

Questions and Answers to the Nuclear Energy Launch Pad Request for Applications (2026)

1. Is there an associated cost with transitioning from Pilot Program to Launch Pad? Is there an associated cost in participating in Launch Pad?

Developers selected under the Pilot Program are not required to transition from their active Pilot Program initiative to Launch Pad. If the developer is interested in submitting an application for a new facility meant for DOE Authorization, then they would apply to Launch Pad. There is no cost associated with submitting a Launch Pad application. Developers selected into Launch Pad may incur costs for NRIC Technical Program Manager Support, NRIC/INL/DOE expenses related to reviews, travel, and other expenses incurred, and site services associated with support for Launch Pad INL participants.

2. It appears that participants are assigned a "concierge"? How does that work?

Participants are not assigned a concierge. The Concierge team is a group of senior leaders from INL and DOE that are available to the Developers that are there to help developers remove barriers that the NRIC Technical Program Manager may not be able to solve at their level. Refer to GDE-55179 for additional details.

3. Will transitioning from the Reactor Pilot Project to Launch Pad USA result in any form of reset or setback from where we are?

No, there will not be any reset or setback for Pilot Program Participants who transition to Launch Pad so long as the scope and deliverables remain unchanged.

4. Does the option exist to apply for both the Launch Pad INL and USA programs?

Applicants are welcome to apply to both Launch Pad INL and USA in separate applications. If the scopes are complimentary, there should be discussion of priority and interplay. If you are unsure of final siting location, INL vs USA, you may submit a single package that states priority and preferred path. Each unique facility that requires a DOE Authorization should be accompanied by its own Launch Pad RFA Application.

5. Under the Launch Pad USA program, will developers still receive "assistance navigating the complexities of nuclear regulations for Nuclear Regulatory Commission licensing"?

Yes, Launch Pad INL and USA selected Developers will be able to leverage and contract with many resources that can help enable them in navigating the pathway from DOE Authorization to NRC licensing. Participants in the Launch Pad program are expected to be deploying facilities and activities under DOE Authorization.

7. Is there any available guidance or template for the waiver request for foreign entity participation (we have a U.S. entity and U.S. presence but are majority foreign owned)?

SF-328 provides instructions that will need to be completed by the developer for DOE to review the waiver request. This waiver should be filled out by the developer and sent directly to DOE. Contact NRIC through the RFA points of contact and NRIC will provide further instruction on submittal actions.

8. Is there a requirement for a company to have a letter of intent with INL for land access as part of the Launch Pad INL program?

A letter of intent is not required for Launch Pad INL applicants. If a developer has any written correspondence with INL/DOE about possible INL land acquisitions, that could be provided to assist the application evaluation team, but it is not required.

9. What/if the RPP/FLPP need to do to continue progress on their previously approved projects within the Launch Pad structure?

A company which has previously been accepted into a Pilot Program does not need to submit an application for their project to be transferred to Launch Pad. To transfer from the Pilot Program to Launch Pad, a company simply needs to submit a written request to either their DOE Federal Program Manager or their NRIC Technical Program Manager stating their desire to transfer.

10. I'd appreciate any guidance on how Launch Pad is evaluating NRC readiness and how best to position early NRC engagement in the application.

Developers are required in their Launch Pad application to present a long-term regulatory strategy as an NRC license holder (i.e. water rights, access to electrical infrastructure, etc.) and commercialization plan, including how their DOE authorized deployment will support future NRC licensing. While Launch Pad is focused on enabling deployment under DOE Authorization, NRIC and DOE will assist selected developers in navigating NRC interactions as needed, particularly where NRC engagement supports long-term commercialization goals. Early-stage NRC licensing activities are not the primary focus of Launch Pad; however, NRIC and DOE will help selected developers understand regulatory pathways, coordinate information needs, and support analysis that enables an eventual transition from DOE Authorization to NRC licensing.

11. Since Launchpad costs are paid by applicants/recipients, do standard federal/DOE procurement rules apply? In this context, how do developers work with DOE/INL/NRIC before application submissions to determine the cost and timelines associated with the offered DOE capabilities?

Federal and DOE procurement rules will not apply to companies that are privately funding their work and operating under their own design authority. However, if a vendor is using the national laboratory to procure good or services for the vendor, that procurement will be through the DOE approved procurement program.

A developer's costs to be sited at Launch Pad INL or Launch Pad USA depend on the type of services they request. For Launch Pad INL, site-associated costs may include (but are not limited to) Safeguards & Security support, power, water, emergency

services, and other site services. Fees for these services are negotiated individually with each developer after DOE selection.

For Launch Pad USA, selected developers will work with DOE and NRIC to obtain cost estimates based on the specific services provided in support of their deployment.

12. Which DOE Office (Environmental Management or Nuclear Energy) is the safety basis approval authority for nuclear facilities at INL? Does it depend on where it is located on the INL Site?

If selected to Launch Pad INL, the DOE-Office of Nuclear Energy (DOE-NE) is responsible for the Safety Basis Approval Authority, regardless of whether the deployment is on Launch Pad INL land set aside, or within the INL withdrawn land, or within an existing INL facility.

13. Can I correspond with the INL DOE Site office concerning my questions?

NRIC is working with the DOE-Idaho Field Office to address questions. It is requested that all Launch Pad questions be submitted through the RFA process, and NRIC will escalate or address questions with DOE as necessary.

15. Will NQA-1 be part of the construction quality assurance requirements for companies building on Launch Pad?

Yes, but developers can also identify an alternative. As developers work through their Nuclear Safety Design Agreement (NSDA) per DOE-STD-1271, NQA-1 can be one of the quality assurance requirements identified or the developer can identify an alternate.

16. As a small business federal contractor interested in prototyping and building personal scale micro-/nano- reactors in the sub MW range; who can I contact for advice, support and compliance during development?

NRIC is here to support reactor developers and nuclear technology developers trying to bridge that gap between research and development and commercial deployment. NRIC Technical Program Managers will assist developers navigating the DOE Authorization process once selected into the Launch Pad Program. Launch Pad RFA applications are the responsibility of the developer.

17. For Launchpad USA, how defined or specific does a location need to be for the proposal? Would it be sufficient to have an informed short list of locations (e.g., municipal or county level) with a project milestone to finalize the locations in the short term (e.g., 3-6 months)?

NRIC evaluates Launch Pad developers on overall readiness for execution, and siting is one of the factors considered. While having a specific site identified is helpful, it is not required.

An informed shortlist of potential locations such as at the municipal or county level paired with a clear plan to finalize the site, is considered acceptable. Applicants who already have a site identified may score higher under readiness criteria, but a shortlist with a credible timeline is adequate for application purposes.

19. Is the Launch Pad a suitable program to support non-reactor nuclear technology, i.e., recycling/decontamination of irradiated materials (graphite) and recovery of critical minerals, isotopes? Both Pilot Project and commercialization scale.

Yes.

20. Are university partnerships allowed in Launch Pad?

Yes. Developers may partner with universities as they see fit to obtain subject-matter expertise or other support. In fact, one of the first Launch Pad developers transitioned from the Reactor Pilot Program is a university–nuclear developer partnership.

21. It was stated that developers fund the management of used nuclear fuel (and presumably other waste from decommissioning). Is there a mechanism to transfer the waste to DOE for long term storage and/or disposal, particularly if testing on a DOE site such as INL? If not, how might applicants plan for long-term management and disposition of waste/decommissioning activities as part of their cost/scheduling sections of the application?

