

Section 4. Study Process

4.1 Applicability

The Study Process shall be used by an Interconnection Customer proposing to interconnect its DER with the Area EPS Operator's Distribution System if the DER 1) is not eligible for Section 2 Simplified Process review or Section 3 Fast Track Process review, or 2) did not pass the Fast Track Process or the Simplified Process. The application fee described in section 1.5.1.3 shall be applied to the application completeness review costs and the first deposit required in this section

4.2 Scoping Meeting

4.2.1 A scoping meeting shall be held within ten (10) Business Days after the Interconnection Application is deemed complete or, if applicable, the Fast Track Process or Simplified Process has been completed and the Interconnection Customer has elected to continue with the Study Process, or as mutually agreed to by the Parties. The Area EPS Operator and the Interconnection Customer will bring to the meeting personnel, including system engineers and other resources, as may be reasonably required to accomplish the purpose of the meeting.

4.2.2 The purpose of the scoping meeting is to discuss the Interconnection Application and review existing study results and relevant underlying data and assumptions relevant to the Interconnection Application. The Parties shall further discuss whether the Area EPS Operator should perform a system impact study or studies, or proceed directly to a facilities study or an Interconnection Agreement. If the Area EPS Operator determines there is no potential for Transmission System or Distribution System adverse system impacts, the Interconnection Application shall proceed directly to a facilities study or an executable Interconnection Agreement, as agreed to by the Parties.

4.2.3 The scoping meeting may be omitted by mutual agreement.

4.3 System Impact Study

4.3.1 A system impact study shall identify and detail the electric system impacts that would result if the proposed DER(s) were interconnected without project modifications or electric system modifications, and to study potential impacts, including but not limited to those identified in the

scoping meeting. A system impact study shall evaluate the impact of the proposed interconnection on the reliability of the electric system.

- 4.3.2 If the Parties agree at the scoping meeting that a system impact study should be performed, the Area EPS Operator shall provide the Interconnection Customer, as soon as possible, but not later than five (5) Business Days after the scoping meeting, a system impact study agreement as defined in 4.4.3.

If the scoping meeting is omitted by mutual agreement or, if applicable, the Simplified Process or Fast Track Process has been completed and the Interconnection Customer has elected to continue with the Study Process, and a system impact study is required, the Area EPS Operator shall provide the Interconnection Customer a system impact study agreement within ten (10) Business Days.

- 4.3.3 The system impact study agreement (Attachment 6) shall include an outline of the scope of the study and a non-binding good faith estimate of the cost to perform the study. If applicable, the agreement shall list any additional and reasonable technical data on the DER needed to perform the system impact study. The scope of and cost responsibilities for a system impact study are described in the attached system impact study agreement. A deposit of the good faith estimated costs for each system impact study shall be provided by the Interconnection Customer when it returns the study agreements. The additional and reasonable technical data, if applicable, shall be returned with the system impact agreement. Upon Interconnection Customer request, the Area EPS Operator shall grant a time frame extension as described in 5.2.3 if additional technical data is requested.
- 4.3.4 In order to remain in consideration for interconnection, an Interconnection Customer who has requested a System Impact Study must return the executed system impact study agreement and pay the required study deposit within twenty (20) Business Days.
- 4.3.5 A System Impact Study shall be completed within thirty (30) Business Days after the system impact study agreement is signed by the Parties and delivered with deposit to the Area EPS Operator. The results and, if necessary, facilities study agreement shall be delivered to the Interconnection Customer within five (5) Business Days of completion of the System Impact Study. Upon request, the Area EPS Operator shall provide Interconnection Customer supporting documentation and workpapers developed in the preparation of the system impact study, subject to confidentiality arrangements consistent with these procedures and the System Impact Study agreement.
- 4.3.6 In instances where the System Impact Study shows potential for Transmission System adverse system impacts, within five (5) Business Days following the identification of such impacts by the Area EPS Operator, the Area EPS Operator shall coordinate with the appropriate Transmission Provider to have the necessary studies completed to determine if the DER causes any adverse transmission impacts.
- 4.3.7 In order to remain in consideration for interconnection, an Interconnection Customer must return the executed Transmission System impact study agreement within fifteen (15) Business Days.
- 4.3.8 A Transmission System impact study, if required, shall be completed and the results transmitted to the Interconnection Customer in as timely a manner as possible after the transmission system impact study agreement is signed by the Parties. The Area EPS Operator shall be responsible for

coordination with the Transmission Provider as needed. Affected Systems shall participate in the study and provide all information necessary to prepare the study.

4.4 Facilities Study

- 4.4.1 If construction of facilities is required, a facilities study may be necessary to specify and estimate the cost of the equipment, engineering, procurement and construction work identified in Initial Review, Supplemental Review, or the Study Process to provide interconnection and interoperability of the DER with the Area EPS Operator's Distribution System as required by Minnesota Technical Requirements. Interconnection Applications reviewed in the Simplified Process and Fast Track Process that require construction of facilities may be eligible, upon determination of the Area EPS Operator, to forego a facilities study as described in section 3.2.2.2.

