QUESTION AREAS

Expression of Interest (29 questions)
Consultant RFP (18 questions)
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

1. **Are students considered vulnerable population?**
   a. Applicants should justify in their Expressions of Interest whether a population is vulnerable. We would likely not consider “students” as a general category to be a vulnerable population, but if the students are also of disadvantaged sub-segments of the community who would face additional risks over the general population during a long-term outage, this may be considered to be a vulnerable population.

2. **If the microgrid includes a solar PV system that is installed by a MA based installer is this considered a MA-based clean energy technology or do you want the power controls equipment and storage equipment to be MA based?**
   a. A Massachusetts-based installer is not considered a Massachusetts-based technology. A power controls or storage equipment technology company based in Massachusetts would meet the Massachusetts-based criteria.

3. **Definition of multi-user.** You are not interested in a microgrid for a hospital for example which has multiple buildings but all buildings are owned by the same entity. Is that correct? If I were to work with a municipal water or waste water entity and the town’s police facilities for example does this meet the criteria for multi-user?
   a. Multiple public buildings or facilities may be included in a proposed microgrid if they serve different functions; however, Expressions of Interest will be evaluated competitively on both the diversity of facilities (both public and private) and functions served by the microgrid.

4. **Are Municipal Light communities that don’t participate in the Renewable Energy Trust eligible for the Community Microgrids Program announced on May 5?**
   a. Yes.

5. **Can a building which contains multiple (such as residential) meters in a building qualify for the microgrid EOI?**
   a. This building type could qualify for a project under the EOI; however, it would be considered one building and must be combined with other buildings, including a critical facility, to be considered an eligible project.

6. **Could a microgrid configuration comprised of participating customers/buildings not electrically connected to the same local circuit qualify for the EOI?** The participants might use on-site technologies and coordinated efficiency and load control, for example, to provide economic benefits allocable among the participants.
   a. This type of project will be eligible, as long as there is islanding capability, a critical facility, multiple buildings included in the project, and the project meets all other eligibility criteria outlined in the EOI.

7. **How did you arrive at the conclusion that 8-12 buildings make for an ideal project, and how firm is that criterion for this application? Is there a strict upper or lower limit on the number of buildings in the proposed microgrids?**
a. The 8-12 building guideline is based on successful projects awarded or developed under similar programs in other states. This is not a hard criterion. A project must contain at least two buildings to be considered under the Program. There is no upper limit.

8. Is it a requirement that proposed microgrids are able to island? Or would improving grid resilience benefits (e.g. VAR management) suffice?
   a. While the ability to island is not specifically called out in the Expressions of Interest solicitation, encompassing and supporting at least one critical facility is called out, and MassCEC anticipates that microgrids that are able to island during grid blackout periods will be best equipped to support the critical loads which they serve. The EOI also calls out the expectation that the microgrid will provide services that are meaningful to the local utility; a wide range of benefits and services, including VAR management, would suffice in meeting that requirement.

9. Does the principal investigator and/or prime contractor of a proposal team have to be the owner or local government agency, or can it be a third-party consultant or technical partner?
   a. The entity that conducts the feasibility study does not need to be the local government entity or property owner within the microgrid. Third-party consultants are eligible.

10. What is the expectation for the maturity of the project for the application? For instance, is it expected that a list of vendors be provided as well as the size and type of energy assets?
    a. Respondents to the EOI should provide as much information on the project as is available at the time of submission.

11. Are universities good candidates for this EOI?
    a. Yes. There are various examples of successful campus style microgrids in operation on university campuses within Massachusetts. However, it is important to note the requirement, as outlined in the EOI solicitation, that proposed microgrids are community, multi-user microgrids (as opposed to single owner or campus-style microgrids). This means that for a university microgrid to be eligible, it would need to encompass additional buildings not owned by the university.

12. How many applicants might be selected to complete a viability questionnaire?
    a. MassCEC is unable to give an estimate as to the number of applicants that might be selected to complete a viability questionnaire, as this number is largely dependent on the number of applications that MassCEC receives.

13. For DOE resources and regulatory planning agencies, were you suggesting that they would help applicants before 6/23 applications, or would supplement other resources later during feasibility study process?
    a. These organizations were suggested as those that may be able to assist projects throughout the feasibility study process. Applicants should contact the resources directly regarding available resources.

