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MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Hello, and welcome to today's webinar, a look into the Grid Resilience Innovation Partnership Program Selections. I'm Meredith Braselman with ICF, and I will be your host today.

A few housekeeping items for today's webinar. This Webex meeting is being recorded and may be used by the US Department of Energy. If you do not wish to have your voice recorded, please do not speak during the call. If you do not wish to have your image recorded, please turn off your camera or participate by phone. If you speak during the call or use a video connection, you are presumed consent to recording and use of your voice or image.

All participants are in listen-only mode today. If you have technical issues or questions, you may type them in the chat box and select to send to host. We will have time for a brief Q&A after today's presentation, so please submit your questions using the chat box.

If you need to view live captioning, please refer to the link that will appear in the chat now. Finally, we will post a recording and copy of today's presentation on the A Look into the GRIP Program Selections webinar page in about two weeks.

With that, let's get started. First we'll hear from Maria Robinson, director of the Grid Deployment Office for opening remarks. Maria, welcome, and I'll turn it over to you.

MARIA ROBINSON: Thank you so much. And I just wanted to welcome everyone here today to discuss the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program, also known as GRIP. And today we are going to be talking a little bit about our selections.

But I wanted to start by saying thank you so much to everyone who applied to this program. Whether you were selected for a project or you're interested in applying for a next round of funding, we are incredibly grateful to have you here today.

As you may have seen, last week, Secretary Granholm announced that nearly $3.5 billion in investments through the GRIP program for 58 projects across 44 states to strengthen the electric grid resilience and reliability across the country. These projects will help address our electric grids' three major challenges-- aging infrastructure, increased threat of extreme weather events, including wildfires, hurricanes, and flooding, and consistent underfunding to replace and modernize existing systems.

This is a historic investment. It's the largest single direct investment in the grid in American history. And in total, these projects will leverage more than $8 billion in both federal and private investments in order to deliver affordable, clean electricity to all Americans, and ensure that communities across the country have a reliable grid that's prepared for extreme weather worsened by the climate crisis. And we couldn't do this without you and all of your amazing applications.

Today we'll walk through an overview of the GRIP selections, including our three program topic areas, as well as hitting on some of the key themes and trends that we'll see from these projects, including some investments in wildfire mitigation and resilience, microgrids, renewables integration. We'll also hit on the community benefits that these projects will bring to underserved and disadvantaged communities around the country, as well as, importantly, their commitment to workforce development and union partnerships.

Lastly, and I know many of you will be excited about this section, we'll provide some insight into the next round of funding, including some adjustments-- and, I like to think, improvements-- that we will make to the application process from round one into round two. Our goal is to try and make these applications more straightforward and more accessible, recognizing the significant amount of demands that you all have on your time.

As we move forward, I hope to date that within the laws and regulations, we have been as accessible as possible. I want to make sure that you understand that our team is available to answer your questions and your inquiries. And I do encourage all of you to reach out to our team with any questions that you might have. Our goal is really to be as open and transparent as we possibly can under the law.

I am ridiculously proud of this team and the great work that they have done to get this program off the ground, and that we will have future funding rounds to be able to do this again and again. And I hope that you show your appreciation for them as well. And we look forward to partnering with you again in future rounds of GRIP.

So thank you for joining us today. And I'm delighted to pass it back over to Colin Meehan, who is our GRIP program manager, and has run the vast majority of this particular program.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Thank you so much, Maria. Now we do want to welcome members of the GRIP program team to join us for their presentation on the selections we're going to hear from Colin Meehan, project manager of the GRIP program, Anne Egger, project manager for grid resilience, Kristen Frick, project manager for grid innovation, and KC Fussel, metrics and analysis lead. Colin, I will turn it over to you to get us started.

COLIN MEEHAN: Great. Thank you so much, and thank you, Maria, for that introduction. Thank you all for being here. We're obviously very-- excuse me-- very excited to have this conversation today. Maria noted, we're going to be walking through a lot of the takeaways in more detail from last week's announcement, and also talking about the next steps as we look forward towards the next funding cycle. Once again, my name is Colin Meehan. I'm the program manager for the GRIP program. And I'll be walking you through some of the slides and handing it off to some of my colleagues throughout this discussion.

Just to reiterate what Maria has already said, this investment, these selections that were announced last week, do represent the largest single direct investment in the electric grid by the federal government in history. We're very excited about these projects, about what they mean for the electric grid.

