

ASI announce intention to Open Round 2 Funding on April 23rd 2010

The Australian Solar Institute (ASI) invests in research and development to accelerate to market innovation in photovoltaic (PV) and concentrating solar thermal (CST) technologies which have the potential to significantly reduce the levelised cost of solar energy (LCOE) when compared to existing energy sources and the current global solar energy cost benchmarks.

The first Round of ASI funding closed in late September 2009 with initial results announced in December 2009. There are a number of Round 1 projects still under negotiation with further announcements anticipated during May 2010.

The ASI Management team is currently finalising the guidelines and application forms for Round 2 which will be made available via the ASI web site when the funding round is opened. Round 2 will be a two stage process with an initial call for expressions of interest (EOI) from interested parties.

The following are the target dates for the EOI phase of the ASI Round 2 funding:

23 April: Round 2 launched with invitation for submission of EOIs; proposal guide and application materials posted on ASI web site, advertising in national media.

21 May: closing date for submission of EOIs.

The EOIs will undergo a detailed review by the ASI Research Advisory Committee who will provide advice to the ASI Board, with a shortlist of proponents then being invited to submit detailed proposals. It is anticipated that proponents will be advised of outcomes from the EOI process by 30 June 2010. Proponents will then have 4-5 weeks to prepare and submit full proposals. The ASI Board aims to make final funding decisions before the end of September 2010 following advice from the Research Advisory Committee and ASI management.

Highly meritorious projects will be funded in Round 2, however the ASI is unlikely to commit all of its remaining funds. Some funding will be retained for future rounds, for leveraging new funding sources and for brokering of strategic projects. The amount of funding to be released in Round 2 will be at the discretion of the ASI Board.

The ASI will identify specific focus areas of interest for funding in Round 2. However, exceptional high quality proposals outside the focus areas will also be considered. In all areas, industry and state government partnerships that increase project funding leverage beyond the matched funding criteria and reduce commercialisation risk will be viewed favourably. The same minimum matched funding requirements as applied in Round 1 will also apply in Round 2. Note: This excludes state government contributions. Any State government contributions will however help increase the overall leverage of ASI funds.

In **photovoltaics** (PV) innovation the ASI has a particular focus in this round on R&D in technologies not yet commercialised in the market place that offer the opportunity to substantially lower the lifetime cost of solar electricity and therefore increase commercial deployment within the next decade. The path to cost reduction could be through challenging current efficiency thresholds, or alternative materials cost structures to the limited number of technologies that dominate today's market. Note: the projects funded in the foundation round and Round 1 were dominated by support for advancing the position of single junction silicon technologies. While proposals in this area are not excluded, proponents should consider that the ASI Board has a desire to create a portfolio of R&D investments across a suite of PV technology areas with short, medium and long term potential. The ASI will focus on electricity generation technology that has the potential to compete with current stationary forms of electricity supplied to the Australian market.

In **concentrating solar thermal** (CST) innovation the ASI is seeking proposals in this round which will reduce the levelised cost of solar energy by increasing the efficiency of CST energy generation and reduce the cost of its capture and delivery. This includes research into increasing steam temperatures, dispatchability, hybrids (i.e. linking and integrating different thermal energy sources), reducing materials and solar field costs, reducing water dependency and reducing operating and maintenance costs. Technologies that seek to displace conventional electricity requirements with thermal energy need to demonstrate a clear path to market that will credibly result in commercial deployment.

In **enabling** research ASI is seeking proposals which advance the knowledge base and reduces barriers to deployment of solar energy in Australia. For examples projects which:

- i) examine grid and transmission development needs to enable solar expansion
- ii) team with the fossil fuels industry to investigate options to increase solar field deployment and reduce emissions through solar / fossil hybrid applications
- iii) increase finance sector confidence to invest in solar by identifying key investment risks and proposing global best practice mitigations
- iv) research generation forecasting techniques that build on best practice in solar deployment Europe and wind in Australia.

Clarification can be requested by contacting the ASI team at guidelines@australiansolarinstitute.com.au