# American-Made Solar Prize Round 8 Set! Contest Submission

## Project Name

### Innovation tagline (e.g., your mission in a few words)

#### *Keyword tags*

## Team

Names, geographic locations, contact info, and LinkedIn profiles

## Partners and American-Made Network

Key project partners and organizations (if any)

The Connectors that significantly helped you advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable)

Link to your 5-minute video

## 5-minute pitch and technical demonstration video (public)

Post your publicly accessible video online (e.g., YouTube, etc.). Be creative and produce a video that conveys the required information in exciting and interesting ways, but do not focus on time-consuming activities that only improve production values (i.e., technical elements such as décor, lighting, and cinematic techniques). Assistance from others with experience in this area may be helpful. Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you create your video.

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| **Pitch and Demo Video –** 5-Minute Pitch on Your Innovation, Company, and Proof-of-Concept Demonstration (Public). | |
| **Suggested content you provide**   * A demonstration of the proof of concept. * Explain the features of your proof of concept and how it works. Demonstrate its functionality or testing of its known possible failure modes. * What progress has been made over the competition period? * Describe the real-world problem you are solving. * Describe your solution and why it is transformational compared to existing solutions. * What is the scale of the opportunity, and what is your target market? * Who are you, and why do you have a competitive edge? | **Evaluation Criteria**   * The video demonstrates a proof of concept for an exciting innovation. * The proof of concept has retired significant technical risk. * Progress has been demonstrated during the competition period. * The video explains a compelling real-world problem and solution. * The video identifies a reasonable target market and a path to making a significant impact on the U.S. solar industry. * The video shows a knowledgeable and skillful team. |

## Cover Page

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| **Cover page – List basic information about your submission Template[[1]](#footnote-2)** |
| * Project name * Innovation tagline (e.g., your mission in a few words) * Link to your online pitch video * Key project members (names, contacts, and links to their LinkedIn profiles) * Keywords that best describe your solution (e.g., agrivoltaics, microinverters, solar financing) * Your city, state, and nine-digit zip code * The partner(s), affiliate(s), and Connector(s)[[2]](#footnote-3) that significantly helped you advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable) |

#### Four Question Written Narrative

Answer each of the following four questions:

1. **Problem & Solution** - What is the problem and how are you solving it?
2. **Innovation** - What progress have you made to prove your solution will be successful?
3. **Team** - What qualities give you a competitive edge, and how have you grown?
4. **Plan** – What is your plan to achieve your goals?

For convenience, these questions are provided in the headings of the tables on pages 4-7 along with suggested content (and corresponding judging statements) to help guide your responses. You decide where to focus your answers.

You should answer each of the following four questions. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide your responses. You decide where to focus your answers. The individual answers to the four questions do not have a word limit; however, the **aggregate response to these four questions must not exceed 2,500 words,** not including captions, figures/graphs, and 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 graphs or charts**. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

**Note**: If your concept/innovation has substantially pivoted from your original submission, you must provide an explanation of how and why this happened. It is understood that innovation and entrepreneurship are not usually a linear path, but major changes in direction should always be well rationalized. You were selected on the strengths of the idea submitted in the Ready! Contest, and significant changes without justification are unlikely to be successful.

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| **Question 1: Problem & Solution – What is the problem, and how are you solving it?** | |
| **Suggested content you provide**   * Describe the problem, being specific to the problem space that your innovation addresses, and why existing solutions are inadequate. * Describe your innovation and how it is better than existing products or emerging solutions. Show how you know this using evidence-based validation (e.g., interviews with users and experts). * Describe your innovation’s unique value propositions and how these will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. | **Evaluation Criteria**   * The competitor quantifies a critical problem, and their assessment of current solutions shows a comprehensive understanding of the problem-solution space. * The solution represents an innovative approach built on reasonable assumptions, a valid technical foundation, and lessons learned from experience gained. * The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution, which will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. |

**Response to Question 1:**

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| **Question 2: Innovation – What progress have you made to prove your solution will be successful?** | |
| **Suggested content you provide**   * Describe the current state of development of your proof of concept, its technical specifications, and sufficient underlying details on how it works to facilitate external evaluation of the performance claims you make. For software solutions, provide instructions on how to access and use the software. * Describe the progress made over the contest period and highlight key engagements, relationships, and milestones. * Describe how you have validated your technical performance assumptions. * Describe who gave feedback on your proof of concept, why it is important, and changes you made as a result of that feedback. * Describe your business model, cost model, and potential price points. | **Evaluation Criteria**   * Sufficient technical detail was provided to understand the underlying principles of operation of the innovation. * The proof of concept is grounded in real-world assumptions and resolves critical technical risks. * A considerable amount of high-quality effort was put into building a proof of concept and advancing the innovation. * A rigorous customer discovery process was performed to uncover key insights and relevant feedback on the proof of concept. * The assumptions around the business model and pricing are reasonable, achievable, and competitive. |

