# **Questions and Answers**

# **GFO-23-603**

# **Implementation of Medium- and Heavy-Duty (MDHD)**

# **Zero-Emission Vehicle** **Infrastructure Blueprints**

# **October 27, 2023**

The following answers are based on California Energy Commission (CEC) staff’s interpretation of the questions received. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to review the purpose of the solicitation and to determine whether or not their proposed project is eligible for funding by reviewing the Eligibility Requirements within the solicitation. The CEC cannot give advice as to whether or not a particular project is eligible for funding, because not all proposal details are known.

Unless indicated otherwise, all section numbers identified are from the solicitation manual (for example, “Section II.B” refers to Section II.B of the solicitation manual).

***Availability of Funds***

**Q1:** **Will there be additional/future funding available for those approved entities whose blueprints are not yet ready/approved by the November 13,** **2023 deadline?**

A1: There may be additional funding available for additional completed blueprint awards resulting from GFO-20-601, which would occur in a subsequent solicitation. The timing and amount of funding is yet to be determined.

**Q2:** **Will this solicitation be open to the public again or is all funding going to be spent in this round?**

A2: This will depend on whether there are enough applications and passing/funded projects. Due to the amount of funding available which is $20 million, the CEC expects all funds to be awarded in this solicitation.

***Maximum and Minimum Award Amounts***

**Q3:** **If EVSE is proposed for multiple sites owned by one entity that cost $1.5 million each, can the Applicant submit one application for $4.5 million for the total project, or must the Applicant submit three separate applications for $1.5 million each?**

A3: Applicants may submit one application for multiple sites. Additionally, Applicants may submit multiple applications for multiple sites. However, if submitting multiple applications, each application must contain a separate and distinct project, meaning there is no overlap between applications with respect to the tasks described in the Scope of Work. Please refer to Section I.H and Addendum 2.

In the example described in the question, $1.5 million is under the minimum award amount of $2 million and would not be eligible for award.

***Maximum Number of Applications***

**Q4:** **Can the project identified in the Blueprint be applied to another similar location at another company site if using the model outlined in the Blueprint? Similarly, can we include other California locations we operate in if those sites weren't mentioned in the blueprint? For example, we mentioned 3 of the 6 sites we operate in California.**

A4: Applicants must identify the portion of the Final Blueprint to be implemented, and project proposals must include actionable and implementable infrastructure deployment with measurable outcomes. Activities that the Applicant proposes to implement must be consistent with those identified in the Final Blueprint.

 Under Project Readiness and Implementation of the Evaluation Criteria (Section IV.E.2, “The proposed project is described within the completed, submitted and CEC-approved Final MDHD Blueprint, with references to, but not limited to, potential site locations, identification of fuel type, and number and types of infrastructure to be installed.” Therefore, the Applicant could potentially replicate the “proposed project” described within the CEC-approved Final MDHD Blueprint at multiple site locations even if not identified in the Final MDHD Blueprint. The proposed project will be evaluated on the degree to which the actions and milestones needed for installation and deployment of MDHD charging or hydrogen refueling infrastructure are identified.

**Q5:** **Can an Applicant only apply for one site per application, or can an application contain multiple sites?**

A5: Applicants may submit one application for multiple sites. Additionally, Applicants may submit multiple applications for multiple sites. However, if submitting multiple applications, each application must contain a separate and distinct project, meaning there is no overlap between applications with respect to the tasks described in the Scope of Work. Please refer to Section I.H and Addendum 2.

**Q6: If a single entity wanted to implement a Group 1 EV project AND a Group 2 Hydrogen project at the same property, would this need to be one or two separate applications?**

A6: A single entity would need to submit two separate applications, one for EV funding and another for H2 funding. See Section 1.G Minimum and Maximum Award Amounts, which states: "If an Applicant plans to submit an application for a project that focuses on installing charging infrastructure, and another separate and distinct application for a project that focuses on installing hydrogen refueling infrastructure, the Applicant can be eligible for the maximum award amount in both groups, totaling $10 million."

***Eligibility Requirements***

**Q7:** **Are fast marine chargers for electric marine vessels, such as small passenger ferries tow boats, and workboats eligible to apply for this GFO?**

A7: Fast marine chargers for electric marine vessels may be eligible under this solicitation provided the Applicant developed and submitted a Final Blueprint under GFO-20-601 and the project meets all the requirements in the solicitation.

There is a full range of entities that were awarded in the initial GFO-20-601 funding to develop a blueprint for a zero-emission transition. Off/Non-Road applications (construction, ag, etc.) may be eligible under this solicitation.