But we also know that it's not enough. And our focus continues to be on projects that are going to have a catalyzing impact on grid and on resource investments. This $8 billion in public and private investment is going to be a critical step forward in enhancing the electric grid's resilience, and our ability to maintain clean and reliable electric supply into the 21st century.

But we know there's more to be done. And that's a part of why we're here today, to talk about those next steps.

Let's see. Just to move into the topic areas, I want to just provide a quick overview, maybe a reminder for some of you who are already familiar with the program, but also a bit of a breakdown of what we've seen in our selections for this first funding cycle.

First, we have the utility grid resilience grants. These are grants that support activities to reduce the impacts and consequences of extreme weather events. And importantly, they are eligible to primarily grid

operators, electric utilities, and other participants within the electric system, fuel suppliers, distribution providers, and the like. The eligibility is laid out clearly in the FOA. The details are there.

For this program, we selected 16 projects for almost $1 billion in federal investment, and $1.7 billion total. One thing I do want to note, within this program, we selected both large utilities and small utilities. Small utilities are defined as those with less than 4 million megawatt hours in electric demand annually. And importantly, among those nine applicants in the small utility category, some of them were consortium applicants. So they were applicants with multiple utilities participating. Which really means that for this program we have almost 40 different small utilities that we're able to impact with the projects that we're funding here.

For the next topic area, the smart grid grants, this is the grant program focused on technology that will increase grid flexibility, efficiency, and reliability. This is broadly open to entities that are both private, for profit, not for profit, universities, states, tribes, local governments. So this has broad eligibility. And we did see a tremendous amount of interest in this program. Ultimately, we selected 34 projects and a total of $2.5 billion in investment.

One thing that we were pleased to see in this category is a higher than average cost match. So each of these programs required a 50% cost match or cost share from the applicants. But we were very pleased to see in this program that some applicants were willing to provide a greater level of cost match or cost share.

Similarly, with the grid innovation program, we saw a significant commitment from the private sector and from applicants to bring a greater amount of cost share into the program. And that was something that was very encouraging for us to see.

We recognized, from all three of these programs, a significant amount of demand. The number of applications that we had here far outstripped-- and the budgets that were requested-- far outstripped the amount that we have available to provide to applicants. And so that's why the subsequent cycles are going to be critically important for us.

I want to spend a little time digging into a few specific projects. So let me move ahead to the next slide. First, I want to highlight the award that we gave to Hawaiian Electric. This project is, of course, timely given the devastation that we saw in Maui. And the focus of this project is on grid resilience and hardening measures to prevent the kinds of impacts that we saw from those wildfires.

There are two things in particular, though, that really impressed us in the review process here. And we want to share these kinds of insights for all of you on the call today to help you think through what we're looking for as we move into the next funding cycle. And the two things that really impressed us here were the comprehensive nature of the project.

So it includes a suite of approaches that are intended to prevent and recover more quickly from disaster-driven outages. So it's not just one or two kind of relatively narrow applications. Sorry. One or two narrowly crafted sort of technology deployments or something along those lines, but really a cohesive and comprehensive suite of solutions that are intended to achieve that outcome.

And the second is there was a very strong focus on increasing resilience in disadvantaged communities, which we know historically have not been a focus for these kinds of investments across the country. And that is something that we continue to want to drive through this program. So those were two areas with this application that we were especially encouraged to see, and that the review process really, really drew out.

Another project that we're really excited to talk about is the Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company's adaptable grid project. A couple of things here that really stood out to us throughout the process. The first is, you'll notice on the right, we have a little call-out table on anticipated impacts. Applicants that provided us some basic estimates of potential metrics and potential impacts of their proposal really helped us better evaluate the proposal and what the likely outcomes would be. So it was very appealing to us to see even these kind of basic estimates.

I want to say, we recognize that these metrics will change as we enter into award negotiations. And throughout the life of the project, we expect some of this to change. But seeing some upfront estimates that are backed by analysis, that's really critical. That does help us in the review process, identify and kind of differentiate projects.

Another thing that was especially appealing here, and this is a theme that you're going to see throughout our discussion today, 100% of the project benefits are flowing to tribal lands and/or disadvantaged communities. That's a really significant impact and something that we were very encouraged to see from this application.

