

Taylor Moot, TWX

All right, thank you. Hi, everyone. We're excited to host this last informational webinar for the Transmission Acceleration Grants. This is being funded by GDO or the Grid Deployment Office at the Department of Energy.

Next slide, please. So just a really quick intro. My name is Taylor Moot and I'm part of the TechWerx Hub. TechWerx is a new innovation hub managed by RTI International in support of the Department of Energy. And our goal is to facilitate connections among federal, state, tribal entities, academia, and nonprofits a small businesses across the US, just to name a few.

To hear about any new opportunities that come up or any updates from TAG, we recommend that you follow our page on LinkedIn as well as sign up for our newsletter via a link on our website.

Next slide, please.

A couple of housekeeping items just to kind of repeat. Again, questions will be handled at the end of the session and we're going to be using that Q&A function of Zoom. We'll be addressing the questions that get the most votes, so please go ahead and vote for any questions that feel relevant to what questions you have and we can make sure that those get answered first.

We should have plenty of time to go through all the questions that we have today, but in the off chance we don't, we'll make sure that those are answered by the Department of Energy as soon as possible and get updated onto our website. Regardless of origin of the question and when we answer them, all questions will get answered and put on our website as soon as possible.

Just a couple of other things per DOE guidance, we don't allow any AI bots on the webinar. You shouldn't need them because this is being recorded and the transcript will be available on the website as well. But just so you know, if we see them, they will get kicked out of the session.

Last, as a reminder, this webinar is being recorded and will be posted to our website in a few business days. We're going to try to do it as quickly as possible, knowing that this closes next week. But that'll get updated along with the slides and the transcript as soon as we can.

Next slide, please. Okay, so today we're joined by our friends over at GDO, Liza and Andrea. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to them to cover the overview of TAG.

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

Thank you so much, Taylor. So I'm excited to be here for our second office hour session and talking through the transmission acceleration grants program I recognize a number of folks maybe weren't able to attend our webinar a few months ago, and so I do want to take some time to go over the program, but I want to say the bulk of the time for questions.

But we will have some additional slides from that webinar to share to talk through examples if that's of interest to folks. I'm just going to start with a high level overview.

And on the next slide, I'm going to start with the Grid Deployment Office and who we are. So GDO is an office within the Department of Energy, and we have three goals that we organize our work around. Ensuring resource adequacy by supporting critical generation sources and expanding and enhancing electricity markets. This TAG program is coming out of the transmission division, which is most of the work is organized around the next goal, where we're catalyzing the development of new and upgraded high voltage electric transmission lines and distribution systems. And then finally, there's the resilience aspect of the grid. And so there's work that is very important in GDO related to preventing outages and enhancing that grid resilience.

And so I'll move right into the tag opportunity on the next slide.

TAG is a new program out of GDO that is supporting state and tribal efforts in transmission And I'm going to talk through the eligibility and the scope of this.

But our goal here is to increase, speed up, facilitate evaluation planning, research, understanding of transmission and how I don't know if that was me, if we could go.

Thank you. And how it can be useful for reducing consumer cost, making the grid more resilient, benefiting all Americans, but Of course, the states and tribes particularly who are applying. And so our objective here is to support those studies or implementation of modern approaches to transmission.

We've been on a long journey. We've been on over a century of um of development of the electrical grid Some things have changed and some things have stayed the same, but certainly processes always have an opportunity to approve to improve as we think differently, right? As that lens gets bigger or smaller from local to interstate and interregional.

Depending on the needs and goals. And then to increase that speed of transmission project reviews.

So those are our overall objectives. On the next slide, I want to talk about eligibility.

We have pretty broad eligibility. So our applicants can be state or tribal entities and we have a definition in the frequently asked questions and my colleagues might be able to put it in the chat here to help explain what we mean by an entity here, because I know that that has been a question for groups. One thing that we thought of when we designed the TAG program is just how different transmission development is in different states and different regions. And so you'll see as we have defined things like eligible applicants, as we have defined things like state entities. We're trying to recognize and provide breadth of opportunity for those unique regional and state and tribal differences. There are states who have established a transmission specific authority who have that work coming out of a PUC, a public utility commission. There's also relevant work in transmission, maybe from an environmental evaluation perspective that could be coming out of a Department of Natural Resources. There's lots of different forms this takes in different locations and at different scales. But state and tribal is the scale that we're looking at here for those entities. And then the third is nonprofit organizations. And particularly these nonprofits have to be working with the state and tribe to achieve these objectives. So we recognize that a lot of nonprofits are working in the transmission space and maybe pursuing relevant questions here, but what we're looking for is that kind of work that is directly tied to state or tribal efforts that could lead to specific transmission acceleration in those regions.

