

BIL 40103(b) Grid Innovation Program (GIP)
Invitational Call for Innovative Project Design Concepts
Responses to Questions Submitted by Interested Respondents
Released: October 27, 2023
Updated: November 14, 2023

1. If a concept is selected and proceeds to the concept paper submission and funding application stage and ultimately receives a funding award from DOE, would the project then be developed by the proposing developer, in coordination with the Participating States, rather than the concept being used for a competitive solicitation?
 - *At this time, the Participating States expect that the project would be developed by the proposing developer. However, the Participating States intend to seek guidance from DOE regarding how a competitive solicitation may align with the objectives of this funding opportunity.*
2. For the 50% cost share from non-federal sources, would the Participating States entertain supporting shared cost allocation of transmission solutions through regulated cost recovery as a possible solution?
 - *If the project is a transmission solution, the Participating States contemplate that the 50% cost share from non-federal sources could be allocated to benefited load through a funding mechanism approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).*
3. Could the Participating States clarify what type of projects are considered "onshore projects" (and perhaps expand on what would not be considered an "onshore project" in this solicitation)?
 - *The Participating States are not seeking a project that is physically located within federal waters or within the marine environment under state jurisdiction. For example, the Participating States are not seeking a transmission project that would connect or mesh offshore wind projects at this time. Note, however, that the project need not be physical infrastructure, but could also include a novel management approach, contract mechanism, control system, financing approach, or other innovative deployment. During an October 24, 2023 [DOE webinar](#), DOE stressed that creative approaches and strategies also meet DOE's innovation requirement.*
4. Could the Participating States provide information on how to register and attend the informational meeting on October 6 from 10-11?
 - *The Informational Meeting has been rescheduled for October 31, 2023 at 2 pm EST. Interested parties must register on the New England States Transmission Initiative website at <https://newenglandenergyvision.com/new-england-states-transmission-initiative/> to receive a link for the webinar.*
5. Post submittal, do the states anticipate a Q&A opportunity for the states to clarify proposals submitted?
 - *The Participating States reserve the right to ask clarifying questions of the respondents following receipt of proposals.*
6. If analysis is undertaken by the Participating States and ISO-NE, would respondents receive feedback following submission / evaluation?

- *The Participating States may seek technical assistance from ISO-NE if it will assist in their review of the proposal, but Participating States are not obligated to provide feedback to respondents. Respondents that are not selected to move forward will be notified. The Participating States further note that the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) program includes three separate funding mechanisms, some of which allow for non-state entities to apply directly. If not selected to move forward by the Participating States for a state application, the Participating States encourage all respondents to consider the other two funding mechanisms under GRIP as well.*

7. Will Participating States consider an adjustment to the deadline for concepts if circumstances in Washington extend the DOE's anticipated timeline for the second round of GIP funding?

- *The Participating States have already adjusted the deadline for concepts, shifting it from October 20 to November 17, 2023, and will be mindful of any announcements from DOE. At this time, however, Participating States have no further plans to adjust the timeline.*

8. If Innovative Project Design Concepts proceed through submission of Full Applications and are selected by DOE for award negotiations, to what extent will proponents of Innovative Project Design Concepts be involved in award negotiations with DOE. If proponents are involved in negotiations with DOE, what award negotiation cost will proponents be expected to cover?

- *Proponents of Innovative Project Design Concepts will be involved in award negotiations with DOE, to the extent necessary, along with the Participating States. Respondents selected by DOE for award will be solely responsible for all costs incurred by the respondent during award negotiations.*

9. In 4.1 Impact and Market Viability, the second bullet notes that Innovative Project Design Concepts will be evaluated based on "The extent to which the Project enhances collaboration between eligible entities and owners/operators." Can you please elaborate on the meaning of "eligible entities" and "owners/operators"?

- *"Eligible entities" refers to parties that are eligible to submit concept papers to the DOE. These include states, local governments, Tribes, and public utility commissions. During an October 24, 2023 [DOE webinar](#), DOE expressed interest in expanding GRIP program eligibility in round 2 to include vendor-driven and consortia-based approaches and projects. "Owners/operators" refers to transmission owners or operators, or owners or operators of any other electric system asset.*

10. In 4.1 Impact and Market Viability, the seventh bullet notes "For Projects that include proposed transmission infrastructure investment, the extent to which the proposed Project achieves the claimed benefits." What metrics should respondents use to demonstrate achievement of claimed benefits?