And then, finally, just the broad geographic distribution of these, again, comprehensive grid automation technologies is going to create a greater system-wide impact. So a lot of times what we're looking for, or what we've seen that's appealing throughout all three of our program areas, are approaches that are either comprehensive in nature or have a broad and greater system-wide impact. This one hit both of those marks, and we were really excited to see this, and to-- we're excited to move forward with Oklahoma Gas & Electric on this project.

The last one I want to highlight in this part of the discussion is the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue Transmission Study Process and Portfolio. Hopefully, some of you on this call are already familiar with this project. It's fairly well known. The JTIQ project has been established and under process for some time now. And we were, of course, very encouraged to see them looking at our program, and looking to our program to help them move this project forward.

This is an incredibly ambitious project. It's designed to break the interregional logjam between MISO and SPP in developing interregional transmission connections. And it's also intended to unlock opportunities for as much as 30 gigawatts of new renewable energy.

Projects like this are just absolutely critical to meet our national climate goals. And the proposal from the Minnesota Department of Commerce and its partners showed an unprecedented level of collaboration among states too. And I should say not just among states, but also among utilities, utility regulators, and other stakeholders. In particular, with the grid innovation program, because the eligibility is limited to states, tribes, and local governments, seeing that level of collaboration is especially encouraging. And the JTIQ project really exemplified that. So we were pleased to see their application, and we're excited to continue the discussion with them about their project, and do whatever we can to help it move forward.

I'm going to shift into talking about some themes and trends overall about the selectees. As Maria mentioned, there were four major trends that really emerged for us as we went through the process of reviewing all of the applications. There's a clear need for support-- financial support, specifically-- in responding to the increased risks we see from wildfires and other extreme weather across the country, but especially in the Western US. So we've got $1.3 billion in total investment going to 13 projects that are focused on wildfire resilience. And that is far exceeded by the demand that we saw in terms of number of applications. And that's the case, really, for all of these categories.

The second theme is really the emergence of microgrids as both a technically and a commercially viable tool to support communities in responding to a wide range of changing conditions. That includes the increasing risks of extreme weather, but also the continued evolution of electricity production and demand. So the changes in load growth, increasing electrification, the growth of variable renewable energy, and our general transition to lower carbon energy.

Microgrids are an elegant solution on a local scale, and we're really encouraged by the number of projects that we're moving forward. We see these as supporting a broader deployment of microgrids across the country by helping to show that the technical and commercial viability of microgrids is real, and it's here. So we're really excited to move forward with those projects as well.

As it relates to renewables integration, I think we all know that renewables are a least-cost resource across most of the country now. And the current pace of interconnecting renewables at both the distribution and the transmission level just isn't sufficient to meet even the market demand, let alone our national climate goals. So we're particularly thrilled to be able to select 17 projects that total $3.6 billion in total investment-- federal and applicant investment.

These are going to help address that logjam at all the different levels, in particular the distribution and transmission levels. I'll talk about that more in a few slides. But this is an area that we've been particularly focused on in this cycle of the GRIP program.

Finally, I do want to emphasize how gratified we were to see how seriously our applicants took our guidance regarding the community benefits plan. We did hold a specific training webinar prior to the application deadlines to help applicants prepare for this part, because we recognize that for a lot of applicants, this is a new requirement. But it is a critical requirement. And we saw significant support for communities and workforce development across all of our projects. You can see that in the statistics here. I do want to reiterate, as we did back in February, the quality of the community benefits plan portion of the application did, and we expect will continue to play an important role in our evaluation and selection projects. And we'll have some more information on that later in the discussion today.

So I'm going to talk for a few moments about renewables integration, and some specific things that we've seen there. I think, fundamentally, we saw approaches that focused on innovations that were both in the technology space as well as in the business strategy and other approaches. So more addressing processes rather than deploying technologies.

It's encouraging to us to see an all of the above approach when it comes to solving these problems. We recognize that some of the problems are technology based. Excuse me. But we also know that a lot of the problems, as it relates to renewables integration, are based on long-standing processes or other issues. And we want to do what we can to support that.

We were also encouraged to see a growing recognition of the value in distributed energy resources, and greater ability to manage and observe those distributed energy resources as an avenue to increase the ability to utilize, specifically, distributed renewable generation. So that was a really encouraging trend we saw in this context.

