

**Research Development and Demonstration RDD 2021  
Questions and Answers - Updated May 5, 2021**

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*The following are responses for non-project specific questions emailed or submitted via chat during the webinar or during the open application process to [cef@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:cef@commerce.wa.gov). Some edits may have been made to avoid project-specific details in the original question, but otherwise, questions are presented as submitted. We attempted to answer all questions asked during the Pre-Application Conference on May 5. Some answers from the Pre-Application Conference have been truncated for clarity. If your question was not addressed, please submit it to the CEF email address listed below. All questions related to the RD&D competitive process are required to be in writing to [cef@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:cef@commerce.wa.gov) to ensure an equitable process.*

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**Questions received up to May 6, 2021 (including Q&A from May 5 Pre-Application Conference)**

- 1. Q. Our project fits many of the requirements of this RFA well (including our ability to match funds), except that we have no particular benefit for vulnerable populations, including tribes and communities with high environmental or energy burden. It is unclear to me from your RFA if:  
(a) priority is given for \$1M of funding to projects that meet the vulnerable population requirements (in which case we will apply)  
(b) priority is given for all of the funding in this round to projects that meet the vulnerable population requirements (in which case we will not apply)**

**A.** According to RFA Section 1.2 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK, priority must be given to projects that benefit vulnerable populations, including Tribes and communities with high environmental or energy burden. Projects are still eligible to apply for funding if they do not provide benefits to the priority groups mentioned. This solicitation will prioritize projects meeting these goals through the scoring criteria. All responsive proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the scoring weights listed in RFA Section 4.2 EVALUATION BREAKDOWN.

- 2. Q. I wanted to know if it would be possible for [current CEF3 grant recipient] to apply for RD&D funding for a small project while we still had CEF3 open or if we were only allowed 1 project at a time?**

**A.** Previous RD&D grant recipients with projects under contract are welcome to apply to this round of funding.

- 3. Q. What does it mean that a project is "completed" within 36 months, what if this is intended to be an ongoing program?**

**A.** The intent of the program is to have the scope of work complete and the capital asset finished at the end of 24-36 months following the contract execution. We encourage the work to continue and the capital asset to be used for the ongoing program.

**4. Q. We're also wondering if there is more detail on the capital assets requirements. Can you provide examples or elaborate on the same?**

**A.** Please refer to RFA SECTION 1.7 DEFINITIONS for an explanation of capital asset. Eligible capital assets will be evaluated on a case by case basis. If you have specific questions about specific capital expenditures and how the capital asset is being used, we may be able to give a more detailed answer.

**5. Q. Do we use the funding to acquire the capital asset, or does that need to be secured prior to the grant for eligibility?**

**A.** Please provide further clarification on this question. Are you asking if the grant funds need to be used to acquire/develop the capital asset, and if the asset needs to be secured prior to the grant? Or are you asking if the funding needs to be secured prior to the grant?

**6. Q. Do the existing (non-state) funding/sponsorships qualify for the match?**

**A.** Match funds should correspond with the duration of the Commerce grant contract period. Previously acquired matching funds spent during the contract period would be eligible. Funding spent outside of the contract period would likely not count.

**7. Q. Just confirming on the match ratio again, for 1:5 ratio - for every 100 requested from this grant, 20 should be matched, right?**

**A.** This is correct.

**8. Q. Do we have any page limit for phase one proposal?**

**A.** Please refer to the individual Phase One application document "Instructions" section for page length guidelines.

**9. Q. In phase 1 if we specify the organizations that may be interested in funding and in phase 2 if we provide commitment letters will that be sufficient?**

**A.** Yes, providing the names of potential match sponsors in Phase One and submitting commitment letters for match funding in Phase Two would be sufficient. Note that a commitment letter is not mandatory, but may strengthen your Phase Two application.

**10.Q. What will be the normal award size?**

**A.** Commerce cannot anticipate an average award size. The size of awards will depend on the requested funding from applicants and number of awardees. Please refer to RFA Section 1.4 FUNDING for requirements on award ranges for Group 1 and Group 2.

