

Solar SunShot manufacturing program enters design phase

The consultation process has commenced on the design of the \$1 billion Solar Sunshot program that aims to boost the development of Australia's solar manufacturing industry and increase the nation's role in the global solar manufacturing supply chain.

APRIL 23, 2024 **DAVID CARROLL**

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Image: CSIRO

The Solar Sunshot program, announced by the federal government earlier this month as a way “to supercharge Australia’s ambition to become a renewable energy superpower at home and abroad,” will see the government funding production subsidies and grants under the auspices of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

The \$1 billion (USD 650 million) initiative aims to support manufacturing facilities in Australia across the solar supply chain, including polysilicon production, production of ingots, wafers, solar PV cells, and solar module assembly. The program may also support complementary aspects of the PV supply chain such as solar glass, module frames and deployment technology.

ARENA, which will design the **program** in collaboration with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), has now published a consultation paper outlining a proposed structure for the package that could see it delivered through a series of funding rounds supporting targeted stages of the supply chain.

Under the program, production-linked payments are proposed to be the primary form of financial support. ARENA said it will also assess how capital grant funding or other forms of concessional support can be used to complement production-linked payments to achieve the program objectives.

ARENA is seeking information on prospective **projects under development** or project concepts that could fall under the Solar Sunshot umbrella. The agency said this will enable it to better understand overall readiness and appetite of the market to develop projects in different areas of the supply chain and will be used to develop final design parameters for the program.

ARENA Chief Executive Darren Miller said the agency will work closely with industry to shape a program that supports “innovative and competitive solar PV manufacturing that is critical to securing Australia’s role in the transition to a net zero world.”

"The scale at which solar needs to be deployed to meet our climate targets means that we cannot rely solely on importing solar panels from overseas," he said, adding that Australia can drive a greater role in PV production to make the supply chain less vulnerable.

"There is a credible pathway for building a solar manufacturing industry in Australia," he said. "A collaborative and committed approach from government and the private sector gives us the best chance at tackling this challenge."

The consultation remains open until 31 May 2024 with ARENA accepting written submissions through [online forms](#) and also hosting two consultation webinars.

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