14. Will a copy of the webinar presentation slides be available?
    a. A copy of the slides can be found on the Community Microgrids Program website, under the FAQs tab.
15. Could a single entity submit an expression of interest in the hopes that they may be able to be put in contact or paired with another local group looking to develop a larger project?
   a. Technically, yes. However, given that the microgrids are intended to be multi-user community microgrids, it is difficult for MassCEC to imagine that an application from a single entity would be competitive in the evaluation process. That said, given that MassCEC has no way of knowing the quality and thoroughness of the applications we will receive in advance, it is difficult to definitively anticipate the competitiveness of an application submitted by a single entity. Single entities that are interested in contacting or being paired with other groups in order to develop a project should review MassCEC's previously released Request for Information.

16. If a critical facility (such as a wastewater treatment plant) has no neighbors for which inclusion in a microgrid would make sense, does that preclude it from participation in this program?
   a. Yes. The EOI solicitation requires that proposed microgrids be community, multi-user microgrids (as opposed to single owner or campus-style microgrids).

17. You listed utility contacts for National Grid — are there others for Eversource?
   a. Utility contact information is available on the MassCEC website. We will post all utility contacts as they are made available to MassCEC.

18. Will preference be given to responses that bring ownership/financial resources to bear to actually build the microgrid?
   a. Yes. As outlined in the Evaluation Criteria on page 7 of the Expressions of Interest Solicitation, a project team’s capacity to implement a project long-term is a top priority, and the expressed willingness of stakeholders to provide financial support for the project is a secondary criterion.

19. We’ve been approached by a couple of firms to do two different projects. Can a municipality submit more than one EOI?
   a. Yes, a municipality may submit more than one EOI; however, each response should be for a different site.

20. Does the selection process correlate with an internal scoring criteria that may emphasize certain public policy objectives?
   a. Among other criteria outlined in the Request for EOI, responses will be evaluated with respect to three primary program goals: resilience, GHG emissions reductions, and energy cost savings.

21. Can you specify the preferred source of the flood maps to be submitted with the application? For example, we have flood maps in our Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and our Hazard Mitigation Plan (one is more recent than the other); does one take precedence over the other? Also, are any other maps required besides flood-area maps and maps from the Assessor’s Database?
   a. Flood maps should be submitted from the best source available, with more recent flood maps preferred.
22. Will applicants be stronger if they have already identified an implementer/developer or vendors for the microgrid? Do we need to provide names and letters of support at this point, or can we anticipate they will be identified from the feasibility assessment?
   a. Applicants with an identified implementer, developer, or vendor will be favorably evaluated with respect to the Project Team’s experience and capacity to implement a project long-term (see Request for EOI, page 7). However, applicants are not required to have these entities identified at the time of application.

23. Do communities need to be in IOU territory or, if in MLP territory, pay into the Renewable Energy Trust to be eligible?
   a. Applicants from all IOU and MLP territories are eligible to apply.

24. Will the EOI become an RFP for the turn-key design + building of the selected microgrids? If so what is the timing and budget? And, will the RFP be open to other entities that were not originally in the EOI?
   a. At this time, MassCEC has not developed any programming beyond this initial Feasibility Assessment stage.

25. Was funding intentionally made only available for the technical and financial analysis? In the community stakeholder process, including customer education and education for the community group employees themselves appears to be a major need. A small amount of money could go a long way in that area.
   a. At this time, MassCEC does not have funding available for activities for customer education and stakeholder engagement activities.

26. Is it advantageous for respondents to include specific technologies and technology providers, or can the feasibility assessment be used to assess and recommend technology options?
   a. If respondents have preferred vendors or technology providers identified, they may be included in the application. However, MassCEC realize that many of these options will be identified through the feasibility assessment, and applicants are not required to have them identified at the time of application.

27. Is there support for land expansion exclusively for this purpose? (like creating a new dock along the water to place solar panels on)
   a. At this time, MassCEC has not developed any programming, such as financial support for implementation, beyond this initial Feasibility Assessment stage.

28. Hartford doesn't appear to use renewable energy. However it does use fuel cell. Is alternative energy like fuel cell acceptable or do we need a true renewable option to be considered by MassCEC?
   a. Fuel cells are eligible technologies for inclusion under this Program; please see M.G.L. Chapter 23J.