So we have \$10 million of funding, at least \$10 million of funding available, and up to \$3 million each per award, we expect there to be a really big range here as well. Depending on what scale you're looking at, we wouldn't be surprised if \$250 or \$500,000 proposals come in, but we wanted to again provide a wide range here and there's no cost share requirement.

And then the activities, especially if you came to the webinar or listened to the webinar, I do want to clarify one thing here. The activities are up to 12 months with potential for an additional 12 months. So why is that not just 24 months? So I wanted to clarify here that if you are proposing something that is longer than 12 months, there is a required go no go milestone at 12 months. And so we want to make sure that folks are aware of that as they are thinking about their plan. And so we're recommending 12-month proposals, but recognizing that there can be additional work that could extend past 12 months pursuant to that no go no go milestone being adequately evaluated.

So that's the timeline. And then the other aspect is that these activities should be related to planning, siting, or permitting of transmission lines where we define that as 100 kB or above.

So then on the next slide, I will talk about what that means related to planning siting or permitting. That's about everything. And as you can see here, hopefully you also recognize here that we're trying to identify a lot of opportunities again that could be different depending on where you are. So there are some states and tribes and regions that are interested in identifying or evaluating specific corridors or specific zones or other types of

areas for preferred transmission development, sort of creating a prioritized list. There's other regions who maybe are interested in streamlining transmission siting and permitting processes. And that could be while the applicant has to be a state entity. There's a number of forms that could take, right? I mean, that could be collaborating and that streamlining across multiple state entities or up and down a different scale at the local or regional level, as long as that state or nonprofit working with them is the applicant.

And then enhancing or expanding other transmission related activities. If you watch the webinar or look in our notes and slides, we give some examples of this, right? If you're studying or trying to implement how you could do some innovative transmission financing, right? We're paying for transmission is an interesting part of things. So there's evaluating cost allocation, but then there's also maybe potentially money in your region that you want to figure out how you could structure it to support transmission development.

Those are just some examples. There's also transmission planning. And how transmission planning maybe could be tied to integrated resource planning. These are just some examples to be thinking about. And then the final area is surge funding to increase capacity.

So we also recognize that the growing energy resources in the United States are a great opportunity for lowering costs for Americans, but we need to be able to be moving that energy to where it is needed to be consumed. And that requires transmission lines and that is often on. State and tribal entities who are trying to evaluate these lines appropriately. And so we recognize that there's been an uptick in this. And some folks might be looking for support in helping them move through and evaluate those proposals faster.

So those are our high level areas. Hopefully those examples help you think through where you might fit in them. They are not exhaustive. And in fact, this is one of the primary goals of the application is to explain how the work that you're proposing fits into these visions and objectives of accelerating transmission deployment.

On the next slide, I'll quickly go over the application review criteria. They're in three buckets. Technical merit is the most important. The approach and understanding, right? So are you demonstrating that you understand the problem and that you have described something that will address the problem. And then technical management and capabilities, right? Is this a team that that can accomplish the work that's proposed. There's details on each of these available on our website.

And then finally, I'll do a little timeline summary of where we are on this last slide.

Our applications opened on October 31st. We had an objective strategic session or an informational webinar. On November 13th, that recording is available online. As is the recording for our first office hour session on December 3rd.

We wanted to have this session with a week out answer any questions, talk through to the extent that we are able questions that folks have, and just really encourage applications. It's a no more than seven page application. So we hope folks don't find that burdensome. And we're happy to talk through it with you here. So the deadline is next week at 5 p.m, next Tuesday at 5 p.m. And we expect selectees to be announced by June.

So with that very quick overview of everything. I wanted to see the floor. I know we've got a lot of folks here and I'm excited to help out and answer questions.

