

MIP Webinars Q&A Session



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MIP Informational Webinar

October 17, 2023

- **Is there any case where a Behind the Meter (BTM) proposal would be eligible for some level of MIP support? Since BTM microgrids could serve multiple customers during an outage, please explain.**

MIP only funds in front of meter Project Resources. Other programs, such as SGIP and NEM, support BTM resources.

- **Would school districts be eligible to apply as a community-based organization?**

Yes, a school district can apply in partnership with a local government.

- **Can you provide more details on the Microgrid Islanding Study? Details have been pending on this step for some time now so updates would be appreciated.**

Please see Section 9.3 of PG&E's [Community Microgrid Best Practices Guide](#).

- **Could you clarify the meaning of California Native American tribe? Does this mean only federally recognized tribes, or does it include tribes which do not have federal recognition?**

CA recognized and federally recognized tribes are eligible.

- **Can you clarify that the initial consultation form is due Dec. 31 and if it is a required step?**

Yes, the initial consultation is a required step and we can receive it any time before and up until December 31, 2023. If you plan to apply during the first application window in April, you must fill out the initial resilience consultation form by December 31, 2023.

- **Will PG&E maintain any ownership of the microgrid assets? How will customers be charged?**

While PG&E will continue to own and operate the distribution system, other elements, such as the Distributed Energy Resources, can be owned by the applicant.

There is no charge for participating in the microgrid. Customers within the microgrid boundary continue to receive service from either PG&E, a Community Choice Aggregator, or a Direct Access provider. Customers will be metered and billed according to their selected rate plan, whether the microgrid is operating in Blue Sky Mode or Island Mode.

- **Is there a minimum amount of acreage/space needed to facilitate a competitive project?**

No.

- **Can a portion or all of the project be on a large warehouse rooftop?**

Yes, as long as the Project Resources being funded are located in front of the utility meter.

- **What is the construction timeline or time allowed to complete construction?**

The development of the project must be completed within 24 months from the signing of the Microgrid Operating Agreement (MOA). This term can be extended to 36 months by mutual agreement of the applicant and PG&E.

- **Are you funding small programs of, say \$250,000?**

Yes, the scoring and eligibility favor projects that provide the most benefit for the least amount of ratepayer funds. See p. 23 of the [MIP Handbook](#) for more information.

- **How do communities find a technical partner to build out the microgrid?**

See [Equity and Access Grant Program \(ca.gov\)](#), or email capacitygrants@cpuc.ca.gov.

- **Is the MIP funding size related (MW DC) or is the award amounts mentioned irrespective of the project size?**

Project size is indirectly related to funding, in that applications will be scored based on benefits per dollar requested. See p. 23 of the [MIP Handbook](#) for more information.

For example, in evaluating two projects with the same benefit score, the project with lower cost will score better.

- **How long does the microgrid specific interconnection study take? We have a renewable project that has a completed WDT interconnection**

There is no microgrid-specific interconnection study. The interconnection study only pertains to the DERs within the microgrid.

- **Can a funded IFOM resource be the primary Load Serving Entity within the microgrid during normal operations? I.e., can it net meter loads and offset grid electricity regardless of whether there is an outage or not?**

No, the Community Microgrid Aggregator doesn't directly sell power to customers within the microgrid. However, IFOM resources can participate in the CAISO wholesale markets for energy and related services during Blue Sky and Island Modes.

- **Given the typical Wholesale Distribution Tariff (WDT) interconnection timeline, is PG&E in concert with CAISO able to accelerate this timeline? Big picture, and given PG&E's MIP process, are you estimating an additional year or more?**

This program does not impact the WDT timeline in any direction. The timeline varies by complexity of the project. We encourage you to research the distribution interconnection process for more information.

Also, see the Studies section of the [MIP Handbook](#) for more information.

- **Must the system components be owned by the applicant, or could the applicant use funds to contribute to a project owned by a third party?**

While the MIP does not dictate who owns the Project Resources and Balance of System components, the program only funds new, not existing, projects.

- **If the microgrid is IFOM – How is pricing set? Who is the off taker?**

The IFOM DERs would be interconnected through the Wholesale Distribution Tariff, and can participate in the CAISO wholesale market. Separately, the owner of the DERs can find off takers such as a Community Choice Aggregator with whom they could sign a Power Purchase Agreement.

- **Could you please clarify the duration of the power purchase agreement (PPA)? Specifically, is the PPA expected to have a 20-year term?**

PG&E is not signing PPAs for these DERs. Please see answer to question above.

- **For tribal communities – are casinos included in this group?**

The microgrid needs to serve 2 or more customers, so a casino can participate as one of the customers. Feel free to contact us at communitymicrogrids@pge.com for more specifics.

- **Would a microgrid project that serves multiple customers but did not receive MIP funding still be able to proceed with development if it was cost effective to do so?**

We offer a path forward via the Community Microgrid Enablement Tariff. Please contact us for further information.

- **I understand the CMEP excludes BTM resources. However, can you confirm that the CMEP and CMET may apply to BTM resources?**

None of our community microgrid programs fund BTM resources. However, a BTM resource can participate in the microgrid. Contact us to discuss the technical issues.

- **Are there any requirements for eligible generation technologies? i.e. does it have to be zero emission? Or low emission?**

Please see page 12 of the [MIP Handbook](#).



