**Questions and Answers**

GFO-24-302

Enabling Electric Vehicles as Distributed Energy Resources

November **22**[~~12~~], 2024

The most up-to-date solicitation documents (including the solicitation manual) are available at the solicitation webpage: [GFO-24-302 - Enabling Electric Vehicles as Distributed Energy Resources](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-10/gfo-24-302-enabling-electric-vehicles-distributed-energy-resources)

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 their proposed project is eligible for funding by reviewing the Eligibility Requirements within the solicitation. The CEC cannot give advice as to whether 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). The solicitation manual is Attachment 00 found on the webpage linked above.

# **Technical Questions**

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| **#** | **Question** | **Answer** |
| 1 | **Can Group 2 projects use CHAdeMO-based EVSE technology?** | There are no restrictions regarding the use of EVSE charging protocol or connectors, but all technology developed in Group 2 projects should align with the CEC's [Statement on Charging Interoperability](https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=253106). |
| 2 | **Which standards, certifications, and qualifications should the submetering be compliant to?** | All technologies developed under Group 3 should align with the requirements set forth by the CPUC in decision 22-08-024.  The technologies should also align with the CEC's [Statement on Charging Interoperability](https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=253106) where applicable. |
| 3 | **For Group 3, can the submeter be embedded into an adapter plugged between EV and EVSE, or must be embedded into an EVSE only?** | For Group 3, there is no specificity on submeter location and, as such, the submeter is not required to be embedded in an EVSE. The solicitation seeks to fund projects that address the barriers and advance innovative, accurate, robust, and cost-effective submetering solutions with the potential to increase vehicle-grid integration (VGI) adoption. |
| 4 | **Is group 2 intended to be for the distribution of DC V2G technologies? Or are technologies that would better allow access to the benefits of AC V2G allowed as well?** | Group 2 does not prescribe the use of AC or DC for V2G. Either could be submitted under Group 2 if the overall project meets the requirements of the group. |
| 5 | **What standards do EVSE have to comply with?** | All EVSE developed and used in these projects should align with the CEC's [Statement on Charging Interoperability](https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/GetDocument.aspx?tn=253106) where applicable. |
| 6 | **What TRL is required for Group 2 and Group 3?** | There is no entrance TRL requirement for Groups 2 and 3, but projects are expected to have measurable technology advancements and achieve between TRL 3-5 at the completion of the project. Group 2 and 3 are targeted at applied research and development and are defined in Section II.B.1 as activities that support pre-commercial technologies and approaches that are designed to solve specific problems in the electricity sector. |
| 7 | **For Group 2 and Group 3 demonstrations, what TRL is required?** | Demonstrations are not required for Group 2 and 3. If they are included in the proposal, projects are still expected to end between TRL 3-5 in order to align with the definition of applied research and development in Section II.B.1. (Refer to question 6) |
| 8 | **What does a solution to Group 3 include? Submeter? Or MDMA? Is it just a bidirectional meter? Hardware vs Software vs mix?** | Requirements for Group 3 can be found on pages 9 through 11 of the solicitation manual. Example project concepts can also be found in that section and should provide insight into the type of projects that could be funded under Group 3. |
| 9 | **Is this intended to be a grant to develop grid connected technology or are remote, off grid charging devices not considered appropriate?** | This solicitation is funded by the EPIC 4 Investment plan and responds to the strategic objective of increasing the value proposition of distributed energy resources to customers and the grid. Technologies developed through this grant should aim to enable the use of electric vehicles as grid-connected distributed energy resources that could directly benefit California electricity ratepayers. |
| 10 | **Is developing software for economic management of a remote, off-grid charger an appropriate topic?** | Please refer to questions 9. |