Taylor Moot, TWX

Okay. Thank you, everyone. I already see some questions in here. I'll encourage you to add them as this is your last opportunity to ask. We will still be responding to questions via email, but this is your kind of big platform.

Okay, that being said, let's start with the first question. Strict word and page limits are appreciated. I'm assuming that we can include attachments such as bios, et cetera. Can you confirm and should those attachments be appended as a separate PDF document?

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

So we do provide the ability to include optional attachments I think one of the things we suggest is you could have a letter of support. So for example, if you're a nonprofit entity and you want to show that that work is being done in collaboration with a state or tribal entity. Bios would be another appropriate thing to put in these optional attachments.

But we do encourage you to put in the narrative explanations of who folks are and why they're relevant to the work.

Taylor Moot, TWX

Then PDF is preferable in terms of document type, from our side. So thanks.

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

Oh, thank you.

Taylor Moot, TWX

Okay, next question is on the application, how and where would we describe the contribution of staff time to a project for which we are not requesting or expecting reimbursement from an award?

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

So we do provide a cover sheet on the application where we ask you to describe to explain the total budget of the project And then the budget that is being requested from this award. So you can propose, I think this is getting to your question um. Please provide a clarification if I'm not quite answering what you're looking for. But we do provide on the cover sheet that ability to say like the total project is this.

The piece that we are requesting support for is this. So we do we do allow for describing part of another project where that part has to be relevant to the tag outcomes.

And if you are not expecting or requesting reimbursement well I guess the other piece is that this is not a reimbursement program. So Taylor, if that's something that you want to talk through that I think might help clarify this as well.

Taylor Moot, TWX

Yeah, so... Sorry. So this is the way that these awards happen is through milestone based payments. So basically as you're applying, you're filling out that milestone template that will be discussed if you're selected.

During the negotiation phase, but basically your payments will be made based on your progress on those milestones as you've laid out. There's a little bit more detail and nuance in the FAQ section of the page, but I'm happy to talk through that more if those questions come up. So feel free to put those in the chat.

Okay. Next question is, and I think I'll answer this one probably, but TechWerx site says applicant must certify as not owned by, controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of government of a country of risk is there of risk A form for such certification or is it part of the seven page application or a separate attachment?

So you have access to the page application, but what you'll need to do to actually submit the application itself is make an account through TechWerx and you'll see a submission form. At the bottom of that submission form. You'll see the certification agreement It basically runs through all of those details. And at the very bottom, you click a button that says, I agree to the certifications listed above. That will basically be your certification and your way to fully submit the application.

Okay, I think that covers everything there. The next question is, to what extent can renewable generation planning that triggers local and network transmission upgrades be

part of the grant proposal? For example, funding novel solar designs that can be repeated as a template throughout a reservation.

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

So while I can't speak to specifics about eligibility, so I encourage folks to apply if they think there is an argument to be made for how this fits into TAG.

I'll just, I will say that this is a transmission focused program. So we are looking for our objectives, as we stated at the top, are about studying implementing modern approaches on assessing the need and impact of new transmission infrastructure.

So obviously transmission is tied to generation But that intersection and transmission aspect would be essential to what would be relevant to this program design.

Taylor Moot, TWX

We have another series of questions coming in. If we want to use the money to hire an administrator who would then issue RFPs for conducting studies, could this be done? Do we need to name the administrator as a partner and are there sub recipient awards allowed?

GDO, if you want to take the first part and I can take the last part from like a administration perspective.

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

Yeah, and I'll ask OTT to jump in as we talk through this, because I think that would be related to milestones and management. So as you think about what you are proposing, I would focus on the project and the process and the outcomes. And it would be an internal decision to

The project proponent about how that got accomplished and if it was accomplished through an administrator who needed to issue those rfps I think would be most important to be talking about what the goals are of those RFPs and the timelines.

But OTT Just wanted to confirm that with you.

Erik Olson, DOE OTT

Yeah, yeah, no, that's correct. I think the thing to note here is you want to have enough information that you can kind of justify your budget and kind of how you're going to be spending the money. But as has been said previously, PIAs are called milestone based payment. So you should include any costs required to accomplish the work and the scope that you're proposing. And I think maybe to kind of jump ahead on some of the second half of the question and get similar. So subrecipient recipient awards, those are allowed

but again should be included in your budget and the information should be there sufficiently justified that it shows how you're going to spend the money and how you're going to accomplish the objectives.

