Questions and Answers for Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Pilot Commercial Deployment Projects Solicitation Applicant Teleconference

On October 21, 2015, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) held a meeting to answer questions regarding the Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Pilot Commercial Deployment Projects Solicitation released on October 1, 2015. Staff encourages applicants to read through this document, as ARB has provided more detail in these responses to stakeholder questions than what was discussed during the teleconference. Questions and answers are grouped by topic.

Grantee and Project Team Eligibility

1. Would a city harbor department qualify as an "other California-based public entity" discussed under Eligible Grantees at the top of page 10 of the Solicitation?

   Answer: Yes.

2. Can a 501(c)3 non-profit organization apply for funding if partnered with a municipality?

   Answer: Yes.

3. Would a public college or university qualify as the Grantee for the application?

   Answer: Yes. The Solicitation is open to California-based public entities acting as Grantee as discussed on page 11 of the Solicitation.

4. Can a college that is not located in a disadvantaged community and not directly eligible for Federal Transit Agency (FTA) funds apply for funding under this Solicitation for electrification of campus shuttle systems?

   Answer: Yes. A public college is eligible for funding under this Solicitation. As discussed on pages 8 and 9, and shown on Table 1 of the Solicitation, a portion of the funding from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16 funding plan does not have to go to projects located in or benefitting disadvantaged communities.

5. Would a new company that wants to start a new operation be eligible to apply for a grant?

   Answer: No. Private companies are not eligible to apply for funding; however, they may partner with an eligible applicant as part of the project team.

6. Would a non-profit homeowner's association be eligible to apply for funding?

   Answer: Yes. However, applicants with experience in managing air quality projects will score higher under Scoring Criteria 1 and 2. For this reason, the homeowner's

association may consider partnering with an experienced public agency or non-profit organization.

7. If private parties will be working with the applicant on the project, how should they be classified on the application?

   Answer: Private parties would be part of the project team, and should appear as such in the application.

8. If we plan to contract with others, do we include them in the application?

   Answer: Yes.

Vehicle and Project Eligibility

9. Is the FY 2014-15 funding amount a level playing field for all project types (school buses, transit, etc.)?

   Answer: Yes.

10. On pages 15-16, school buses are mentioned as eligible vehicles, but Table 1 (page 8 of the Solicitation) shows school bus funding as part of the FY 2015-16 funding and also mentions rural school district funding. Is the rural school district funding separate?

    Answer: Yes. The $5 million for rural school buses (shown in second footnote to Table 1) is not a part of this Solicitation and will be a separate project. Regarding the $40 million for buses from the FY 2015-16 Funding Plan (also shown in Table 1), both school bus and transit bus projects can compete for these funds.

11. Is there a minimum number of vehicles that can be included in a project application?

    Answer: No.

12. Can the funds be applied to leasing vehicles as opposed to purchasing them?

    Answer: Yes.

13. Are near-zero vehicles eligible?

    Answer: Yes. Near-zero vehicles as defined on page 14 of the Solicitation are eligible.

14. Regarding the definition of near zero-emission on page 14 of the Solicitation: “Near zero-emission means a vehicle capable of utilizing zero-emission technologies that

produce no tailpipe greenhouse gas, criteria pollutant or toxic contaminant emissions when operating within a disadvantaged community census tract or ZIP code." Is there a minimum requirement for the number of hours the vehicle must be near-zero emissions? Are there any other requirements for near-zero emissions technologies?

Answer: There is no requirement for the number of zero-emission hours that a near-zero emission vehicle must operate; however, each vehicle must have the ability to operate in zero-emission mode while in a disadvantaged community. Project vehicles, whether they are zero-emission or near zero-emission, must be able to perform the functions as outlined in the project work plan. For example, if an applicant proposes to operate near-zero emission vehicles within disadvantaged community census tracts or ZIP codes, the vehicles must have sufficient zero-emission range to operate in zero-emission only mode the entire time they are within the disadvantaged community census tract and ZIP code as discussed on page 18 of the Solicitation.

15. Does the technology have to be zero-emission while operating in a disadvantaged community?

    Answer: Yes. See response to question 14.

16. Pages 14 through 17 of the Solicitation provide examples of eligible vehicles and technologies. Are these technologies the only technologies eligible for the Solicitation?

    Answer: Yes. Applications with non-eligible vehicles will be rejected.

17. Can projects that include both trucks and buses be funded under this Solicitation?

    Answer: Yes.

18. Beyond buses, the only other vehicle application identified is delivery trucks. Would a zero-emission utility trouble truck that is built on the same drive train as a delivery truck be eligible?

