

Q&A for Black Start Procurement in Northeast Alberta



Question	AESO Response
<p>What operational target date does the AESO require for the commencement of Black Start services? Is sooner better?</p> <p>If a facility is ready before 2020, can it provide service earlier?</p> <p>Why is the date of commercial operation of 2020 so far out when some providers could be ready today or with minimal capital upgrades?</p>	<p>The AESO anticipates an operational target date at or before December 31, 2020 and welcomes interest from facilities which can be operational earlier than 2020. The AESO, however, recognizes that some facilities participating in the competition may require capital upgrades in order to become Black Start capable, which may increase their timeline for commissioning. A date of commercial operation at or before December 31, 2020 aligns with the AESO's restoration plan requirements.</p>
<p>Are you seeking a single Black Start provider or potentially several? Why such a broad competition?</p>	<p>The AESO will review all submissions and evaluate how the facilities will aid in the AESO's restoration strategy for the area. This may result in one or more submissions being selected for the area.</p> <p>The AESO operates in the public interest and supports the principles of fair, efficient and open competition.</p>
<p>When performing testing, what point of interconnection is considered? Is a provider responsible for testing the entire path up to the point of interconnection? Or, is testing only considered at the point of interconnection at the transmission system?</p>	<p>During the one-time performance test, the AESO will test a provider's ability to start their own generating units without outside supply, close onto a dead bus, and may be required to energize a portion of the transmission system. The outage of the dead bus and the transmission line will require coordination with the AESO and the transmission facility owner.</p> <p>During the ongoing testing the provider will test the start-up of the unit without outside supply and close on the dead bus. If the bus cannot be isolated during this ongoing test, it can be verified through simulation. The AESO will coordinate this testing with the provider.</p>
<p>If a facility can energize a dead bus that is a portion of a ring bus, is that sufficient to meet the requirement of energizing a dead bus?</p>	<p>Yes, as long as the section of the ring bus that the generator connects to can be isolated for this test.</p>

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Is it possible to test a potential bidder's Black Start capability before the contract award date during the Request for Proposals (RFP) process?	The obligations under the agreement (including those obligations related to testing) will only be effective after the contract between the service provider and the AESO has been executed. Therefore, it will not be possible for a facility to test its ability to provide Black Start services in accordance with the agreement in advance of the completion of the RFP process and the execution of the agreement. Please note that a service provider's ability to provide Black Start services in advance of the December 31, 2020 effective operational date will be evaluated as part of the RFP.
<p>What is the MW requirement for a Black Start provider in NE Alberta?</p> <p>Does AESO consider any preference for location or size of facility when assessing proposals?</p>	The MW, or in general, MVA requirement depends on the location of the generator, cranking path and the unit(s) the Black Start provider is required to start. The MVA capacity needs to be large enough to provide the reactive and real power requirements to restore power in the affected area.
Are there more specific details of the evaluation criteria, in particular, the effectiveness criteria?	More details on the criteria that will be part of the Effectiveness, Redundancy and Cost Evaluation will be provided in the RFP.
What happens to the availability payment of a Black Start unit if it is called upon and then does not provide the service?	If a Black Start unit is available and when called upon does not provide the service, the AESO may elect to terminate the agreement. Further details will be outlined in the draft Black Start Services Agreement (BSSA).
Does the AESO publish costs for Black Start services?	The AESO's annual report publishes aggregated annual costs for Black Start services provincially.
Does the AESO publish names of Black Start services providers?	No, the AESO does not publish the names of existing Black Start services providers due to the commercially sensitive nature and critical reliability service they provide to Alberta. Further, the AESO will not make public the names of participants in this Black Start services procurement for NE Alberta.

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How do I communicate with the AESO?	<p>General inquiries may be emailed to blackstart@aeso.ca. Once the RFP stage opens on February 15, 2018 communications between interested parties and the AESO will be through the SharePoint platform.</p>
How do I register for SharePoint?	<p>To register for SharePoint, please email blackstart@aeso.ca with "SharePoint Registration" in the subject line. A signed SharePoint User Agreement & non-disclosure agreement will be required to access the site, and registered users will be provided with a SharePoint FAQ and User Guide.</p> <p>Please register as soon as possible to ensure you can access the procurement documents when the RFP opens on February 15, 2018.</p>
What is the process for inquiries marked as commercial in confidence (CIC) that are submitted during the RFP process?	<p>The AESO may, in its discretion, respond to inquiries submitted as CIC. If the AESO concludes for purposes of fairness that an inquiry should not be responded to on a confidential basis, we will endeavour to notify the bidder who submitted the CIC inquiry within three business days of the inquiry being submitted to the AESO. The bidder may then withdraw its inquiry at any time through SharePoint. If the bidder does not withdraw its inquiry within two business days of the AESO's notice, then the inquiry will be deemed withdrawn and will not be posted along with the AESO's response on SharePoint for the benefit of all bidders.</p>
What are the next steps?	<p>The RFP and a draft BSSA will be posted February 15, 2018. Access to these documents will be available to registered SharePoint users.</p> <p>For news and updates, please visit the Ancillary Services procurement page of the AESO website: www.aeso.ca/market/ancillary-services/procurement/</p>