The awardee is solely responsible for handling and disposal of any hazardous substances and wastes arising from activities under their Other Transaction Agreement. Decommissioning encompasses all activities to remove installed facilities and return the site to its original status (e.g., as a greenfield, brownfield, etc.). This includes used fuel removal, and management of spent nuclear fuel until either a final disposition pathway is available and/or DOE assumes ownership of the spent fuel through negotiation at either the Awardee site or other negotiated location. DOE will negotiate a disposition contract with the vendor prior to initial nuclear fuel receipt, defining title, transport, interim storage, and ultimate disposition responsibilities relating to the management of any spent nuclear fuel and any high-level radioactive waste produced pursuant to the agreement.

Applicants are encouraged to be creative and cost-effective in planning for backend spent fuel and other residual materials, including identifying the best long-term storage approaches.

22. There is a deadline in the RFA for applicant submissions but also language regarding it being on a rolling basis. Can you explain more the expectations around and handling of post deadline submissions if that is the case?

The Launch Pad RFA is open on a continual, rolling basis. However, to support the initial review cycle, DOE and NRIC established a July 8, 2026 submission deadline to streamline the first wave of applicant evaluations.

Applications submitted after July 8 will still be accepted and will be reviewed regularly on a periodic basis, though the review cadence may change based on the quantity of applications received and other factors.

23. What is the expected application review time?

NRIC anticipates announcing initial selections of participants by August 19, 2026, but will be dependent upon the number of applications received and other factors.

24. For accepted applicants, is there an expected time to reach criticality (i.e. July 4th, 2027)?

Launch Pad execution goals for participant deployments are still under evaluation. Until the Launch Pad goals are finalized, Participants should forward their most aggressive, achievable schedules for their deployments.

25. How can an entity make contact with NLIC respondents to coordinate with an appropriate point of contact within the State that is knowledgeable of the NLIC plans in order to coordinate a Launch Pad USA submission with a compatible NLIC approach? Can NRIC identify the appropriate State interface?

NRIC Technical Program Managers may assist in communication coordination between selected Launch Pad developers and DOE, as well as other industry advocates.

NRIC can provide contact to the governor appointed energy advisory staff of an affected state, who can further facilitate NLIC/vendor discussions.

26. Are ISO 9001 QMS & ISO 19443 nQMS acceptable Quality Management standards in lieu of ASME NQA-1?

As developers work through their Nuclear Safety Design Agreement (NSDA) per DOE-STD-1271, NQA-1 may be identified as one of the quality assurance requirements, or the developer may identify an alternate.

This means ISO 9001 or ISO 19443 may be acceptable, provided they are justified and agreed upon during the NSDA process.

27. If a facility is sited on the INL property and is under DOE authorization, will it be possible to later convert to an NRC license, or does siting on INL land prohibit this or make it difficult to do?

A facility sited at INL under DOE Authorization may later transition to an NRC license. Siting on INL property does not prohibit or prevent this pathway. Applicants must address any additional siting-related considerations and include a clear long-term licensing strategy in their Launch Pad application describing how a DOE-to-NRC transition would be executed.

28. How about part 57 as the basis for Micro Reactors- may we apply using part 57 instead of part 53.

Part 57 and Part 53 are both NRC licensing approaches; however, all facilities deployed under Launch Pad are intended to initially operate under DOE Authorization, regardless of which NRC licensing pathway a developer intends to pursue later. Applicants may reference either Part 57 or Part 53 in their long-term regulatory planning, but these NRC pathways do not apply to the initial DOE Authorization basis required for Launch Pad participation.

29. What are the expected financial terms related to decommissioning? Is it acceptable to provide an investment plan that will reach maturity at the expected decommissioning date? What level of restoration is required? Are there examples of projects which have fully completed the decommissioning phase for greenfield and brownfield restoration that can be used as guidance?

Launch Pad participants are expected to cover the costs of decommissioning and restoration of the site. The financial terms and potential investment strategies are at the discretion of the applicant. A high level of maturity and financial readiness in the decommissioning plan will strengthen an application. In general, restoration must return the site to reclaimed land. DOE may allow some of the site and structures to remain in place if they support DOE's other missions and this may be negotiated.

30. What are the operator expectations for training turnover? What staff will run, maintain, and integrate the plant? What level of existing training or workforce qualifications can be expected? What does the operational funding profile look like if we are using DoE staff to operate the plant or maintain the interface connections? Is there a DoE HMI standard or style guide that can be used to develop the initial control interfaces?

Selected participants will through their NSDA address their training and operational needs. In general, Launch Pad participants are responsible for providing and training their own operations staff. INL and other resources may be used for training or operational support on a contractual basis.

There is no required DOE HMI standard; INL can offer guidance as needed.

31. What resources are available for DOE land availability at INL? Can we use existing site characterization data for seismic, atmospheric modeling, and water table run-off? Is there an example of a typical land grant or lease that we can use as a basis for negotiation of land for our proposal? If our proposal is not accepted, what are the surviving contract terms, or can we develop a contract on the basis of acceptance?

INL has extensive but not exhaustive site characterization data including seismic, biological, cultural, water-table, and other environmental information which Launch Pad participants may use for siting where available. Land for Launch Pad INL projects will be leased from DOE at fair-market value. Additional details on contract terms would be established during negotiations following selection.

32. Contingency funding as it relates to risk profile, are there expected baselines that we need to meet for the DoE or for INL? What are the differences for this calculation when considering locating the plant on federal land vs private land?

Development of the application is the financial responsibility of the Applicant. NRIC and DOE will not be providing funding for projects selected as part of Launch Pad and will not be providing funding or in-kind contributions for cost sharing. If selected, the Applicant will be responsible for the costs associated with, but not limited to, designing, manufacturing, constructing, operating, decommissioning, and waste streams related to

its facility(s). The contingency funding calculation will be dependent on the applicant deployment planning.

33. What power, water, and access information is available for INL land that is suitable for LAUNCH? Can we provide our requirements to determine suitability or has INL already identified potential sites?

Launch Pad INL has available power, water, fiber, and other associated infrastructure, and more in planning. As part of a Launch Pad application, applicants are expected to submit their utility and infrastructure requirements for all deployment and operational phases. This will assist in the siting process.

34. Does DOE-ID issue the authorizations for projects proposed to be located at other DOE sites? What role does the other site (lab/DOE) have?

DOE-ID is the only DOE Site Office authorized to issue DOE Authorization for Launch Pad deployments. This applies whether a facility is sited at INL or at another DOE site. The local site office and host laboratory still play an important support role, including land-use coordination, facilities access, local regulatory interfaces, and providing site-specific requirements and resources needed for deployment.

35. Given the current challenges in the fuel supply chain, is it mandatory to have "US Flag" fuel? Or are applicants able to propose fuel fabrication at non-US fabrication facilities?

Applicants are welcome to propose fuel fabrication and feedstock as long as it is not precluded through US policy and/or legislation.

36. What is the average dollar amount for contributory funds?

All Launch Pad work is entirely privately funded and estimated on a case-by-case basis.

37. Could you speak to how Launch Pad handles applicants with existing or in process DOE engagements? Specifically, if an applicant already holds an OTA under a prior DOE RFA and has additional scope tied to a separate RFA that's still pending - can those efforts be folded into a single Launch Pad USA application to access NRIC's support?

Developers can access NRIC support without going through Launch Pad. If an applicant already holds an OTA and also has scope under another pending RFA, NRIC recommends evaluating whether these efforts should be merged, as both fall outside the Launch Pad mechanism. If no new scope is being proposed under Launch Pad, developers should consider alternative pathways. NRIC can assist in identifying the appropriate mechanism, and developers may contact NRIC@inl.gov with specific questions.