    Answer: No. The Solicitation is open specifically to delivery trucks as specified on page 15 of the Solicitation.

19. Can a project involving the purchase of zero-emission electric-powered garbage trucks and the installation of charging infrastructure at a City's municipal waste collection fleet be eligible for this grant?

    Answer: No. Solid waste collection vehicles are not eligible. The Solicitation is open specifically to buses and delivery trucks as specified on page 15 of the Solicitation.

20. Will an off-road, repower of terminal trucks (e.g., tractors, spotters, hostlers) qualify for this Solicitation? What about these trucks that are plated for on-road use?

    Answer: This Solicitation is not open to off-road vehicles and equipment. Only zero-emission terminal trucks that comply with all applicable federal and State requirements for on-road use, and meet the requirements for eligible vehicles on pages 15, 16, and 18 of the Solicitation would qualify for this Solicitation.

21. Would a truck equipped with an engine that has been newly certified to the optional low NOx standards be eligible?

    Answer: Vehicles that are not full zero-emission during operation must be capable of operating in zero-emission only mode to be considered eligible for funding under this Solicitation as discussed on page 15 of the Solicitation. The FY 2015-16 Funding Plan has allocated $5 million from Low Carbon Transportation funds and $2 million from AQIP ($7 million total) for a separate project to specifically incentivize low NOx trucks.

22. If an applicant wants to include both new vehicles and conversions of existing vehicles to zero-emission, can the vehicles be on the same application? Or should they be submitted on separate applications?

    Answer: Both conversions and new vehicles can be included on the same application.

23. Are zero- or near-zero emission light-duty vehicles eligible under this Solicitation if used in lieu of shuttles to transport people from transit hubs to worksites?

    Answer: No. This Solicitation only open to buses and shuttles 8,501 pounds GVWR or greater, and trucks 14,001 pounds GVWR or greater.

24. Are class 8 drayage trucks allowable?

    Answer: Yes, if they meet the requirements for being commercially available as detailed on pages 15 and 16 of the Solicitation.

25. Would a proposal for a pilot project involving zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles (i.e. Class 7 or larger) be considered under this Solicitation?

    Answer: Yes, if the vehicles meet the requirements for being commercially available as detailed on pages 15 and 16 of the Solicitation.

26. Please clarify the definition of “commercial” as it pertains to this grant Solicitation.

    Answer: The conditions for “commercially available” vehicles are discussed in detail on pages 15 and 16 of the Solicitation.

27. If an applicant starts with a commercially available vehicle then changes the powertrain and battery pack, and re-certifies it, would this modified vehicle be eligible?

    Answer: Yes, provided the conversion kit used in the converted vehicle receives an exemption Executive Order (EO) from ARB, as discussed in paragraph e on page 16 of the Solicitation.

28. On page 16, paragraph c, in reference to the approval letter from ARB for new zero-emission vehicles weighing greater than 14,000 pounds GVWR, what is required to receive the approval letter?

    Answer: The process for obtaining an ARB approval letter, including the information to be submitted and ARB’s contact personnel are all available at: http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/cihd/approvals/approvals.php under the heading “Approvals Available.”

29. Is the approval letter required to be included with the application? And if not, can ARB assign a firm date for when certification or an approval letter must be received so that the applicant can know whether or not certification or approval is going to happen?

    Answer: No. An approval letter is not an application requirement but will be required before ARB will approve payment for those vehicles. ARB will not assign a firm date for when an approval letter must be received in this Q&A document; however, applications including vehicles that have not received ARB approval must describe where they are in the process of obtaining an approval letter, and include obtaining the approval as a milestone in the application. The same would apply to the exemption EO required for conversion kits (see paragraph e on page 16 of the Solicitation).

30. Regarding the timing of the certification requirements for being considered “commercially available” as outlined in the Solicitation (paragraphs 1.a through 1.e, pages 15 and 16 of the Solicitation): Can a vehicle become “commercially available” during the term of the Grant?

    Answer: Yes. As discussed in response to question 29, if vehicles included in an application have not yet received the appropriate certifications or approvals, the applicant must describe where they are in the process of obtaining

certification/approval and include it as a milestone. ARB will not approve payment for vehicles unless this milestone has been reached. They must also show in their application how they will ensure that project vehicles will be able to operate for the minimum one-year data collection period.

31. Could an aftermarket conversion kit that is currently undergoing ARB's process for obtaining an exemption EO be funded under this Solicitation, pending its receipt of the EO?

    Answer: It depends. First the aftermarket conversion kit must be zero-emission. If the kit is zero-emission, the response to question 29 above applies here.