Taylor Moot, TWX

I think the last detail to add from our side is that just as a heads up, TechWerx doesn't handle the subcontracts. We contract directly with the lead organization and then it is up to that lead organization to do any subrecipient awards or anything like that that they would like. But we do ask in the application that you name the organizations that you are interested in having subrecipients to. And with the flexibility that if that information is not available because that will be part of the process.

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

That is also something that you can note in your application. So that is another thing that is a little more that is a little different about this proposal about this opportunity than other funding opportunity announcements you may have responded to. So you'll also see there's not like a formal budget justification per se. We're looking for milestones, explanations and And that's just a couple of pages, right, about sort of what you're trying to accomplish and why you're trying to accomplish it. So it's not that same kind of detailed budget justification that you might require for a notice of funding opportunity.

Because again, we are not, TechWerx is not managing those subrecipients.

I think, can we jump to the, I think there's a related question from that same. Okay, Taylor, if you wanted to read it. Thanks.

Taylor Moot, TWX

Yeah. If two state entities want to control the hiring of two separate outside consultants to perform two phases of the project, can this be done with one of the agencies taking the lead as a contractor with TechWerx, would that agency be allowed to give other agencies money so that they can contract or should the first agency also contract with the second consultant directly?

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

So I think, great.

Rob Andersen, DOE OTT

I think I can jump in on this one. Yeah, I would say, so again, we can't advise in any specific, we can't recommend that you do any procedure. We think that you should discuss with potential partners and kind of make the determination that's most

appropriate based on your specific circumstances and that if selected, the ultimate contractual arrangements will have to be finalized at a later date. Something you know in this hypothetical sounds pretty complex. I think we can't give this around the fly, considering each situation as it comes.

Taylor Moot, TWX

Next question. Is on one of the slides, did you say this grant is to study grid transmission infrastructure? Is this correct?

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

Well, and I want to clarify when we say study, it was studying or implementing modern approaches to the needs for, I'm just reading the sign up studying or implementing those modern approaches. So looking at, it is not necessarily a grid study right which is a specific thing and could be eligible here.

More often, grid studies are like a type of transmission planning, but it doesn't have to be a grid study alone, right? There are many things related to the study and implementation of transmission and where what we meant when we said study here was more thinking about like studying where something has been successful in another region and how you could map it and implement it in your region. Like that would be an example of a non-technical study that would fall under that category.

Taylor Moot, TWX

The next question is, are you open to ocean and coastal transmission planning activities or is this strictly land-based? Can funding go towards mapping of critical areas, habitats needed for transmission planning or more synthesis of data for planning and siting?

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

So our only requirement on the transmission is that it's 100 kV or above. So it could be on land or on land or offshore or coastal sea as you were. And then regarding those activities I would encourage you to describe those activities within the four pillars that we discussed. I can certainly see a line of sight to how those would be eligible. But it's really up to the applicant to make the case for why these are relevant for your region for speeding transmission evaluation, development, and deployment.

Taylor Moot, TWX

We have one more question on here. So for all of you that are still on, please go ahead and add any other questions that you have. We're happy to stay on as long as it takes to get you all the answers you need.

But the question that we currently have is, can you clarify what a transmission related activity is? It seems an argument could be made for generation development. If you can speak to this, that would be great, but understand if not.

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

I would say that transmission related activities must include transmission. I mean, that is very specifically what we're looking for here so I think I understand, I think, where this question is coming from I suggest a generation developments alone is more transmission adjacent than it is transmission related.

So I would encourage you to think about things that are specific specifically linked to if you're discussing generation development as part of a proposal I would really encourage you to think about the transmission nexus of it and what the transmission related work is that you are looking to accomplish through an award through this program. And whether that's financing the transmission planning the transmission, citing the transmission identifying where transmission is needed in time or in space.

I think those are some ideas on where that generation transmission nexus could be.

Taylor Moot, TWX

Great. All right. Those are all the questions that we have open right now. So again, if you have more questions, please go ahead and drop them in the chat.

