GETTING STARTED: WHAT TO ASK THE DEVELOPER?

Below is a list of preliminary questions to think about when approached by a developer or technology representative for developing clean energy resources on tribal lands. For more assistance, contact the DOE Office of Indian Energy at indianenergy@hq.doe.gov.

Resources:
- Which resources have been identified as being available?
- What data was used to identify the resources?
- Has the development of all available resources been evaluated separately as well as optimally combined with others?
- What is the effective resource capacity?

Development:
- What is the proposed scale (MW capacity) for the project?
- How will construction be accomplished?
- How long will development and construction to commercial operation date (COD) take?
- Where is the renewable energy (RE) generation development proposed to be sited?
- What will the initial project design and/or layout look like?
- What direct and surrounding land impacts are expected from on-site development and access routes?
- How will the community be impacted?

Economics:
- Who will pay for and manage the initial assessment and all phases of pre-construction development?
- How will funds be raised?
- Has an economic feasibility study been performed?
  - Is demand for power sufficient?
  - Is interconnection deemed to be cost-effective?
- How much will the project cost? By category:
  - Studies
  - Permits
  - Materials
  - Labor
  - Transmission
- Who will be the financially responsible party?
- Which tax credits and/or incentives (federal and state) are applicable to the proposed project?
- Which deal structure would be used to monetize incentives?
- Do you have any pre-existing relationships with investors, Tax Equity or otherwise?
  - What is your frequency of using outside Tax Equity?
- How much revenue is the project expected to generate?
- What is the expected rate of return of the project?

Operations and Maintenance (O&M):
- Who will operate the developed project?
- Who will perform maintenance?
• How will these responsibilities be determined?

Management, Operation, and Ownership:
• What are the anticipated O&M costs?
• Will training be made available to develop a local workforce?
• What role will the tribe play?
• What will the ownership structure look like?
• What opportunities will this project provide to members of the tribal community?
• How will the tribe be engaged in each aspect of the project?
• Who holds ownership of project assets and work products?
• Do you typically develop, own, and manage your projects or do you sell off your stake?
  ○ If you sell your stake, how long do you typically hold it before selling?

Permitting and Legal Issues:
• Has an analysis been performed of all applicable permitting requirements?
• Who will be responsible for securing permits?
• Tribe
  ○ Will a land lease be required?
• Federal
  ○ Will development comply with environmental protection laws such as National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and Endangered Species Act (ESA)?
  ○ Has approval been obtained from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) if Native lands are leased?
• State

Transmission and Interconnection:
• Is the necessary infrastructure currently in place?
• Are electric transmission and distribution lines adequate for load growth and additional power project needs?
• How will load and transmission studies be performed?
• Who will pay for a transmission system study?
• What is the plan for interconnection?
• Have interconnection issues been addressed with the utility company?
• Will upgrades to the transmission system be required to accommodate interconnection?
• Will an inspection by the state be required for final project integration?

Market:
• Has significant market need been identified for the project’s anticipated output?
• Have potential buyers been identified for the output?
• Does the developer have a power sales agreement in place, or what strategy does the developer propose for obtaining one?

Miscellaneous:
• How does the project coincide with the tribe's long term energy plan?