

Feds invest nearly \$7M in small business to boost clean tech

March 11 2016, by Susan Montoya Bryan

The federal government is investing nearly \$7 million in 33 small businesses across the country to build partnerships with national laboratories in hopes of speeding up development of clean energy technology, the U.S. Department of Energy announced Thursday.

The selected businesses represent only a fraction of the hundreds that applied to participate in the first round of a new small business voucher pilot project. They represent 20 different states and will be working with nine national labs.

As part of the pilot, another \$13 million in vouchers will be awarded to [small businesses](#) in subsequent rounds, and officials have asked for a budget increase for the next fiscal year to expand the project.

Dave Danielson, an assistant secretary with the Energy Department, said the nation's labs are science powerhouses that have cutting-edge supercomputers, high-tech laser facilities and some of the most brilliant minds on the planet—all strategic advantages that the U.S. has in the global race to develop [clean energy technologies](#).

"But if we really want to accelerate our transition to a low-carbon economy, we have to accelerate the process of lab technology reaching the market and help our labs to collaborate with the private sector," Danielson said during a conference call with reporters.

That's where the small businesses come in.

Aside from bringing game-changing technology to the market faster, he said the Department of Energy is looking to double the number of small businesses that are working with the national labs over the next year.

The small businesses can use the vouchers—anywhere from \$50,000 to \$300,000—to do collaborative research with the labs or to seek lab assistance. That could include working on prototypes or validating innovations that the businesses have already developed.

The focus will be on advanced manufacturing, building and vehicle technologies, fuels cells and a range of [renewable energy sources](#).

The project also will boost economic development around the country, supporters say.

At Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, New Mexico-based iBeam Materials was among the businesses to show off their work Thursday. iBeam is developing new LED products for lighting, displays and wearable electronics.

Other labs participating in the first round include the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado, Lawrence Berkeley in California, Oak Ridge in Tennessee and the Pacific Northwest lab in Washington.

More information: Online: www.sbv.org

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