32. Scoring Criteria 8 (page 32 of the Solicitation) states "Projects with better warranties will score higher." Is there a minimum, or an optimal warranty that ARB is looking for?

    Answer: At a minimum, vehicles including engine (if applicable), motor, drive train, batteries, and energy storage systems must be covered under full warranty with the manufacturer, conversion company or integrator for the duration of the grant agreement.

33. Would a lease including a complete service/parts contract be equivalent to a warranty?

    Answer: Yes. A lease including complete service/parts contract for the duration of the grant agreement would be equivalent to a warranty.

Eligible Funding for Fueling/Charging Infrastructure

34. Regarding the statement on page 19 of the Solicitation: "ARB will only process applications for fueling infrastructure projects where the project is proposed to be sited where similar infrastructure already exists (e.g., installing electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) where electrical infrastructure already exists…)." In the case of battery electric vehicle charging infrastructure, please clarify whether this statement means that project funds cannot be used for (1) installing EVSEs at school bus yards that currently lack EVSEs; or (2) installing EVSEs at sites that currently lack electrical service altogether.

    Answer: The exclusion in this statement refers to installing EVSEs at sites that lack electrical infrastructure altogether.

35. Would a project that includes bringing electricity out to a charging site be eligible for funding if the associated electrical infrastructure costs were funded solely by a transit agency or third party and not with ARB funds?

    Answer: As provided on page 19 of the Solicitation, the project must be sited where similar infrastructure already exists, meaning the electric infrastructure must already be present at the site, rather than being installed for the first time specifically for the charging infrastructure project.

36. Please indicate whether a hydrogen fueling station would qualify for infrastructure funding in the following example: The hydrogen fueling station will be built at a site that does not have preexisting fueling infrastructure, but the site has approved land use plans and a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) determination to build a hydrogen fueling station.

    Answer: Yes. A hydrogen fueling station sited in the above example would be eligible to apply under this Solicitation if the proposed location is at an existing commercial or industrial facility and the application includes the necessary documentation demonstrating that all CEQA requirements have been satisfied as described in Appendix E. Additionally, if this necessary CEQA documentation is pending, the application may be considered for infrastructure funding provided the necessary CEQA documentation is received before the April 13, 2016 deadline provided on Table 2, page 23 of the Solicitation.

37. Would installing solar panels on a vehicle be considered siting fueling infrastructure where existing infrastructure already exists?

    Answer: No. The Solicitation requirement that charging/refueling infrastructure must be sited where similar infrastructure already exists does not apply in this example because it refers to stationary charging/refueling infrastructure (i.e., a charging station). Solar panels installed on a vehicle would be part of the vehicle and would be considered an eligible expense.

Disadvantaged Community Criteria and Allocations

38. Can projects located within disadvantaged communities be funded with FY 2014-15 funds?

    Answer: Yes.

39. What criteria will be used to evaluate projects located in census tracts versus ZIP codes containing census tracts (as identified in CalEnviroScreen) when scoring an application's benefits to disadvantaged communities?

Answer: First, applications will be checked to see if they satisfy the minimum requirements associated with specific funding sources for projects either benefitting or located in a disadvantaged community (detailed on Table 1, page 8 of the Solicitation). Consistent with Table 2.A-1 in Appendix A, Attachment 6 of the Solicitation, scoring criteria should favor projects that provide multiple benefits or the most benefits to disadvantaged communities. As such, an application that proposes greater percentages of vehicle miles and services in disadvantaged community census tracts will likely receive a higher score in Criteria 7 than one with most vehicle miles in disadvantaged community ZIP codes. As a point of clarification, the Solicitation directs applicants to ARB's *Cap-and-Trade Auction Proceeds Funding Guidelines for Agencies that Administer California Climate Investments* (Guidelines)[1], and to the interactive maps of disadvantaged community census tracts and ZIP codes,[2] not to CalEnviroScreen. Scoring Criteria 7 (pages 31 and 32 of the Solicitation) lists 7 items that reviewers will be looking for in an application, with greater detail provided in Appendix A, Attachment 6 of the Solicitation.

40. Given that there is up to $17.5 million (from the FY 2015-16 Funding Plan as identified on Table 1, page 8 of the Solicitation) for bus projects that have no disadvantaged community requirements, is ARB planning to give preference to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities?

Answer: No. However, projects that provide benefits to disadvantaged communities will score higher in Criteria 7, possibly resulting in an overall higher score compared to projects that do not provide benefits to disadvantaged communities.

41. How would a project fair in terms of scoring if it includes operating a zero-emission bus on one of the heaviest corridors, starting and ending within a disadvantaged community census tract, serving individuals located within a disadvantaged community, but otherwise operating primarily within ZIP codes containing a disadvantaged community census tract?