Lastly, there was a focus in these proposals on reconductoring. We do want to continue to emphasize our desire to see more focus on the use of advanced materials. And that includes seeing more HVDC proposals. So that's something that we continue to want to see from the market. We think that advanced materials and transmission provide a unique opportunity to address a lot of these issues without creating a need for, necessarily, new rights of way in transmission. That's an area that we expect to emphasize going forward.

We had a wide range of projects that touch on renewables integration. I guess I would say there are probably two major areas in the context of renewables integration. There's kind of several large high voltage transmission focused projects. And that includes the project from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, partnering with Portland General Electric. The Allete project that's going to upgrade HVDC converter terminals, which is going to increase their ability to transfer capacity from wind-rich areas to the load centers in the upper Midwest. And then, of course, the JTIQ program that I spoke to earlier. So those are the kind of large-scale transmission projects that have supported renewables integration that we're moving forward with this cycle.

The other kind of cohort within this is focused more on managing distributed energy resources to improve the capacity of the distribution system to integrate renewables. The other applications that you see here from Tri-State and the Intermountain West, and from National Grid in the Northeast, are really using distribution system management tools to enable the distribution system to incorporate more demand-side renewables in their profile.

And I do want to highlight the project from the Delaware Electric Cooperative, where they partnered with the Pecan Street Project. In that one, in particular, they're using what I would consider to be an innovative business approach, as well as some new technologies, particularly with smart devices, to modestly curtail solar output during low load seasons so that they can increase overall solar capacity for the times when they know they're going to have higher load. So that was a particularly appealing project to us as well.

Lastly, as it relates to renewables penetration, I think you can see here, there are a couple of key project elements that we found particularly appealing. Grid intelligence at scale. Sorry, this is specific to the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District. This proposal in particular is one of those instances where we were drawn to the scale of their impact, and as a deployment across their entire system.

So grid intelligence at scale by deploying roughly 200,000 grid edge computing sensors. These kinds of sensors can help them understand what's happening throughout their distribution grid and make adjustments as necessary to accommodate and incorporate renewable energy.

Outage system, the outage management system modernization, advanced distributed energy systems monitoring, and additional enabling technology and systems. This is a really comprehensive proposal that we saw from the Sacramento Municipal-- from SMUD, I'll just say, to incorporate renewables in their system.

So we've been very encouraged by all of these different proposals. There are obviously many more. You can find them on the GRIP website.

I want to hand the discussion over to my colleague Anne Egger, who's going to speak about the wildfire impacts of some of the projects that we've selected.

ANNE EGGER: Thank you, Colin. For the wildfire resilience theme, the projects selected provided a clear demonstration of how the proposed investments responded to a certain threat while demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of vulnerabilities and necessary resilience improvements.

The projects selected offered a range of possible solutions, with the solutions tending to address most, if not all, of the following high-level wildfire resilience strategies, anywhere from prevention to recovery-- next slide.

Until there was over $660 million invested going towards wildfire resilience. The total investment, including private sector investment, over $1.2 billion.

The map shows some of the selected projects and locations, with the highlighted utilities being PacifiCorp, Missoula Electric Cooperative, Xcel Energy, and Holy Cross Electric Association. These

projects have a wide variety of approaches, and some of the solutions included advanced modeling software, non-explosive fuses, covered conductor, fire-resistant pole materials and coatings, wildfire detection cameras, fire sensors, and fault detection. Next slide.

A project we are really excited about and wanted to highlight was the Wildfire Assessment and Resilience for Networks-- WARN. This project is a collaboration effort across 39 rural electric cooperatives in high-threat areas for wildfire. WARN will use state of the art wildfire ignition and propagation modeling using grid data, trained data, and historical weather data. This will help reduce risk and harden the grid against wildfires by strategically deploying well-known methods and advanced technologies for grid hardening, grid operations, and condition-based maintenance.

Knowledge gained from this project will be shared throughout the NRECA community. And then also, this product had a strong community benefits, which included impacting over 170 disadvantaged communities. Most of the product labor will be done by unions. And also a majority of the applicants will sign a statement committing to negotiated community benefits agreement, good neighborhood agreement, or a similar agreement.

Overall, the wildfire resilience project's first funding cycle responded to the program's resilience goals. And I will now hand it over to my colleague Kristen to cover microgrids.

