

Request for Project Proposals

**Issued by the
Governor's Energy Office
and the
Maine Public Utilities Commission
Pursuant to the
Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
Section 40103(b) Grid Innovation Program**

**December 19, 2022
Docket No. 2022-00360**

I. Summary

The Maine Public Utilities Commission has issued a Notice of Inquiry, Docket No. 2022-00XXX, to initiate a process in conjunction with the Governor's Energy Office that will request submission of Project Proposals to consider in preparing an application by the State of Maine for funds available through the United States Department of Energy (DOE) Grid Innovation Program (GIP), which is authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). As set forth in this document, Proposed Project Developers submitting Project Proposals must describe how their Proposed Projects are eligible for funding under the GIP **and must be submitted in the inquiry docket no later than December 30, 2022**. The docket is a secured docket only accessible to the Commission, the GEO, and other specified individuals or entities as set forth in a Protective Order. Project Proposals that meet eligibility requirements may be included in a Regional Concept Paper to be submitted to the DOE.

II. Background

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), was signed into law by President Biden on November 15, 2021. The law provides for significant funding opportunities for energy infrastructure projects, some of which are to be awarded through the states. On November 18, 2022, the DOE issued a [Funding Opportunity Announcement \(FOA\)](#) for the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program, which includes the [Grid Innovation Program \(GIP\)](#).¹ The GIP is intended to fund projects that improve grid reliability and resilience using advanced technologies and innovative partnerships and approaches. States are eligible to apply for GIP funding, with \$1.82 billion in total funding available and project awards of up to \$250 million, or up to \$1 billion for interregional transmission projects.

The GEO and the Commission are seeking information that may support pursuing GIP funding by submitting a Concept Paper to the U.S. DOE no later than January 13, 2023. The GEO is also exploring coordination with neighboring states to collaborate on this and related efforts. The GEO may submit more than one Concept Paper to this FOA, provided that each application describes a unique, scientifically distinct project or projects.

Through this Notice of Inquiry, the Commission and the GEO request interested project developers or other entities interested in proposing eligible projects for the GEO to consider including in a funding application to the GIP.

¹ The GIP is authorized by Section 40103(b) of the BIL and is described in the GRIP FOA as Topic 3. The GRIP FOA also describes Topics 1 and 2, which contain funding opportunities for which other entities are eligible to apply.

III. Process for Submitting a Project Proposal

A. General Information and Instructions

Proposed Project Developers must file a submission that addresses the questions and categories listed below in subsection III.B. Many of these questions address the objectives of the DOE program as set forth in the [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#). Project Developers are advised to review the Funding Opportunity Announcement in full to ensure understanding of the federal program and the eligibility criteria.

Project Proposals should demonstrate regional benefits, as well as projects that would benefit Maine communities.

Project Developers are requested to make their submissions as succinct as possible, preferably within a limit of 12 pages. This will assist in the development of a concept paper at the state and regional level.

Project Developers should designate all material that is considered confidential clearly. The Inquiry docket is secured, meaning that filings cannot be viewed by the public. The Commission will issue a Protective Order to ensure confidentiality to the fullest extent allowed by law.

B. Required Information for Project Proposals

1. Describe the Proposed Project Developer's business and business structure and the qualifications and expertise of the project team specific to energy transmission and/or distribution projects, including experience in New England and Maine. Please include in this description explanation of:
 - a. Whether the Proposed Project's project manager and team members have the requisite training and expertise to execute the project plan successfully;
 - b. Whether the applicant has prior experience to execute tasks with similar risk and complexity that are necessary to execute the project plan;
 - c. If the Proposed Project is to be completed with an external partner or partners, whether the applicant has worked together with its partners on prior projects or programs; and
 - d. Whether the Proposed Project Developer has adequate access to equipment and facilities necessary to accomplish the effort; if not, the Proposed Project Developer must explain how it intends to obtain access to the necessary equipment and facilities.

2. Describe the Proposed Project with respect to the following specifications:
 - a. Which Area of Interest, as described by DOE, is addressed by the Proposed Project:
 - i. Area of Interest 1: Transmission system applications
 - ii. Area of Interest 2: Distribution system applications
 - iii. Area of Interest 3: Combination systems applications
 - b. Technical description
 - i. Identify the Proposed Project's location and the technical issue the Proposed Project will address.
 - ii. Indicate if the Proposed Project will include any of the following:
 - distributed generation assets;
 - energy storage systems and other flexibility enhancements;
 - technologies to increase the capacity of the transmission and distribution system;
 - grid-edge technologies;
 - enhanced grid management systems, such as behind the meter asset operations,
 - aggregation,
 - coordination to provide demand response and grid services;
 - sensing,
 - communications, and control technologies and approaches;
 - grid-forming power electronics, such as inverter-based systems; and
 - integrated system design.
 - iii. Describe how the project addresses the topic area's eligible uses and technical approaches.
 - iv. Describe how the project supports state, community and regional resilience, improves climate readiness, reduces the likelihood and consequences of disruptive events, and ensures that all communities and citizens can benefit from climate and energy strategies and plans.