Answer: ARB cannot estimate how a project will score before seeing the application. That said, providing benefits to disadvantaged communities is an important aspect of this Solicitation. Scoring Criteria 7 (pages 31 and 32 of the Solicitation) and Appendix A, Attachment 6 of the Solicitation both explain the scoring criteria in terms of benefits to disadvantaged communities. The response to

[1] http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/fundingguidelines.htm
[2] http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/535investments.htm

question 39 above discusses how percent of miles in disadvantaged community census tracts versus ZIP codes will affect the score. In addition, projects providing multiple benefits to disadvantaged communities will be scored higher in this category.

42. Can a California public university that is not located in a disadvantaged community census tract or ZIP code but serves a high number of low-income, first to college students provide demographic information on the students to satisfy some of the disadvantaged community requirements of the Solicitation?

    Answer: No. As discussed in response to question 39, applications will be checked to see if they satisfy the minimum requirements associated with specific funding sources for projects either benefitting or located in a disadvantaged community. If a project does not meet the minimum requirements associated with being *located in* a disadvantaged community or *providing benefits to* disadvantaged community (Step 1 and Step 2, respectively, in Table 2.A-1, Appendix A, Attachment 6 of the Solicitation), the project is not eligible for funding that has been specifically allocated to projects located in or benefitting disadvantaged communities (as specified on Table 1, page 8 of the Solicitation). However, that project application would be evaluated and scored for benefits to disadvantaged communities based on the elements in Scoring Criteria 7 (pages 31 and 32 of the Solicitation) and Appendix A, Attachment 6 of the Solicitation.

Project Budget, Eligible Expenses and Match Funding

43. What level of budget detail/itemization are you expecting to see in the application budget?

    Answer: Budgets should be detailed and show all costs associated with each task in the project. At a minimum, they should include labor, fees, large purchases, and supporting materials, as well as the portion of each line item covered by grant funding, cash match and in-kind match. Budgets lacking detail to the extent that they cause a reviewer to question whether specific costs are captured will score lower and may be rejected as an incomplete application.

44. Are allowable administrative costs up to 5 percent of the grant amount, or up to 5 percent of the total project cost?

    Answer: Up to 5 percent of the grant amount.

45. Regarding the statement on page 30 of the Solicitation, “Administrative fees may not exceed 5 percent of the total amount awarded by ARB.” Please provide guidance on what constitutes an administrative activity.

    Answer: Project administration is the role of the grantee and includes day to day project oversight, preparation and submission of periodic project update reports, recordkeeping, submission of disbursement requests, coordination of monthly project update meetings, and other day to day activities in support of the project. More details are provided on page 12 of the Solicitation.

46. Is it permissible to use match funds to cover administrative fees in excess of the 5 percent threshold?

    Answer: No.

47. Is it permissible for the administrative entity (who might otherwise be described as the project manager) to perform and be compensated for non-administrative tasks within the scope of the project? For example, if a project includes conversion to electric drive of existing diesel vehicles, is procurement of the starting vehicles considered a non-administrative activity?

    Answer: If the administrative entity purchases the starting vehicle in the above example, that purchase cost is an eligible project expense reimbursable to the administrative entity (otherwise referred to as the “Grantee”). Staff time dedicated to procuring project vehicles and services is considered administrative activity, and part of the 5 percent cap discussed in question 44.

48. Is the final report (discussed on page 38 of the Solicitation) part of administrative costs?

    Answer: Yes.

49. Would labor associated with the operation of buses for transit service be an eligible expense?

    Answer: Yes, as long as the buses are associated with the pilot project.

50. Is there a limit on the number of years for funding the operation of buses under this Solicitation?

    Answer: Funding will only be provided for the term of the grant agreement.

51. If a lead applicant is not a public agency, what can the required 10 percent cash match be used for (i.e., supporting the pilot, purchasing equipment, buying labor)?

Answer: As discussed on page 11 of the Solicitation, the lead applicant or eligible Grantee can be a public agency or a California-based non-profit organization. The 10 percent required cash match may include money spent by the grantee or any project team member on project-related labor and purchases during the term of the grant agreement. It could also include cash donated to the project to cover any project-related purchases or expenses. See page 9 of the Solicitation for greater detail.

52. How is cash match different from in-kind match?

Answer: Unlike cash match, in-kind match may include project-related supplies, materials, and equipment donated to the project that will be used during the term of the grant agreement. For example, the monetary value associated with the use of existing fueling infrastructure would be considered in-kind match, but cash used to purchase charging stations or other fueling infrastructure equipment could be considered cash match. A used truck or bus chassis donated for the purposes of installing an electric drive train would be considered in-kind match. Finally, any match funding that is considered cash match can also be considered in-kind match, and distinguished in the project budget as discussed in response to question 43.

