



New Jersey Economic Development Authority

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ("RFI")

2019-RFI-OET-CE-097

for

Mechanisms for strengthening New Jersey's Cleantech Innovation Ecosystem

1. INTENT/SUMMARY OF SCOPE

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority ("Authority"), an independent Authority of the State of New Jersey with support from the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Clean Energy Program (CEP), is developing a set of initiatives and programs aimed at positioning NJ as a leader in Cleantech Innovation. The aim is both to support and strengthen current cleantech innovation activities and encourage new research, investment, and jobs in the sector.

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority ("Authority", "NJEDA") in collaboration with the NJ Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Clean Energy Program (CEP) to seek information from entities and individuals with perspectives on the cleantech innovation ecosystem in New Jersey. The NJEDA and BPU is interested in receiving comments, questions, recommendations, facts, information, ideas, and responses that will help the NJEDA and BPU better understand the scope and characteristics of the existing ecosystem, recognize challenges, and develop potential programs/actions that can be undertaken to effectively strengthen and position NJ as a leader in cleantech innovation.

2. BACKGROUND

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority serves as the State's principal agency for driving economic growth. The Authority is committed to making New Jersey a national model for inclusive and sustainable economic development by focusing on key strategies to help build strong and dynamic communities, create good jobs for New Jersey residents and provide pathways to a stronger and fairer economy. Through partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, the Authority creates and implements initiatives to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in the State and strengthen New Jersey's long-term economic competitiveness.

In [*The State of Innovation, Building a Stronger and Fairer Economy in New Jersey*](#), the State's comprehensive Economic Development Plan released in October 2018, Governor Murphy reiterated the importance of innovation for New Jersey to strengthen its economic resilience and

promote social justice. The plan identified eight high-growth, innovative sectors (including Clean Energy) that are expected to deliver outsized economic impact over the next five to fifteen years. Strategic initiatives in these sectors will therefore have an outsized effect on making New Jersey's economy stronger and fairer.

New Jersey currently ranks among the top States in the nation in deployment of clean energy resources and other clean solutions (i.e., technologies and initiatives aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) as well as emissions from criteria air pollutants). Under Governor Murphy, the State has taken bold strides towards transitioning to a cleaner future by establishing goals of 100% clean power generation by 2050, 2.5% or greater annual reductions in use of electricity, and the deployment of 2 GW of energy storage capacity by 2030. The State has launched a series of new initiatives aimed at supporting its clean energy goals such as rejoining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the development of an Energy Master Plan (EMP), and actively supporting the roll-out of 330,000 zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) by 2025 through our "Partnership to Plug-in".

However, in the field of cleantech innovation, there is a perception that NJ lags a number of our peer states. It seems that these peer states have been more effective at nurturing a cleantech ecosystem, increasing the development of new technologies as well attracting supply chain activities and jobs. To re-position NJ as a leader in cleantech innovation, the State is looking to develop a portfolio of initiatives and programs that will strengthen, support and inspire cleantech innovation in the State.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The RFI is seeking responses from all stakeholders within the cleantech innovation ecosystem, these include but not limited to, early stage companies, cleantech investors, large corporate institutions that are active in cleantech R&D, colleges and universities engaged in cleantech-related R&D, university technology transfer and research commercialization offices, real estate developers, incubators, proof of concept facilities, accelerator experts, other development agencies, local governments and or any interested parties. Qualified entities do not need to be located within the State of New Jersey to provide a response.

4. RFI RESPONSE QUESTIONS

In submitting responses to this RFI, respondents are encouraged to answer all questions listed below that are relevant to you or your company and to the best of your ability. Answers are understood to be preliminary and non-binding. Respondents are free to go beyond the scope of the questions and/or structure responses as necessary to increase clarity and efficiency of responses.

The questions are meant as guidance to gather input centered on four main themes:

1. Current cleantech activities in the State

- Please provide information on your company, group, government entity, or self and your capacity and qualifications within the State’s cleantech ecosystem.
- What cleantech innovation activities are you currently working on?
- How do you currently interact with the State’s cleantech ecosystem? Are you engaged in any activities or programs to further advance that ecosystem?

2. Assets and stakeholders within NJ’s cleantech ecosystem

- What do you think are the most important elements of NJ’s current cleantech ecosystem (e.g., companies, physical spaces, financial supports, programs, networking events, etc.)? Please provide specific examples of key elements if possible.
- How do you think these elements could be strengthened?
- Who are the top 3-5 cleantech ecosystem stakeholders (other than yourself/your organization) that you think NJEDA should be aware of? What type of innovations/programs are they working on? Why should NJEDA be aware of them?

