# Questions and Answers

**GFO-24-501**

**Paving the Way for California’s Gas Transition**

**May 14, 2025**

The following answers are based on California Energy Commission (CEC) staff’s interpretation of the questions received during the pre-application workshop and those submitted in writing as of 5 p.m. on April 10, 2025. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to review the purpose of the solicitation and to determine if the proposed project is eligible for funding by reviewing the Eligibility Requirements within the solicitation manual. The CEC cannot give advice as to whether a particular project is eligible for funding, because not all proposal details are known.

Please note that the application period has been extended from that outlined in the original release. These new dates are shown in the Solicitation Manual addendum, available at the GFO-24-501 website ([here](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2025-03/gfo-24-501-paving-way-californias-gas-transition)).

### General/Administrative Questions

##### **Q1: What is the timeline for the grant application and award? What is the timeline for an awarded project?**

A1: Please see Section I.E: Key Activities Schedule in the Solicitation Manual for a summary of dates related to application timeline and anticipated grant timeline. The date specified for Deadline to Submit Application has been extended from the original date, as shown in that section.

## **Q2: Where are the application attachments?**

A2: Application attachments are posted on the GFO-24-501 website: <https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2025-03/gfo-24-501-paving-way-californias-gas-transition>.

**Q3: What is the last date I can email questions about this GFO?**

A3: The last date to submit technical questions about the solicitation was April 10, 2025. Applicants can submit administrative questions to the Commission Agreement Officer at Marissa.Sutton@energy.ca.gov until the application deadline.

##### **Q4: Will the CEC allow project teams to propose schedules that are shorter in duration than the period specified Solicitation Manual?**

A4: Yes, the CEC welcomes considering projects that end earlier than the timeframe outlined in the Solicitation Manual.

##### **Q5: Are there maximum rates set by the CEC?**

A5: There are no maximum rates set by the CEC. Please see IV.F Scoring Criteria 5: Budget and Cost-Effectiveness (p. 46 of the Solicitation Manual) for information on how grant application budgets, including labor rates, are assessed. Please also see the instructions for Budget Forms (pp. 31-33 of the Solicitation Manual) for details on the conditions on proposed rates, as well as the instructions in Attachment 6.

##### **Q6: How is cost-effectiveness determined? Does it assess whether a person is paid too much?**

A6: Please see the answer to the preceding question. The [ECAMS Resources](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources/ecams-resources) page provides information on rates in the [Budget Category Guidance](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources/ecams-resources/budget-category-guidance) section. For an explanation of the three indirect rate options available to Recipients, please refer to the [ECAMS Recipient Training slide deck](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/Intro_to_ECAMS_Recipient_Training_ADA.pptx). Additional details can be found in the [Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources/ecams-resources/ecams-frequently-asked-questions) section of the [ECAMS Resources](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources/ecams-resources) page. Also, please abide by the relevant PIER Terms and Conditions for Grants available [on this page](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources).

##### **Q7: Are funds associated with research contracts granted by other state agencies permissible for use as match?**

A7: Please see Section I.J: Match Funding of the Solicitation Manual, which indicates “‘Match funds’ do not include CEC awards, future/contingent awards from other entities (public or private), the cost or value of the project work site, or the cost or value of structures or other improvements affixed to the project work site permanently or for an indefinite period of time (e.g. photovoltaic systems).” Please also note that, as stated in the same section, “Cash match can include funding awards earned or received from other agencies for the proposed technologies or study (but not for the identical work).”

**Q8: Are other state agencies permitted to provide letters of commitment and/or support?**
A8: Yes, other state agencies at their discretion are permitted to provide letters of commitment and/or support. Please see Section III.C.9, of the Solicitation Manual, under “Commitment and Support Letter Form,” for more information.

##### **Q9:** **Does the CEC have any social scientists they are willing to recommend for proposed projects?**

A9: The CEC cannot make staffing recommendations for competitive grants. [Empower Innovation](https://www.empowerinnovation.net/) (<https://www.empowerinnovation.net/>) is one resource to explore for locating potential project partners. The page for this solicitation is here: [https://www.empowerinnovation.net/en/custom/funding/view/46515#](https://www.empowerinnovation.net/en/custom/funding/view/46515).