38. Are the reactors on and off DOE property held to the adopted building codes for the INL? Usually facilities at DOE are using International Building Code, international fire code, etc. and don't have much guidance for power reactors. Is there flexibility in code adoption or do you expect applicants on or off site to follow the normal adopted code for INL.

DOE and the developer will determine applicable building and safety codes during the Nuclear Safety Design Agreement (NSDA) process. The NSDA establishes the project's code of record, and DOE allows flexibility in code adoption for projects with appropriate justification.

39. Do you have to submit an application for each specific Launch Pad?

Developers may apply to both Launch Pad INL and Launch Pad USA. If a developer is unsure of their preferred siting location, they are encouraged to apply to Launch Pad USA, and the location can be updated later through discussions with DOE and NRIC.

40. Can an existing DOE OTA be amended for Launch Pad? Should we submit multiple applications (fuel reactors, etc.) at once?

Yes. DOE can amend an existing OTA if needed. Developers may also submit multiple applications. For any facilities that will be separate from each other and require their own OTA and DOE Authorization, a developer should submit an individual application for each.

41. SPPs have been going through six month long foreign ownership reviews at headquarters when they are required to take 20 days under the 485.1 process. Since SPPs will be required for Launch Pad, how will the program plan to address the length of this process?

DOE is evaluating options to streamline and expedite the foreign ownership review process for SPPs. DOE recognizes that applicants entering Launch Pad will need SPPs with BEA as quickly as possible and is actively assessing ways to optimize and shorten the current review timelines.

42. Does DOE expect to issue a NEPA categorical exclusion for the fuel line pilot program projects and similar for Launchpad, similar to its cat X for advanced reactors?

DOE will examine the need for new additional NEPA categorical exclusions for fuel line facilities.

43. Does the OTA follow any specific labor agreements (such as, Davis Bacon). Thinking of how we budget for project construction.

DOE has not established a predefined labor agreement requirement for OTAs. Whether agreements such as Davis–Bacon apply depends on the specific circumstances of the project. DOE will evaluate labor-agreement applicability on a case-by-case basis.

44. Is there a Document ID for the OTA agreement guide?

There is no number for the OTA guide.

45. Is there a consolidated schedule or framework of anticipated fees and cost recovery activities associated with collaboration, technical review, and support engagements involving DOE and the INL through the lifecycle of the project?

NRIC and DOE have documentation available for developers planning to deploy at INL. NRIC provides an interface plan template that includes a menu of services to help

estimate anticipated costs. If selected for Launch Pad INL, NRIC will work with the developer to identify scope and develop a cost estimate; INL does not use flat fees but can provide reasonably accurate estimates. A similar process will apply for DOE safety document reviews performed under DOE Authorization.

46. GDE-55179 is referenced in the RFA but I'm unable to find it on the web and the sam.gov site states that it will be released soon. Is there an expected release date?

GDE-55179 is available on the Launch Pad RFA page on sam.gov; however, each update to the RFA generates a new hyperlink, which may cause older links to display outdated information. Applicants should verify they are viewing the current materials by using the "Version" dropdown at the top of the RFA posting and selecting the latest version. Because revisions may be posted at any time, applicants are encouraged to check this dropdown regularly to ensure they are referencing the most up-to-date guidance.

49. How "sufficiently mature design" is evaluated at the time of application — whether against a quantitative benchmark (a design completion percentage, completion of a conceptual or preliminary design phase, or a minimum TRL for critical technology elements), or functionally based on the applicant's demonstrated readiness to imminently develop a Nuclear Safety Design Agreement and supporting safety basis documentation?

A "sufficiently mature design," as defined in GDE-55179, is not tied to a specific completion percentage or TRL threshold. Instead, reviewers assess whether the applicant's design and supporting analyses are developed enough to begin DOE Authorization activities, including near term initiation of the Nuclear Safety Design Agreement (NSDA) under DOE-STD-1271. A design is considered sufficiently mature when it is technically credible, supported by a clear and organized deliverables list aligned to DOE requirements, and backed by a project plan, risk awareness, and resources adequate to progress without major redesign. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to develop and submit required safety basis documentation, including the Final Documented Safety Analysis needed to support operations.

50. We are exploring our options for quicker timeline to groundbreaking. If we were to submit an application for Launch Pad U.S.A, is it possible to: Use INL/BEA as design authority? Leverage INL/BEA operators?

***Launch Pad INL** participants with an OTA may have the option for BEA to be the design authority. While NRIC and INL may provide technical assistance and support throughout the DOE Authorization process, they do not assume design authority for **Launch Pad USA** projects.*

Developers are also responsible for providing and training their own operators. INL/BEA personnel may support training or operational activities only on a full cost-recovery basis.

51. We understand that applications submitted after the July 8, 2026, deadline will be considered on a rolling basis. Could NRIC clarify whether the review lead time for applications submitted after July 8 is expected to be consistent with the review lead time for applications submitted on or before July 8, or whether off-cycle submissions should anticipate a longer or otherwise different review timeline?

The Launch Pad RFA is open on a continual, rolling basis. However, to support the initial review cycle, DOE and NRIC established a July 8, 2026 submission deadline to streamline the first wave of applicant evaluations.

Applications submitted after July 8 will still be accepted and will be reviewed regularly on a periodic basis, though the review cadence may change based on the quantity of applications received and other factors.

52. Is there any material available online which could help me understand the costs associated with DOE Authorization if we were to be accepted into the Launch Pad USA Program?

Costs associated with DOE Authorization will vary based upon the maturity and complexity of the design.

There is no standalone public document outlining the costs associated with DOE Authorization. All Launch Pad work is performed on a full cost-recovery basis, and costs are developed specific to each applicant's scope.

53. Can schematics, CAD outputs, 3D models be included as attachments outside of the 50-page Technical Volume?

Yes.

64. Facility transition at INL: We are evaluating a phased approach where we would utilize an existing INL facility or test bed for our initial demonstration phase, and later transition operations into a newly constructed facility on an allotted Launch Pad parcel. Is this type of plan something you see as possible, given current availability of spaces.

A phased approach using an existing INL facility followed by a new constructed facility may be possible if the newly constructed facility at INL would be for continued demonstration of the same demonstration performed in an existing INL facility, but it could require separate Launch Pad applications if the two phases are trying to demonstrate separate technologies. This could require individual OTAs and distinct DOE authorizations. Each OTA requires its own Launch Pad application. If the new construction would be for immediate commercial use, an NRC license would be required.

65. Multi-Site authorization: We are also considering a regional phased approach where our initial demonstration facility would be located at our headquarters in Texas, followed by a more fulsome facility in Idaho. Can the regulatory

authorizations granted through this framework be used across multiple locations?

No. DOE Authorization is site-specific and cannot be applied across multiple locations, allowances could be reviewed if the phased approach is with a regional site area such as the Idaho National Laboratory (i.e. one phase in an existing INL facility and follow-on continuation of the demonstration in a newly constructed facility). A phased approach that includes facilities in more than one state or site would require separate Launch Pad applications—one for each facility—so DOE can issue distinct OTAs and authorizations appropriate to each location. Developers should clearly define the purpose of each phase so DOE can determine how many applications and authorizations are required.

67. Would a committed investor letter with milestone-based funding tranches be considered acceptable when evaluating a project's financial readiness? Or does the program require that funds be fully committed or held in escrow at the time of application?

A milestone-based investor commitment letter can be acceptable as long as it provides a clear, credible funding pathway that aligns with the project schedule. While having all funds fully committed at the time of application is ideal, applicants are not required to hold the total project cost in escrow. Developers should describe how committed tranches support near-term execution under DOE Authorization and provide sufficient confidence that remaining funds will be available when needed.