KRISTEN FRICK: Thank you, Anne. I am here to talk about our microgrid investments in the GRIP portfolio. The selected microgrid projects reflect really the diverse applicability of microgrids technologies. We see that microgrids are deployed for resilience and reliability to mitigate hazards from extreme weather, and they've really demonstrated an integrated approach both to collaboration and coordination with the technology needs, and, as a theme [INAUDIBLE], with the communities, to make sure that they identify critical facilities and support deployment.

If we go to the next slide, there's a map I want to discuss. This is a map highlighting the microgrid projects in the selected portfolio. We're really excited about the geographic diversity and the variety of technologies and solutions being implemented. As you can see, we funded over $650 million from the GRIP program, and the total investment is $1.4 billion just in microgrids. [LAUGHS]

We want to highlight a project on the next slide, the Louisiana HERO Project. So this one, of the total 400-plus microgrids we see in our portfolio, the Louisiana HERO Project is planning to deploy 385. This is the highest number of microgrids per project. And it really reflects a comprehensive statewide effort, that they partner with multiple utilities throughout the state and community organizations. And this feedback is helping them plan their approach to where and how they will deploy microgrids working with those local communities that are impacted by extreme weather, especially in the Southeast.

We see a clear alignment in their community benefits plan with directing a majority of the benefits to disadvantaged communities, supporting the creation of over 875 new jobs as a result of this project, and working with local labor unions on all their agreements.

Again, we're really excited. The benefits of microgrids are numerous. And we're just happy to have them in our portfolio. And we look forward to seeing the positive impacts for the grid in the community that they're deployed in.

And the next, I believe, I'm handing this over to my colleague KC.

KC FUSSELL: Thanks, Kristen. To speak to some of GRIP's community benefit plan highlights, within GRIP's 58 projects, there were some fairly exemplary CBPs. Some highlights we've already seen in the webinar, and some we'll see in the coming slides. But despite each CBP being specialized to its

respective proposal, there were some common features across our most impressive projects and most impressive CBPs that GRIP would like to encourage and see more of in our future funding cycles. In particular, CBPs that identified what project benefits would flow to DACs performed fairly well, but projects that performed best demonstrated how the flow of project benefits to DACs would be enhanced and maximized through a partnership with the DOE. But in addition, some other elements that greatly impacted the success of CBPs were elements that supported accountability to the project-impacted communities. Some of these accountability measures were commitments to smart milestones, opportunities for feedback throughout all stages of project deployment as the community needs developed or became more apparent. And in addition to that, an intent to negotiate additional commitments to the communities as needed.

These accountability measures were aspects of CBPs that allowed applicants to show good faith, but also demonstrate their strategies to mitigate negative impacts of project deployment and to ensure positive community relations throughout the project durations, which, in all cases, took years. Next slide. Thanks, [INAUDIBLE].

Across this map, we can see the 44 states that will be impacted by GRIP projects. You may have heard this already, but GRIP is very proud that 100% of our selections have made commitments to support the Justice40 Initiative, and have demonstrated within their CBPs how the commitments have committed within their CBPs, how the flow of benefits will be delivered to those disadvantaged communities.

We understand at GRIP that the applicants to our funding programs are, in large part, the experts in their regions for understanding the energy needs of the areas they're applying for projects and areas that they're doing business in. But we expect applicants to demonstrate within their CBPs a knowledge of the area that they'll be performing these projects in as well. And because of that expectation, we expected applicants to optimize not only the technological benefits, but optimize the federal funding within those benefits.

We saw many ways that CBPs were able to do this successfully, some of which are called out on this slide. But overall, we wish to see applicants demonstrate that their knowledge of the communities they'd be impacting would make them the best fit for the project at hand.

There are a few ways that applicants could or did demonstrate this, some of which identified service areas that were poorly performing relative to regional or national standards, or that would be greatly impacted by their application. Or others identified critical infrastructure that would be hardened in high-risk areas. But across the board, CBPs that demonstrated that they were structured to optimize for the project-impacted communities overall had much stronger forward alignment and overall performance within our review. Next slide.

One project that did this particularly well came from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, highlighted here. The project will-- well, the project includes investments in battery storage, local microgrids, and other grid reliability improvements, while also implementing some new transmission lines to link communities that had not had available certain energy resources. And the project shined in part due to how well it implemented this technology in hard to reach, rural, and underserved communities throughout the State of Georgia.

The application made clear, in both it's-- in all aspects of its application how it would lead to the increased reliability, and reduce the energy burdens for the impacted communities, and unlock some additional clean energy resources. And we're very excited about this and other projects within the first round of GRIP funding. But with that, I'll pass it back to Colin to talk about GRIP's next steps in the future.