All right, we have another one. Great. Are award amounts possibly negotiated with TechWerx?

Actually, Erik, I'm going to turn this one over to you if that's all right.

Erik Olson, DOE OTT

Yep, sure, happy to. Yes. So once, you know, if selected, we'll get through the review and down selection process. And if selected, you'll then turn to agreements with tech works And with DOE folks kind of supporting on the side in those agreement, the negotiation process, you are welcome to uh For those different tasks or terms or dates or whatever, you know, again. There will be lines, I think, later on in the process of what is and is not really negotiable, but we'll kind of cross that bridge when we get there. So the short answer is yes.

Taylor Moot, TWX

All right. We'll hang out for another maybe two, three minutes as if no questions roll in. But while you all are kind of coming up with some any last questions that you all have, we switched sides real quick. I just wanted to highlight as you all are finishing up, we do have

1/14/2025

a QR code here if you would like to take a brief post-webinar survey. We do appreciate any feedback that you all have on how we can make this process better, how we can make this webinar or these types of webinars more informative, all that good stuff.

But again, we're happy to stay on as long as you all have questions. So we'll wait another couple of minutes and see what comes through. And if folks have more clarifications, I know some of those questions at the at the start were fairly complex and I think we handled them, but if there's any clarification you want to provide to the extent that we can attempt to re-answer. We're happy to.

Yeah, good. Yeah, and anything additional you'd like to ask outside of this, please email us at info at TechWerx.org. It is me behind that email. I will be paying attention to it daily. So we'll do our best to get you as quick of a response as possible. But it is a real email. We do check it a lot. So feel free to email us questions there.

Okay. The next question is, do you anticipate conducting interviews prior to selection?

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

That's a great question. I'll say that we believe we stated in our materials that that might be a piece of the evaluation and that depends timeline and number of applicants to help us identify the right fits.

Taylor Moot, TWX

All right, next question is If our project is proposed to be within a year, but our procurement process for a consultant takes six months before the project can begin, does this qualify, sorry, does this still qualify for a year-long project?

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

OTT or TechWerx is there Is there a technical answer to this that you want to provide? Or is this something that we would discuss in negotiation?

Erik Olson, DOE OTT

I would say we would want to discuss the negotiation again can't comment on specific ideas and timelines but um GDO team, correct me if I'm wrong, I would have to imagine you know there are certain outcomes that are going to that are going to, we want done at the end of this period. If there's a six month period, to start that work before it even begins. I think it would kind of raise some questions as to how the full 12 to 24 month process would be executed. But again, I defer to GDO on kind of that, and as Liza said, there'll be something that will be confirmed later on.

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

1/14/2025

Yeah, and just to clarify what Eric said, that's a fair point. And that is not to discourage. It's just to state that if that is something you are describing in your timeline, it would just be helpful to clarify that the work could still get done within those 24 months and where a go-no-go milestone could be placed.

Taylor Moot, TWX

All right, we are again with no questions, so we'll hang on for another couple of minutes to see if anything comes in. As we said, we're more than happy to stay on to answer your questions as we can.

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

And then I think I said this at the jump, but in the overview slides but did again want to clarify we have a range of sizes of award steroids. So this could go up to three million dollars And that is across the full performance period. But um expecting, you know, sort of a range of proposals As you can even tell from the questions, lots of different work going on in transmission, depending on where you are and what your goals are, which is exactly what we're eager to see.

Taylor Moot, TWX

We'll wait till 32. And if no one else has any questions, we'll do a quick wrap up and call it for the day.

Liza Reed, DOE GDO

I encourage folks as we're wrapping up here to review the webinar slides where we go over some examples. And again, those examples are not intended to anchor, but to be a launching off point. But hopefully that give some more detail on what we meant by sort of activities and a study Again, we are trying to provide a breadth of opportunity here from folks who are looking into a question to teams who are ready to move forward on a solution. Any of those could be eligible, depending on the proposal.

Taylor Moot, TWX

Well, it seems like we have no more questions. So I'm going to call it for the day. Thank you so much for attending. Thank you for all the questions. We really appreciate it. As you all are finalizing applications, don't hesitate to reach out. Again, our email is at info@TechWerx.org.

I will be keeping a close eye on that for anything that you all need as you all are finishing up