Recommend you provide a plan for funding to demonstrate you have enough committed funding to get you through the initial design phase and long lead items.

69. For Launchpad INL projects, we are unsure of what the expectations are on different resources and functions provided by INL or need to be provided by us. If these are performed by INL, what is the expectation from the vendor (i.e., us) in supporting these functions? • Physical security • Safeguards and nuclear material management • Facility criticality assessments.

BEA doesn't act as a subcontractor and cannot provide these programs in lieu of the vendor's programs. But BEA may act as a consultant to help develop the programs to meet the vendor's needs.

Physical security for the INL site is provided up to the perimeter of the leased area. Vendors are responsible for establishing and maintaining their own facility-specific security programs, though INL may provide training or program development support as needed.

Safeguards and Nuclear Material Management – BEA may support the vendor by providing training and advise on program development for these programs.

Facility Criticality Assessments – BEA may support the vendor by providing training and advise program development for these programs.

71. For Launchpad INL, does the review include an assignment of land to be used for awardees or will there be a site selection process that follows approval?

Site allocation for Launch Pad INL will be conducted after selection. NRIC, in coordination with DOE, BEA land-use planning, and the developer, will identify the appropriate parcel based on program needs. Applicants should include projected construction and operational power requirements, water usage, and estimated land needs in their application to support this post-selection siting process.

72. In the Launch Pad RFA, Section 9 called Internal Capabilities asks for partnerships to be described (which are external). Section 10 External Needs reads like it is mostly looking for where we would need government support but it also briefly mentions ‘other consultants or expertise’. GDE-55179 merges these two sections into one. Please advise which section should include a description of our partner and supplier capabilities. Please advise if both sections will be jointly marked out of 10 as per the guidelines?

The Launch Pad RFA technical volumes 9, Internal Experience & Capabilities, and 10, External Needs & Capabilities, sections are evaluated jointly in accordance with GDE-55179. Together they comprise the Experience & Capabilities criterion and are scored out of 10 points. Partner and supplier capabilities may be described within these sections as appropriate.

73. 1. What is the timeline for application approval/acceptance/access? We have our own timeline we are working towards, but want to make sure that is realistically aligned DOE/INL timelines for accessing this resource. 2. Is there a target TRL the DOE is expecting for this application? 3. Is the application a go/no-go? Or is there any back and forth to improve our application during the submittal process? 4. Our nuclear industry partners would like to include letters of support. Are these allowed in the application and if so where can we add them? 5. What is the intended project duration? We want to make sure our campaign aligns with DOE expectations. 6. Is there a preferred MDDL Template?

NRIC and DOE anticipate announcing initial selections in alignment with the schedule outlined in the RFA. Access to Launch Pad resources begins after selection and is dependent on successful execution of the OTA with DOE and the SPP with INL/BEA. Execution timelines vary based on the developer’s scope and readiness.

There is no target Technology Readiness Level (TRL) required for Launch Pad participation. Applications are evaluated on the Applicant’s technology readiness plan and that it is detailed and comprehensive. There are no significant technology maturation issues that would threaten the Applicant’s readiness. Technical risks and mitigation plans are manageable.

While Launch Pad applications are evaluated as submitted, NRIC and DOE may reach out to applicants with clarifying questions depending on the number and nature of applications received. Applications not selected will receive feedback and may be revised and resubmitted during subsequent rolling review cycles.

Letters of support may be included in the application. These should be submitted as a separate attachment labeled “Letters of Support,” and they will not count toward the

50-page Technical Volume limit. Applicants may also reference partner capabilities in Technical Volume Sections 9 and 10 where appropriate.

Launch Pad is designed as an ongoing initiative supporting projects progressing expeditiously toward DOE Authorization and eventual commercialization. Developers should propose their preferred project duration and timelines in the application; these may be refined during OTA negotiations with DOE.

There is no preferred or required MDDL template.

74. Are the Cover Letter and the Exec Summary included in the 50-page limit for the Technical Volume? Would the Government allow a Title Page, Glossary of Acronyms, and a Compliance Matrix to be included with the Technical Volume, each exempted from page count? For any graphics and tables that are submitted in the Technical Volume, would the Government allow the font size to be less than Font 12 as long as the usage is readable?

The Cover Letter and Executive Summary of the Technical Volume are counted toward the 50-page limit for the Technical Volume. Only the content beginning with the Technical Volume itself is subject to the page limit.

A Title Page, Glossary of Acronyms, and Compliance Matrix may be included as separate attachments and will not count toward the 50-page Technical Volume limit. Applicants should clearly label these supplemental materials.

Graphics, figures, and tables included in the Technical Volume may contain fonts smaller than 12-point provided the content remains legible and professional in appearance. All narrative text must adhere to the formatting requirements in the RFA.

75. Do you expect the 1995 Settlement Agreement to impact the suitability of on-site dry-cask storage at INL for LEU PWR spent fuel assemblies pending ultimate disposition at a federal repository?

Yes, the 1995 Settlement Agreement will have to be part of the requirements set to be considered for on-site dry-cask storage of spent nuclear fuel at the INL pending ultimate disposition at a federal repository.

76. Do you expect that operating novel fuel assemblies in Launch Pad could replace a standard NRC Lead Test Assembly (given sufficient collaboration with the NRC) and accelerate the NRC licensing timeline?

Data gathered from novel fuel assemblies operated under DOE Authorization may be used to inform and support NRC licensing activities. Launch Pad participants are encouraged to leverage operational data, materials performance information, and safety analyses developed under DOE Authorization to aid in their NRC licensing strategies. However, the DOE Authorization process does not replace NRC requirements, including those associated with Lead Test Assemblies. Any acceleration of the NRC licensing timeline would depend on NRC acceptance of the data and the applicant's engagement with NRC to determine how DOE-generated data can be used in lieu of, or in support of, NRC-required testing.

77. For applicants considering INL as their primary site, but who have evaluated other suitable sites for Launch Pad USA in case of a lack of space or bandwidth at INL, would it be appropriate to submit as a single application? You mentioned in the meeting that you would publish guidance on this soon, so feel free to just point us there.

DOE Authorization is site-specific and cannot be applied across multiple locations, allowances could be reviewed if the phased approach is with a regional site area such as the Idaho National Laboratory (i.e. one phase in an existing INL facility and follow-on continuation of the demonstration in a newly constructed facility). A phased approach that includes facilities in more than one state or site would require separate Launch Pad applications, one for each facility, so DOE can issue distinct OTAs and authorizations appropriate to each location. Developers should clearly define the purpose of each phase so DOE can determine how many applications and authorizations are required.

78. The RFA language specifically says: ** For Qualified Test Reactors: Explanation of the plans to qualify, procure, and deliver fuel, and (following irradiation) plans for storage and disposition of used fuel. This should include the plan for fueling and defueling the reactor. The use of an agreement for used/spent fuel disposition which will outline the management of materials between DOE and applicant will be required. My question: What is meant by the word "qualify" in the RFA guidance? Are we to discuss fuel qualification in the formal sense? Or are we to discuss simply the qualifying of vendors in the supply chain to procure fuel?

In the context of the Launch Pad RFA, "qualify" refers to the applicant's plan to demonstrate that the proposed fuel form, fabrication approach, and associated analyses are sufficiently developed to support DOE Authorization activities. This is not a formal NRC fuel qualification process; instead, applicants should describe the technical maturity, supporting analyses, and evidence demonstrating that the fuel is credible for use in a DOE-authorized test reactor.

