

**Solar America Initiative
Technology Acceptance Technical Exchange Meeting
Washington, DC
June 12, 2006**

Market Expansion Breakout Group A

Facilitator: Cecile Warner

What are the biggest new opportunities or current activities that we should support?

- Target Markets:
 - Areas with rapidly increasing utility rates: aim at the homeowner— Northeast cities may be a good place to start.
 - Areas with increasing level of construction.
 - Look at big, up-and-coming markets. Look for opportunities that haven't already been exploited.
 - The biggest market area of interest was in the buildings sector:
 - Residential new construction.
 - Retrofit residential: couple energy efficiency with solar.
 - Commercial and industrial markets: address utility rates and power quality concerns.
 - Healthcare/hospitals (e.g. Veterans Administration facilities).
 - Regulators: National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners committees, states with high utility prices.
 - Target production builders in states with high electric rates and a big new construction market.
- Development of national interconnection standards (technical rules) is a top priority.
 - Learn from what others are doing:
 - Interstate Renewable Energy Council model based on state models and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.
 - Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
 - Net metering goes along with this (payment regime).
 - 10% of funding allocated to interconnection was suggested, along with leverage of state activities.
- More substantive links/coordination between the Department of Energy Solar and Building Programs

What are the best Solar-ready niche applications?

- Do not need to focus on niche applications; focus on mainstream markets.
- Using energy security (benefits) as a “niche” market was suggested, but targeting other types of smaller niche applications was not advocated, per se.

Best Ways to Engage Builders

- Target areas with high utility rates.
- Don’t exclude Building America builders.
- Builders should be encouraged/have an advantage in the proposal process.
- Market aggregation and large purchase agreement focus over the long term (Department of Energy representative suggestion—not well received).

Solar America City Designation

- Solar America City designation—piggyback efforts of other organizations (e.g. Sierra Club’s “Cool Cities” campaign, green community efforts).
- There is an opportunity for cost share from cities.
 - Marketing and outreach resources could be part of cost share, i.e. cost share could be used for areas for which the Department of Energy lacks resources.
- Incorporate Million Solar Roofs lessons learned/partnerships.
- This should be an enabling program (not just a designation).
 - Include technical expertise (see “Technical Assistance” below for details).

Technical Assistance—level of effort and subject matter

- Technical Assistance (in the form of education, e.g. Million Solar Roofs lessons learned, not technical assistance on PV installation design) should be provided to:
 - Code officials
 - Regulators
 - Building Inspectors
 - Markets with compelling utility environments
- Technical assistance is not one size fits all
 - One component of technical assistance should identify and address “up-and-comers” target market.
- Distribute technical assistance funds across sectors but target/focus the funding in markets with the greatest potential.
- Develop standard procurement specifications for municipalities.

Proposal Phasing

- There was a lot of interest in a multi-year effort: 3-5 years, maybe even 7 years.
 - It was noted that achieving a Solar America City designation could take 10 years.

Project Partnering

Successful partners would include (and eligibility requirements for partnerships might include):

- Regulators and builders need to be part of the team bidding on the solicitation.
- Big Non-governmental organizations (on the scale of the National Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club, etc.).
- Encourage broad, diverse groups.
 - Multi-institutions with real commitments (cost share).
- Lending/finance institutions?
 - Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) model works well with shorter-term projects, i.e. transaction costs vs. payoff. There may be some lessons to learn from this model
- Financial soundness (should be part of proposal requirements).
 - Identify value of PV to the community, i.e. full cost accounting.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria / Metrics

- There should be PV value to communities beyond kWh produced.
- Don't restrict awards to building-integrated PV projects (there was not a lot of support for targeting building integrated PV separately; it was thought that we should be more inclusive in the Funding Opportunity Announcement criteria/leave it up to the proposers).
 - Some valuable projects that use PV (e.g. brownfields, parking lots) don't involve buildings.
- A Solar America City designation should have thoughtful criteria and metrics:
 - Minimum amount of PV per capita.
 - Demonstrate the added value PV brings to the community.
 - Get the right people on board.
 - Should meet pre-requisites that show forward momentum toward solar.
 - Demonstrate how dollars spent contribute to Solar America Initiative goals and address barriers.
 - The Department of Energy needs goals and metrics.
 - E.g., resources spent on marketing and outreach and the impacts of those efforts.
 - Look at study the by Dr. Richard Perez on where solar can make impact.

Award Amounts

- Percentage should be based on priorities
 - Interconnection and net metering, jobs, and codes and standards were listed as priorities—these need to be prioritized.

Sharing Results of SAI partnerships

- It was suggested that there be a long-term web presence where results/outcomes of Solar America Initiative partnerships/Funding Opportunity Announcement-awarded projects can be posted to enable information sharing/lessons learned/replicability with other entities.