29. Do the utilities report SAIDI/CAIDI figures publicly/to the DPU, and if so, where we might find them?
   a. Yes, this info is publicly available. You can find SAIDI and CAIDI data in the EDCs Annual Service Quality reports. The latest reports, which contain 2016 data, were filed with the Department in March 2017. You can access them from the DPU File Room:
i. Click on link to the DPU File Room: [http://170.63.40.34/DPU/Fileroom](http://170.63.40.34/DPU/Fileroom)

ii. Click on Dockets/Filing menu

iii. Click on Dockets by Number

   1. For FG&E (Unitil) 2016 Service Quality Report, enter docket number: 17-SQ-10
      Look for the PDF filed on 2/28/17 named FGE Electric SQ Report.pdf

   2. For MECO (National Grid) 2016 Service Quality Report enter docket number: 17-SQ-11
      Look for the pdf filed on 3/1/17 named Initial Filing.pdf

   3. For Nantucket (National Grid) 2016 Service Quality Report enter docket number: 17-SQ-12
      Look for the pdf filed on 3/1/17 named Initial Filing.pdf

   4. For NSTAR Electric (Eversource) 2016 Service Quality Report, enter docket number: 17-SQ-13
      Look for the pdf filed on 3/1/17 named NSTAR Electric SQ Report.pdf

   5. For WMECO (Eversource) 2016 Service Quality Report, enter docket number: 17-SQ-14
      Look for the pdf filed on 3/1/17 named WMECO SQ Report.pdf

iv. Do a key word search for SAIDI and CAIDI in the PDFs
CONSULTANT RFP

1. **If you present an evaluation that a community wants to implement, does the community have to bid the microgrid opportunity?**
   a. At this time, MassCEC's Community Microgrids Program is only providing funding for feasibility assessments. Communities may determine whether to move ahead with a project, but will not be required to do so by MassCEC.

2. **If you were the consultant for the evaluation and you can design, build, own and operate the microgrid, would you be excluded from bidding or implementing the microgrid?**
   a. We encourage you to review the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law codified at M.G.L c. 268A. However, please note that at this stage, we have not structured any project implementation programming.

3. **Can a technical consultant work on more than one proposal or feasibility assessment? If a technical consultant is currently working with, say, 3 separate microgrid proposals, would they submit a single proposal, or 3 proposals to the RFP?**
   a. Yes, a technical consultant may work on more than one feasibility assessment. Entities can submit one application to the Technical Consultant RFP and can indicate multiple proposals on the Proposal Cover Sheet (Attachment A.)

4. **Who is the technical consultant referenced in the EOI?**
   a. MassCEC has not yet selected the technical consultant with which we will contract in order to provide services to applicants that are selected for feasibility assessments. MassCEC is currently soliciting applications to be the technical consultant for the Community Microgrids Program through a Request for Proposals available on our website. Applications under the Technical Consultant RFP are due Wednesday, June 28th at 4:00 PM. MassCEC anticipates notifying the selected consultant on Friday, September 1st, 2017.

5. **If a community team elects to rely on your tech consultant in part, can they also ask for some of the $75k to also do some feasibility tasks themselves (e.g., collecting site data)?**
   a. No. If a team chooses to work with MassCEC's selected consultant, all funds for the study will be awarded directly to the consultant.

6. **Will there be a similar "pre-bid" webinar hosted to discuss the Technical Consultant RFP prior to the bid deadline?**
   a. MassCEC is not anticipating hosting a webinar for the Community Microgrids Program Technical Consultant RFP. However, we will be accepting questions regarding the Technical Consultant RFP through Friday, June 16th at 5:00 PM. Questions should be submitted to microgrids@masscec.com, and must have "Community Microgrids Feasibility Assessments – Technical Consultant" in the subject line.

7. **How does a municipality assess the ability of an independent entity to do the assessment of the same quality and scope of work that a MassCEC consultant would perform? Is there guidance from MassCEC?**
a. If a municipality chooses to work with an independent entity (rather than MassCEC’s selected consultant) to perform the feasibility assessment, that entity will be required to submit an application to MassCEC’s Technical Consultant RFP indicating the project for which they wish to perform the work. Each individual project consultant will be evaluated to the same standard as MassCEC’s primary consultant.

8. Your RFI requires any applicant who proposes to do their own Assessment (as opposed to receiving a free assessment from CEC’s "Primary Consultant") to respond also to the RFP for technical consultants. (See the last paragraph on p. 2 and the middle paragraph on page 4.) Yet that RFP says you will select only one primary technical consultant. So is that required response for your information only? How many $75,000 grants do you intend to award?
   a. MassCEC will divide 3-5 awards between the Primary Consultant and teams which elect to use their own consultant. Teams with their own consultant must have that entity respond to the RFP so that MassCEC can evaluate their qualifications and ensure that a study would be commensurate with those conducted by MassCEC's Primary Consultant.