**Response to Question 2:**

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| **Question 3: Team – What qualities give you a competitive edge, and how have you grown?** | |
| **Suggested content you provide**   * Introduce your team and highlight the knowledge, and skills that make the team uniquely capable of achieving success. * Describe how your team has evolved during the competition, including any strategic hires or partnerships. | **Evaluation Criteria**   * The team’s drive, knowledge, and complementary skill sets provide a strong competitive edge toward realizing this solution in the near future. * The team identified skill gaps and brought in the right people or partners to fill those gaps. |

**Response to Question 3:**

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| **Question 4: Plan – What is your plan to achieve your goals?** | |
| **Suggested content you provide**   * Provide the goals submitted in the Ready! Contest submission package and describe the actual outcomes. Update goals for the Go! Demo Day and define goals for the next 180 and 365 days (see special instructions below), including how you will engage relevant stakeholders. * Describe your team’s readiness to meet your goals and the need for additional talent and/or resources. * Describe the specific functional improvements your prototype will demonstrate at the next Demo Day. * Provide a high-level budget plan to meet your goals for the next 180 days, including how you will leverage program resources—specifically the voucher funds, members of the American-Made Network, or other entities. * Describe risks to the development plan and mitigation strategies (e.g., certification timelines or dependance on third parties). * Explain why winning the Set! Contest will substantively change the likelihood of your success. | **Evaluation Criteria**     * The competitors are successfully meeting prior goals and demonstrating continued critical progress toward testing and validating the functionality and market demand of this innovation. * Stated Go! Contest Demo Day goals and 180- and 365-day goals are ambitious and risk-reducing, and they show a commitment to an accelerated solution development cycle. * The competitors’ approach to complete their proposed plan is well-reasoned and makes good use of the program resources available to them (such as national laboratories and the American-Made Network). * Sufficient risks to the development plan have been identified and reasonable risk mitigation strategies have been described. * Winning the Set! Contest significantly increases the team’s chances of creating a viable business based on this solution. |

**Special Instructions for Question 4**

* Use only specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely (SMART) outcome-based goals, not activity-based goals, so that a neutral third party can validate them.
  + For example: Demonstrate a definitive achievement of progress (e.g., “X letters of interest signed” or “achieve Y% efficiency”); do **not** describe how you spent your time (e.g., “provide a report,” “talk to customers,” or “perform experiments”).
* SMART goals for the Go! Contest Demo Day should include demonstrating a functional prototype based on learning throughout the competition and at least one committed pilot partner.
* In defining your SMART goals, include quantified, risk-reducing, meaningful, practical, and testable interim milestones.
* Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you formulate your SMART goals.

**Response to Question 4:**

## Supplementary Information

### Four question narrative word count: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ total words

### Submission Summary Slide (a PowerPoint slide, will be made public)

Make your own public-facing, one-slide submission summary that contains technically specific details but can be understood by most people. There is no template, so feel free to present the information as you see fit. Please make any text readable in a standard printout and conference room projection.

### Letters of Commitment or Support (optional)

Attach one-page letters of support, intent, or commitment from relevant entities (e.g., potential users of the proposed innovation or strategic manufacturing partners) to provide context. 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 into your score. Please do not submit multi-page letters.

### Voucher Work Slide (a PowerPoint Slide as a PDF)

Using the Voucher Work Slide template, describe how you would use voucher funds, including the entities you hope to engage and what they will do with the voucher funds. Use the Capabilities Guide to help you formulate these plans.

See a template here: <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resource/2211>

### Virtual Demo Day Event

You are required to participate in a demo day event with a panel of expert reviewers that may involve a pitch, a closed-door question-and-answer session, and/or a technical demonstration. Reviewers review and score your submitted material before the demo day and then, based on your demo day performance and deliberation with the judge, they will finalize their recommendations for winners on the demo day. At least one representative from each team must be present at the demo day for the team to be considered for a Set! Prize.

**Please read and comply with additional requirements about your submission in** [**Appendix 1.**](https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround7/resource/1345)

**COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.**

1. Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. See description of Connector in the [Official Rules](http://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)