Applicants should also address how fuel will be procured, including identifying capable vendors and outlining any required verification or acceptance criteria to ensure fuel is manufactured to the specifications needed for safe operation. Both the technical readiness of the fuel and the robustness of the supply chain should be described.

The level of detail provided should demonstrate that the applicant can initiate DOE Authorization activities, develop the Nuclear Safety Design Agreement (NSDA), and support fueling, operation, and the eventual management and disposition of used fuel under DOE oversight.

79. Who is the "Contracting PoC" on the application table 1? Who should fill this PoC?

The "Contracting PoC" in Table 1 of GDE-55179 should be the individual within the applicant's organization who is authorized to coordinate contractual matters with DOE and INL/BEA. This point of contact should have the authority to engage in discussions

related to the Other Transaction Agreement (OTA), Strategic Partnership Project (SPP) agreement(s), contractual negotiations, and related administrative requirements.

Applicants should designate a representative who is familiar with their contracting processes and able to respond to DOE and NRIC/BEA inquiries throughout the agreement processes.

80. Page 12 states that the font shall be 12-point Is a slightly smaller font permitted within headers, footers, table and graphics content (e.g. 10-point)?

Narrative text within the Technical Volume must use 12-point font as required by the RFA. However, smaller fonts may be used in headers, footers, tables, figures, and graphics as long as the content remains clear, legible, and professional in appearance. Applicants should ensure that all required narrative text complies with the formatting requirements outlined in the RFA.

81. Page 4 states Launch Pad INL benefits include "Proximity to existing utilities and services at INL." What are the INL services provided? Does it include physical/safeguards security, radiological monitoring & protection services, and INL cybersecurity infrastructure?

Launch Pad INL participants may have access to certain INL-provided site services on a full cost-recovery basis, depending on the needs of the project and the scope negotiated through the OTA and SPP agreements. INL site services may include utilities such as power, water, fiber, and other infrastructure located near designated Launch Pad parcels.

Physical security for the INL site is provided up to the perimeter of the leased area. Vendors are responsible for establishing and maintaining their own facility-specific security programs, though INL may provide training or program development support as needed.

Radiological monitoring and protection services may be available from INL where appropriate and as negotiated; however, vendors are responsible for meeting all radiological protection requirements for their facility under DOE Authorization.

INL cybersecurity infrastructure applies to INL systems. Developers must provide cybersecurity protection for their own systems, though INL may offer guidance and support consistent with DOE requirements and the Interconnection Security Agreement (ISA) process.

83. HAZCAT requirements need to be properly addressed in the proposal per DOE STD-1271-2026 For Hazard Category 3 facilities, per DOE-STD-1271-2025 a readiness review is no longer required prior to receiving nuclear material (after revision of DOE O 425.1 in 2025/2026). 1. What is the stand-in process for HC-3 facilities comparable to a readiness review? 2. Is it the same as those outlined in DOE O 425.1 or a different procedure? 3. If a readiness review is not necessary and skipped all together, then during the commissioning & start-up testing, what would the JTG use as an "approved test plan" per 1271-2025?

For Hazard Category 3 facilities, DOE-STD-1271-2025 no longer requires a readiness review prior to receiving nuclear material. Instead, the authorization basis for these facilities relies on the DOE-approved safety basis and the controls established through the Nuclear Safety Design Agreement (NSDA). DOE evaluates readiness through documentation, implementation planning, and the maturity of the safety basis rather than through a formal readiness review process.

The stand-in process for HC-3 facilities is not governed by DOE O 425.1. Instead, DOE uses the NSDA, applicable safety basis documents, and associated implementation plans to confirm the facility is prepared to safely receive nuclear material and begin operations. This includes verification that required engineered and administrative controls are in place and that programmatic elements supporting nuclear operations have been adequately developed.

For commissioning and start-up testing, the Joint Test Group (JTG) will rely on a DOE-approved commissioning or test plan developed as part of the NSDA process and reflected in the facility's safety basis documentation (DSA & TSR). This plan must demonstrate how testing will be performed safely, identify applicable controls, and align with the DOE-approved safety strategy. DOE will review and approve this test plan prior to nuclear operations, ensuring it provides the necessary framework in the absence of a traditional readiness review.

In order for an applicant to receive nuclear material at their proposed deployment, the appropriate Safety Management Programs and Safeguards & Security requirements need to be in place and DOE approved, if applicable (including a facility clearance to possess special nuclear material).

85. Strategic Partnership Project: we understand an SPP with BEA may be required, and that foreign-ownership reviews can take longer than the nominal timeline. Could you indicate the expected timing, and whether the foreign-ownership review and SPP/OTA negotiation can begin in parallel with or ahead of selection rather than only after, so we can plan the critical path?

The FOCI review begins once a selected developer and DOE/BEA have aligned on respective agreement terms and routing has commenced. Timelines vary but may take up to six months. FOCI review and agreement negotiations generally proceed in parallel following DOE selection; they do not begin before selection.

86. We would appreciate clarification on the commercialization plan, if possible. The description of the plan states the following: "Developed commercialization plan for next steps and plans for long-term commercialization, including plans for commercial licensing, future tests and demonstrations and their locations." What is the intention behind the request for "future tests and demonstrations and their locations"? Is the implication that the commercially operating facilities will also serve as test and demonstration facilities?

The intent of the commercialization plan is for developers to show how they intend to leverage participation in Launch Pad to ultimately commercially deploy advanced

nuclear technologies. Developers should describe subsequent tests or demonstrations planned as part of their long-term commercialization pathway, and to the extent possible future siting of those activities. This section is not intended to imply that commercial facilities will also serve as test platforms; rather, applicants should articulate how their demonstration supports commercialization and what future activities may follow.

87. HAZCAT requirements need to be properly addressed in the proposal per DOE STD-1271-2026 For Hazard Category 3 facilities, per DOE-STD-1271-2025 a readiness review is no longer required prior to receiving nuclear material (after revision of DOE O 425.1 in 2025/2026). 1. What is the stand-in process for HC-3 facilities comparable to a readiness review? 2. Is it the same as those outlined in DOE O 425.1 or a different procedure? 3. If a readiness review is not necessary and skipped all together, then during the commissioning & start-up testing, what would the JTG use as an "approved test plan" per 1271-2025?

Non-federal host institutions may support multiple developers, provided they independently communicate their capabilities and meet applicable DOE and NRC requirements. Siting decisions remain the responsibility of each developer.

88. Can a university-owned site such as the RELLIS Campus be recognized as a standing Launch Pad USA deployment location independent of any specific reactor developer?

Designation of a university-owned site as a Launch Pad USA location is determined by the university's ability to make such capabilities available and attractive to developers. Launch Pad USA is open to all appropriate sites in the US. NRIC provides a pathway for universities to share expertise via its SME portal but does not pre-designate sites independently of developer applications.

89. Is DOE/NRIC developing a directory or inventory of existing or preferred non-federal deployment sites, and if so, what information would be required for inclusion?

DOE and NRIC are not currently developing a directory or inventory of preferred non-federal deployment sites.

90. For a non-federal site hosting multiple DOE-authorized nuclear projects, would DOE/NRIC consider a site-level framework OTA, master interface agreement, or other mechanism to coordinate common site obligations while maintaining project-specific OTAs?

OTAs are project-specific and are executed between DOE and the developer. DOE does not currently employ site-level framework OTAs for non-federal hosts.

91. Can a host institution enter into agreements directly with DOE/NRIC to support common site functions, site characterization, infrastructure, workforce development, emergency planning, or spent fuel management activities?