**11.Q. Minimum qualifications: Washington state-based research institution – Does the national labs qualify?**

**A.** Yes, national labs based in Washington would be an eligible research institution.

**12.Q. “Develop or demonstrate eligible clean energy technologies which: either have demonstrated viability, such as pilot or full scale prototype” - Does the final pilot or full scale prototype need to be implemented in Washington State?**

**A.** We have your question out for review and further discussion. Once there is a response, we will move this question and answer to the top of this thread and the response will be available at the next opportunity for updating the document on the website.

**13.Q. At the end of this project who owns the outcome of the research or research products?**

**A.** We have your question out for review and further discussion. Once there is a response, we will move this question and answer to the top of this thread and the response will be available at the next opportunity for updating the document on the website.

**14.Q. Does the max \$1.5M for each project include the required 1:1 match fund from us? How should I describe the total funding if we are applying for \$1.M state fund?**

**A.** The minimum and maximum amounts listed in RFA Section 1.4 FUNDING are the minimum and maximum award amounts that applicants may request from Commerce in their applications. For example, if you request a grant of \$1.5 million, you would need match of \$1.5 million (or greater) and the total project cost would be \$3 million. Applicants should describe the total project cost as grant funds plus non-state matching fund in their application.

**15.Q. Do all partners also need to be in Group 1 to stay in that group? For instance, if the primary applicant is a non-profit but the match/other partner is a for-profit, are we still eligible for the reduced match?**

**A. We have your question out for review and further discussion. Once there is a response, we will move this question and answer to the top of this thread and the response will be available at the next opportunity for updating the document on the website.**

**16.Q. Could you please elaborate on the match ratio? For 1:5 does it mean securing \$1 of match for \$5, or the other way around?**

A. For every \$100 requested, the applicant must match with \$20.

**17.Q. Does the Washington state requirement apply to subcontractors? Can the prime applicant use out of state contractors, for some of the work?**

A. The primary applicant has to be a Washington-based entity, but can contract with subcontractors that are not Washington-based.

**18.Q. Can funds spent be considered as matching fund? What if promised matching funds fail to be realized?**

A. Spending in-kind/cash match that is directly relatable to the project can be considered matching funds. If spending that is ancillary or outside of the project is not eligible for match. Match should be spent as Commerce funds are spent or within the time period of the contract. For example, if funds were spent a year prior to contracting, Commerce would not consider that to be matching funds.

If promised matching funds are not realized from the very beginning, Commerce would not be able to go to contract with the successful applicant in the first place. Commerce tries to sync expenditures with the applicant's matching funds. If matching funds were received, but then the source was to disappear, there are a couple options: Commerce could give reprieve while the applicant tries to raise additional matching funds, or, if the applicant cannot raise additional funds, Commerce would explore de-scoping the project and finding a place to conclude the project.

**19.Q. Our company was started in Washington State, is registered in Delaware, but we work and do business in Washington State, is that eligible for this funding?**

A. We do have awards with other companies that have presence in multiple states or potentially even internationally. The most important thing is that you have a business or subsidiary or entity that it is registered to do business in the state of Washington.

**20.Q. Match funds must be secured within 6 months of the award. What about the other direction? How far back can matching funds be used from?**

A. Commerce is looking for matching funds to be currently spent in tandem with Commerce grant funds that are awarded. If there were funds spent on the project before contracting, those funds cannot be considered match.

**21.Q. Can you speak more to the won't fund statement about not funding current technology. Would any wind or solar be funded or only new technologies related to that?**

A. Only novel configurations of existing technologies will be funded, and projects will be evaluated on a case by case basis. In this example, we will evaluate how the system is put together. Installing solar is not new and novel. However, the project might be eligible if there is a new and novel implementation of solar panels and some other equipment, and it brings something new and different to the table.

**22.Q. I have a grant from out of state that will start in June and run for three years, can it be used as a match for this opportunity?**

A. Depending on when the applicant and Commerce go to contract and funds are awarded, these funds should be eligible to count as match funds.

**23.Q. Would State agencies fall under Group 2 for funding?**

A. We have your question out for review and further discussion. Once there is a response, we will move this question and answer to the top of this thread and the response will be available at the next opportunity for updating the document on the website.

