

ERA Program Evaluation Criteria

5.0.2 Full Applications

Applications will be evaluated against the technical review criteria shown below, specific to this FOA that supports projects costing less than \$5 million.:

Criterion 1: Community Benefits Plan (30%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following equally weighted factors: Project Benefits

- The likelihood that the project will bring meaningful benefits to the rural or remote community.

Community and Labor Engagement

- Extent to which the project demonstrates a clear plan to meaningfully engage local stakeholders and impacted groups, including labor unions, community-based organizations, and Tribes, in a manner that influences project decisions.

- Extent to which the project addresses priorities identified by the community, labor, and Tribes impacted by the project.

Job Quality and Workforce Continuity

- Extent to which the Community Benefits Plan demonstrates that the jobs supported by the proposed project will be high quality (good paying, safe, opportunities for advancement, opportunity to join a union, and accessible to local workers) jobs.

- Extent to which the plan to attract, train, and retain local workers is aligned with the community's economic and workforce development priorities.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

- Extent to which the project team has integrated DEIA policies and goals throughout their

Integrated Schedule and project workplan.

- Quality of plan to facilitate participation in the project's construction and operations from underrepresented groups, especially workers facing systematic barriers to employment (e.g., women, disadvantage community residents, formerly incarcerated workers, Veterans, individuals with disabilities, etc.).

Justice40 Initiative

- Extent to which the Community Benefits Plan describes how project benefits and negative impacts will accrue within the community and outlines plans to maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts, especially for vulnerable groups within the community.
- Extent to which the project would contribute to meeting the Justice40 Initiative objective that 40% of the overall benefits of Federal climate and clean energy investments flow to disadvantaged communities.

Criterion 2: Workplan (30%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- The likelihood that the proposed workplan will lead to construction and operation of a project within three years.
- The overall reasonableness of the proposed milestones and associated payments.
- The degree to which the proposed workplan has been clearly and thoroughly described and thoughtfully considered.
- The capability of the prime recipient, the proposed team, and key personnel to manage and address all aspects of the proposed work with a high probability of success.

Criterion 3: Technical Merit (20%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- Extent to which the proposed technology or technologies are suited to the needs of the community and are likely to function as designed.
- Extent to which the applicant demonstrates understanding of the key technical, construction, regulatory, permitting, safety and occupational health, and infrastructure integration risks involved in the proposed work, and the quality of the mitigation strategies to address them.
- Extent to which the applicant demonstrates understanding of the permitting and regulatory needs to the project and presents a reasonable plan to overcome them.

Criterion 4: Financial Viability (20%)

This criterion involves consideration of the following factors:

- The degree to which the application justifies the proposed project's economic viability

and sustainability beyond DOE funding.

- The adequacy and justification of the proposed budget and spend plan.

5.1 Other Selection Factors 5.1.1 Program Policy Factors

In addition to the above criteria, the Selection Official may consider the following program policy factors in determining which Applications to select for award negotiations:

The degree to which the proposed project supports disadvantaged communities, communities with a high energy burden, or communities with an urgent energy challenge.

- The degree in which the communities are reasonably determined to be rural or remote.
- The degree to which the proposed project optimizes the use of available DOE funding to achieve programmatic objectives.
- The degree to which the proposed project is likely to lead to increased high-quality employment in rural and remote communities. 26
- The degree to which the proposed project, or group of projects, represent a desired geographic distribution (considering past awards and current applications).
- The degree to which the proposed project incorporates applicant or team members from Minority Serving Institutions (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)/Other Minority Serving Institutions); and partnerships with Minority Business Enterprises, Minority Owned Businesses, Woman Owned Businesses, Veteran Owned Businesses, or Tribal nations.
- The degree to which the proposed project incorporates community partnership and ownership as evidenced through, but not limited to, community groups or governments as prime applicants, community ownership or offtake agreement with the prime applicant, an equity model, or other indicators of community approval, engagement, and involvement in the application and which will result, upon award, in a measurable economic growth in the community.
- The degree to which the proposed project collectively represents diverse types and sizes of applicant organizations.