- *Respondents may offer any metrics that substantiate their claimed benefits. Metrics may include but are not limited to reduction in customer costs, increase in system reliability, and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. During an October 24, 2023 [DOE webinar](#), DOE stressed that these types of metrics were extremely helpful in DOE's review of applications. DOE acknowledged that these benefits are estimates only but encouraged future applications to include such estimates supported by reasonable analysis.*

11. Can respondents indicate a willingness to collaborate with transmission owners if projects would require upgrades to transmission owners' facilities?

- *Yes. Respondents should describe any partnering arrangements contemplated by their proposed projects.*
- 12. Can respondents propose multiple options for project configuration within a single proposal (e.g., propose to install duct bank able to accommodate one or two transmission circuits)?
 - *Yes. Respondents may propose multiple options for a project configuration but should be clear on the project cost and timeline for each option proposed.*
- 13. When do states anticipate announcing approaches to cost recovery for the share of capital costs that would be provided by Project proponents? Lack of clarity on cost recovery mechanisms complicates estimation of project costs and risks, and increased clarity on potential cost recovery mechanisms will reduce uncertainty and improve cost estimation.
 - *The cost recovery mechanism will depend on the type of project concept selected. Participating States would work closely with the selected project proponent(s) on the cost recovery approach. Respondents should clarify the assumptions used in their project budgets and may offer several alternative models/approaches to cost recovery.*
- 14. The Invitation Call invites Innovative Project Design Concepts that meet the DOE's GIP objectives but further notes that the Participating States reserve the right to issue a revision after DOE releases the second GIP FOA. Is there any indication of the timing of when the second GIP FOA may be released and how aligned it may be with the objectives outlined on pages 2-3?
 - *During an October 24, 2023 [DOE webinar](#), DOE indicated that the next GRIP funding opportunity will be announced before January 1, 2024. We expect that the objectives outlined in the Invitational Call will be closely aligned with the objectives of the second GIP FOA, though DOE could revise its priority areas of interest for round 2 which will only be known after release of the FOA.*
- 15. Do the Participating States have any considerations or guidance around the ideal project timeframes? One of the evaluation criteria indicates a desire to determine the potential to "deliver near-term impact", is there general guidance around what near term would encompass?
 - *The optimal timeframe for implementing the proposed projects depends on the intended purpose and benefits to be delivered. Participating States have no further guidance on ideal project timeframes or near-term impacts other than the timeline requirements laid out in the second FOA when it is released.*
- 16. Do the Participating States have a sense of the project size (e.g., 10 MW, 200 MW, etc.) under consideration for the GIP funding opportunities?
 - *Participating States are inviting concepts of all types and sizes.*
- 17. Would the Participating States be looking to propose one or multiple projects?
 - *Participating States reserve the right to propose one or more projects in response to the second GIP FOA.*
- 18. [Respondent X] plans to co-locate its energy storage projects on its existing generation sites located in environmental justice and overburdened communities, to be responsive to the invitational call, could the Participating States detail how the alignment with the DOE's Justice40 objective would be evaluated?
 - *Through the Justice40 Initiative, the Federal Government has made it a goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities*

that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. In reviewing concepts submitted by respondents, the Participating States will look favorably on projects that are aligned with DOE's Justice40 Initiative. During an October 24, 2023 [DOE webinar](#), DOE stated that all selected projects had committed to the Justice 40 initiative and that the community benefit plans proposed as part of the application demonstrated how the projects would achieve those commitments.

19. Can an individual project be submitted in response to the States' Invitation Call for DOE Grid Innovation Project concepts and still be considered eligible for future state specific procurement opportunities (e.g., front of the meter battery energy storage solicitations)?
 - Yes.
20. In terms of potential transmission projects submitted to the invitational, the Participating States have expressed a focus on onshore projects rather than offshore projects. Can the Participating States clarify a bit more how they view this distinction? For example, what if a proposed concept involves a submarine transmission line but it is not for the purposes of unlocking offshore wind?
 - *As discussed in more detail during the informational meeting, the Participating States' focus on "onshore" projects in this invitational is meant to signal that this round of concepts would not focus on projects that implement the wet side of an offshore transmission grid intended to interconnect offshore wind projects to the land-based grid. A proposed concept involving a submarine transmission line that is not intended to interconnect offshore wind to the land-based grid is likely consistent with the objectives of this invitational, but the Participating States reserve the right to review the particulars of any project before making an ultimate eligibility determination.*