53. Can a third party or public agency provide part of the cash match if they provide proper endorsements (letters, etc.)?

Answer: Yes.

54. How does this project work with other existing programs, like Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP)? Can we combine funding for both?

Answer: Funding from HVIP cannot be combined with funding from this Solicitation. HVIP vouchers may not be used to meet any part of the project match requirements. However, funding from the Proposition 1B and Carl Moyer programs can be used as in-kind match.

55. Would FTA match funding be considered cash or in-kind?

Answer: Cash (see page 9 of the Solicitation).

56. Would an application that uses FTA match funding score higher than a project using local transportation funds and local match?

Answer: No.

57. FTA recently announced FY 2015 funding for the Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment (LoNo) Program, and applications for LoNo funding are due by

November 23, 2015. Is there a benefit to applying for funding from this ARB Solicitation and the FTA LoNo Program?

Answer: While there is no scoring benefit to applying for LoNo funding, ARB is encouraging transit agencies to leverage FTA funding as much as possible and use known or expected FTA funding as match. However, since LoNo funding is competitive, applications submitted to ARB that are not selected by FTA for LoNo funding may have to identify in their application to ARB another funding source or consider withdrawing.

58. If a transit agency intends to purchase 10 zero-emission buses, would it be better to apply for funding for all 10 buses under both ARB's Solicitation and the FTA LoNo program, or to apply for buses separately (i.e., 5 buses from each program)?

    Answer: It is up to the applicant to decide how they will apply for funding from ARB and FTA.

Fiscal Year Fund Requirements and Funding Caps

59. Will the funding caps detailed on page 8 of the Solicitation be applied to the overall projects, or to individual project participants?

    Answer: The funding caps on amounts awarded to Grantees, technology types, and air basins will be applied to overall projects. They will not be applied to individual project participants; however, the caps may affect project participants.

60. Are the following dollar amounts accurate for project caps introduced on page 8 of the Solicitation?

    a) No more than 30 percent of the total funding for projects under this Solicitation will be awarded to a single grantee: **$25,097,400**

       Answer: The 30 percent grantee cap will be applied if additional funds, beyond the known FY 2014-15 funding, become available. The above dollar amount is accurate IF the additional funding is appropriated as discussed in the FY 2015-16 Funding Plan; however, at this point we cannot be certain of those amounts until additional funding is appropriated.

    b) No more than 50 percent of funding allocated from FY 2014-15 will be awarded to a single grantee: **$11,829,000**

       Answer: Correct.

c) No more than 60 percent of the funding at any time will be allocated toward projects involving a single technology type: **$50,194,800**

Answer: For the known FY 2014-15 funds, the 60 percent technology cap will be $14,194,800. If the additional funding is appropriated as discussed in the FY 2015-16 Funding Plan, the above amount for the technology cap would be correct.

61. Is there a minimum or maximum award amount?

Answer: There is no minimum award amount. The caps on the amount of funding that can go towards a single grantee, or projects in a single air basin or involving a single technology (page 8 of the Solicitation) help frame what maximum award amounts may be.

62. Can you please elaborate on the levels of funding? Can applicants submit for a share of $23 million or $75 million?

Answer: The $23,658,000 from FY 2014-15 is available to fund projects now, but this Solicitation also applies to project applications that will be preliminarily selected for additional funding that becomes available before June 30, 2016, as discussed on pages 34 and 35 of the Solicitation. That said, ARB is not suggesting that applicants should scale their projects to the funding amounts available in FY 2014-15. Available funding will be allocated to the highest-scoring projects taking into account the caps described on page 8 of the Solicitation. If the available funding is less than the amount requested by the applicant, ARB may offer to fund the project at a scaled down scope.

63. If the highest scoring eligible application is requesting $15 million from ARB, would that project be funded fully?

Answer: Assuming that only FY 2014-15 funds are available, then the 50 percent grantee cap would limit funding to a single project to roughly $11.8 million, and ARB would fund the above project at a scaled down scope as discussed above in response to question 62 above. If future funding becomes available, ARB may at our sole discretion, offer additional funds to that project as discussed on page 34 of the Solicitation.

64. If the future funding does not come through as discussed in the Solicitation, will ARB work with the applicants to downscale projects?

Answer: Yes. See response to question 63 above.