Toward making social sciences expertise easier to specify and find, the CEC has added selections to the Empower Innovation member profile menu categories:

* Members who want to identify themselves as having social sciences expertise can go to their profiles in Empower and make changes in two menus. To do this, go to PROFILE (top menu, drop down under user icon), EDIT MODE. Click in the SKILLS box to bring up the “Skills” menu, and tick “Social Science.” This makes the first change. Then click in the INTERESTED IN box to bring up a second menu, and tick “Social Sciences” to make the second change.
* Those who want to identify parties with social sciences expertise: go to the COMMUNITY dropdown and select MEMBERS. Then type “social science” in the SEARCH box on the middle ribbon.

Please note that these additions are very recent, and it will take time for them to become well-populated.

##### **Q10: Might one entity apply for multiple groups via separate awards?**

A10: Yes, Applicants are permitted to submit separate applications for Group 1 and Group 2, and can submit multiple applications for each group as long as they are distinct. For more information, please refer to the Solicitation Manual, p. 4: “Applicants may submit multiple applications, though each application must address only one of the project groups identified above. If an applicant submits multiple applications that address the same project group, each application must be for a distinct project (i.e., no overlap with respect to the tasks described in the Scope of Work)”.

**Q11: Does the organization submitting the proposal need to be legally based in California?**

A11. As specified in Attachment 11: Applicant Declaration, the “Applicant [must be] registered to do business in California, which typically means with the California Secretary of State, and such registration is in good standing.” The Applicant is not required to be legally based in California. If the Applicant is not registered at the time of application, they cannot sign Attachment 11 unless there is a waiver as described on page 35 of the solicitation manual; the lack of signature would affect scoring.

##### **Q12:** **The Solicitation Manual references submitting electronic copies of an application on a USB key when submitting hard copy but also states that the only method of submitting applications is via the online ECAMS system. Can you confirm that submission is online only (i.e., no USB key or hard copy)? Are wet signatures required?**

A12: Submissions for this solicitation are accepted **only** through the Energy Commission Agreement Management System (ECAMS), as per page 29 of the Solicitation Manual. No wet signatures are required for submission through ECAMS.

##### **Q13: Under what conditions would we need a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for this research grant?**

##### A13: Please see documentation on CEQA requirements provided by the Governor’s Office, <https://lci.ca.gov/ceqa/>. Applicants must complete and submit Attachment 7 in their applications, regardless of whether the proposed activity is considered a “project” as defined in that attachment**.** Activitiesthat are not expected to result in a change to the environment are generally exempt from CEQA. The CEQA section is a standard element of Gas Research and Development solicitation manuals, even in cases where it is expected that proposed efforts will be exempt.

##### **Q14: For a Group 2 application, is the matching grant requirement $40,000 total?**A14: The match requirement is a minimum of 5% of the total CEC funds requested. A grant requesting less than the maximum $800,000 of CEC funds available would thus have a minimum match requirement of less than $40,000. For example, an application requesting $750,000 would be at minimum required to provide $37,500 of match funding to the project. Fo more information on match funding, please see Section I.J: Match Funding of the Solicitation Manual.

**Q15. How will the funding be allocated among different projects and research areas?**

A15**:** Please see Section I.D: Funding of the Solicitation Manual for information on allocation of funds. Within a project, the allocation of funding is left to the judgement of the Applicant.

**Q16: Are there any preferred or required collaboration structures for Applicants? Will there be a required collaboration with the CEC or other parties?**

A16:Please see the Scope of Work template attachment (Attachment 4) available on the [solicitation page](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2025-03/gfo-24-501-paving-way-californias-gas-transition). In that template, the language in TASK 1: GENERAL PROJECT TASKS outlines the minimum requirements for collaboration with CEC and with a Technical Advisory Committee. Also in that template, please see the description of the mandatory KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER ACTIVITIES task.

As noted in Section I.A: Project Focus of the Solicitation Manual, “The goal of this solicitation is to sponsor multidisciplinary and silo-bridging results and tools that help connect high-level transition expectations and programs with the on-the-ground complexity of transitioning away from an incumbent energy system, fossil gas.”

**Q17:** **What are the reporting and documentation requirements for the funded projects?**

A17: Please see the Scope of Work attachment (Attachment 4) for details on reporting and documentation requirements for funded projects.

**Q18: What kind of support or follow-up can applicants expect after the grant period ends?**

A18: The CEC does not have set support structures for executed grants after the grant period ends. Generally, reports of research results from Gas Research and Development iProgram funded project are published on CEC website, [here.](https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/all-publications/energy-research-and-development-reports) The CEC website [Energize Innovation](https://www.energizeinnovation.fund/) (<https://www.energizeinnovation.fund/>) also summarizes CEC research and provides links to published reports. Awardees may be asked to complete a survey after the project ends.

