

The solar panel validation initiative

Information for manufacturers

The Clean Energy Regulator (the agency) administers the Renewable Energy Target which includes the Small-Scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES). The SRES creates a financial incentive for individuals and small businesses to install eligible small-scale renewable systems, including solar systems.

The agency has partnered with the Australian solar industry and peak bodies to establish the Solar Panel Validation (SPV) Initiative. SPV provides a way to check and confirm that panels are approved by the Clean Energy Council, eligible for the SRES incentive, meet Australian standards and are genuine brand panels (and therefore covered by warranty).

SPV is a proactive step in addressing the use of unapproved (sub-standard and counterfeit) solar panels in the Australian market, which damage consumer confidence in rooftop solar and take sales from legitimate businesses.

How it works

SPV is made up of two parts — an app for installers to use on a mobile device and a database of information for solar panels. The database includes solar panel serial numbers provided directly from manufacturers or their Australian authorised representatives.

The initiative is a partnership, with every member playing an important role:

- > **Industry** representatives have invested their own funds to build apps that collect serial number information. The apps synchronise with a verification database to verify solar panel serial numbers.
- > Participating **manufacturers** or their Australian authorised representative provide timely and accurate data about their solar panels, including serial numbers, to a verification database.
- > **Installers** use apps to scan solar panel serial numbers, which are then checked against a database to ensure they are verified.
- > **The agency** has invested in its systems to accept signed data packages from apps during the application process to streamline the creation of small-scale technology certificates (STCs).
- > **Registered agents** use signed data packages generated from apps to create STCs for verified panels.

SPV offers a number of benefits to consumers, industry and government:

- > consumers know they are getting genuine products and can receive evidence their installed solar panels, that have been verified via SPV, meet Australian standards and come with a warranty
- > installers using an app will receive confirmation they are installing the right panels within seconds
- > retailers have confidence in the products they purchase and sell
- > manufacturers or their Australian authorised representative can protect their brand reputation, better understand where their panels are located and gain efficiencies in managing warranty information and product recalls, and
- > it helps to protect Commonwealth entitlements, lowers the risk of fraud and streamlines data collection for industry.

Why participate?

Your participation will be a major deterrent to those who might seek to connect counterfeit or substandard panels to your brand. You can provide your customers with an added level of confidence in your brand by participating in SPV.

