation. The headings match the sections required in the proposal narrative and the questions/statements in the Proposal Evaluation section will be the primary basis for scoring proposals.

Can the POCC for Category B be a virtual center, rather than bricks-and-mortar?

- Yes. The solicitation does not outline any requirements that the POCC, for either Category, be "bricks-and-mortar".

Can technologies come from sources other than universities and colleges?

- There are no restrictions as to the source of the technologies other than the bottom of page 4 of the solicitation: "For either Category, the source of the clean energy technology innovations or intellectual property can come from any part of the state. " and from page 1: " The goal of the program is to provide early-stage investments and services to enable the development and validation of promising clean energy technologies that are, or will become, the platform for start-up companies located in New York State."

Is there any preference given to institutional consortia?

- As stated on page 5 of the solicitation: "Proposals under this category [A] may be from a single institution or a group of institutions. In the latter case, a lead institution that will administer the Institution-POCC and contract with NYSERDA must be designated. "
- As stated on page 10 of the solicitation: "As a matter of course, the VDN-POCC must establish partnerships with technical and academic laboratories, incubators, angel and venture investors, service providers, venture development organizations, and so on. Proposals in this category need not be led by a university or research institution; however, a lead proposer must be designated. "

Is there a regional consortia preference?

- As stated on page 4 of the solicitation [emphasis added]: "Following proposal review, evaluation and funding availability, NYSERDA intends to select the one or more proposals that are most likely to be successful over the long term without regard to Category selection. *NYSERDA may, however, take the geographic distribution of POCC programs into account when making the final selection.* NYSERDA may also elect to make no awards under this solicitation. "

When will awards be announced?

- Subject to the number of proposals received and the necessary evaluation process, the goal is the have decisions made in September 2012.

If questions are submitted later, will you publish them and the answers for others to see?

- We do not intend to publish questions and answers to any follow-on questions.

Reports are required for ten years. Contracts are for a five year period. How will the costs associated with reports from years 6-10 be paid for?

- The annual metrics reports following the 5-year expected period of performance are expected to be relatively simple to prepare. There is no allowance for covering the cost of this report preparation.

What sorts of cost elements should be considered for participation in NYSERDA's social media site program?

- NYSERDA is actively developing a social media platform to link our various business development programs together. The expectation is that the POCC will see this as a component of an overall technology transfer/outreach program.

Can you comment on the TRL levels of innovations that Category A programs should focus on?

- No limitation as to the stage of the technology/intellectual property was discussed within the solicitation. Refer also to the Proposal Evaluation material under Implementation Strategy and Plan on page 16 of the solicitation: "Will implementation of the Plan result in the identification and evaluation of promising research that can serve as the platform for clean energy technology business formation, and accelerate progress to the viability of any resulting business?"

Can you tell us how many participants are online today?

- The count at the time this question was asked was 87.

Is there a minimum amount of funding for a POCC --how many do you hope to initiate?

- There is no minimum level of funding per POCC. The total funding allocated to the program is \$15 million with a maximum award of \$5 million. Assuming proposals request the maximum, three awards could be made.

Is it pre-seed and seed stage exclusively or what about involvement from an established business to commercialize new technology?

- Refer to page 1 of the solicitation and the first two objectives: "The objective of this solicitation is to select one or more teams that will design and implement sustainable programs that [emphasis added]: (1) Accelerate the commercialization of innovations out of research institutions and into the marketplace, *particularly through startups*; (2) Match emerging clean energy technologies that have scalable commercialization potential, based on real market need, with the investment community; ..."

How do you envision that the POCCs will work in conjunction with the NYSERDA Incubators¹?

- To the extent that NYSERDA-supported incubators are within the region defined by the POCC, refer to page 15 of the solicitation and the second bullet under the Market Analysis section of V. Proposal Evaluation: "Does the proposal indicate awareness of entrepreneurial and business

¹ NYSERDA is supporting clean energy technology business incubators at SUNY-Buffalo, Rochester Institute of Technology, TechGarden in Syracuse, SUNY-Albany, NYU-Poly and SUNY-Stony Brook.

support resources both within the proposing POCC team and the region around the POCC?
How deeply engaged with these resources has the POCC been?”

For Category A, should we identify the technologies or intellectual properties first? And business partners?

- Refer to page 15 of the solicitation and the first and second bullets under the Market Analysis section of V. Proposal Evaluation: “Does the POCC team demonstrate access to sufficient intellectual property and research that will result in a critical mass of intellectual property in clean energy technology for the POCC? How strong is the team’s record of performing energy-related R&D that is of interest to industry? Does the proposal indicate awareness of entrepreneurial and business support resources both within the proposing POCC team and the region around the POCC? How deeply engaged with these resources has the POCC been?”

Does NYSERDA retain or want to retain any rights over IP that is generated by the POCCs?

- No

Is there a specific weighting of the proposal sections that NYSERDA will be using in evaluating the proposals?

- Yes, the process for evaluating proposals is described in the solicitation beginning on page 15. Weighting factors for individual questions/statements have not been assigned at the moment.

Can you provide more details to what NYSERDA expects of the POCC director?

- Refer to page 15 of the solicitation and the second bullet under the Governance Structure, Management and Proposing Team Qualifications section of V. Proposal Evaluation: “Does the POCC Director have sufficient management authority to implement an effective POCC?”

Is there a benefit to starting a company that would eventually be international but based in NYS?

- As outlined in the first paragraph on page 1 of the solicitation: “The goal of the program is to provide early-stage investments and services to enable the development and validation of promising clean energy technologies that are, or will become, the platform for start-up companies located in New York State.” The market for the technology does not have to be exclusively New York State.

Does the company need to exist by the time we apply to the PON, or is it better to form it as a part of the project?

- Refer, for example, to the Proposal Evaluation material contained on page 16 of the solicitation under Implementation Strategy and Plan [emphasis added]: “Will implementation of the Plan result in the identification and evaluation of promising research that can serve as the platform for clean energy technology *business formation*, and accelerate progress to the viability of any resulting business?” “Is there a sound approach to identify promising early-stage clean energy technologies that could be the *foundation for new ventures*, including those within research laboratories or incubators?”

For Payment Group C-- is it limited to success for only new companies, or are existing, small companies eligible if they commercialize new technology?

- As outlined in the discussion of Payment Group C, “Payment Group C includes outcome milestones related to new startup companies emerging from the POCC’s work. “The

expectation is that this payment category rewards the POCC for the effort it has made to help participants in the POCC program succeed.

Are there restrictions on Category B funds [this is interpreted to mean Payment Group B]? Can they be equity investments/debt instruments in the newly formed/forming startups?

- The solicitation does not mention financial relationship limitations/restrictions between the POCC and the newly formed/forming startups.

Will you be releasing a list of attendees who are on this call?

- No. Some of the attendees only appeared as phone numbers.

Will you be choosing centers based on geographic location (ensuring that centers are in different parts of the state, for example)?

- As stated on page 4 of the solicitation [emphasis added]: “Following proposal review, evaluation and funding availability, NYSERDA intends to select the one or more proposals that are most likely to be successful over the long term without regard to Category selection. *NYSERDA may, however, take the geographic distribution of POCC programs into account when making the final selection.* NYSERDA may also elect to make no awards under this solicitation.”

Is the list of attendees who were at the January meetings public?

- The list is available. Email Jeff Peterson at jmp@nyserda.org.