**Q8:**  **Who is eligible for funding under GFO-23-603?**

A8: Please refer to Section II.A.1 Eligibility of the solicitation manual. This solicitation is open to all entities listed on the Notice of Proposed Awards (NOPA) for GFO-20-601 the “Blueprints for Medium and Heavy Duty Zero-Emission Vehicle and Technology Infrastructure” solicitation that have completed, submitted, and received CEC-approval of their Final Blueprint. This solicitation is also open to any commercial fleets identified as a case study or with an infrastructure analysis completed in a GFO-20-601 project, if a Final Blueprint has been completed, submitted, and CEC-approved.

**Q9:** **Are only those entities who applied to the GFO-20-601 eligible for this new solicitation or is it any Applicant?**

A9: Entities listed on the Notice of Proposed Awards (NOPA) for GFO-20-601 the “Blueprints for Medium and Heavy Duty Zero-Emission Vehicle and Technology Infrastructure” solicitation that have completed, submitted, and received CEC-approval of their Final Blueprint are eligible to submit an application to this funding opportunity. Please refer to Section II.A Applicant Requirements for full list of eligible applicants.

In addition to the entities listed in Section II.A Applicant Requirements, commercial fleets identified as a case study or with an infrastructure analysis completed in a GFO-20-601 project are eligible to apply if the Final Blueprint has been completed, submitted, and CEC-approved by the application deadline listed in the “Key Activities and Dates” table in Section I.D No other entities are eligible to apply.

**Q10:** **How can I be eligible for this type of GFO-20-601 Blueprint funding in the future?**

A10: CEC encourages entities who may be interested in future blueprint funding opportunities to subscribe to CEC’s [Subscription Topics](https://www.energy.ca.gov/subscriptions) (https://www.energy.ca.gov/subscriptions) to be notified when funding workshops are held to provide comment and when CEC releases future funding opportunities. (Subscription Topics: Transportation Energy – Clean Transportation Program; Commission General Topics – Solicitations and Awards Announcements Only (GFO, RFP, RFQ, IFB, NOPA, NOS))

**Q11:** **When would a grant recipient from GFO-20-601 Planning Blueprint need to submit their Final Blueprint to the Commission Agreement Manager (CAM) for approval to be able to meet the application submission deadline for the GFO-23-603 solicitation?**

A11: The Final Blueprint **MUST** be completed, successfully submitted, and approved by CEC CAM by the application submission deadline of November 13, 2023. Please refer to the “Key Activities and Dates” in Section I.D of the solicitation manual.

**Q12: The solicitation manual indicates that eligible Applicants must have completed, submitted, and received CEC approval of their Final Blueprint by the time they submit their grant application. Is that strictly the Final Blueprint or does that also include the Final Report (or does the project need to be closed out altogether)?**

A12: This solicitation is open to all entities listed on the NOPA for GFO-20-601 that have completed, submitted, and received CEC-approval of their Final Blueprint document. Additional deliverables, such as but not limited to, the Final Report, Final Fact Sheet, Final Meeting and Schedule of Close-Out Activities may be completed after the application submission deadline of November 13, 2023. However, please note that the degree to which the Applicant has successfully fulfilled the requirements of previous agreements will be evaluated as part of the evaluation criteria under this solicitation.

**Q13:** **Did you have to be part of the pre-solicitation workshop titled “Staff Workshop on Funding Allocations for Future Medium- and Heavy-Duty Charging and Refueling Infrastructure Projects”, which took place on February 28, 2022, to participate in this solicitation?**

A13: No, the pre-solicitation workshop was an informational workshop that was open to all public and private entities.

**Q14: Can you please provide information regarding the process to get a Final Blueprint approved so that entities not listed on the GFO-20-601 NOPA may be eligible for this solicitation?**

A14: Entities not listed on the GFO-20-601 NOPA or not identified as a commercial fleet as a case study, as part of one of the entity’s blueprints resulting from the GFO-20-601 NOPA, are not eligible to apply to GFO-23-603.

Entities who were awarded funding under GFO-20-601 developed and drafted a blueprint planning document for MDHD ZEVs and infrastructure to aid in the fleet’s transition to zero-emission. All tasks associated with the funding from GFO-20-601 were related to aiding in the development of the planning blueprint. Each awarded project was required to submit a draft and final blueprint, at which time the CAM reviewed the documents to provide edits, feedback, and approval.

**Q15:** **What constitutes CEC approval once the Blueprint is submitted and what does that timeline look like?**

A15: CEC approval of a submitted blueprint means that the CAM has reviewed and verified that all due deliverables have been submitted, and all requirements in the solicitation and agreements are met. This process timeline could vary from one agreement to the other, depending on the grant agreement Scope of Work.