### **Technical Questions**

##### **Q19: Will a winning project proposal team be provided access to the IOU customer electricity and natural gas interval data that is currently being collected by the CEC under Title 20 Section 1353 of the California Code of Regulations?**

A19: Awardees to this solicitation would have access to Title 20 Section 1353 data held by the CEC, presuming the awardee signs non-disclosure agreement(s) and satisfies any other administrative and management requirements.

There are important caveats. First, the Title 20 Section 1353 data now held by CEC **does not include** Interval Meter Data (IMD) for gas. As required in Phase 2 Data Collection Regulations, the CEC does have monthly gas billing data for some gas customers.[[1]](#footnote-2) Phase 3 Data Collection Regulations are expected, but not guaranteed, to secure access to gas IMD data; if so, this could happen within the next year or two. Second, for the Title 20 Section 1353 required data held by CEC, grantees are not allowed to directly access IMD or billing data that could be linked to personally identifiable information (e.g., street address level granularity); rather, they could request appropriate aggregations of this data. This holds true even if the grantee has previously had access to more granular interval meter data as a *contactor* to the CEC.

Applicants wishing to work with IMD are encouraged to consider alternative avenues for accessing this data, such as partnering with gas utilities or making institutional arrangements. Applicants anticipating working with this data should speak to and plan their analyses with careful consideration of the time intervals and measurement unit characteristics available for the areas/premises of interest (e.g., gas IMD may often be available only in daily intervals). As stated in the Solicitation Manual in Section I.C: Project Focus under Group 2 for the Topic 5, Gas Use Analysis, option: “Applicants pursuing this topic should provide details on what gas use data they have at their disposal or are reasonably certain they can obtain in a timeframe congruent with the proposed research” (p. 12).

##### **Q20: Can we focus on a local geography for Group 2, such as one county or one utility? Or is the award meant for a larger geography? What about one region, such as an IOU service territory? Would it work to have some specific fieldwork focused areas?**

A20: Applicants have leeway in geographic scale and scope. They can propose working only in one county or in one region in their Group 2 applications. Applicants should consider that applications will be evaluated with respect to how well they speak to the overall questions raised in the Solicitation Manual (see Section I.A: Purpose of Solicitation and I.C: Project Focus), including their value to informing a statewide gas system transition.

The CEC recognizes that any location will have unique characteristics. Being able to see location- and population-specific details, and to interpret these details as they apply to a transition from fossil gas, are key objectives of this solicitation. Balancing the specificities of the characteristics of any given location(s) or topical focus with overall learning for applicability to a state transition is a central challenge of developing this type of research. The solicitation is intended to provide leeway for applicants to design studies that exploit opportunities and/or to develop creative approaches to addressing this challenge. Applications should provide grounded discussions of applicability, efficacy, and credibility of their approaches with respect to the overall purpose of the solicitation and the relevant project group focus.

For the specific topics in Group 2 for which fieldwork is required, it is not necessary to do fieldwork in all geographic areas that your research intends to address. For projects proposed under Group 2, the minimum requirements include the specification that projects: “prioritize fieldwork and/or use of empirical data” (p. 14 of the Solicitation Manual).

##### **Q21: How can I connect with Investor-Owned Utilities for potential collaboration?**

##### A21: While the CEC does not facilitate coordination with IOUs, one option mentioned at the pre-application workshop was offered by Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) in connection with understanding the needs of disadvantaged communities. Please see the details in the [pre-bid workshop recording](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-03/pre-application-workshop-gfo-24-501-paving-way-californias-gas). For this opportunity, PG&E can be reached at innovation@pge.com, with program details available at [www.pge.com/innovation](http://www.pge.com/innovation).

##### **Q22: Are you supportive of participatory research framework as an effective way of getting good data about a community?**

A22:Applications proposing deployment of a participatory research framework are welcome. Any proposed method should be accompanied by a rationale for the approach or approaches used, including how the approach(es) is appropriate for satisfying the relevant funding group’s Project Focus and addressing the Purpose of Solicitation. In Section I.C: Project Focus, see, for example, the requirements to “Describe analytical and conceptual approaches of data collection and interpretation, including with respect to sampling philosophy and representation of communities with respect to what matters for transitioning away from gas use” (Group 1, p. 10) and “Describe the basic methods as well as analytical and conceptual approaches and logics of data collection and interpretation you will use on the project, including with respect to representation within selected communities or case studies concerning factors at play in transitioning away from gas use” (Group 2, p. 14).