65. Should applicants strive to keep their funding requests below $11.8 million?

Answer: No. ARB does not require that applicants submit scaled down projects solely to accommodate FY 2014-15 funding. This Solicitation will be used to administer future funding as discussed in the FY 2015-16 Funding Plan and ARB will not be resoliciting if the future funding becomes available by June 30, 2016. For example, if an application applying for $20 million receives the highest score but is subject to the $11.8 million grantee cap, we would ask the applicant if they would like to move forward with $11.8 million in ARB funding at a scaled down scope. The remainder of the funding would go toward the next highest scoring project until money is exhausted.

66. Could the project in the above example get fully funded if the future funding from the FY 2015-16 funding plan becomes available before June 30, 2016?

    Answer: Yes. If additional funds become available before June 30, 2016, ARB may at our sole discretion, offer additional funding to the highest scoring projects that did not receive full funding.

67. Can an applicant submit one large proposal requesting $25 million in ARB funding, and in the proposal, it will state clearly the amount requested for FY 14-15 and the amount requested for FY 15-16 for a total of $25 million between two fiscal periods, as long as the requested amount for each fiscal period meets all the funding cap requirements stipulated on page 8 of the Solicitation?

    Answer: No. Allocations from a specific fiscal year funding source will be at the sole discretion of ARB.

Disbursements

68. On Page B-2 in Appendix B: Sample Grant Agreement of the Solicitation, it states: "The ARB Executive Office retains the authority to terminate or reduce the dollar amount of this grant if, by January 1, 2018, 60 percent of project funding has not been expended by the Grantee…." Does this mean actual amount spent or amount obligated?

    Answer: The work completed by the Grantee by this date must represent 60 percent of the total requested funding, and the Grantee must submit a request for payment that, when added to previous payments, reflects at least 60 percent of ARB-committed funds.

69. Can funding be provided upfront?

Answer: No. Funding is provided at the completion of grant agreement milestones, which applicants will propose in their application budget and work plan (see Appendix A of the Solicitation). Disbursement requests should be submitted after completing tasks described in an applicant's work plan.

Application Scoring

70. Will the scoring scale shown in Table 4 (page 26 of the Solicitation) be applied to each criterion or to the application as a whole?

    Answer: The scoring scale will be applied to each criterion listed in Table 3 (page 25 of the Solicitation) and detailed on pages 26 through 34 of the Solicitation. Percent values shown on Table 4 represent how the total points available for each scoring criterion will be assigned based on the application's responsiveness to the specific criterion.

71. Regarding the statement on page 33 of the Solicitation: "Applications that are clear, concise, and include all the requested information will be scored higher than those that are unclear or missing information. Do not make a declaration as to application completeness in your submittal." Would it be deleterious for the applicant to state in so many words that its application is complete?

    Answer: No. A declaration alone would not be deleterious.

72. The Solicitation states there's a preference for having identified the technology vendors in advance of application. Will the FTA allow sole-sourcing?

    Answer: It is ARB's understanding that FTA will not allow sole-sourcing for formula funds (also referred to as 5307 funds) except under certain conditions. However, applicants are responsible for determining FTA requirements. For public transit applications using FTA formula funds as match, ARB is providing flexibility so that applicants are not required to identify a specific bus manufacturer at the time of application. However, applicants are encouraged to identify in their application the technology type and/or anticipated bus manufacturer(s) subject to completing FTA's open-procurement process.

73. Will vehicles deployed earlier, with more time in operation score better?

    Answer: No.

74. Regarding the statement on page 28 of the Solicitation: "Identify the extent to which renewable sources of energy will be used to support the zero- or near zero-emission vehicles to be deployed. Projects employing a higher percentage of renewable

energy will score higher than those employing a lower percentage or no renewable energy." Will a higher score be given if the fleet proprietor (i.e., a school district in the case of EV school buses) installs a photovoltaic system in advance of the deployment of EV school buses funded by the project?

Answer: Renewable electricity generated from an existing photovoltaic system and used by project vehicles will count towards a project's renewable percentage, and a higher score will be given in Scoring Criteria 3 for projects using higher percentages of renewable energy.

75. Regarding the statement page 29 of the Solicitation: "Details must be provided explaining the existing similar infrastructure where the funded infrastructure is proposed to be sited (e.g., existing electrical infrastructure where proposed EVSE is to be sited)." Assuming the answer to question 34 is that the presence of an electrical service qualifies as "existing electrical infrastructure," what would constitute a high-scoring response to this question? Is it enough to assert that a given site (e.g., a school bus yard) has an existing electrical service? Would it be better to provide a technical description of that electrical service (e.g., 120/208V 600A electric panel served by a 112.5 kW distribution transformer)?