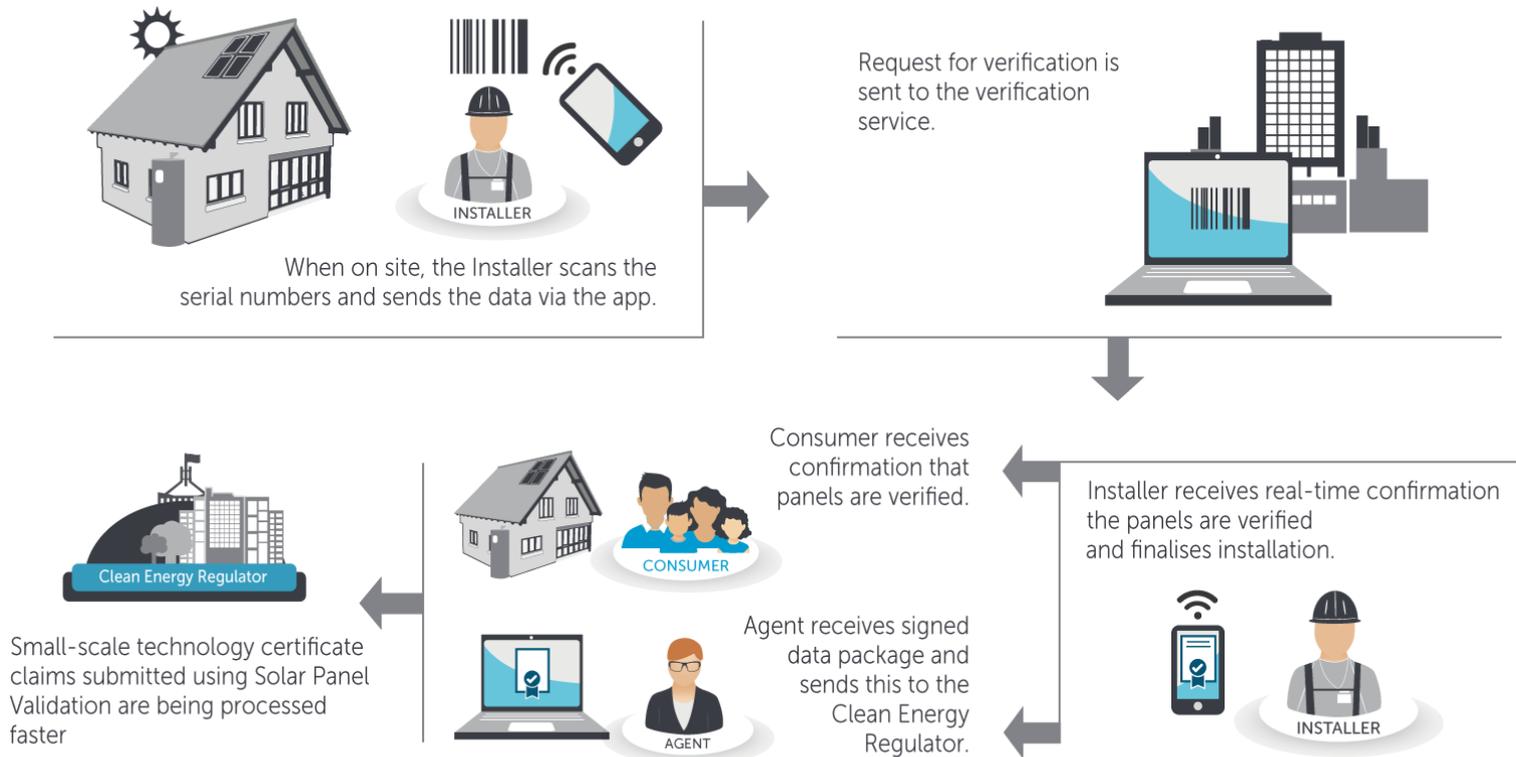
Solar businesses submitting applications to create STCs with verified solar panels can expect to have their applications processed faster than panels that are not verified (subject to meeting all SRES requirements). The agency may request that STC applications include evidence of serial number verification. SPV is the easiest way to do this as it reduces the time and effort you need to dedicate to individual data requests.

Manufacturers not using SPV may face additional pressure from solar retailers seeking to prioritise sales of solar panel brands that can be verified.

The agency takes compliance seriously. Where we detect the use of unapproved panels under the SRES we will apply a broad range of compliance and enforcement options, including suspension of REC Registry accounts, enforceable undertakings and criminal or civil proceedings.

If the agency or verification service provider have any concerns about the integrity of panels being verified, there is a mechanism to immediately revoke a manufacturer or their Australian authorised representative's participation in SPV.

SOLAR PANEL VALIDATION - HOW IT WORKS



How to participate

Join other leading manufacturers or their Australian authorised representative and provide serial number data for SPV by selecting a verification service provider and entering an agreement with them, or bring your own verification service to SPV by contacting the agency.

Contact details for all current verification service providers may be found on our website.

Each verification service provider will have slightly different approaches. Talk to each verification service provider to determine:

- > how your data will be uploaded to the verification database
- > the security measures that are in place to protect your data
- > what (if any) costs are associated with using the verification service, and
- > the nature of the agreement that you will have with them.

Each manufacturer or their Australian authorised representative can only provide their data to one verification service.

Only solar panel modules that are approved and listed on the Clean Energy Council approved solar photovoltaic modules list will be able to be verified as part of the SPV Initiative.

More information

For more information about SPV, visit www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au or contact us at enquiries@cleanenergyregulator.gov.au or 1300 553 542.