##### **Q23: The solicitation seems to focus on the electrification of building heating systems. In addition to evaluating the decommissioning of residential and commercial gas infrastructure, would it be of interest to this project to also assess gas decommissioning of industrial gas end-use?**

A23: An application that integrates attention to industrial gas use decommissioning and decarbonization, e.g. speaking to a holistic perspective on a transition from fossil gas, is welcome as long as it satisfies other conditions and foci as specified in the Solicitation Manual. The solicitation has no intended emphasis on heating systems versus any other building end use.

The grant funding opportunity does articulate a focus on gas use in residential and commercial applications, as stated in Section I.A: Purpose of Solicitation: “The focus of this solicitation is understanding and supporting both the prerequisites to and impacts of conversion from gas end uses in the residential and commercial sectors, considered in the context of a transition from fossil gas use overall” (p. 2).

Also, opportunities more directly focused on the industrial and power sector aspects of a transition away from gas could become available in forthcoming solicitations funded under the Gas Research and Development Program Budget Plans and Proposed Budget Plans[[2]](#footnote-3) and under the Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) 5 program now in development.[[3]](#footnote-4) To be informed of upcoming funding opportunities, please subscribe to announcements at the CEC’s [Solicitations](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/solicitations) page.

**Q24: Would the CEC be open to, in addition to the main part of gas infrastructure analysis, evaluating the impact of gas decommissioning on the electricity grid? This would be a project deliverable that follows the main part of gas infrastructure analysis.**

A24: The impact of gas decommissioning on California’s electricity grid is in scope insofar as other requirements outlined in the Solicitation Manual are satisfied. Those interested in conducting research on this topic are also encouraged to monitor potential future solicitations; please see answer 23 for information on how to be informed of upcoming funding opportunities and budget/investment plans.

**Q25: Would the CEC be willing to mediate requests for confidential gas infrastructure data from utilities? Also, how should we approach this data ambiguity while writing the grant proposal?**

A25**:** The CEC is often willing to support relevant data requests for grant agreements, though this depends on the request, and support from the CEC does not guarantee successful access to data. However, the CEC cannot compel utilities to release confidential data on gas infrastructure, including potentially sensitive data on detailed locations and characteristics of gas pipelines. Even if a utility prospectively agrees to share confidential data with a grantee, the final arrangement for data sharing would have to be between the requestor’s organization and the utility.

Please see relevant conversations and data linked under the California Public Utilities Commission’s (CPUC) Long-Term Gas Planning Rulemakings R.20-01-007[[4]](#footnote-5) and R.24-09-012,[[5]](#footnote-6) including those related to Senate Bill 1221 requirements.[[6]](#footnote-7)

As to how to handle the ambiguity of data not yet in hand in an application, see Section I.C: Project Focus of the Solicitation Manual, which states: “Where existing data is key to the analysis (for example, in proposing analysis of gas usage data), applicants should indicate whether they currently have access to the data and whether they have the right to use it in the proposed project; if access and/or use rights are not current, outline a promising approach to obtain these rights” (p. 14). One option is getting a commitment from a utility, or forming a partnership with that utility, and including in the application package a letter from that utility outlining its commitment. An applicant could propose a contingency plan in case access to the desired data is not possible timely.

**Q26: Could the planning and feasibility analysis of a microgrid for a housing project in development be an eligible expense under Group 2?**

A26: While we cannot assess the extent to which a particular project concept meets the solicitation focus, the solicitation is focused on empirical data collection and analysis related to gas system decarbonization and decommissioning. While avoiding gas use in a new build is certainly important for successful decommissioning, please also see the details for the topic options outlined in Section I.C: Project Focus; these options often refer to existing gas use. The applicant must provide a credible approach to addressing all required elements of its respective group. If these conditions are satisfied, then planning and feasibility analysis of a microgrid for a housing project would be a reasonable expense.

**Q27: Could the solicitation support creating power plans for mixed use, affordable housing projects?**

A27: The applicant must provide a credible approach to addressing all required elements of its respective group. If these conditions are satisfied, then creating a power plan for a housing project would be a reasonable expense. Please see additional details in the answer to Question 26.

