

The AESO is transitioning to a cluster assessment approach where projects will be batched (i.e., clustered) and studied together simultaneously. The cluster assessment will include generation and storage projects injecting 5 MW or more into the Alberta interconnected electric system (AIES) at the facility's connection to the AIES (i.e., the transmission or distribution system, as applicable). This document applies to in-flight Connection and Behind-the-Fence (BTF) projects which meet these criteria and describes how these projects can either (A) remain in the existing process or (B) enter the first cluster assessment. In-flight projects which do not meet these criteria, including load projects, will continue in the existing process.

A) Remain in the existing process

To remain in the existing process, in-flight projects in Stages 1, 2, and 3 (or 3/4 for BTF projects) and on-hold projects must have the following by no later than 11:59 pm MST on August 31, 2023:

- Have a valid Proposal to Proceed letter issued by the AESO.
- The generation facility owner (GFO) has provided GUOC evidence (for Connection projects) or GUOC payment (for BTF projects).

For GUOC evidence, the AESO will accept financial security that meets the requirements of section 103.3 of the ISO rules, [Financial Security Requirements](#). As described in subsection 8(1), the financial security must be a letter of credit, cash collateral deposit, or third-party written guarantee. To ensure the GUOC evidence can be provided by the deadline, the AESO recommends that the GFO initiate discussions with the AESO regarding the options, timing, and process for providing financial security by contacting the AESO Project Manager.

In-flight projects in Stages 4, 5, and 6 that have received a Proposal to Proceed letter from the AESO and have submitted their GUOC evidence or payment will automatically remain in the existing process.

Projects which successfully receive a Proposal to Proceed letter and provide GUOC evidence or payment, will be deemed to have satisfied the AESO's project inclusion criteria and will remain in the existing process.

Progress Milestone Guidelines

The progress milestone guidelines in Table 1 are based on historical timelines and are provided to aid market participants with assessing the feasibility of receiving the Proposal to Proceed letter by 11:59 pm MST on August 31, 2023. Market participants are encouraged to consider these target dates when working toward advancing their projects within the existing process. Note, these are guidelines and are not meant to cover all situations.

Table 1: Progress Milestone Guidelines for In-flight Projects

Deliverable	Target Dates for Connection Projects	Target Dates for BTF Projects
Study cases validated	January 31, 2023	March 31, 2023
Draft ESR (w/ all results, SLDs, plots, SC results)	May 1, 2023	July 1, 2023
Final ESR Accepted (signed & stamped)	July 1, 2023	August 1, 2023

Not meeting the progress milestone guidelines above indicates a risk that the project may not meet the criteria to stay in the existing process by 11:59 pm MST on August 31, 2023.

On-hold Projects

For on-hold projects, the market participant must submit a project change proposal form to request project reactivation or submit a request to cancel the project. Following a request for reactivation, the project must follow the process above as an in-flight project. Please note, the Engineering Study Report or Proposal to Proceed letter previously issued for the project may no longer be valid.

B) Transition to the cluster assessment

To transition to the cluster assessment, in-flight projects and on-hold projects must complete the following steps by no later than 11:59 pm MST on August 31, 2023:

1. Submit a request to the AESO Project Manager to cancel the in-flight or on-hold project.
2. Submit a new complete SASR to the AESO using the updated SASR Template and indicate the cancelled in-flight or on-hold project number in the email body with the new SASR attached.

Note, the project must also pay the applicable fees by the deadlines described in the [Fee Guideline](#). However, in-flight projects may have their processing fee and preliminary assessment fee waived as described below.

Waiver of Fees for Cluster 1

To aid with the transition of in-flight projects to the first cluster assessment, the AESO is offering a one-time waiver of the processing fee and preliminary assessment fee for eligible in-flight projects, as described below. This is only being offered for Cluster 1 and will not be offered for subsequent cluster assessments.

The AESO will waive the processing fee and preliminary assessment fee for new SASRs submitted during the intake window for Cluster 1 if the following two conditions are met:

- The SASR represents the same scope as the cancelled in-flight project under the existing AESO Connection Process without any changes to the project details; and
- The in-flight project completed the validation of study cases prior to April 3, 2023.

To request the waiver of fees, include the request in the email body along with the cancelled in-flight project number when submitting a new SASR. The AESO will review the request and confirm whether any fees will be waived.

Projects not electing (A) or (B)

In-flight projects in Stages 1, 2, and 3 (or 3/4 for BTF projects) and on-hold projects may choose to cancel their project rather than complete the steps in (A) or (B) above, in which case the market participant may submit a request to the AESO Project Manager to cancel the project.

Failure to successfully complete the steps in (A) or (B) above by 11:59pm on August 31, 2023, will result in the following:

- Engineering studies for the project will be invalidated; and
- The existing AESO connection process will no longer be available.

The market participant may cancel their project and submit a new SASR for Cluster 2.