**Q16:** **Can we create a blueprint, and if approved by the CEC prior to the deadline listed, apply to this solicitation? Or would we need to have applied to GFO-20-601, been awarded a grant agreement through GFO-20-601, and completed a blueprint under GFO-20-601 to be eligible?**

A16: To be eligible to apply to GFO-23-603, Applicants must have applied to GFO-20-601, been awarded a grant agreement through GFO-20-601, and completed, submitted, and received CEC approval for an MDHD blueprint by the application deadline. Additionally, any commercial fleets identified as a case study or with an infrastructure analysis completed in a GFO-20-601 project are eligible to apply if the Final Blueprint has been completed, submitted, and CEC-approved by the application deadline.

**Q17:** **Can groups that did not submit a blueprint participate as a partner with one of the eligible Applicants?**

A17: Yes, as long as all other solicitation eligibility criteria are being met.

**Q18:** **Are there any solicitations available for truck stop chains with multiple sites in California, most if not all of which are located in corridors by major Interstates?**

A18: Please refer to the CEC’s solicitation: [GFO-23-602](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2023-09/gfo-23-602-charging-and-refueling-infrastructure-transport-california), Charging and Refueling Infrastructure for Transport in CALifornia Provided Along Targeted Highway Segments (CRITICAL PATHS). Solicitation information can be found here: https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2023-09/gfo-23-602-charging-and-refueling-infrastructure-transport-california.

***Eligible Reimbursable and Match Share Costs***

**Q19: Can project funding be applied to utility substation upgrades needed to increase capacity to provide service to a proposed MDHD charging/hydrogen project?**

A19: Potentially, funding could be applied to a utility substation upgrade needed to increase capacity to provide service to a proposed MDHD charging or hydrogen project; however, applicants should contact their utility to determine if utility funding programs will cover the cost.

**Q20: Is there a restriction on the kind of match funding? For example, could another federal or state grant serve as match?**

A20: Other state, local, and federal funding may be claimed as match share; however, other sources of CEC funding may not be claimed as match share. While Applicants may be able to stack other federal and state funds, Applicants should read and pay particular attention to the terms and conditions of other funding programs. Please see Section II.D.4 for a list of all match share restrictions.

**Q21: How do you find the commercial fleets that were identified as a case study?**

A21: Commercial fleets were identified as case studies in some of the completed and CEC approved final blueprints submitted by some grant recipients from the prior GFO-20-601.

**Q22:** **The solicitation mentions using "unloaded" hourly rates. Does that mean fringe or indirect costs are not eligible? If not, then can these costs count towards the match? Are subrecipients defined as project partners or as third-party contractors?**

A22: The CEC defines Direct Labor as “unloaded” labor rates, meaning the base rate calculated without fringe benefits, indirect overhead, general & administrative, or any added-on costs. This is the salary or wage rate that is actually paid to the employee. That means hourly rates must not contain fringe and indirect rates as one.

While fringe and indirect rates may not be claimed as Direct Labor, these rates may be separated from Direct Labor and claimed as reimbursable or match expenditures in separate budget categories.

Expenditures for an Applicant’s compensated labor hours, including allowable fringe benefit and overhead rates, travel, materials, supplies, equipment, subrecipient costs, and other miscellaneous expenditures may be claimed as cash match if the expenditures are included in the approved agreement budget.

 Unlike subrecipients, who receive some CEC funds from the project, project partners are providing support for the proposed project but will not be incurring any expenses toward the project. Match funding from either a subrecipient or a project partner is an in-kind match share contribution.

**Q23:**  **Is shore power (EV charging) for tugboats an eligible project?**

A23: Shore power for tugboats may be an eligible project if identified in a completed blueprint. All proposed projects must include the installation, deployment, and demonstration of electric vehicle (EV) charging or hydrogen refueling infrastructure that has been identified in a completed, submitted and CEC-approved Final Blueprint developed under GFO-20-601.

**Q24:** **Can engineering and design include futureproofing for shore power?**

A24: Without knowing the full details of this project, engineering and design could include futureproofing for shore power. All proposed projects must include the installation, deployment, and demonstration of EV charging or hydrogen refueling infrastructure that has been identified in a completed, submitted and CEC-approved Final Blueprint developed under GFO-20-601.

**Q25: Do electrical/utility upgrades need to be directly tied to charging units deployed under this grant? Or can an Applicant perform upgrades that may help to support additional charging units in the future?**

A25: Utility service upgrades and stub-outs are eligible project costs under this solicitation. The proposed project will be evaluated on the degree to which the Applicant and/or project team will work with local utilities, permitting agencies, and/or stakeholders to ensure that the project progresses in a smooth and timely manner.

**Q26:** **Can you please provide more details on what “installation costs”**  **include for hydrogen refueling stations?**

A26: Installation costs are the costs incurred to install purpose-built refueling infrastructure to accommodate any commercial fuel cell vehicle fleet. Eligible costs may include, but are not limited to, alterations to land, materials, labor, engineering, and any processes necessary to connect the equipment and make it operational, such as electrical work.

