

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FOR CSI RD&D GRANT SOLICITATION #4

PRIMARY TARGET AREA: SOLAR GRID INTEGRATION

PROCESS

Q1. What are the monthly requirements in terms of reporting for a minimum sized project?

- A. Typically the grantee will have a short check-in telephone call with their grant manager every few weeks to discuss any issues that come up and to track progress. Invoices, including a progress report, can occur monthly or quarterly. A final report is required for all projects and typically reports are done for individual tasks, depending on project size and complexity. The grantee may also be asked to provide PowerPoint Presentations and webinars on their project.

Q2. Is it possible to secure an additional year on the grant term?

- A. The CPUC established the 2 year grant term to bring the research results into the market as quickly as possible. The agreement may be extended for an additional year with no increase/augmentation in the overall grant budget, upon approval by the CPUC and Itron, the CSI RD&D Program Manager.

Q3. The schedule in the solicitation states that the estimated date for approval of grants by the CPUC to be in the November – December 2013 time-frame. Is it likely that the project start date will be in January 2014, or is it likely that it will be a little later?

- A. The schedule in the solicitation is an estimate and dependent on the CPUC's timing for the release a draft and final resolution. Once the resolution is adopted, the grantee will work with Itron, the CSI RD&D Program Manager, to get the grant agreement in place, including the scope of work, budget and project schedule. If these items take a bit more time, actual project start date may not occur until February or March 2014.

ELIGIBILITY

Q4. Is it acceptable to address multiple target areas within one application package?

- A. The primary target area for this solicitation is on grid integration, so all proposals are required to address this target area. There can be several topic areas within grid integration and it is acceptable to include these in a single proposal.

Q5. Are biofuel energy sources an acceptable form of distributed renewables technology?

- A. No, biofuel energy is not eligible under the CSI RD&D Program.

Q6. Will this funding cover "Solar Concentrators and Integration to PV"?

- A. This appears to be an appropriate topic area for CSI RD&D funds.

Q7. Is there any preference with including a field demonstration or laboratory proof of concept or is simulation work is acceptable?

- A. The proof of concept and early research funding has already been allocated to the Solar Energy Research Center (SERC) at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. The CSI RD&D Program, under this solicitation, is

looking for field demonstrations, however if you can make a case for why a demonstration is not appropriate for your proposed project, please go ahead and do so.

Q8. Will the location of the proposer (e.g. outside of California) be a factor in the evaluation? Can an out-of-state firm apply as long as there is a California utility partner?

A. An out-of-state proposer with a California utility is welcome to apply for grant funding. Also, the proposer is allowed to team with a utility outside of California; however it will be essential that the research focus on a topic that is relevant for California and the research products are of value and relevance to utilities in the state.

Q9. To clarify, an entity based outside of CA is eligible to apply as long as there is a CA utility partner?

A. An out-of-state entity can apply for CSI RD&D funding and a California utility partner is not a requirement. Please see the response to Q8 for more information.

Q10. The solicitation includes examples of grid integration research that is near term and focused on the distribution system. Would a longer term project that focuses on future impacts on the generation and transmission system and upstream aspects qualify for funding?

A. The focus of the CSI Program is on the customer-side of the meter and the research time-line for results from the CSI RD&D Program is in the 3-5 year time-frame. A proposal that focuses on transmission aspects or a longer-time frame for results will not be excluded from being evaluated, but the proposer will need to make a case for how the proposed project addresses the goals of the CSI Program.

Q11. Can public-owned utilities apply for CSI RD&D funds?

A. Yes.

Q12. "Demonstrations that support the quantification of costs/benefits of integrating IDSM, energy efficiency, demand response and storage with PV." What is meant by "demonstrations" in this context? Are field demonstrations with hardware required? Must all of the above technologies be included?

A. Demonstrations can be done for a product, practice or tool and are intended to provide data on the performance, barriers and viability of the project in a real-world application. In the context of the above example, a field demonstration of a market-ready (or near market-ready) product, tool or practice can provide valuable information on barriers and opportunities are for integration of energy efficiency, demand response and energy storage with PV. Hardware may not be necessary for conducting a field demonstration and not all of the above mentioned technologies are required to be included.

