

Technical Standards Review Group Guidelines

Technical Standards Review Group Purpose and Scope

In its Final Report to the Department of Public Utilities (“Department”), the Massachusetts Distributed Generation Interconnection Working Group, as established in D.P.U. 11-75, recommended the creation of a Technical Standards Review Group (“TSRG”) to further address interconnection issues. These Guidelines set out the responsibilities of the TSRG.

The TSRG will meet ~~quarterly semi-annually~~ to discuss the common and Utility-specific distributed generation (“DG”) interconnection technical standards (“Technical Standards”), used by NSTAR Electric Company, & Western Massachusetts Electric Company, ~~each d/b/a Eversource~~, Fitchburg Gas and Electric Light Company d/b/a Unitil, and Massachusetts Electric Company and Nantucket Electric Company, each d/b/a National Grid (collectively, the “Utilities”). TSRG discussions may also focus on any common or Utility-specific Technical Standards Manuals developed by the Utilities¹. In addition to the Technical Standards, the TSRG may also discuss other topics related to DG interconnection.

The members of the TSRG understand and agree that the Utilities have the final decision over which Technical Standards, both common and Utility-specific, to employ for the purposes of interconnecting DG facilities to their respective distribution systems and ultimate control over any Utility-specific and common Technical Standards Manuals they develop. Any common Technical Standards Manual shall be subject to each Utility’s uncontroverted ability to continue to apply a Utility-specific Technical Standard that deviates from a common Technical Standard followed by one or more of the other Utilities. The Utilities have the absolute right to update and modify the Technical Standards Manual to account for changes in accepted industry practices, evolving standards, etc.

The Utilities shall notify the TSRG of any update/modification made to the common and/or Utility-specific Technical Standards and provide an explanation as to why the update/modification was necessary².

Topic and Change Request Process

The TSRG provides non-Utility members with a formal process for providing input on the common and Utility-specific Technical Standards and relevant Technical Standards Manual. The members of the TSRG, in whole or in part, may make proposals or recommendations for updates/modifications to the Utility-specific and/or common Technical Standards. These proposals and recommendations are made with the understanding and agreement that the Utilities have the final decision as to which Technical Standards, both common and Utility-specific, to employ, and ultimate control over the Technical Standards Manual.

Action of any kind requires that the topic be brought before the TSRG membership as a whole³. The person, or group of people, requesting that the topic be considered must submit in writing a description of the topic to the Chair and Co-Chair at least 3 weeks prior to the regularly scheduled quarterly

¹ Pursuant to the Massachusetts Distributed Generation Interconnection Working Group Final Report, the Utilities are in the process of developing a Common Statewide Technical Standards Manual. See Final Report, p. 30

² Neither notice nor TSRG review of an upgrade/modification is required prior to implementation. Timely notice of the update/modification should be made as soon as is practicable.

³ Includes any and all requests for action of the TSRG including changes to the Common Guideline, changes to utility specific technical standards, and any request for action to the DPU.

meeting. Submission will enter the topic into the agenda for the quarterly meeting where the person(s) will have the opportunity to present the topic to the TSRG in whole.

The topic must be presented in such a way as to clearly describe the issue being addressed and the specific request of the TSRG. Discussion on the topic amongst attendees will be encouraged following the presentation. If consensus on actions or next steps can be reached at the meeting, it will be documented in the meeting minutes.

If further action is needed that cannot be accomplished at the time of presentation, then a sub-group shall be formed to address the topic. At the time of presentation, the presenter must request support from attendees to pursue the next steps on the topic. Those that express support will immediately be formed into the sub-group who will be responsible for following up with the action items related to the topic.

Where less than 5 people agree to participate in follow up action items, the topic will be dismissed. Dismissed topics may be brought up again in future quarterly meetings to be revisited if desired, and must follow the same procedure for submission to the agenda.

Where sub-groups are formed, topics must be broken down enough such that the scope of work can be accomplished prior to the next quarterly meeting (approx. 3 month time frame). At the next quarterly meeting, it is expected that the presenter of the topic will be able to communicate the outcome of the sub-group. Should the sub-group have been unable to reach a conclusion on the topic as originally presented, the sub-group shall have redefined the scope to a more reasonable ask.

Should the sub-group result in a requested action to the DPU from the TSRG, the ask and all supporting material shall be presented to the TSRG at the quarterly meeting. TSRG members shall be responsible to vote to progress the requested action to the DPU on behalf of the TSRG, amend the request (noting the specific area to update), or deny the request. Requests to the DPU will not be progressed without unanimous consent of the membership to move the item forward.

Membership and Vacancies

The TSRG shall be composed of ~~seven~~six members with one representative each from the ~~three~~four Utilities and three non-Utility members. Each TSRG member shall be an engineer with both electric supply systems and DG interconnection experience.

1) Utility members of the TSRG shall be appointed by their respective Utility. These shall be individuals currently employed by their respective utility or may be a third part appointed by the utility to represent on behalf of the company.

