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Obama Administration Announces i6 Green Challenge for Clean Energy Innovation and Economic Growth

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The U.S. Department of Energy joined with the U.S. Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA) and its Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship today to announce the opening of the \$12 million i6 Green Challenge, which will also be conducted in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, and Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology and U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.



The funding will support awards for six teams around the country with the most innovative ideas to drive technology commercialization and entrepreneurship in support of a green innovation economy, increased U.S. competitiveness and new jobs. The Department of Energy will invest up to \$2 million to support the \$12 million multi-agency i6 Green Challenge, which will establish or expand Proof of Concept Centers across the U.S. In order to be eligible for DOE funding, applicants will be required to demonstrate innovation in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency, or green building technology.

"Investments in small business innovation through the i6 Green Challenge will play an important role in strengthening U.S. competitiveness and supporting economic development and job growth around the country. These centers will help companies test their innovations, a critical step in commercializing next generation clean energy technologies," said U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu.

"Initiatives like the i6 Green Challenge support the President's vision for out-innovating the rest of the world by moving great ideas from the lab to the marketplace to spur the development of 21st century jobs and industries," U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke said. "We know that in the last 30 years, nearly all net new jobs were created by startups, and they will continue to play a critical role in our nation's economic prosperity."

First announced at the White House launch of Startup America in January, i6 Green follows last year's inaugural i6 Challenge to accelerate high-growth entrepreneurship in the United States.

"The \$12 million i6 Green Challenge is an important component of President Obama's Startup America initiative to promote American innovation and win the future," said U.S. Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra. "The multi-agency competition builds on the success of last year's initiative by encouraging Proof of Concept Centers and promoting green growth to increase our nation's competitiveness and accelerate the economic recovery."

This year's competition focuses on promoting Proof of Concept Centers, which support all aspects of the entrepreneurship process, from assisting with technology feasibility and business plan development, to providing access to early-stage capital and mentors to offer critical guidance to innovators. Centers allow emerging technologies to mature and demonstrate their market potential, making them more attractive to investors and helping entrepreneurs turn their idea or technology into a business.

"The i6 Green Challenge will help catalyze American ingenuity by leveraging the proven benefits that these centers offer to promote green growth, advance cluster development and strengthen the economic ecosystems of America's regions," U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development John Fernandez said.

The Federal Funding Opportunity notice and application information on i6 Green is available at

www.eda.gov/i6. The deadline to submit an application is May 26, 2011. Funding is contingent upon Congressional approval of the administration's 2011 budget.

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