U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response

RC3 – The Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program

NRECA America's Electric Cooperatives

Improving the cyber and physical security posture of electric cooperatives

Cooperatively owned and operated electric utilities serve more than 42 million people across a territory that covers 56% of the nation. Electric cooperatives are essential to their regional economies and to the nation's electric infrastructure. This project focuses on improving the cybersecurity and resiliency capabilities of small- and mid-sized distribution cooperatives. The team uses a customized approach that creates appropriate, affordable, and accessible solutions that leverage the culture of cooperation unique to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's members. The project supports efforts to develop cybersecurity tools, guidelines, and training programs; evaluate and mitigate cyber and physical system vulnerabilities; research, develop and adopt emerging technologies; and enhance capabilities to share information. The project delivers tools and resources that fit the cooperative model and can be easily and rapidly used by utilities to enhance organizational capacities, resulting in stronger internal cyber resiliency and security programs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Builds solutions that are appropriately designed for wide adoption by electric cooperative distribution utilities
- Creates a stronger ecosystem of cybersecurity skills and knowledge that will persist and continue to benefit electric cooperatives after federal funding ends
- Results in electricity distribution cooperatives implementing controls and practices that improve their cybersecurity

OUTCOME

This project creates tools and resources that distribution utilities can use to improve their ability to understand, detect and respond to cybersecurity vulnerabilities using appropriate mitigation methods. Success will be based on the extent to which RC3 Program offerings are used by utilities to harden their systems and enhance their organizational capacities.

PARTICIPANTS	ROLE
NRECA America's Electric Cooperatives	Provides strategic direction informed by knowledge of distribution utility needs, and develops appropriately scaled assessments, guidelines, training resources, and tools
axio	Hosts the RC3 Cybersecurity Self-Assessment tool on the Axio360 platform and provides subject matter expertise to test and modify the tool
BLACKBYTE Cyber Security, LLC	Develops an operational technology cybersecurity asset identification and information sharing tool, *Cybersecurity – Collect – Communicate – Collaborate* (C4)
ILLINOIS	Develops a series of role-based cybersecurity guidebooks for distribution utilities
moorefield research & consulting, llc	Analyzes and translates research findings into publications and training materials and coordinates event logistics
SANS INSTITUTE	Provides cybersecurity skills training
SYNOPSYS®	Creates self-assessment tools building on subject matter expertise and familiarity with the cooperative business model

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Period of Performance: July 2016 – December 2020

Total Award Value: $7,687,097
DOE Share: $7,499,862
Cost Share: $187,235

CYBERSECURITY FOR ENERGY DELIVERY SYSTEMS (CEDS)

CEDS projects are funded through DOE CESER, which aims to enhance the reliability and resilience of the nation's energy infrastructure by reducing the risk of energy disruptions due to cyberattacks.

Website: https://www.energy.gov/ceser

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