# Feedback Form

## Grid Innovation Fund (GIF) Engagement Roundtables – December 2025

### Feedback Provided by:

Name: Brad Roach

Title: Investment Attraction Officer

Organization: City of Belleville

Email: [redacted]

Date: 12/19/25

To promote transparency, feedback submitted will be posted on the Grid Innovation Fund engagement page unless otherwise requested by the sender.

| | |
|---|---|
| | **Yes – there is confidential information, do not post** |
| x | **No – comfortable to publish to the IESO web page** |

Following the Grid Innovation Fund roundtable discussions, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) is seeking feedback from stakeholders on the items discussed. The presentation can be accessed from the Grid Innovation Fund engagement page.

**Note:** The IESO will accept additional materials where it may be required to support your rationale provided below. When sending additional materials please indicate if they are confidential.

**Please submit feedback to** engagement@ieso.ca **by December 24, 2025.**

# Innovation Ecosystem in Ontario's Electricity System

## Topic 1: Significance of Innovation (slide 15 of presentation)

Why does innovation matter in the electricity system and how can it support the energy transition and evolution of the system?

Innovation lowers energy costs, improves reliability/resilience of critical municipal services, and attracts cleantech investment and jobs. Grid- interactive buildings, managed fleet charging, and industrial demand flexibility reduce peak demand and emissions while maintaining service quality. Municipal pilots provide -real-world- data and scalable models for other communities.

## Topic 2: Strengths (slide 16 of presentation)

What are the strengths of the current state of innovation in the electricity sector? What is working well?

- Strong technical talent and vendor base in Ontario for DERs, controls, and electrification.
- Established academic partners (e.g., Loyalist College) for measurement & verification (M&V).
- Growing collaboration between municipalities, LDCs, and aggregators on reliability and peak shaving.
- Clear TOU signals and emerging DR opportunities that reward flexibility.

## Topic 3: Evolution of Innovation (slide 17 of presentation)

Recognizing the electricity system of tomorrow will look different than today's, what support do you feel the innovation sector needs to support the energy transition?

**1. Flexible Funding Models**

- Larger project caps and multi-year funding streams to enable **scalable pilots** (e.g., aggregated DERs, municipal fleet electrification).
- Rolling intake windows to match fast-moving technology cycles.

**2. Integration Pathways**

- Clear mechanisms to transition successful pilots into **IESO programs** (DSM, DR) or LDC offerings.
- Support for **commercialization and replication toolkits** so innovations move beyond one-off demonstrations.

**3. Data & Digital Infrastructure**

- Access to **real-time grid data** and standardized telemetry protocols for DER integration.
- Funding for **cybersecurity and interoperability** to ensure safe, scalable adoption.

**4. Workforce & Skills Development**

- Training programs for municipal staff, local contractors, and Indigenous communities to implement and maintain advanced technologies.
- Partnerships with colleges and universities for applied research and talent pipelines.

**5. Regulatory & Market Flexibility**

- Adaptive rules to allow **new business models** (e.g., aggregators, community energy services).
- Incentives for **non-traditional actors** (municipalities, SMEs) to participate in grid services.

**6. Collaboration Incentives**

- Bonus scoring for projects that include **municipal, Indigenous, and private sector partnerships**.
- Support for **regional innovation hubs** to foster cross-sector collaboration.

What are the biggest gaps or challenges to advancing innovation in the electricity sector in Ontario?

- **Eligibility & leadership:** Municipalities are not clearly recognized as lead applicants in GIF, limiting ability to initiate community scale- demonstrations.
- **Scale & funding caps:** The $500k cap and $9.5M annual budget make multisite or MW- scale- pilots difficult.
- **Intake cadence:** One open/targeted call per year may miss windows for construction and commissioning.
- **Commercialization path:** Limited support for business model development, replication toolkits, and post pilot- scaling into DSM/DR programs.
- **Data & privacy:** Industrial partners need clear data governance/M&V protocols to participate confidently.

# Grid Innovation Fund Governance Framework

## Topic 4: Existing Framework (slide 20 of presentation)

From your experience, what would you say has worked well to date with GIF?

What do you see as potential limitations/risks with the current GIF framework?

- Narrow CDM focus excludes electrification, DER aggregation, and resilience projects.
- $500k cap and $9.5M annual budget limit scalability and multi-site demonstrations.
- Intake cadence (one open or targeted call per year) slows innovation cycles.
- Evaluation criteria underweight community benefits and commercialization potential.

## Topic 5: Current Mandate (slide 21 of presentation)

Do you feel the current mandate is appropriately broad? Too narrow?

Too narrow. It focuses primarily on CDM and does not fully capture emerging priorities like electrification and DER integration.

How could it be refined to better capture the needs of supporting innovation within Ontario's electricity sector?

- Expand mandate to include efficient electrification, DER aggregation, grid-interactive buildings, and resilience.
- Explicitly recognize municipalities and Indigenous communities as eligible lead applicants.
- Include commercialization pathways and workforce development as part of innovation support.

## Topic 6: Eligible Project Categories (slide 22 of presentation)

Thinking about where innovation in the sector is headed, are there project categories you feel should be added or removed to ensure we're able to fund new innovations in the future?

**Add:**

- Managed fleet/community charging and DER integration.
- Industrial demand flexibility (process controls, thermal storage, DR readiness).
- Microgrids and resilience solutions for critical municipal facilities.

**Keep:** Energy efficiency, demand reduction, system integration.

**Clarify:** Expand "conservation behaviour" to include digitalization and operational excellence.

## Topic 7: Budget (slide 23 of presentation)

How is the funding amount limiting our ability to meet our broader objectives?

- Current caps prevent multi-site or MW-scale projects.
- Limits ability to integrate advanced technologies like battery storage or aggregated DER platforms.
- Constrains inclusion of robust M&V, cybersecurity, and workforce development components.

What types/scale of projects is GIF unable to support?

- Large-scale DER aggregation (1–2 MW flexibility across multiple industrial sites).
- Multi-depot municipal fleet electrification with storage and DR readiness.
- Community microgrids for resilience.

What types of projects could a larger budget enable GIF to support and how could that allow projects to secure additional funding from other sources?

- Regional innovation hubs and consortia projects.
- Full-scale industrial park demand flexibility programs.
- Integration of advanced analytics and AI for grid optimization.
- Larger GIF contributions attract federal/provincial co-funding and private investment, accelerating commercialization.

## Topic 8: Intake Approach (slide 24 of presentation)

Do you think the current approach is best to identify and assess projects?

- Current approach is functional but not optimal for fast-moving innovation cycles.

What do you perceive to be the benefits of open calls? Targeted calls?

- **Open calls:** Promote inclusivity and diversity of ideas.
- **Targeted calls:** Focus resources on priority themes (e.g., DER integration, EV infrastructure, resilience).

Are there alternative approaches that could be considered?

- Rolling submissions for shovel-ready municipal/industrial projects.
- Multi-year frameworks for consortia to reduce repetitive admin burden.
- Bonus scoring for municipal and Indigenous partnerships.
- Staged funding (design → implementation → scale-up) to manage risk and accelerate deployment.

## General Comments/Feedback

- Recognize municipalities as eligible lead applicants to unlock community-scale innovation.
- Incentivize partnerships with Indigenous communities and local economic development offices.
- Align GIF with other provincial and federal programs to maximize leverage and impact.
- Include commercialization support and replication toolkits to move beyond one-off pilots