COLIN MEEHAN: Thanks, KC, and thanks Kristen and Anne as well. I know, or I hope at least a lot of you on the call today are here because you're interested in applying to our next program. And I'm sure folks are eagerly awaiting any announcements that we have there. We want to try and provide as much information as we can at this point in the process, and so I'm going to speak to that a little bit next.

I think the first thing that folks are going to want to be aware of, we do anticipate issuing a funding opportunity announcement before the end of this year. That is as specific as we can get this at this point. I do want to emphasize that we're still in the process of developing this announcement, and the discussion here today on our next steps is focused on our goals for that opportunity. None of this is a definitive statement of what will or will not be included, but our intent is really to address several different ways we think that we can simplify and expand access to the application process.

So within that, we're focusing on, really, three different areas. The first is on eligibility and outreach, really, to our stakeholders and to our partners in the GRIP program. So we want to emphasize that we're encouraging vendor-driven or consortia-based applications. Each of the program areas have some eligibility requirements within them. Some of those can be met through consortia approaches. We are also working to identify ways to allow additional entities who are representing eligible entities to become eligible entities. So we want to try our best to expand that access.

But fundamentally, as you've seen in the discussion about the first GRIP cycle, we did see some consortia-based approaches. And that, actually, we think has a lot of value and benefit within the GRIP program. It creates a lot of cross pollination opportunities, as well as simplifying the application process for, whether it's smaller utilities that maybe don't have the same amount of resources, or a technology vendor who is trying to work across multiple jurisdictions to accomplish a goal that, again, is shared with the GRIP program, which is to really achieve a more geographically dispersed distribution of these kinds of different solutions.

So that's an area that we really want to emphasize for potential applicants. We continue to see very strong interest from small utilities, from rural utilities, to the GRIP program, to the various GRIP programs. We want to continue to encourage you to apply.

And as Maria said, we do have some bounds and constraints once the FOA is out there. We want to do everything that we can to help make things easier for anyone who is considering applying, and encourage you to apply.

One thing that we actually haven't discussed that I want to make clear for those that did apply in the current cycle, but were not ultimately selected. You should have received that notification last week. And within that notification, you should have received a document or an indication that we will be providing you with additional feedback within the coming weeks on different strengths and weaknesses that reviewers observed within your application. So our goal through all of this is to give you whatever feedback that we can to all potential applicants to help you refine any projects that you're considering bringing to us and proposing.

The second area that we've focused on is we've kind of revisited our program and our approach, is to streamline the concept paper process in particular. For the first funding cycle, we asked applicants to submit a concept paper that could have been up to 20 pages long. And what we're trying to do this time around is to really streamline that by providing applicants with a form-based application. So this will be a document that applicants would fill out.

The idea there is to give applicants more structure and less kind of space to fill up. So, ideally, less work that applicants will have to do. That's our goal. That's why we're focused on that kind of an approach. We do want to make it easier for applicants however we can.

Partnered with that, the form-based approach allows us, in the review process, to more easily identify the specifics of each individual proposed concept. And that allows us to hopefully give-- sorry-- eligible entities that submitted a concept paper a little bit of additional directional feedback beyond what we were able to do in the first funding cycle. So our intent is to be able to indicate for a particular concept where it might be best fit within the three different program areas within the GRIP program. That's what we're hoping to get to.

The last thing I want to spend a little bit of time on before we get to the Q&A is increased guidance for the full application process. We intend to provide additional instructional webinars. We were able to do a little bit of that. But our hope is to provide more of those throughout the application timeline, to help applicants. We encourage potential applicants to bring questions to us. We can either respond to those, or they can inform some of these training webinars, whether it be about community benefits plan process, or the cybersecurity plan, or specific elements within the full application and the technical volume document.

We are planning to simplify the technical review criteria and reorganize them so that we can clarify for you, as you consider applying, what our priorities are, and what are the technical review criteria that will inform our review of your application. The goal there is really to just simplify it. We recognize that this is a large document. And then that criteria in the first cycle was especially large. So we're trying to distill it down and simplify it as much as possible while still maintaining a very clear focus on the areas of interest that we have within the GRIP program.