**Q27:** **Can equipment for Group 2 include a liquid hydrogen storage tank?**

A27: Yes, liquid hydrogen storage tanks / cryogenic tanks are eligible costs for Group 2.

**Q28: The solicitation discusses what is defined as a cash match. With this context, is a tax credit considered to be a "discount or rebate"?**

A28: The savings from discounts on goods or services purchased for a grant agreement project are not allowed to be counted as Match Share expenses. The reason that discounts cannot be counted, which a recipient or subrecipient negotiates with a vendor, is because the recipient or subrecipient did not incur the cost of the savings that resulted from the discount.

However, if tax credit funds are actually expended by the Applicant for the project, this may be considered cash match. Expenditures for Applicant’s compensated labor hours, including allowable fringe benefit and overhead rates, travel, materials, supplies, equipment, subrecipient costs, and other miscellaneous expenditures may be claimed as cash match if the expenditures are included in the approved agreement budget, paid in full with funding sources other than grant funds, and supported with appropriate documentation, including proof of payment.

**Q29: What goes into planning and engineering design under eligible project costs?**

A29: Activities that go into planning and engineering design include creating design documents for permitting, construction, and as-built design. CEC will not reimburse expenditures for permitting or insurance; however, these expenditures can be included as match share expenditures.

**Q30:** **Project management, Engagement and Outreach are listed as not eligible for CEC reimbursement but may be included as an Applicant’s match share as eligible match. Why aren’t staff time and overhead eligible reimbursable project costs?**

A30: Please see Addendum 2. Project management and engagement and outreach are now eligible for reimbursement; however, eligible reimbursable costs for project management, engagement and outreach, and workforce development and training may not exceed 5% of total CEC grant funds.

***Past Performance Reference Form***

**Q31:** **Do we need to provide past performance reference forms for subrecipients as well as project partners?**

A31: No, Past Performance Reference Forms should be provided for the Prime Applicant and/or subrecipients that have received a CEC agreement (e.g., contract, grant, or loan) in the last 10 years, including ongoing agreements, and the five most recent agreements with other public agencies within the past 10 years.

**Q32:** **For Past Performance Review section, do we only need to list agreements from California agencies?**

A32: No, Applicants must complete and submit a separate Past Performance Reference Form for each CEC agreement (e.g., contract, grant, or loan) received by the Applicant in the last 10 years, including ongoing agreements, and the 5 most recent agreements with other public agencies within the past 10 years.

***Miscellaneous***

**Q33:**  **For solicitation GFO-23-603, does the ECAMS site provide a place for the Applicant to attest to the required Applicant Certifications, or does a separate document need to be created and uploaded to ECAMs providing confirmation of the required certifications?**

A33: Yes, ECAMS will require Applicants to provide the required authorizations and certifications prior to final submission of their application (Solicitation Manual Section IIID.1), and a separate document does not need to be created.

**Q34:** **The solicitation requires that the Applicant/application provide quantified greenhouse (GHG) emissions in metric tons. Does CEC have additional information, methods, or suggested approaches on how to calculate emission benefits or equivalent reductions from the infrastructure projects?**

A34: While not required, Applicants may use the GREET model tool to calculate GHG emissions. The [tool](https://afdc.energy.gov/tools) is also available on the Alternative Fuels Data Center’s Tools Page: afdc.energy.gov/tools.

Applicants can also use the California Air Resources Board’s [calculation methodology](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/low-carbon-fuel-standard/lcfs-guidance-documents-user-guides-and-faqs#guidance) for guidance: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/low-carbon-fuel-standard/lcfs-guidance-documents-user-guides-and-faqs#guidance.

**Q35: Can we obtain a copy of this zoom webinar?**

A35: Yes, a [link](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2023-10/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-603-implementation-medium-and-heavy) to the pre-application workshop zoom recording is posted on the solicitation event page found here: <https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2023-10/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-603-implementation-medium-and-heavy>.

**Q36:** **Can the applicant subcontract with other entities to own the infrastructure? (For example, a** **terminal subcontracts to a port authority or city, which ultimately owns the infrastructure)?**

A36: It depends on who the CEC grant Applicant and/or grant recipient is. An Applicant is defined as at least one of the following: the business, principal investigator, or lead individual acting on behalf of themselves. Should an Applicant be awarded a grant from this solicitation, the Applicant will become a grant recipient (Solicitation Manual Section V.A).

Title to equipment acquired by the grant recipient with grant funds shall vest in the grant recipient. However, the recipient may encumber the equipment, to allow a subcontractor to own the infrastructure, with CAM approval.

**Q37: What will be the period of performance required from applicants for this solicitation?**

A37: All work must be scheduled for completion by no later than **March 31, 2028,** to allow timely processing of final invoices before the liquidation date of CEC funds (Solicitation Manual Section III.D.4).