FUNDING

Q13. Can match funding be provided by another rate-payer funded distributed generation incentive program such as the SGIP?

A. No. Funds from any solar incentive program (CSI, NSHP, SGIP or POU etc.) do not qualify as match.

Q14. Regarding the \$200,000 minimum proposal amount, does that include the 50% match? In other words, is a \$200,000 project \$100,000 of CSI RD&D funds and \$100,000?

A. No, the minimum proposal amount is \$200,000 of requested CSI RD&D funds and \$200,000 in match funds.

- Q15. Please clarify that the total matching grant cannot exceed \$750K or \$1.5million.*
- A. The minimum amount of match funding required for this solicitation is 50% of the total project (project = CSI RD&D fund request + match funds). There is no upper limit placed on match funding. Contribution of match funding is a scoring criteria and projects with a higher proportion of match funding which is also well substantiated through supporting documentation, receive a higher score than those that only bring in the minimum amount of match required for the solicitation.
- Q16. Will equipment purchase by a proposer be considered cost share?*
- A. Yes.
- Q17. Will equipment purchases be considered more favorable if the required matched funds are exceeded?*
- A. Equipment purchases will be viewed most favorably if they are paid for by sources other than the CSI RD&D grant and used to meet the match funding obligation.
- Q18. Is it acceptable to use federal funds from the DOE's SunShot Initiative as cost share under this solicitation?*
- A. Yes.
- Q19. If a budget for a group solar installation where CSI RD&D funds would be used for 20% of the total budget with the remaining 80% as match funding coming from homeowners who commit to doing upgrades to their homes – would this fall into the realm of equipment?*
- A. If the 20% from CSI RD&D funds is used to purchase equipment, than yes.
- Q20. Do commitments by homeowners to do upgrades to their homes count as match funding?*
- A. This may count as match funding if the proposer makes a case for it in their proposal and includes sufficient documentation for this match funding.
- Q21. Can match funds be committed once the project receives funding, or do match funding commitments need to be included with the proposal?*
- A. No, the match funding commitment and documentation must be included in the proposal and the match must be incurred during the term of the grant.
- Q22. Can grant funds from the California Energy Commission be used as match?*
- A. Yes. Please provide supporting documentation on the award and relevant scope.
- Q23. Can the match funding be from an ongoing (current) project?*
- A. The match funding must be accrued during the term of the proposed project and must also be related to the proposed project. If your current project has an overlapping time frame with the term of your grant (should you be awarded one) and the projects are related, than you can count the non-CSI RD&D funded expenditures as match.
- Q24. Can existing solar equipment be accepted for match funding?*
- A. Match funding must be accrued during the term of the grant, so existing equipment does not qualify as acceptable match.
- Q25. Does leasing equipment for the project duration count as an equipment purchase?*

- A. No, assuming the equipment is both essential for the research project and the grantee does not take ownership of the equipment. Renting or leasing equipment is the preferred option to obtaining equipment that is critical to the research project.

Q26. Will this award support the purchase and demonstration of advanced PV tracking technologies?

- A. Not necessarily. The purchase of equipment using CSI RD&D funds is discouraged and only permissible if it is essential to the research project and absolutely necessary. Any equipment (hardware or software) over \$5,000 will be subject to Section 5.3 requirements in the grant agreement. In your proposal, you must demonstrate how the equipment contributes to the end result and cannot be cost effectively leased or rented.

Q27. Will this award support the purchase and demonstration of other generation technologies that interact and support solar technologies?

- A. The CSI RD&D Program, as described by SB1, supports “solar technologies and other distributed generation technologies that employ or could employ solar energy for generation or storage of electricity or to offset natural gas usage.” In general, all solar technologies and balance-of-system components used for distributed generation may be eligible for CSI RD&D grants. Examples of balance-of-system components are advanced meters, inverters, and storage. In terms of the purchase of equipment, please see the response to Q26.

Q28. Q&A informed us that incremental costs from a builder partner could be counted as match, how would the incremental costs be determined and documented? Would the basis for the upgrades & match be code? If yes, and the builder normally builds above code by participating in an IOU program e.g., CAHP, should code be the basis or use the CAHP incentive as match? If so, what about the features above the CAHP program, such as the solar? Can the cost of the solar be counted as match?

