

Working with NREL

What To Expect When Entering into a Partnership Agreement with NREL

Partnerships are key to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL's) success and central to its mission. By leveraging the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) investment in researchers, facilities, tools, and analyses, partners can catalyze cutting-edge innovations that create new business opportunities and greatly reduce new technology investment risk. NREL is the only national laboratory to help organizations fully bridge the gap from foundational science research to examining the feasibility of market applications. Our world-class researchers answer key questions about technological and commercial viability, making it possible for industry to bring important new solutions to market faster.

NREL is a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC), and with that designation come advantages as well as requirements in which NREL must comply. This fact sheet provides some important information about how NREL is organized and what partners can expect when entering into a new agreement with NREL.

Advance Funding

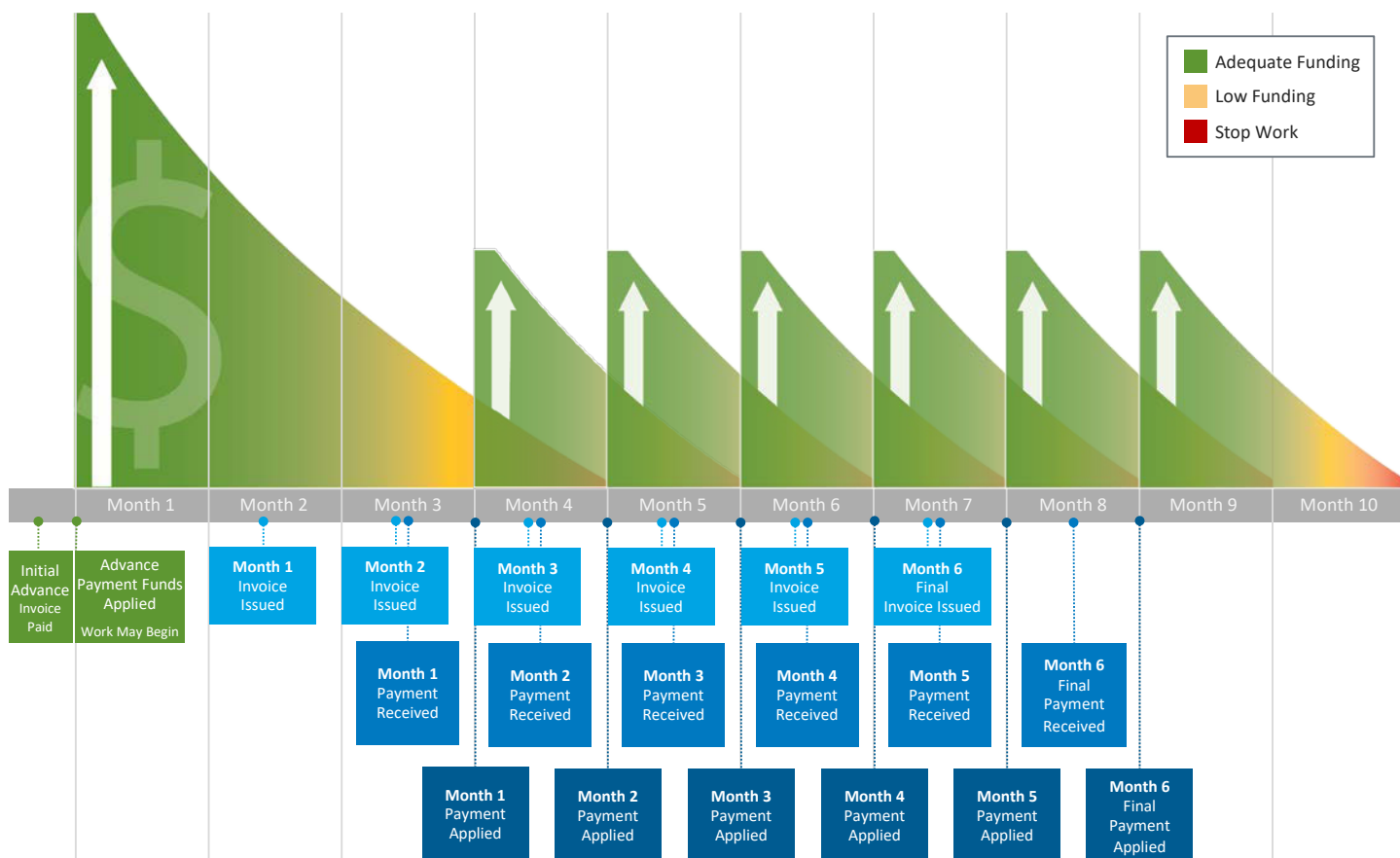
National laboratories like NREL are funded by the U.S. Congress for DOE-sponsored work every government fiscal year. Unlike private industry, there may be no additional working capital or cash reserves to pay for researchers or facilities not covered under DOE programs. The Antideficiency Act prevents national laboratories from beginning work before receiving funding. Any work NREL does with partners must be advance funded throughout the lifecycle of the agreement. NREL

What Is Advance Funding?

NREL typically seeks an advance payment to cover the first few billing cycles to begin work with a new partner, and then replenishes it with regular invoicing for actual costs once work is underway.

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Due to the time it takes to process payments once received, NREL's standard practice is to obtain at least four months' worth of advance funding. Funding must be received and processed prior to a project commencing to ensure the project does not encounter any financial roadblocks. NREL may not begin work in the absence of available funding. After work has begun, NREL may issue an order to stop work if sufficient funding has not been received.

The Role of an FFRDC

For nearly 70 years, FFRDCs have been vital to our nation's growth and security. FFRDCs meet special, long-term research and development needs that are integral to the mission of the sponsoring agency.

Since their inception, FFRDCs have made significant contributions to solving key national challenges. For this reason, the government has consistently reaffirmed their value. Moreover, because FFRDCs share some of the practical results of their work—through such methods as cooperative research and development agreements, technology licensing, open-source participation, and contributions to industry standards—commercial industries benefit as well. Working together, government, industry, and FFRDCs deliver the outcomes that make our nation stronger.

NREL as an FFRDC

DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy is NREL's sponsoring agency and is responsible for NREL's long-term direction. NREL is a government-owned, contractor-operated FFRDC, and as such is operated by the Alliance for Sustainable Energy.

In support of the DOE mission, NREL has a responsibility to protect U.S. investments, intellectual property, and economic security and adhere to U.S. laws and regulations. The requirements below ensure NREL is in compliance with federal laws while performing work with partners.

DOE Terms

The Alliance for Sustainable Energy operates NREL for DOE and must use DOE-approved agreement terms. To facilitate contracting, NREL uses a set of pre-approved agreement templates that include specific terms required by statute. NREL's agreement specialists work with partners to understand requirements or suggest alternative language that is acceptable to DOE. NREL commits to working directly with the appropriate person at the partner organization to review terms. Using this approach, NREL is able to negotiate agreements with hundreds of partners every year.

Learn more

Learn more about working with NREL at <https://www.nrel.gov/workingwithus/>. Contact your business development partner with questions or for more information.