9. The Request for EOI FY2017MKTDEV-02, to which the actual microgrids apply, states "If the respondent team does include an entity which can carry out the Assessment, MassCEC will require that entity to respond to a Request for Proposals for Technical and Financial Feasibility Assessment of Community Microgrid Projects in Massachusetts before releasing any funds." Is it correct to interpret this to mean that the tech folks from a microgrid team will submit a proposal with the same info as required for the "RFP for Technical and Financial Feasibility Assessment of Community Microgrid Projects in Massachusetts" (which states that "MassCEC anticipates selecting one (1) Technical Consultant under this RFP"), just for a different purpose than being considered for that 1 consultant for the free studies?
   a. Yes; technical consultants who wish to conduct the feasibility assessment for a specific team must respond to the RFP for Technical and Financial Feasibility Assessment of Community Microgrid Projects and indicate on the cover sheet which microgrid project(s) they are applying with.

10. Is there only one RFP FY2017MKTDEV-02 for BOTH the single consultant to be selected by MassCEC to do the free studies AND the various different tech consultants that are bidding just to do the study directly for each (selected) microgrid?
   a. Yes, all technical consultants must respond to the RFP and will be evaluated against the same criteria.

11. Will MassCEC review a tech proposal for a particular microgrid to decide if you will actually select the associated microgrid or not? Or will you review each such proposal to determine if you will allow the microgrid team (if selected without its tech team) to use its own consultant or require it to use the one you selects to provide the free studies?
   a. If a team-specific consultant does not meet MassCEC's criteria, it will not prevent the project team from moving ahead with a feasibility study through MassCEC's Primary Consultant. This will be worked out on a case-by-case basis with project teams upon selection.

12. When are the tech consultants with a particular microgrid team required to submit their tech proposal to you? On 6/23? 6/28? Or is this tech proposal only needed for microgrids that
make it through the "step 2" screen, so you will request it at the time of the viability assessment?
   a. All technical consultants must respond by the 6/28 deadline indicated in the RFP.

13. If one technical consultant is working with, say, 3 microgrid teams, must it submit a separate technical proposal for each microgrid, or may it submit one proposal and identify the multiple microgrids it's proposing to study?
   a. A technical consultant may choose to work with multiple microgrid teams. The consultant should submit one proposal and identify the multiple microgrid teams on the application cover sheet.

14. Given that the page limit for responses is ten (10) single-spaced pages, can our custom sample Scope of Services (should we choose to submit an alternate to your sample) be part of an appendix rather than count against the ten page total?
   a. Yes.

15. Will the Technical Consultant be provided detailed site and load information by the Project Team/projects initially selected by MassCEC? Conversely, in an instance where MassCEC selects a project which requires development of an initial technical and financial assessment (e.g., for projects that may be more in conceptual stages), will MassCEC consider allowing for additional time/budget for acquisition of this information?
   a. Please note the "Load Characterization" task (3.2) outlined in the Sample Scope of Services (Appendix 1). Given that MassCEC is yet to select specific projects, we are unable to comment on the level of granularity of the information that project teams will be equipped to provide the Technical Consultant. As noted on page 3 of the RFP, MassCEC will pay the Technical Consultant up to $75,000 per Assessment. MassCEC does not currently anticipate making additional time or budget allowances beyond what is outlined in the RFP.

16. Can we assume that each “Assessment” is project/Project Team specific, rather than specific to a site which might have multiple proposed projects?
   a. Yes.

17. Can MassCEC confirm if HOMER will be considered an equivalent tool to DER-CAM per the requirements of Task #3?
   a. MassCEC does not have the expertise to comment on the quality of tools that may be utilized by consultants. Proposals from Technical Consultants should inform us as to what types of tools exist for the tasks required and whether they are comparable to those described in the RFP.

18. Can you clarify what is required regarding Attachment B for RFP FY2017MKTDEV-02? What are the Terms and Conditions that must be agreed to and are referenced in the 3rd paragraph of the form?
   a. "Terms and conditions of the RFP" refers to all language within the RFP - this includes the language within the Signature and Acceptance form, as well as language found within section 6 of the RFP, "GENERAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL CONDITIONS".