**24.Q. Projects must develop or acquire capital assets, but funds must be spent on other items such as labor, materials, and supplies, in addition to the capital assets?**

A. Yes, funding can be spent on other items than the capital asset as long as they are tied to the creation of the capital asset. Commerce will evaluate spending on a case by case basis depending on the budget.

**25.Q. If the primary applicant is Washington based, can the primary applicant utilize staff located outside of Washington?**

A. Yes. If the primary applicant, partners, or subcontractors have some staff members outside of Washington, those staff can be utilized. If the majority of the staff working on the project are outside of Washington, Commerce would need to consider a situation like that.

**26.Q. How extensively do we need to prove the 13-year life of the asset? Given that this supports early-stage technologies, is it enough to say that the "design life"**

**is expected to >13 years? We have not yet proven that it will actually last 13-years in the field?**

A. Commerce evaluates the capital assets on a case by case basis. We are looking for a good faith effort from the applicant to explain why the capital asset meets the 13 year criteria.

**27.Q. The requirements state that you must be able to demonstrate partnership through continuous and intensive engagement with the research community, could you elaborate on this? Does this mean that all applicants need to partner or be involved with academia? Does this preclude private companies working with utilities on developing and demonstrating technologies, unless they engage with universities?**

A. We have your question out for review and further discussion. Once there is a response, we will move this question and answer to the top of this thread and the response will be available at the next opportunity for updating the document on the website.

**28.Q. Can we help get an electrolysis charging station installed and operated for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation at Grand Coulee? I contacted the State earlier this year and was told that being a Federal facility that the State could not assist with this project.**

A. Being a Federal Institution does not make you ineligible for this funding. Commerce is unable to comment on a specific project or give specific direction for an applicant. While the technology itself may be under the list of potential eligible technologies, the project itself has to qualify as novel and innovative.

**29.Q. Is it acceptable or qualified for this funding, as long as we have a UBI in Washington State?**

A. Yes. A UBI signifies you are registered with the Department of Revenue to do business in Washington State, and you should be able to submit an application as long as all other requirements in RFA Section 1.3 are met.

**30.Q. Can applicants use in kind Labor hours for some of the matching fund requirement?**

A. Yes.

**31.Q. Do Alaska Tribes get equal consideration with Washington State Tribes?**

A. We have your question out for review and further discussion. Once there is a response, we will move this question and answer to the top of this thread and the response will be available at the next opportunity for updating the document on the website.

**32.Q. We're planning to develop a new battery technology or we asked to develop a project or demonstrate at the end of the project and the project should be able to run for at least 13 years?**

A. Commerce understands that initial prototypes and projects evolve and a new technology may not be running or running at full time for the 13-year capacity. The funding is meant to fund long term capital assets that have the intent of trying to keep the project going or going for the 13-year lifespan.

**33.Q. It's unclear what the intention is on what funds should be spent since the RFA focus' on capital assets and the answer mentioned funds can be spent on other items, can you clarify?**

A. It depends. The primary focus of the project should be on the creation of the capital asset the application is proposing. Whatever expenses and equipment that can be directly tied to the development of the capital asset can be eligible cost. There are items Commerce will not fund, such as purchasing land or buildings.

**34.Q. Does current funding through sponsorships or existing state funding qualify for the match?**

A. CEF4 explicitly states that match must be non-state funding, so existing state funding would not qualify for match.

**35.Q. We are a Washington based company. Can we work with partners that are non-Washington based?**

A. We have your question out for review and further discussion. Once there is a response, we will move this question and answer to the top of this thread and the response will be available at the next opportunity for updating the document on the website.

**36.Q. What are the prioritized groups?**

A. Vulnerable populations and Tribes.

**37.Q. Can you expand on vulnerable populations?**

A. Please refer to RFA SECTION 1.7 DEFINITIONS. For the purposes of this grant, Vulnerable Populations are defined as communities that experience a disproportionate cumulative risk from environmental burdens due to: (a) adverse socioeconomic factors, including unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, access to food and health care, and linguistic isolation; and (b) sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Revised Code of Washington, Chapter 288, Laws of 2019, SECTION 2 (40).