3. Challenges facing the State’s cleantech ecosystem and stakeholders

- What are the biggest challenges/concerns/gaps in the State’s current cleantech innovation ecosystem? How can these challenges/concerns/gaps be addressed? Please provide specific examples if possible.
- What set of actions/programs could help address these identified challenges/concerns/gaps? And what role should the State play?

4. Ideas for how to strengthen and grow our cleantech ecosystem

- Are there programs from other states/localities that NJ should look to implement?
- Are there particular types of cleantech innovation that you think the State should try to especially focus on (e.g., offshore wind R&D, energy storage power management systems, transport electrification services, energy efficiency innovations, etc.)?
- What three big ideas do you have for how to advance the State’s cleantech ecosystem?
- What else can the State be doing to market and position itself as a hub for cleantech innovation?

5. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (From Respondents to the EDA)

All questions concerning this RFI must be submitted in writing no later than 11:59pm EST, on January 24, 2020 via e-mail to: rfioetce@njeda.com .

The subject line of the e-mail should state: “QUESTIONS-2020 RFI-OET-CE-097-Mechanisms for strengthening NJ’s Cleantech Innovation Ecosystem”.

Answers to questions submitted will be publicly posted on the Authority’s website on or about January 29, 2020 at: <https://www.njeda.com/Bidding-Opportunities-General/Economic-Transformation-RFIs> as Addendum.

IT IS THE RESPONDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THIS URL REGULARLY FOR UPDATES.

6. RESPONSE DETAILS

All RFI responses must be submitted in writing no later than **11:59pm EST, on February 7, 2020** via e-mail to: rfioetce@njeda.com .

The subject line of the e-mail should state: "RFI Response-2020-RFI-OET-CE-097-Mechanisms for strengthening NJ's Cleantech Innovation Ecosystem".

7. FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS (from EDA) / ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Respondents may be asked to provide additional information to allow the Authority and BPU to better understand the responses or services available.

8. PROPRIETARY AND/OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The Authority and BPU reserves the right to copy any information provided by the Respondents. The Authority and BPU reserves the right to use ideas that are provided by Respondents, applicants, stakeholders, or vendors. By submitting a Response, the submitter represents that such copying or use of information will not violate any copyrights, licenses, or other agreements with respect to information submitted or product solutions demonstrated, if applicable. Responses must clearly be marked for any information the Respondent deems Proprietary and/or Confidential.

9. DISCLAIMER / NO OBLIGATION

NJEDA or BPU is under no obligation to contact Respondents to this RFI.

If necessary, NJEDA or BPU may contact respondents through telephone calls, written or electronic communications, presentation requests and/or interviews to seek clarification on submissions. Please note that, Respondents shall not be under any obligation to respond to any such request.

If it is determined by NJEDA in consultation with the BPU, that there is need for State support/intervention in an area; information gathered from this RFI may be used to develop programs/actions aimed at supporting the cleantech innovation ecosystem in NJ.

This RFI is completely voluntary and will not affect scoring or consideration of any applications that may in the future be submitted to NJEDA or BPU under programs or projects intended to strengthen New Jersey's cleantech innovation ecosystem.

This RFI is issued solely as a means of gathering information. Interested parties responding to this RFI do so at their own expense. There will be no monetary compensation from the Authority or BPU for the time and effort spent in preparing the response to this RFI. All expenses incurred are the sole responsibility of the Respondent.

This RFI is not a request for qualification/proposal. It may or may not result in further action.

Should the Authority in consultation with BPU decide to move forward and issue an RFQ/P or announce a program/product related to this RFI, Respondents need not have submitted a response to this RFI in order to be eligible to respond to the RFP. Should an RFQ/P be issued, responding to this RFI will not affect scoring or consideration for that process.

10. NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Respondents should be aware that responses to this RFI are subject to the “New Jersey Open Public Records Act” (N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.), as amended and including all applicable regulations and policies and applicable case law, including the New Jersey Right-to-Know law. All information submitted in response to the RFI is considered public information, notwithstanding any disclaimers to the contrary, except as may be exempted from public disclosure by OPRA and the common law.

Any proprietary and/or confidential information submitted in response to this RFI will be redacted by the Authority. A person or entity submitting a response to this RFI may designate specific information as not subject to disclosure pursuant to the exceptions to OPRA found at N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1.1, when such person or entity has a good faith legal and/or factual basis for such assertion (i.e. information that may be included in another ongoing public procurement or solicitation). The Authority reserves the right to make the determination as to what is proprietary or confidential and will advise the person or entity accordingly. The Authority will not honor any attempt to designate the entirety of a submission as proprietary, confidential and/or to claim copyright protection for the entire proposal. In the event of any challenge to the Respondent’s assertion of confidentiality with which the Authority does not concur, the Respondent shall be solely responsible for defending its designation.