Host institutions may enter into agreements with DOE or NRIC where appropriate and within DOE authorities. Such agreements would be scope-specific and evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

92. Can environmental, emergency planning, infrastructure, security, and site characterization work performed for one Reactor Pylon Program, Launch Pad USA, or NRC ESP, project be leveraged by subsequent DOE projects at the same site? Does DOE/NRIC anticipate establishing mechanisms to recognize previously characterized sites in order to reduce duplication of future project reviews?

Reuse of environmental, emergency planning, infrastructure, and site characterization information may be possible on a case-by-case basis. DOE will determine applicability to subsequent projects based on regulatory requirements and project scope.

93. How can universities participate in the NRIC subject matter expert and capabilities network described during Industry Day?

University personnel may participate by submitting subject matter expert profiles through the NRIC Launch Pad website, which enables developers to identify expertise relevant to deployment activities. The link for university staff to submit an SME profile is provided below.

<https://nric.inl.gov/experts-list/>

94. Will NRIC maintain a database of university-owned facilities, deployment sites, workforce assets, and testing infrastructure available to Launch Pad participants?

NRIC maintains a limited database of national laboratory capabilities and NRIC testing resources. It does not currently plan to expand this database to include university or privately owned facilities.

95. Does DOE/NRIC anticipate future opportunities to establish regional advanced nuclear deployment hubs, university-affiliated deployment campuses, or multi-user demonstration and testing sites outside of the DOE national laboratory system? If so, what characteristics would DOE/NRIC consider important for such sites?

DOE and NRIC are not currently pursuing development of regional deployment hubs, university-affiliated deployment campuses, or similar multi-user sites outside the national laboratory system.

96. What is the relationship between the Nuclear Energy Launch Pad program and the Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campus (NLIC) initiative? Does DOE/NRIC envision opportunities for non-federal institutions to participate in both programs, and can a site support activities associated with Launch Pad U.S.A., NLIC, and related DOE advanced nuclear deployment initiatives simultaneously?

Launch Pad and the Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campus (NLIC) are independent initiatives. Developers may participate in both, provided each program's requirements

are met. A site may host activities associated with both initiatives if appropriate. Developers are encouraged to apply to all related initiatives supporting advanced nuclear deployments.

98. For a non-federal site seeking to support multiple DOE-authorized advanced nuclear projects over time, is the Launch Pad U.S.A. application process the appropriate mechanism to pursue a site-level framework agreement or similar DOE-recognized site designation, or does DOE/NRIC envision a separate process for establishing such relationships with host institutions independent of a specific reactor developer application?

Launch Pad USA applications are developer driven and project specific. DOE does not currently provide a separate site-level certification or recognition pathway independent of a developer's application for Launch Pad.

100. Is a Thorium Molten Salt Reactor (MSR) eligible under the Launch Pad program as an advanced reactor under DOE Authorization?

A Thorium Molten Salt Reactor may be eligible for Launch Pad participation if deployed under DOE Authorization and if the applicant demonstrates readiness to meet all requirements outlined in the RFA and DOE-STD-1271.

101. M2PV Capital is a 100% US-registered company. However, our prospective molten salt reactor manufacturer may initially be a European company exporting to the United States. How does this affect eligibility, and what is the process for addressing foreign manufacturer requirements under the Launch Pad program?

A project utilizing a foreign reactor manufacturer may be eligible, provided no prohibitions exist under U.S. policy or legislation. Applicants must comply with all FOCI requirements and ensure foreign involvement is disclosed and evaluated under DOE processes.

102. Can a company simultaneously participate in the Nuclear Energy Launch Pad program and the DOE EDF Title 17 loan guarantee program for the same project?

Applicants may participate in both Launch Pad and the DOE Title 17 loan guarantee program for the same project, subject to the terms and conditions of each program.

103. For Launch Pad USA, is a non-federal, privately owned site in Howard County, Texas eligible for deployment?

A privately owned, non-federal site is eligible for Launch Pad USA, provided it meets siting, regulatory, and infrastructure requirements. Developers may propose such sites in their applications.

104. Is it acceptable to apply with a shortlist of potential sites rather than a single confirmed location? What is the minimum siting specificity required at the time of application?

A privately owned, non-federal site is eligible for Launch Pad USA, provided it meets siting, regulatory, and infrastructure requirements. Developers may propose such sites in their applications.

105. Can M2PV Capital apply to both Launch Pad INL and Launch Pad USA simultaneously in separate applications?

Developers may submit separate applications to Launch Pad INL and Launch Pad USA. Applications should reflect the distinct siting, regulatory, and infrastructure considerations of each program scope.

107. Does the Thorium MSR qualify under the ADVANCE Act / Part 53 NRC licensing pathway following DOE Authorization under Launch Pad?

Use of NRC Part 53 or other licensing pathways following completion of DOE-authorized activities is determined by the NRC and the developer's long-term commercialization plan. Developers should describe their intended NRC licensing approach in the application.

108. Is it acceptable to list prospective technology partners rather than confirmed partners in the application?

Developers may list prospective technology partners. Finalized partnerships are not required at the time of application. However, applicants should clearly indicate the status of each listed partner — specifically, whether the prospective partner has been contacted and is aware of their potential role in the project, or whether they are being identified as a candidate without prior engagement. Listing a partner who has no knowledge of their inclusion may misrepresent the strength of the proposed team and could affect the evaluation of the application.

109. Is a milestone-based investor commitment letter acceptable as proof of financial readiness, or are fully committed funds required at the time of application?

Milestone-based investor commitment letters are acceptable, provided they demonstrate clear, credible funding pathways that align with project schedules and early execution needs.

110. Since DOE does not provide funding to Launch Pad participants, can EDF Title 17 loan guarantee proceeds be used to fund Launch Pad project costs?

Yes. Launch Pad projects are privately funded, and Title 17 loan guarantee proceeds may be used to support project costs, subject to program requirements.

111. What is the expected timeline from application submission to DOE selection announcement for the first review cycle?

DOE anticipates announcing initial selections according to the schedule outlined in the RFA. Timelines may vary depending on the number of applications received.

112. What is the expected timeline from selection to beginning of DOE Authorization activities?

DOE Authorization activities begin following developer selection and execution of the OTA. The timing depends on the applicant's readiness and the scope of agreement negotiations.

113. Page 6 of the RFA states: "DOE direct salary costs to review documents necessary for DOE authorization may be the responsibility of the Applicant. DOE/NRIC/INL costs associated with DOE authorization or other activities will be borne by the Applicant. Contributory funds may be required of the Applicant pursuant to the terms and conditions of its respective agreement(s). Contributory funds will be required for federal and contractor travel to support on-site assessments and will be required for contracted personnel to support DOE activities." What are the hourly rates for DOE direct salary costs and contractor costs?

DOE direct labor rates and NRIC/INL contractor rates are business-sensitive and cannot be published. Selected developers will receive detailed cost estimates once scope is established during agreement development.

114. Is there a restriction on the number of applications from one applicant?

No. There is no restriction on the number of applications a single applicant may submit. Each application will be evaluated independently based on its own scope, maturity, and readiness. Applicants submitting more than one proposal should ensure that each application clearly differentiates the distinct scope, facility, or authorization being requested.

115. Can an applicant re-apply if they are not selected in the first round?

Yes. Applicants not selected during the initial review cycle may revise and resubmit their application during subsequent rolling review periods.

116. For uranium enrichment activities, is the commercial sale of enriched product permitted under DOE authorization?

No. Commercial sales of enriched product is not permitted under DOE Authorization. Any production of nuclear material for commercial sale, whether in final form or as feedstock for further processing, is considered a commercial activity and must be licensed by the NRC. Activities conducted under Launch Pad must remain within the DOE Authorization framework, which is limited to testing, demonstration, and research functions.