The Area EPS Operator shall provide the Interconnection Customer a facilities study agreement in tandem with the results of the Interconnection Customer's system impact study or, if required, Transmission System impact study.

If no system impact study is required, but a facilities study is required, then the Area EPS Operator shall provide as soon as possible, but not later than five (5) Business Days after the scoping meeting, a facilities study agreement.

If the scoping meeting is omitted by mutual agreement and no system impact study is required, but a facilities study is required, the Area EPS Operator shall provide the Interconnection Customer a facilities study agreement within ten (10) Business Days after the Interconnection Application is deemed complete and, if applicable, the Simplified Process or Fast Track Process has been completed.

- 4.4.2 The facilities study agreement (Attachment 7) shall be accompanied by an outline of the scope of the study and a non-binding good faith estimate of the cost to perform the facilities study. The scope of and cost responsibilities for the facilities study are described in the attached facilities study agreement. A deposit of the good faith estimated costs for the facilities study shall be provided by the Interconnection Customer at the time it returns the study agreement.
- 4.4.3 In order to remain under consideration for interconnection, the Interconnection Customer must return the executed facilities study agreement and pay the required study deposit within fifteen (15) Business Days.
- 4.4.4 The facilities study shall specify and estimate the cost of the equipment, engineering, procurement and construction work (including overheads) needed to implement the conclusions of the system impact study(s).
- 4.4.5 Design for any required Interconnection Facilities and/or Upgrades shall be performed under the Facilities Study Agreement unless the Interconnection Application is processed under the provisions of section 3.2.2.2. However, in the event that the Interconnection Customer did not provide to the Area EPS Operator all required Conditional Use Permits at the time of entering into the Facilities Study Agreement, any such Design and/or Upgrades by the Area EPS Operator may be delayed until after the Interconnection Customer has provided to the Area EPS Operator all required Conditional Use Permits or provided a final design. The information in the Conditional Use Permits, or changes to the design, may result in significant modifications to the planned design and/or Upgrades. The Interconnection Customer may send to the Area EPS Operator a

redacted version of the Conditional Use Permit to ensure confidentiality, but any and all information that the Area EPS Operator would reasonably need to perform an accurate Facilities Study shall not be redacted. If necessary to comply with these requirements, a confidential version of the Conditional Use Permit may be provided to the Area EPS Operator, with the confidential information being clearly marked and subject to the Confidentiality provisions in 5.9. The Area EPS Operator may contract with consultants to perform activities required under the facilities study agreement. The Interconnection Customer and the Area EPS Operator may agree to allow the Interconnection Customer to separately arrange for the design of some of the Interconnection Facilities. In such cases, facilities design will be reviewed and/or modified prior to acceptance by the Area EPS Operator, under the provisions of the Facilities Study Agreement. If the Parties agree to separately arrange for design and construction, and provided security and confidentiality requirements can be met, the Area EPS Operator shall make sufficient information available to the Interconnection Customer in accordance with confidentiality and critical infrastructure requirements to permit the Interconnection Customer to obtain an independent design and cost estimate for any necessary facilities.

- 4.4.6 In cases where Upgrades are required, the facilities study must be completed within forty-five (45) Business Days of the receipt of the executed facilities study agreement and deposit.
- 4.4.7 In cases where no Upgrades are necessary, and the required facilities are limited to Interconnection Facilities, the facilities study must be completed within thirty (30) Business Days of the receipt of the executed facilities study agreement and deposit.
- 4.4.8 Once the facilities study is completed, a draft facilities study report shall be prepared and transmitted to the Interconnection Customer. Upon request, the Area EPS Operator shall provide Interconnection Customer supporting documentation and workpapers developed in the preparation of the Interconnection Facilities Study, subject to confidentiality arrangements consistent with these procedures and the facilities study agreement.
- 4.4.9 Within ten (10) Business Days of providing a draft facilities study report to Interconnection Customer, the Area EPS Operator and Interconnection Customer shall meet to discuss the results of the facilities study unless the meeting is omitted by mutual agreement.
- 4.4.10 Interconnection Customer may, within twenty (20) Business Days after receipt of the draft report, provide written comments to the Area EPS Operator, which the Area EPS Operator shall address in the final report.
- 4.4.11 The Area EPS Operator shall issue the final facilities study report within fifteen (15) Business Days of receiving Interconnection Customer's comments or promptly upon receiving Interconnection Customer's statement that it will not provide comments. The Area EPS Operator may reasonably extend the time frame upon notice to the Interconnection Customer if the Interconnection Customer's comments require additional analyses or lead to significant modifications by the Area EPS Operator prior to issuance of the final facilities study report.