Answer: Providing a detailed description of the existing electrical service and conveying how that service, along with the proposed charging infrastructure, will meet the charging and travel needs of the project vehicles would constitute a higher scoring response to this specific criterion.

Emissions and Cost-Effectiveness

76. Using the cost-effectiveness criteria on page 31 of the Solicitation, if someone submits 3 different applications with differing technologies and differing cost-effectiveness, will the same criteria be applied to all applications? (Example given: plug-in at $1,000/ton of criteria reduced; battery-electric at $500/ton criteria reduced; and battery-electric at $400/ton of criteria reduced.)

Answer: Yes. For both cost-effectiveness (Scoring Criteria 6) and emissions reductions benefits (Scoring Criteria 5), scores will be assigned after all applications are reviewed and the scores assigned to these criteria will be relative to the other projects.

77. In the cost-effectiveness calculations, is it required that default values for fuel efficiency for the baseline vehicle be used, or can an applicant use the actual baseline vehicles?

Answer: Every application must use the same baseline (2010 model year) as described in Appendix D.

78. Can the calculations in Appendix D of the Solicitation be modified to allow the following approach: In lieu of the current emissions baseline provided in Appendix D, give applicants the option to establish an emissions reduction baseline using "real world" advanced criteria emissions testing (using PEMS, or another testing protocol) on vehicles that would be replaced or converted to zero-emission, or near zero-emission technologies.

    Answer: To create a level playing field for scoring emissions benefits, the emissions reductions associated with each technology must be calculated using the same baseline as detailed in Appendix D.

79. Is there a database of cost-effective numbers that applicants can refer to?

    Answer: No.

Solicitation and Application Process

80. Can the Sample Grant Agreement included in Appendix B of the Solicitation be modified?

    Answer: The General Provisions of the Sample Grant Agreement cannot be modified from their current form. All applicants are encouraged to review the Sample Grant Agreement.

81. Assume an applicant intends to submit a project proposal that does not meet any disadvantaged community requirement. Should they submit their project application by the January 29, 2016 deadline, or wait until the FY 2015-16 funding is approved by the California legislature?

    Answer: This Solicitation is requesting applications for projects to be funded from FY 2014-15 funds, as well as future funds according to the requirements of the FY 2015-16 Funding Plan. ARB will not be resoliciting if the future funding becomes available by June 30, 2016. As such, if someone is interested in applying for funds that meet the FY 2015-16 Funding Plan requirements, which allow for funding projects that do not meet disadvantaged community requirements, then the application must be submitted by the January 29, 2016 deadline.

Timing of Project Completion

82. If funding is released later, do we assume the same amount of time for completing the project?

    Answer: As stated on page 34 of the Solicitation, applications may be preliminarily selected for funding from future funds provided appropriations are made before June 30, 2016. As such, projects preliminarily selected after February 25, 2016, will likely require extensions to the other deadlines shown on Table 2, page 23 of the Solicitation. ARB cannot predict when additional funds will become available, therefore we reserve the right at our sole discretion to adjust the deadlines on Table 2 during grant agreement development, and establish a new project completion date.

83. Does ARB have discretion in extending the April 1, 2019 completion deadline?

    Answer: ARB is focused on making sure that projects are completed by this date. Except as provided above in response to question 82, ARB does not anticipate needing to extend the deadline.

84. There is concern about the time required to deliver a zero-emission vehicle once it is ordered, and being able to meet the timeline for spending the money as specified in the Solicitation. As an example, it can take 12 to 18 months for delivery of a diesel bus after the bus purchase is approved.

    Answer: ARB anticipates that applicants have been corresponding with zero-emission bus manufacturers about their production capabilities and, therefore, are able to estimate the timeline from order to delivery. ARB is also encouraging applicants to realistically scale their projects in line with the vehicle manufacturer's production capabilities. Information regarding vehicle procurement timelines should be included in the application's detailed project schedule (see Appendix B, Exhibit B of the Solicitation). To satisfy the requirement for one-year of operation for data acquisition, vehicles must be put into service by April 1, 2018. However, as discussed in response to question 82, for projects that are selected for future funding, ARB reserves the right at our sole discretion during grant agreement development to adjust the timelines and project completion dates.

85. Can the project evaluation period commence with delivery of the first of multiple vehicles?

    Answer: Every vehicle including the last vehicle deployed must have at least one year of data collection.

Vehicle Ownership

86. Regarding the fifth bullet on page 28 of the Solicitation: "Describe how the funded project vehicles will be used and the expected dispositions of the funded project vehicles and infrastructure after the end of the term of the grant agreement." Is it expected that the applicant will retain title to the vehicles and fueling (charging) equipment during the term of the grant agreement?