- A. This is a very project specific question. In terms of guidance we recommend that you make a reasonable assumption for the baseline against which match is being measured for your specific project. Include the discussion for establishing the baseline in the proposal for the review team to assess. Please also see response to Q 13 for use of solar incentives as match.

Q29. Do the minimum and maximum funding amounts refer to the total project cost or to the awarded amount?

- A. The minimum and maximum funding amount refers to the CSI RD&D award amount.

PROPOSAL

Q30. If Exhibit B includes project sub tasks, do cost match values necessarily need to be broken out and entered at the sub task level, or can they be more aggregated?

- A. Cost match can be aggregated at the task level.

Q31. Can multiple research objectives be combined under one proposal, or would you prefer to keep projects focused on one research objective?

- A. Yes, a project or proposal can have multiple research objectives. The focus of this solicitation is on grid integration, so the research project must have this as the topic area.

- Q32. What is both the ideal and minimum level of documentation and commitment for matching funds to be considered in the review process? In past rounds, related projects with work that supports the project, not funded by the CPUC, have counted as matching. Is this still eligible?*
- A. Yes, as long as there is a clear connection between the work being supported by the other entity and your proposed project. Acceptable documentation can include an award letter from the funding organization, a copy of a grant or contract for the funding organization, or a letter from an organization committing funds or in-kind services on behalf of the project. Commitment letters must include the dollar amount along with the time-frame of the commitment.
- Q33. Do you have a Microsoft Word format file available for Exhibit A (Grant Application Cover Page) and an Excel file format for Exhibit B (Proposed Budget Summary)?*
- A. Yes, you can find Exhibits A (cover page) and B (budget summary) in a Word document on the CSI RD&D Program website at: <http://calsolarresearch.ca.gov/Current-Solicitations/fourth-grant-solicitation.html>
- Q34. Are there any technical or size limitations for submitting proposals?*
- A. A single PDF file, no larger than 30 MB in size is required and must be submitted through the online submission form, which can be found at: <http://www.calsolarresearch.ca.gov/Current-Solicitations/submit-proposal.html>
- Please do not send hardcopies or email files and allow adequate time to complete the proposal submission process. If you encounter a problem with the submission process, please contact us for assistance through the CalSolarResearch web site at: <http://www.calsolarresearch.ca.gov/forms/Contact-CSI-RDD.html> or email info@calsolarresearch.ca.gov

GENERAL

- Q35. Does the California Energy Commission have a role in this solicitation, if so what role?*
- A. In the past, the California Energy Commission staff have done technical reviews of CSI RD&D Proposals as well as served on the Scoring Committee. With this solicitation, Itron CSI RD&D Program Manager will again request similar involvement and support from the Energy Commission.
- Q36. Does satisfaction of the educational criteria imply participation by a California University or educational institution or are there other methods of satisfying that objective?*
- A. Education, technology transfer and outreach can be conducted by entities other than universities or educational institutions. For successful RD&D, it is critical that the research findings, results and products be used by the intended audience. In your proposal you will need to articulate who the target audience is for your research and how the work responds to a need in the market. Additionally you will need to describe your approach and present your plan for disseminating project outcomes to effectively reach the intended audience. For example, workshops and webinars along with outreach material distributed through web or print can be considered as approaches to meet this criteria.
- Q37. What is the anticipated relationship between this solicitation and solicitations expected to emerge under the EPIC program?*

- A. It is hard to say at this point since the CPUC has not yet made final decisions on the proposed plans for the EPIC Program submitted by the CEC and IOUs. The CSI RD&D Program staff will work closely with relevant EPIC staff to ensure that research efforts are complimentary and not duplicative.

Q38. May the entity, which owns the partially grant funded demonstration project, retain proprietary rights to a specific portion or process of that project?

- A. The intellectual property rights provisions can be found in Section 12 (Rights of Parties Regarding Deliverables, Data and Intellectual Property) of the grant agreement. Any work associated with a project that uses CSI RD&D funds will be made available to the public. It is recommended that you use match funding for any portion of the project that you do not want to be made publically available.

Q39. Where can I get copies of this presentation and other pertinent documents?

- A. All pertinent documents are posted on the Cal Solar web site at: www.CalSolarResearch.ca.gov
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