**Q28: Can you provide more detailed information on the specific objectives the CEC hopes to achieve with this grant opportunity?**

A28: Beyond a detailed review of the Solicitation Manual, including Section I.A: Purpose of Solicitation, applicants may find a review of the [Gas Research Program](https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/gas-research-and-development-program) and [Budget Plans](https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/reports/energy-research-and-development-investment-plans-and-annual-reports) useful to understand the Solicitation objectives. Section I.A: Purpose of Solicitation identifies the two gas plan initiatives that are supported by this Solicitation.

**Q29: The solicitation mentions selecting at least three different topics from the list provided for Group 2. Could you elaborate on the desired balance between breadth and depth across these topics?**

A29: It is each Applicant’s responsibility to balance the breadth and depth proposed in its application. All applications will be evaluated based on the scoring criteria provided in the Section IV.E Application Screening and Section IV.F: Application Scoring of the Solicitation Manual. Please see the answer to Question 30 for more information on how CEC evaluates submitted applications.

**Q30: Are you looking for one or two bidders to cover all topics**? **What will the process be if two firms select the same topics within Group 2; what will the CEC do if two teams pick the same topics?**

A30: The CEC expects to grant two awards for Group 2 and does not assume that all topics identified in Section I.C: Project Focus for that group will necessarily be covered. Even if topics overlap across two proposals, the CEC anticipates that the overlap in the proposed research for a given topic addressed by two different teams would likely not be substantial or duplicative. Grants are evaluated and awarded according to the criteria outlined in Section IV: Evaluation and Award Process in the Solicitation Manual, rather than comparatively.

As to the potential case in which there is duplication across two grants recommended for an award, please see Section IV.B.2: Ranking and Notice of Proposed Award of the Solicitation Manual, which states: “In addition to any of its other rights, the CEC reserves the right to […][n]egotiate with successful applicants to modify the project scope, schedules, project team that will receive the award, location, and/or level of funding” (pp. 36-37).

**Q31. What specific policy impacts on stakeholder groups does the CEC prioritize for the results generated from projects under Group 2?**

A31: The Solicitation Manual is intended to be the best guide to support Applicants in designing research that addresses solicitation research priorities, as discussed in Section 1.A: Purpose of Solicitation and in Section I.C: Project Focus. Since the funding is for research grants, the level of specificity articulated in the Solicitation Manual is different than for that for many contracts, in which desired activities and specific impacts tend to be more narrowly outlined or more closely directed by the funding agency.

**Q32. Does the CEC have preferred or required performance metrics specifically relevant to Group 2, such as metrics around customer acceptance, supply chain reliability, or economic impacts on communities?**

A32: The CEC does not have pre-determined performance metrics for Group 2. Proposing metrics that are aligned with the types of progress targeted by the proposed research as well as the scope of CEC’s Gas Research and Development Program is an important element of each Applicant’s proposal. Please see Attachment 10: Project Performance Metrics available on the [solicitation page](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2025-03/gfo-24-501-paving-way-californias-gas-transition) and the instructions for completing this attachment provided in the Solicitation Manual Section III.C: Application Content. Applicants may find a review of recent and ongoing gas decommissioning projects funded by the CEC useful; see the [Energize Innovation](https://www.energizeinnovation.fund/) platform cited above.

1. For further information on Phase 2 Data Collection, see the CEC’s Energy Data Collection Rulemaking page (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/rules-and-regulations/energy-suppliers-reporting/clean-energy-and-pollution-reduction-act-sb-350/energy-data-collection-rulemaking>) and California Energy Commission, 2021, “California Code of Regulations. Title 20. Public Utilities and Energy. Revised July. CC-140-2021-002. <https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2021-07/Title%2020%20Updated%20July%2023%2C%202021.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For information on investment plans, see <https://www.energy.ca.gov/data-reports/reports/energy-research-and-development-investment-plans-and-annual-reports> . For the Gas Research and Development Program, for example see the Proposed Budget Plans for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/publications/2024/gas-research-and-development-program-proposed-budget-plan-fiscal-year-2024-25>) and for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (https://www.energy.ca.gov/publications/2025/gas-research-and-development-program-proposed-budget-plan-fiscal-year-2025-2026) and any updates. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. See the California Public Utility Commission page for the Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) program for information on the EPIC program and ongoing planning for EPIC 5 https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/energyrdd/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. See <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/natural-gas/long-term-gas-planning-rulemaking> including the data summary sections listed at the bottom of the webpage. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. See <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M542/K029/542029029.PDF> and [564385365.PDF](https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M564/K385/564385365.PDF) . [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. For further discussion on potential access to confidential gas system data, see for example, <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M564/K385/564385365.PDF> (April 21, 2025). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)