And so another thing that we expect to do in this cycle is to provide additional guidance to identify priority areas of interest for the GRIP 2 funding cycle. I'm not able to speak to that at this point, but if you look at the FOA for this current GRIP, the Funding Opportunity Announcement for this current funding cycle, you will see that there are priority areas of interest identified.

We do anticipate doing something similar in this funding cycle, and identify some specific priority areas of interest across the entire program, but also within each specific sub-program so that applicants can get a better sense of what technologies, what approaches, what outcomes we are looking for in the GRIP program.

And lastly, we do expect to request interviews for some of the larger or more complex projects. That will assist the department in finalizing project selection. So we want to make sure that applicants of those larger or kind of more complex, more ambitious projects, are simply aware of that fact. That's something that may become a part of this process.

Just again, as a reminder, we anticipate that we will be announcing the next funding cycle before the end of this year. And I think with that, we've covered all of the ground that we have today. But I'd like to open up the conversation to some questions if we can.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Thank you so much, Colin. We do have time for Q&A, so please continue to submit your questions for the GRIP program, to the GRIP program team in the chat, and select to send to host.

So, first question, Colin-- I'm going to send this over to you. What criteria did you focus on when selecting projects for awards?

COLIN MEEHAN: So as I just mentioned, we have, within the current funding opportunity announcement, a section called Technical Review Criteria. And I encourage any potential applicant to pay close attention

to that section because that is the criteria that informed our review process. We also have what are called program policy factors, which play another role in informing that, the selection process.

I will emphasize something that-- I believe it was Kristen said earlier in the discussion. We continue to be focused on applications that have a transformative impact, that are not simply accomplishing the objective laid out in that project, but are potentially impacting the broader industry and leading to kind of catalyzing additional investment across the industry. Thanks.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Thank you. KC, this one's for you. What are you looking for in community benefits plans, or in a community benefits plan, and how do you ensure that the community had input?

KC FUSSELL: Yeah, it's certainly a broad question, but I'd defer to the FOA here and say that community benefit plans in general should reflect a high degree of collaboration across project partners that have been thoughtfully chosen from the community and from the experts that are most apt for applicants. But overall, CBPs that have demonstrated engagement with impacted communities are CBPs we're looking for.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Thank you. Kristen, how can applicants get a better idea of what kinds of projects DOE wants to fund for the next GRIP cycle?

ANNE EGGER: Attending this webinar is a great start. Similar to the prior FOA, we will be putting in areas that are priority areas of interest, like Colin alluded to. We plan to restructure the FOA so it's more clear. And we're kind of directly getting to the priority technologies and impacts, as you heard on this call.

The community benefits plan is a huge portion. And as much as applicants can spend time refining that, and really demonstrating collaboration. And again, those consortia applications, we're really interested in, whether from the technology vendor, or utility, or other entity. And subscribe to our GDO updates, so you know.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Very good. We'll get that in the chat too. Thank you.

Anne, this one is for you. What types of partners should an application include?

ANNE EGGER: So applicants should include all relevant stakeholders, including regulators, community organizations, and technology vendors. We do encourage you guys to partner up as much as you can. And we'll have more information in our next FOA.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Very good. Colin, how can we find more information about the selectees' projects?

COLIN MEEHAN: The best resource for information on the selectees' projects is on the GDO GRIP website. So we have a project list posted up there with fact sheets for each of the selected projects. We fully expect to keep our website up to date as we work through the process with each selectee to finalize an agreement. And we expect to continue to update this part of the website, really, throughout each project's process. So that's going to be your best source going forward.

And of course, as Maria said at the outset, we encourage you to reach out to us if you have any questions, if there's any way that we can help and support. We do have some restrictions, and want to recognize that fact. But we want to be as helpful as we can for anybody that's considering applying, or anyone that would like to work with a potential project or a potential applicant. We're also doing everything that we can to make sure that all stakeholders are engaged in this process.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Very good. Thank you. And we have dropped the GRIP project list into the chat for everyone as well.

So thank you very much. This wraps up today's webinar. We will review the other submitted questions, and we will make sure to update the GRIP FAQs once we have those answers for you all.

A copy of today's slides will be available on this webinar's landing page by Friday, and the recording will be available in about two weeks. We will send you an email when it is available. And you can find the link in the chat now.

So thank you to Maria, Colin, Anne, Isabel, Kristen, and KC for joining us today. And thank you to all of our attendees for participating. Take care, everyone, and we will see you next time.