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On July 17, the Department of Energy (DOE) allocated up to \$31 million in funding for the beginning phases of the Frontier Observatory for Research in Geothermal Energy (FORGE). The FORGE facility will be a field laboratory dedicated to the science and technology of Enhanced Geothermal Systems (EGS).

EGS, as opposed to natural geothermal systems, uses hot, relatively impermeable rock and small amounts of water. Engineers create a man-made reservoir and inject fluids into the rock in order to open up pathways for the fluids to travel and bring heat to the surface to generate electricity. EGS technology would allow engineers to develop geothermal systems in any area with hot rock below the surface, rather than relying exclusively on rock formations with high permeability.

Ultimately, FORGE seeks to understand how to best create and maintain fracture networks in rock formations through cooperation with industry and academic partners. DOE hopes this effort will lead to a commercially-viable method of EGS that is easily adapted to other sites.

More information on FORGE can be found on the Department of Energy website. Full applications are due by 1 October 2014.

Source: Department of Energy

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