117. For uranium enrichment activities, is the commercial sale of enriched product permitted under DOE authorization?

Separate applications are required. DOE Authorization is site-specific and cannot be applied across multiple locations. Each site requiring its own DOE Authorization must be supported by its own Launch Pad application and resulting OTA. Applicants may reference shared information across applications but must submit distinct applications for each location.

118. Our enrichment technology is likely to be determined to be classified by the DOE in the next year. At that point, the relevant information (equipment, paper documents, electronic information, etc.) will need to be protected as such. Since we plan to transition to NRC licensing, is it possible for the NRC to grant to possessing facility clearance, approve any classified computer networks, and grant security clearances?

Launch Pad Facility clearance, classified network approval, and personnel security clearances for classified information are governed by DOE authorities, not NRC. While applicants transitioning to NRC licensing may coordinate closely with NRC regarding licensing requirements, classification determinations, facility clearances, and associated security programs remain under DOE purview. Applicants should plan for DOE to retain responsibility for classification and related security controls throughout the transition process.

119. For a new-build (greenfield) facility proposed on a DOE site other than the INL Launch Pad parcels, which DOE sites beyond INL are available to applicants under this RFA?

Launch Pad deployments may occur at INL or at other DOE sites, provided the site can support the project's safety, regulatory, infrastructure, and mission-alignment requirements. While DOE-ID is the only site office authorized to issue DOE Authorization for Launch Pad deployments, other DOE sites may host a project if land-use coordination, site-specific requirements, and facility access can be supported in partnership with the host site. Coordination among the host DOE site and the developer is the developer's responsibility. Developers should identify candidate DOE sites in their application.

120. For the Launch Pad U.S.A. pathway on a non-INL DOE site, what mechanism does an applicant use to obtain site-control documentation (e.g., an LOI or MOU) from the host DOE site prior to selection, and who at DOE is the point of contact to initiate that arrangement?

Developers are not required to obtain site-control documentation prior to DOE selection for Launch Pad. A letter of intent is not required at the time of application. For non-INL DOE sites, site-control mechanisms such as land-use agreements, MOUs, or access documentation may be established after selection. Coordination among the host site and the developer is the developer's responsibility. The Developer will need to work closely with the BEA Technical Program Manager to ensure applicable state/federal requirements are appropriately captured and that the state regulatory bodies understand the roles and responsibilities between DOE and the applicable state. Developers may provide any existing correspondence to support evaluation, but pre-selection commitments are not required.

121. For a facility sited on an already-characterized DOE site, can the applicant tier the NEPA review off existing site-wide NEPA documentation (e.g., a categorical exclusion or environmental assessment rather than a new EIS), consistent with the EO 14301 NEPA streamlining referenced in Section IX?

Tiering from existing NEPA documentation may be possible where the proposed action aligns with previously analyzed environmental conditions and impacts. DOE will evaluate applicability of existing site-wide Environmental Assessments (EAs), Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), or Categorical Exclusions (CXs) on a project-by-project basis. DOE is actively evaluating NEPA streamlining approaches consistent with updated federal guidance.

122. Can an applicant proposing a standalone fuel fabrication facility obtain accelerated availability to HALEU feedstock through the DOE HALEU Availability Program, or is DOE-supplied feedstock available only to reactor applicants?

The HALEU Availability Program prioritizes reactor deployment needs but may support other advanced nuclear fuel-cycle activities subject to DOE program requirements. Developers proposing HALEU fuel-fabrication activities should coordinate with DOE-NE-4 early; however, participation is not guaranteed and is evaluated separately from Launch Pad selection. Launch Pad does not provide feedstock.

123. For a fuel fabrication line that accepts multiple different feedstock materials such as processing metal feedstock into oxide (i.e., includes a metal-to-oxide conversion step) in addition to the receipt of oxide powder, does the inclusion of multiple feedstock materials change the facility classification or expand the authorization and safety-basis scope, versus an oxide-powder-only line?

Facility hazard categorization and authorization scope are determined through the NSDA process based on material at risk inventories, chemical forms, and process operations. DOE authorization will cover all operations across multiple feed stock processes which will affect nuclear facility hazard categorization, safety basis breadth and corresponding controls. DOE establishes the final hazard categorization during review of the developer's documentation.

124. Is a DOE Authorization scoped to a specific throughput or total-capacity limit, such that increasing an authorized line's production capacity over time would be handled by amending the existing authorization for the same facility, or does a capacity increase, or the transition from a demonstration line to commercial production, necessarily require a separate facility and a new DOE Authorization?

DOE Authorization covers the specific operations, throughput, and material inventories analyzed in the DOE-approved safety basis. Capacity increases or transitions from pilot/demonstration to commercial-scale operations generally require safety-basis updates and may require a new or amended authorization. DOE determines whether a modification or new authorization is necessary based on scope changes. Transitioning from DOE authorization to delivering a commercial product requires NRC licensing to be in place before products may be sold to market.

125. Where no established consensus standard (e.g., ASTM) exists for a novel fuel form, will DOE accept developer-defined product acceptance criteria to

satisfy the Section 1 requirement to identify the applicable standards for product acceptance?

Yes. Where consensus standards (e.g., ASTM) do not exist, developers may propose technically justified, developer-defined product acceptance criteria. These must be documented in the application and refined through NSDA development. DOE will evaluate adequacy as part of the safety-basis review. The developer should ensure any DOE acceptance criteria developed would dovetail with future NRC licensing activities if the novel fuel form will be part of any future licensing efforts.

126. For a HALEU fuel fabrication facility under DOE authorization, does material control and accounting, safeguards, and security follow DOE orders rather than the NRC framework? Is the DOE-based safety and security basis creditable toward a subsequent NRC license?

Under Launch Pad, facilities operate under DOE MC&A, safeguards, and security directives, not NRC requirements. While DOE-based analyses and controls may inform subsequent NRC licensing activities, NRC independently determines what DOE-generated information is creditable toward an NRC license. Developers should engage in NRC early for alignment.

127. Under the Launch Pad framework, may fuel fabricated under DOE authorization be delivered to a separate NRC-licensed facility (e.g., a 10 CFR Part 70 licensee), or to a DOE-authorized reactor, for use? If so, what authorization or approval governs that transfer across the DOE/NRC boundary?

Transfers between DOE-authorized and NRC-licensed facilities are permitted but must comply with applicable DOE, NRC, and DOT transport and material-transfer requirements. Transfer approval is governed through DOE's material-control authorities and NRC licensing controls for the receiving facility. Coordination with both agencies is required.

128. Does delivery of DOE-authorized fabricated fuel to a developer's own NRC-licensed facility constitute material "provided to commercial stakeholders/customers" (which Section B places outside this RFA and directs to NRC licensing), or is intra-developer delivery for testing or use treated differently?

Delivery of DOE Authorized material to an NRC-licensed facility even one owned by the same developer constitutes transfer into the commercial regulatory framework and is therefore outside the DOE Authorization operational scope described in Section B of the RFA. Activities involving commercial products or customers require NRC licensing.

129. For DOE-authorized fabricated fuel to be received and possessed by an NRC 10 CFR Part 70 licensee, does the receiving facility require a license amendment to accept DOE-origin material, and will NRC credit the fabrication performed under DOE authorization, or must the material be re-qualified under an NRC-accepted program?

Acceptance of DOE origin nuclear material by a Part 70 licensee may require a license amendment depending on material type, form, and authorized possession limits. NRC independently determines whether data and QA records from DOE-authorized fabrication are acceptable; additional NRC specific qualification or verification may be required.