    Answer: Yes. As discussed on page 16, the end user (which may also be the applicant) must retain ownership (i.e., title) of the vehicle during the term of the grant agreement, and preferably beyond. There are no ownership requirements for fueling infrastructure; however, all infrastructure included in the application must support project vehicles for the duration of the grant term.

87. If the answer to the above question is "yes," is it expected that under normal circumstances title would pass to the fleet proprietor(s) when the term expires (e.g., to school districts in the case of school buses)?

    Answer: If "fleet proprietor" in this question means the school district, then the title to project vehicles should pass to the fleet proprietor when the vehicles are put in service and remain with the fleet proprietor during the term of the grant agreement. ARB's intent is that the vehicle end-user retains ownership throughout the useful life of the vehicle and infrastructure. While there are no requirements on the final disposition of vehicles or infrastructure after the grant term expires, applications that show a strong commitment to continue using project vehicles (supported by infrastructure) beyond the term will score higher under Scoring Criteria 9 (page 33 of the Solicitation). Conversely, applications that do not discuss final dispositions or do not show commitment to adopting the technology following a successful pilot would not score as well under this criterion.

88. Would it be acceptable for an applicant to retain title to a small number of vehicles after the term expires with the purpose of placing them on a rolling basis with interested fleet proprietors who would like to gain practical experience with the technology before committing to a purchase program?

    Answer: As above, title to project vehicles must be retained by the end user for the duration of the grant agreement, but there are no vehicle ownership requirements after the grant term expires. Applications that include repurposing a number of vehicles to promote technology adoption elsewhere will not be discouraged; however, applications should discuss how the removal of the vehicles from the project fleet would impact services. Discontinuing the use of project buses by the original end user could have a negative impact on Scoring Criteria 9.

General Questions

89. Is the guidance for the project narrative (pages 26 through 34 of the Solicitation) ARB's preferred format for Attachment 3 of the application package as discussed in Appendix A of the Solicitation?

    Answer: No. Pages 26 through 34 of the Solicitation provide the scoring criteria for project applications.

90. Which format takes precedence for the project narrative, the format specified on pages 26 through 34 of the Solicitation or the format specified by Appendix A to the Solicitation, Attachment 3 (pages A-5 through A-7)?

    Answer: Appendix A, Attachment 3 provides the requirements for the project narrative. Appendix A in total provides guidance on the format to be used in the project application. The project narrative requirements spelled out in Appendix A, Attachment 3 are not comprehensive and should be considered minimum requirements for an application. For the project narrative, applicants are encouraged to include additional aspects that they feel are important.

Miscellaneous Questions

91. Is delivery time for vehicles a milestone?

    Answer: Vehicle delivery can be a milestone. All applications should include a proposed work plan with milestones. One required element of each milestone is a completion date (see Appendix B of the Solicitation).

92. Please clarify the requirements for determining which vehicles must be equipped with data loggers.

    Answer: Data loggers are required for every project vehicle and each representative baseline vehicle, which is defined on page 13 of the Solicitation as an existing fleet vehicle that has the same duty cycle or drive cycle as the project funded vehicles. If the fleet of project vehicles all have the same or similar duty/drive cycles, then only one baseline vehicle must be equipped with a data logger.

93. Is the minimum deployment period for data collection two years? If not, what is the minimum deployment period for data collection?

    Answer: The minimum period for data collection is one year.

94. The second paragraph of the summary at the beginning of the Solicitation is clear that this is about accelerating deployment of commercially available technologies. To what degree is it allowable to use grant money to improve/modify technologies during the term of the grant agreement to enhance their performance?

    Answer: ARB anticipates that manufacturers may want to make incremental improvements to project vehicles during the term of the Grant. Any changes made to these vehicles must be approved by ARB at ARB's sole discretion.

95. Can procurement come from overseas?

    Answer: Yes.

96. What is the schedule for announcements for the demonstration projects that were solicited earlier?

    Answer: ARB will have announced the Zero-Emission Drayage Truck and Multi-Source Facility Demonstration project selections well in advance of the January 29, 2016, closing date for this Solicitation.

97. Is there a reason why the Optional Minimal Project Proposal is not included in this Solicitation as it was in the advanced technology demonstration project solicitations?

    Answer: This Solicitation provides flexibility for ARB to work with a preliminarily selected Grantee to scale down their project proposal, if warranted due to limited funds or caps, as discussed in responses to questions under *Fiscal Year Fund Requirements and Funding Caps* in this document. This flexibility is expected to ensure that all available funding can be allocated to the highest-scoring projects and deliver project benefits as expeditiously as possible.