MIP Technical Webinar

October 24, 2023

- **Can the \$25k application development grant support cover costs to engage during the initial and technical consultations, or just the full application? What would be the expected timing for reimbursement?**

Yes, it can cover costs incurred during the initial and technical consultations. Applicants can expect to receive funding within a few weeks of submitting the full application.

- **Does the full application need to be submitted to be reimbursed? (e.g., what if a community goes through initial and tech consultation but then determine it's not a great fit)**

The full application needs to be submitted to be reimbursed.

- **Does the community have to be both susceptible to frequent outages AND disadvantaged?**

The community needs to meet BOTH categories of eligibility.

- **Is biomass considered an eligible technology?**

There are specific requirements around the type of resources; see page 12 of the MIP Handbook.

- **Can MIP fund an existing community microgrid? Can a single site qualify for the program?**

MIP is designed to develop new community microgrids. The program funds multi-customer community microgrids. The project must meet the needs of two or more customers connected by PGE infrastructure.

- **What is the normal voltage of the line the generation site that will be connected with to the micro grid?**

It is anticipated that most proposed microgrids would operate using PG&E's primary voltage distribution grid to connect customers. Typical voltages range from 4kv-21kv. Most generation resources would connect at a lower voltage and be "stepped up" to primary voltage via a transformer to power the microgrid.

That being said, smaller microgrids operating at secondary voltage would also be considered.

- **Does PG&E have a testing methodology/requirement for the MG controls? Especially for multiple interconnection points (mid feeder MGs).**

Please see the Microgrid Island Study information in PG&E's [Community Microgrid Best Practices Guide](#).

- **Who specifies the actual equipment and vendors that are used for the microgrid design? Is this PG&E or the entity submitting the application or a combination?**

While the entity submitting the application can specify the equipment to be used, PG&E provides a reference hardware list in its [Community Microgrid Best Practices Guide](#).

Using reference hardware can greatly streamline and simplify the development and testing process.

- **Who owns the protection equipment/philosophy at the Point of common coupling ?**

This is provided by PG&E at the Microgrid Islanding Point.

- **Is there a mapping resource for reference in understanding how customers are interconnected to determine the number of reclosures required for islanding? Is there a ballpark cost to PG&E per set of reclosers to determine the complexity/ number of points that we can plan to include or exclude?**

The PG&E Integration Capacity Analysis and Distribution Investment Deferral Framework maps ([pge.com](#)) may be utilized to access information regarding high-level overview of PG&E distribution grid; however detailed information such as location of line reclosers, switches, transformers, and cost can be discussed during the initial and technical consultation process.

- **Do the Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) need to be located in front of the meter (IFOM)?**

A community microgrid may include some behind the meter (BTM) DERs; however, MIP only pays for IFOM DERs.

- **Can you provide a link to the community microgrid best practices document?**

PG&E's [Community Microgrid Best Practices Guide \(pge.com\)](#).

- **In the presentation, a period of 24-hour support is mentioned. Is this a lower limit and are more points obtained when the period can be longer? And for longer periods, is a combination of e.g., solar and battery supported by backup generator allowed? (say 24h battery only, and after that a mix?)**

Correct, 24 hours is the minimum, and points are provided for up to four days of resilience. A combination is allowed if the Project Resources seeking funding meet the clean energy requirements described on p. 12 of the [MIP Handbook](#).

- **Is there a list of consultants and controller providers that applicants can use to identify potential partners?**

No, please contact the CPUC's Clean Energy Access Grant program for support, capacitygrants@cpuc.ca.gov.

- **Who owns the microgrid generation assets? Would the community/Tribe/etc. own the solar and storage and be able to claim the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) on those assets?**

MIP will provide funding to the local or tribal government to pay for the cost of the generation or storage resources. The local or tribal government can own the resources. We don't address tax issues.

- **Is there a way to do a quick check with PG&E on the eligibility of a particular MG site? Or is eligibility verified through submission of the application only?**

Please speak with us by sending a request to communitymicrogrids@pge.com.

- **Can you please provide information on the Clean Energy Access Grant program and who their SME(s) are that would be able to recommend microgrid control systems/integrators?**

See [Equity and Access Grant Program \(ca.gov\)](#), or email capacitygrants@cpuc.ca.gov.

- **Please clarify the islanding study process and timeline.**

Please see Section 9.3 of PG&E's [Community Microgrid Best Practices Guide \(pge.com\)](#)

- **How does the RCEA airport provide 24-hour back-up? By restricted load backed up relative to the amount of generation? No back up gas generators were required?**

RCEA microgrid energy resources are sized large enough to cover 24 hours of continuous operation. No additional backup gas generators were required; however, the airport does have an existing backup generator if anything were to happen to the microgrid.

- **For excess power generated, is that exclusively sold on the wholesale market or is there a dedicated tariff rate that could be net metered?**

Net metering is not an option for front-of-the-meter resources. These resources typically interconnect using the Wholesale Distribution Tariff.

- **Are bidirectional EV chargers' applicable equipment eligible for this program.**

Potentially. This would be determined during the technical consultation.

- **Could the solar system be used for community solar tariff when that goes live?**

Potentially. This would be determined during the technical consultation.