



DATE: November 26, 2020

**TO: All Licensed Electricity Distributors
All Other Interested Parties**

**RE: EB-2019-0207 Information and Template Forms for Preliminary Consultations
on DER Connections**

This letter provides distributors with information to support their obligations in connecting distributed energy resources (DER). Ontario Energy Board (OEB) staff is providing this information to distributors to facilitate the timely and efficient connection of DERs as required under the Distribution System Code (Code) and distributors' licence conditions. Specifically, the letter identifies information requirements for aiding discussions between distributed energy resource (DER) proponents and distributors at the initial stages of a DER connection project.

In August 2019, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) initiated a review of its requirements regarding the connection of DERs by licensed electricity distributors (DER Connections Review¹). OEB staff convened a Working Group to identify changes that could improve the consistency and clarity of the process and lower costs for customers, proponents and the industry. The Working Group's membership represents a broad range of interests including: consumer groups, distributors, firms working on DER projects, and groups advocating for generation technologies and environmental concerns.

One of the issues identified by stakeholders was the ability of DER proponents to determine the potential for a specific project in a timely way to support efficient investments. The first step in the process of making that decision is to determine whether there is available capacity on the distribution system to connect the project. The Working Group decided to prioritize this issue for consideration and established a sub-group to look at ways to improve information sharing to allow early and quick decisions about a DER project's viability.

¹ [EB-2019-0207: DER Connections Review](#)

In addressing the issue, the Working Group took into consideration sections 6.2.9 and 6.2.9.1 of the Code. Section 6.2.9 specifies information that persons considering applying for the connection of a generation facility to a distributor's system must provide to a distributor if the proponent requests a preliminary meeting with the distributor. Section 6.2.9.1 sets out the information that distributors must provide in response to a person requesting a meeting. The Working Group also took into consideration forms that some distributors have developed for the purpose of responding to DER proponents regarding the feasibility of projects.

The Working Group has developed a set of recommendations for the information that should be exchanged between DER proponents and distributors at the beginning of a potential DER connection project in order to determine if it is feasible to proceed to the connection impact assessment stage. A listing of the information that the Working Group has identified as information to be exchanged in a written format is provided in Attachment A to this letter.

In order to facilitate the implementation of its recommendations, the Working Group developed examples of a Preliminary Consultation Application (for customers/proponents) and a Preliminary Consultation Report (for distributors) containing the expected information from each party. To assist distributors, these sample forms (included in Attachments B and C to this letter) are being made available. OEB staff as well as the Working Group, understand that several distributors with existing forms and/or information requirements specific to their service areas may continue to use them or develop alternate forms. However, it is anticipated that distributors' forms will include the information set out in the template to minimize costs for DER providers and their customers where they operate across multiple distributor service areas.

Making the Preliminary Consultation Application form available to proponents, including on distributors' websites, will improve process efficiency for distributors and consistency for proponents. Distributors may also want to consider allowing submission of an application form through on-line portals as a further customer service and process efficiency.

OEB staff is suggesting the use of an application form and a report for preliminary consultation that includes the information identified in the Attachment and sample forms represent good utility practice by the distributor, as a precursor to the meeting required under 6.2.9 of the Code. Using the Preliminary Consultation Report to reply to proponents is expected to provide the information proponents need to make decisions on whether to pursue their projects. Getting the correct information in one communication is expected to save customers and distributors time and reduce costs.

The Working Group is continuing its work on reviewing the technical and process requirements for connection of DERs. We expect that this work will continue over the next several months and may lead to further information or guidance. However, the Working Group has identified that making this Preliminary Consultation related information available now will be of value to the sector and on that basis OEB staff is providing it to support efficient and timely connections of customers with DER projects. As additional steps and technical matters are addressed and recommendations made by the Working Group, OEB staff may issue further guidance to the industry

Any enquiries regarding this letter should be directed to the OEB's Industry Relations email address at industry.relations@oeb.ca.

Yours truly,

Original Signed By

Brian Hewson,
Vice President, Consumer Protection & Industry Performance
Ontario Energy Board

Attachment A

Attachment B – separate document

Attachment C – separate document

ATTACHMENT A

Information suggested for the Preliminary Consultation Application and Report

The following is the information recommended by the Working Group to be exchanged between the proponent and the local distribution company in a written format at an early stage of project planning.

Preliminary Consultation Application

The information that a distributor should require from a proponent is:

- Project Name
- Submission Date
- Primary Contact Information
 - Name
 - Telephone number
 - Email address
 - Address
- Project Information
 - Project Intent
 - Injecting energy to the grid
 - Non-injecting to the grid
 - Load displacement generation
 - Emergency backup generation when the grid is not available
 - Other
 - Size
 - Proposed installed capacity
 - Phase of connection
 - Project Type
 - Synchronous
 - Induction
 - Inverter-based
 - Other
 - Site Information
 - Address
 - Municipality (City/Town/Township)
 - Postal Code
 - Existing Account number (if applicable)

Preliminary Consultation Report

The distributor should respond with the following information

- Report date
- Application information
 - Capacity
 - Fuel
 - Location
- Potential for connection
 - A: The requested connection capacity is not available at that location at this time due to restrictions within the distribution system.
 - B: The requested connection capacity is not available at that location at this time due to restrictions within the transmission system.
 - C: Conditional pass – There may be connection capacity at that location at this time. The proponent may check the capacity using the [Hydro One Station Capacity Calculator](#) and the following information:
 - Connection station
 - Connection station name
 - Connecting feeder name
 - Utility transformer size in kVA
 - Connection voltage
 - Host distributor (if applicable)
 - Connection station name
 - Connecting feeder name
 - Utility transformer size in kVA
 - Connection voltage
 - Upstream station (Transmission station)
 - Upstream station name
 - Upstream feeder name
 - Notes
 - The distributor should provide other information if available such as any conditions on available capacity or specific configurations, and the likelihood of transfer trip
 - Process and Requirements for Connection Impact Assessment (CIA)

The distributor should indicate the likely process for DER connection (the number and type of impact assessments that will be required. Currently, the Code specifies the process based on the size of the generation in Appendix F.1)