130. Will data and QA records generated under DOE authorization (e.g., under the DOE-STD-1271 safety basis and DOE quality framework) be acceptable to NRC for licensing the use of that fuel, or must fabrication be performed under an NRC-recognized QA program (e.g., 10 CFR Part 50 Appendix B) for the product to be usable in an NRC-licensed facility?

NRC determines the acceptability of DOE generated QA records on a case-by-case basis. NRC may credit DOE authorized data where methodologies, controls, and documentation align with NRC expectations but may require supplemental qualification under NRC frameworks such as 10 CFR Part 50 Appendix B. DOE-authorized QA does not automatically substitute for NRC QA requirements. DOE recommends applicants have pre-application engagement with the NRC to ensure the DOE authorization strategy will have the maximum alignment foreseeable for future NRC licensing efforts.

131. What transportation framework applies to shipping DOE-authorized fabricated HALEU fuel off the Launch Pad site to an external (including NRC-licensed) facility?

Transportation of HALEU or other special nuclear material must comply with applicable DOE, DOT, and NRC transport regulations, including certified packages, routing, security requirements, and material custody agreements. DOE and NRC will coordinate on boundary conditions for shipments crossing between DOE and NRC regulatory domains.

136. We understand the legal basis that activities “under contract with and for the account of” the Department are not subject to NRC licensing, and that the sale of electricity incidental to a DOE purpose may be permitted in some situations. For a MOX fabrication or recycling facility, what analogous activity, for example fuel supply or processing throughput for third parties, would be permissible as incidental to a DOE purpose while operating under DOE authorization, versus what must await the NRC license?

Commercial activities including fuel supply, product sales, or services for third parties fall under NRC’s jurisdiction and require NRC licensing.

139. Can a project under a DOE Loan Program/private sector funding enter Launch Pad concurrently, and how should the two be represented so they are complementary rather than duplicative in the application?

Yes. DOE Loan Program Office participation is compatible with Launch Pad, provided each program’s requirements are independently met. Developers should clearly delineate scope, funding, and responsibilities across programs, so they are complementary and not duplicative.

141. What DOE requirement/regulation would be expected for this below hazard category 3? DOE-STD-1271 is referenced for other deliverables. Is the full DOE-STD-1271 deliverable set expected for a low-hazard or radiological (non-reactor, non- SNM) facility?

DOE-STD-1271 applies to all Launch Pad facilities but may be tailored based on hazard category and project scope. Radiological or below HC-3 facilities may require material at risk, hazards assessment and nature of process deliverable set to bound the facility hazard category, subject to DOE review and approval. DOE will define required documentation during NSDA development.

142. Does DOE authorization under Launch Pad extend to the transport/receipt of irradiated graphite from off-site client reactors to the INL facility, or is inbound transport authorized separately (e.g. under DOT/other)?

Inbound transport of irradiated graphite must comply with DOT, NRC (as applicable), and DOE transport regulations. DOE Authorization covers on-site activities but transport itself is governed by modal regulatory authorities. Developers should identify anticipated transport pathways and regulatory considerations in their application.

143. For a recycling/treatment facility, the RFA notes DOE may seek a license to “novel data” generated in the project (D.VIII.2). How is the boundary drawn between protected proprietary process data and the data DOE may use for future authorization/safety case justification?

DOE’s rights to project-generated data, including novel data, are defined in the OTA and comply with federal data rights statutes. Proprietary and business-sensitive information may be protected where permissible. DOE will negotiate data rights boundaries with the developer, consistent with DOE needs to support future safety case review and authorization activities.

144. Where DOE or a DOE site is itself the source of the feed material and/or the recipient of treated outputs, does the Launch Pad authorization and agreement structure differ from the case where the feed source and offtake party are third parties? How should applicant represent a relationship in which DOE is both the authorizing party and a prospective material/offtake counterparty?

When DOE is both the material provider and offtake party, DOE establishes material-management terms, custodial responsibilities, and ownership conditions within the OTA and associated agreements. This does not alter the core Launch Pad authorization framework but may add DOE mission specific requirements. Developers should describe anticipated DOE roles so appropriate agreement structures can be developed.

155. For applications submitted after the initial July 8, 2026, deadline, what is the anticipated review cadence? Specifically, should applicants expect periodic review cycles (e.g., quarterly, semi-annually), or will reviews be conducted on a more continuous basis as applications are received?

Applications submitted after the July 8, 2026 deadline will be accepted under the rolling review process. Reviews are conducted on a periodic basis, with cycles determined by DOE and NRIC based on review capacity and the volume of submissions. While the initial cycle was timed to support the August 19 selection announcement, subsequent reviews and selections have not been determined at this time. Applicants are encouraged to monitor communications for updates on review timing.

156. Is there a notional target for the elapsed time between submission and selection notification for post-initial-cycle applicants? The ~6-week timeline observed for the first cycle (July 8 submission to August 19 announcement) is noted, but we understand subsequent cycles may differ.

For applications submitted after the initial deadline, the elapsed time between submission and selection notification may vary depending on review capacity and the number of applications received. While there is no fixed target for subsequent cycles, applicants should expect that timelines may differ from the initial cycle and could extend beyond six weeks. NRIC will communicate anticipated review and notification windows as periodically.

157. For a developer with foreign strategic investors as minority shareholders in a U.S.-incorporated entity, can the FOCI review associated with the BEA Strategic Partnership Project be initiated or pre-scoped in parallel with the application review, or does it commence only after formal selection? We note the FAQ indicates this process may take up to six months and would like to understand options to manage this timeline.

The Foreign Ownership, Control, or Influence (FOCI) review associated with the DOE's Other Transactional Authority (OTA) and BEA's Strategic Partnership Project (SPP) agreements is a critical step for all applicants. While the FAQ notes that this process may take six months to complete, timelines will vary for each developer. DOE and NRIC recommend that developers clearly indicate their ownership structure in their submission. However, formal commencement of the FOCI review will be dependent on DOE selection and finalized agreement terms between the NRIC/DOE and the developer.

161. What is the level of technical, safety, site, fuel, and financing readiness expected?

Developers are generally expected to: 1- demonstrate a mature and credible technical design that is ready for DOE Authorization activities; 2 - preparedness to develop and submit safety basis documentation; 3- clear siting plans or a shortlist with a credible timeline for site selection; 4 - robust plans for fuel procurement, qualification, and disposition; and 5 - sufficient financial readiness, ideally with committed funding or a credible funding plan.

162. Are applications still being considered on a continuing basis following the July 8 deadline?

Yes

163. Can you please provide clarity on the statement contained within the RFA: “Enrichment facility Applicants should source feedstock domestically and utilize domestic processing technologies to be considered for the Launch Pad initiative. Enriched uranium products must be restricted to peaceful, civilian uses.” And how do we provide proof this action is adhered to?

Purchasing documentation received from a feedstock supplier with lawful U.S. business operations will satisfy the requirements of the referenced clause. Where possible, the Launchpad selectee shall allow the feedstock supplier to conduct all aspects of raw material procurement upstream of the supplied product. If the selectee engages in negotiations or procurement activities with or on behalf of the feedstock supplier in order to secure raw material, additional documentation may be required to verify the domestic origin of that material. In the event of difficulties obtaining the required feedstock domestically, the selectee may source the feedstock from an allied country, subject to prior approval from the NRIC POC/project manager, in accordance with applicable treaties and US policy, and submission of documented evidence demonstrating that the required domestic feedstock is not reasonably available within the necessary timeframe.