- v. Describe the grid-enhancing outcomes to be delivered by the project.
- vi. Describe the impact of the project to reduce innovative technology risk; achieve further deployment at-scale; and lead to additional private sector investments.

c. Project design and Development

i. Indicate if the Proposed Project will include any of the following:

- innovative financing and permitting solutions;
- uncommon or innovative regulatory structures;
- innovative rate design;
- innovative planning, modeling, or equitable cost allocation approaches, and other similar projects.

ii. Provide an initial breakdown of anticipated Proposed Project costs, including plans to meet the DOE required 50% cost share, and describe how the Proposed Project will provide enhanced system value, improving current and future system cost effectiveness.

iii. Provide a project development timeline to demonstrates the Proposed Project will attain commercial operation in the DOE required 60- to 96-month period of performance.

iv. Explain why the Proposed Project requires federal funding to enable it to come to commercial operation and, further, how federal funding would ameliorate risks and/or increase the likelihood of securing additional public and/or private investment.

3. Describe how the Proposed Project meets the following DOE funding opportunity goals and Maine clean energy goals:

a. Grid Reliability and Resilience

i. Indicate if your Proposed Project will address any of the following:

1. interregional capacity building to address flexibility, reliability, and resilience;

2. addressing key system needs and challenges that cause or contribute to long interconnection queue times for clean energy; and/or
 3. increasing supply of geographically and technologically diverse sets of location-constrained energy resources to enhance resource adequacy and reduce renewable curtailment.
- ii. Describe how the Proposed Project utilizes multiple approaches to increase overall system resiliency and how these approaches interact with each other and any existing projects or programs.
 - iii. Describe any other ways the Proposed Project would contribute to increased reliability and resilience in the State of Maine, particularly in Maine's most rural and/or energy-burdened communities, and communities with grid access challenges.

b. Innovation and Decarbonization

- i. Describe how the Proposed Project will contribute to the decarbonization of the electricity and broader energy system, including increasing distributed energy resources, energy storage, and beneficial electrification opportunities.
- ii. Describe whether and how the Proposed Project addresses the New England States Transmission Initiative found at <https://newenglandenergyvision.com/new-england-states-transmission-initiative/>, including whether the project supports or includes aspects of the proposed Modular Offshore Wind Integration Plan.
- iii. Describe how the Proposed Project can demonstrate a strategy that is suitable for wide-spread adoption.
- iv. Describe how the Proposed Project would enhance collaboration between and among eligible entities and private and public sector owners and operators on grid resilience, including in alignment with regional resilience strategies and plans.

- v. Describe how the Proposed Project results will enable asset owners and operators to effectively articulate within local, state, and Federal decision-making frameworks the economic, technical, and societal benefits of new and/or innovative approaches.

c. Community Benefits Plan

- i. Describe the Proposed Project's approach to creating a Community Benefits Plan that addresses the following four core elements:
 - 1. community and labor engagement leading to negotiated agreements;
 - 2. investing in job quality and workforce continuity;
 - 3. advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; and
 - 4. contributing to the Justice40 Initiative goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain climate and clean energy investments flow to disadvantaged communities.
- ii. Confirm that the Proposed Project will meet all Justice40, Buy America, and Davis-Bacon Act requirements.
- iii. Confirm that the Proposed Project Developer agrees to work with the GEO to develop and implement strategies to monitor and report on progress towards the goals outlined in its Community Benefit Plan in a meaningful manner.

4. Multi-State Collaboration and Project Portfolio Options

- a. Describe whether the Proposed Project provides benefits to multiple states and may be suitable for a multi-state application.
- b. Confirm that the Proposed Project Developer would be willing to work with multiple states on a joint application for funding.
- c. Explain whether the Proposed Project Developer has pursued or identified potential partnerships or portfolios to form a GIP application.
- d. Describe the Proposed Project Developer's willingness to be part of a portfolio of projects sponsored by Maine and/or other states as part of a GIP application, and description of any terms or conditions that would be required for participation in a portfolio application.
- e. Please identify any project risks associated with joining a portfolio of projects as part of a GIP application.

In addition to the responses required as outlined above, the Proposed Project Developer should describe how the project would meet any other applicable GIP funding eligibility requirements (if sponsored by Maine and/or other states), as outlined in detail in the DOE's Funding Opportunity Announcement.