# **Funding/Eligible Costs/Match Questions**

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| 11 | **What budget details are needed in the pre-application abstract?** | The budget requirements for inclusion in the abstract can be found in attachment A. These include the estimated project budget, estimated CEC funding request, and questions in section III. |
| 12 | **Could be the costs for certifications and qualifications be allowed?** | Technology development and testing costs associated with product readiness for relevant certifications are eligible expenses under this solicitation.  The direct costs for the certification would not be eligible for CEC reimbursement, but could be included as a match contribution. |
| 13 | **Other than the EVs themselves, are there any other unallowable costs?** | CEC funds cannot be used for purchasing/renting/leasing EVs. For other unallowable costs refer to the [ECAMS resources page](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources/ecams-resources) and the Research and Development [EPIC terms and conditions](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources/ecams-resources). |
| 14 | **For Group 2, are software development, hardware development, and EVSE (hardware) costs eligible for reimbursement?** | Yes. All three costs would be eligible for reimbursement. |
| 15 | **Can you please clarify the restrictions on indirect costs allowed in the budget? I see in the GFO manual C.12.3 that the rates proposed are NTE rates. However, I don’t see anything regarding restrictions on the proposed rates themselves. From the budget template, it looks like we can use a federally approved rate, a 10% de minimus rate, or a cost allocation plan. Can you please provide more information regarding this?** | A recipient may choose one of three options for indirect costs: federally approved indirect rate, CEC de minimus rate, or the recipient’s cost allocation plan. Additional information on the requirements for each choice along with examples can be found on the [ECAMS budget guidance](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources/ecams-resources/budget-category-guidance?auHash=cEItgat6JNbO9BFGeVqe4E5T6koCOgTaqliFX6bmwtg) page under the *Indirect Cost & Profit* section. |
| 16 | **If the applicant/OEM partner is located outside California, how will the California Energy Commission's fund utilization be managed ?** | The recipient will invoice periodically, according to expenses listed in the agreement budget, and they will be reimbursed for those expenses at the time of invoice submission. It is the responsibility of the prime recipient to distribute these reimbursed funds to their project partners.  This process is not changed by a recipient being located outside of California. However, depending on where the funds are spent, it could impact the recipient’s score in Section IV.H Criterion 6 *CEC Funds Spent in California*.Please refer to the solicitation manual for more details. |
| 17 | **Is the prime applicant only eligible to receive CEC fund? In case, prime applicant is bidding in partnership, will project partner get the CEC fund?** | The CEC will only issue reimbursements to the prime recipient. These reimbursements can include expenses incurred by project partners in support of the project. It is the responsibility of the prime recipient to enter into agreements with project partners and manage distribution of these reimbursed funds to their project partners. |
| 18 | **Would we as researchers in Idaho be eligible to hire a graduate student for this research who works remotely and takes classes remotely?**  **Would this grant pay tuition if the student studies entirely within California and purchases equipment, books, and incidentals In California?** | Tuition for a student enrolled in a California university and their direct labor are allowable expenses. The student’s equipment, books, and incidentals are not allowable expenses. |

# **General Project Requirements/Miscellaneous Questions**

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| 19 | **Are lands controlled by NON-federally recognized, (but CA native tribes) qualified as the disadvantaged priority population locations?** | SB535 charges CalEPA with the responsibility of designating DACs and in CalEPA's designations, non-federally recognized tribes are not considered DACs. |
| 20 | **Would it be possible to see a list of potential applicants via the sign-up list for this workshop or account creation for this GFO?** | The attendee list is posted on the GFO webpage, along with the slides and link to the recording, shortly after the workshop. The [Empower Innovation](https://www.empowerinnovation.net/en/custom/funding/view/44777) platform would also be a great resource for finding project partners. |
| 21 | **Does the GIS map identify federally recognized tribal lands? and/or non-federally recognized tribal lands?** | The GIS map shows tribal lands designated by CalEPA. |
| 22 | **Are there any particular use cases, rates, or programs that the CEC encourages Group 2 projects to test?** | Applicants are encouraged to refer to the Project Focus section of the solicitation manual (I.C) for project examples and requirements for the specific groups. |
| 23 | **Do we need utility/municipality partnerships in order to qualify? Or if our technology is in prototype or early stage use is that sufficient for our application?** | There is no requirement to have a utility or municipality as a project partner. However, any demonstrations must be located in a California electric IOU service territory. |
| 24 | **If we have a utility that was willing to be part of our demo application of the technology? Do they have to be in-state? Or could they be out of state?** | Demonstration sites must be located within a California electric IOU service territory.  For lab testing, there no specific restriction regarding location. However, one of the core outcomes of these projects must be technology that can be deployed in California. Therefore, all projects must comply with CA-specific requirements for deployment as appropriate. |
| 25 | **Where can we find any currently operating EVITPs?** | The EVITP webpage has a contractor search tool: <https://evitp.org/california> |
| 26 | **Can you clarify what is specifically due on Nov. 22? Just the abstract?** | Attachment A – Pre-Application Project Abstract (5 pages) and the accompanying letters of commitment (not subject to page limit) are due on November 22, 2024. |
| 27 | **If new intellectual properties are generated or invented through CEC-funded projects, who owns the IPs? CEC or the applicants?** | The recipient will own all intellectual property (IP) developed under the grant agreement; however, the CEC may be entitled to royalties. This information can be found in the [EPIC GRANT STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/EPIC_Grant_Ex_C_Standard_General_TCs_ECAMS_compliant_2023-11-29_ada.pdf). Sections 19, 20, and 21 cover pre-existing and independently funded IP, IP, and royalty payments to CEC, respectively. |
| 28 | **Can demonstration projects be customers of a community choice aggregator (CCA) or do they need to be a direct customers of an IOU?** | Demonstration sites must be located in a California electric IOU service territory. A CCA customer would qualify as long as their site is located within the California electric IOU service territory. |
| 29 | **Could an applicant for this GFO also serve as a tech or software vendor on GFO-20-305 - The Next EPIC Challenge: Reimagining Affordable Mixed-Use Development in a Carbon-Constrained Future?** | Yes. There is no restriction against working on multiple CEC grants concurrently. However, applicants cannot use funding from one GFO to work on another GFO, and the previous funding cannot be used as match share on an upcoming application. |
| 30 | **For Group 1, if we use our customer dataset to generate new knowledge for policy makers, is it mandatory to share the dataset with CEC after projects?** | The customer dataset would not need to be shared with the CEC. The new knowledge and results of the analyses would be included in products submitted to CEC and are public domain, unless they are marked as confidential during agreement development stage. More details can be found in section 18 and 26 of the [EPIC GRANT STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/EPIC_Grant_Ex_C_Standard_General_TCs_ECAMS_compliant_2023-11-29_ada.pdf). |
| 31 | **It is not clear if an Executive Summary can/should per the Pre-App Abstract, be submitted for Phase 1.** | The only items due for phase 1 are Attachment A – Pre-Application Project Abstract (5 pages) and the accompanying letters of commitment (not subject to page limit).  The Executive Summary is required as part of the full application for Phase 2. |
| 32 | **For Group 2, are EVSE and EV original equipment manufacturer (OEM) partners both required?** | Yes. Group 2 projects are required to demonstrate the technology in a lab environment with an EVSE OEM **and** electric vehicle OEM project partners. |
| 33 | **For Group 2, is sales and marketing considered a partner level for OEMs?** | Group 2 projects are required to demonstrate the technology in a lab environment with an EVSE OEM and electric vehicle OEM project partners.  The OEM is intended to participate as a partner in the research and development of the project. The sales and marketing department of an OEM may help with the acquisition of a demonstration vehicle, but would likely not make significant contributions to the research. |
| 34 | **Are preference points available for the prime bidder being a certified Diverse Business Enterprise, or for the utilization of DBEs as subcontractors?** | The preference points available for this GFO are included in criterion 8 of the Scoring Criteria, *Disadvantaged & Low-Income Communities*. |
| 35 | **How necessary are letters of commitment for the pre-application?** | There are no specific evaluation criteria for letters of commitment during Phase 1. However, letters of commitment from project partners and stakeholders can highlight the strength of the project team and proposal. Similarly, letters of commitment from demonstration sites would convey a high level of project readiness. |
| 36 | **Is there any detail provided about whether CEC would be entitled to the IP if generated specifically under the grant?** | Please refer to Question 29. Additionally, information regarding IP can be found in the [EPIC GRANT STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/EPIC_Grant_Ex_C_Standard_General_TCs_ECAMS_compliant_2023-11-29_ada.pdf). Sections 19, 20, and 21 cover pre-existing and independently funded IP, IP, and Royalty payments to CEC, respectively. |
| 37 | **Is the RFP is open to participants outside of  California ?** | Yes. However, project demonstration sites must be located within a California electric IOU service territory. |
| 38 | **For Groups 1, 2, and 3, should applicants submit individual applications for each group, or can they consolidate everything into one application?** | Applicants must submit one application per project.  If the applicant submits more than one application for the same project group, each application must be for a distinct project (i.e., no overlap with respect to the tasks described the Pre-Application Project Abstract, Attachment A).  If the projects are not distinct and the applications were submitted at the same time, only the first application screened by the CEC will be eligible for funding. If the applications were submitted separately, only the first application received by the CEC will be eligible for funding. |
| 39 | **Are these community-based requirements specific to the California, or can they be from anywhere in USA?** | The EPIC program is intended to benefit California IOU ratepayers. The benefits must therefore be focused on communities in California. |
| 40 | **Need clarification on whether the site for pilot testing, demonstration, or deployment activity should be in California/USA?** | Pilot testing, demonstrations, or demonstration sites must be located within a California electric IOU service territory. |
| 41 | **Is it mandatory for the applicant to be present in California for undertaking Group 1 activity?** | The prime or other project partners do not have to be located in California. Applicants are encouraged to review the Scoring Criteria (section IV.H) to see how the funds spent in California criteria impacts application scoring. |
| 42 | **We are working on a concept for a project related to GFO-24-302, and would like to know if investor-owned utilities (PG&E, SCE, SDG&E) are able to be part of a project team, contribute project match and/or receive EPIC grant funding?** | [~~California investor-owned utilities (IOUs) can be part of a project team and provide match contributions. They cannot receive any CEC funding for project activities.~~]  **This solicitation is open to all public and private entities with the exception of publicly owned electric utilities.**  **California investor-owned utilities (IOUs) can be part of a project team for GFO-24-302, contribute project match, and receive EPIC grant funding.**  Please refer to section II.A.1 of the solicitation manual for additional eligibility requirements. |