2) Of the three non-Utility members, one shall be appointed from the Government/Customer stakeholder group and the remaining two shall be appointed from the DG provider stakeholder group.

i) The Government/Customer member shall be nominated and appointed by ~~a majority vote of the following parties: Harvard Energy and Utilities (“E&U”); the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (“MA CEC”); the Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative/Cape Light Compact (“CVEC/CLC”); and the City of Boston (Chief of Energy and Environment); in consultation with~~ the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (“DOER”). If one of the Government/Customer entities is no longer willing or able to

participate in the nomination and appointment process, the DOER may appoint a new Government/Customer entity to participate in its stead.

ii) The two DG industry members of the TSRG shall be nominated and appointed by the members of the following organizations: the Solar Energy Industries Association (“SEIA”); the Solar Energy Business Association of New England (“SEBANE”); ~~the Northeast Clean Heat and Power Initiative (“NECHPI”); and the United States Clean Heat and Power Association (“USCHPA”)~~ and the Northeast Clean Energy Council (NECEC). Only those DG industry entities actively performing DG interconnection in Massachusetts shall be allowed to be nominated, appointed and serve as members of the TSRG. No nomination or appointment shall be made by an organization not performing DG interconnection in Massachusetts. Both of the ~~two~~ distributed generation member positions shall not be occupied by representatives of the same technology type (i.e., CHP and solar).

~~If and when appointed by the Department, t~~The Massachusetts DPU Distributed Generation Ombudsperson ~~recommended in the Massachusetts Distributed Generation Working Group Report~~ will serve as an ex officio member of the TSRG and participate in the review and modification of the Common Technical Guideline ~~Technical Standards Manual~~. Similarly to those made by the non-Utility members of the TSRG, any proposals and recommendations regarding Technical Standards and Common Technical Guideline ~~Technical Standards Manuals~~ are made with the understanding and agreement that the Utilities have the final decision as to which Technical Standards, both common and Utility-specific, to employ, and ultimate control over the Common Technical Guideline ~~Technical Standards Manuals~~.

Any vacancies on the TSRG shall be filled as soon as is practicable.

TSRG Meeting Leadership and Responsibilities

The TSRG meetings shall be conducted by the Chair or, in his/her absence, the Vice Chair. The Chair shall perform those duties necessary to enable the TSRG and all meetings, both regular and special, to function effectively and efficiently.

The Chair shall be appointed by the Utility members, while the Vice Chair shall be appointed by the non-Utility members.

The Chair shall preside at the meetings of the TSRG and disseminate the meeting notice and agenda. If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting of the TSRG, the Vice-Chair shall preside over the meeting.

The Chair and Vice Chair shall hold their positions for a period of one year, at the expiration of which he/she shall be appointed in the same manner as above or a new Chair and Vice Chair shall be appointed in the same manner as above. No member shall hold the same office for more than 4 consecutive years in a row.

Regular and Special Meetings

The TSRG shall meet quarterly ~~semi-annually~~ at a mutually convenient place, or via virtual online session, to be determined by the Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair shall coordinate, to the extent possible, with the members of the TSRG in determining the meeting dates, times and locations. Prior to the close of a regularly scheduled meeting, the Chair and Vice-Chair, with the input of the TSRG members, shall determine the date and time for the next regularly scheduled TSRG meeting.

Notice of a regularly scheduled TSRG meeting and the agenda for the meeting shall be distributed to the TSRG members at least ~~fourteen~~ten business days in advance of the meeting. The notice and agenda shall also be posted on a publicly accessible website - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-technical-standards-review-group#membership-https://sites.google.com/site/massdgc/home/interconnection/technical-standards-review-group>.

A special meeting shall be called following the Utilities' notice to the TSRG of any updates or modifications made to the Utility-specific or Common Technical Standards Manual if requested by two of the three non-Utility TSRG members. A special meeting so called shall be for the sole purpose of providing the Utility members an opportunity to further explain and discuss the update/modification made to the Technical Standards. As with Technical Standards discussed in regularly scheduled meetings, in the event that there are differences in opinion regarding the update/modification made to a particular Utility-specific or common Technical Standard, it is understood and agreed that the Utilities have the final decision as to both common and Utility-specific Technical Standards and ultimate control over any Technical Standards Manual(s), both common and Utility-specific, they develop regarding the interconnection of DG facilities to their distribution systems. All differences in opinion regarding any update/modification that is the subject of the special meeting shall be accurately and descriptively reflected in the special meeting's notes.

The Chair, with the agreement of the Vice Chair, may call a special meeting of the TSRG for any other purpose. The discussion at a special meeting shall be confined to the topics in the agenda agreed to by the Chair and Vice Chair.

Notice of a special TSRG meeting and the agenda for the meeting shall be distributed to the TSRG members at least fourteen business days in advance of the meeting. The notice and agenda for any special meeting shall also be posted on a publicly accessible website - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-technical-standards-review-group#membership-https://sites.google.com/site/massdgc/home/interconnection/technical-standards-review-group>.

Meeting notes shall be taken by the Vice Chair at each TSRG meeting and shall include the date, meeting location, members present, topics discussed and a descriptive account of all differences in opinion offered or positions taken regarding common and/or Utility-specific Technical Standards. The Chair and Vice Chair shall develop a schedule wherein, for each TSRG meeting, the designated TSRG member shall ensure the participation of an individual associated with his/her organization for the sole purpose of recording meeting notes. In the alternative, the designated TSRG member may elect to take the meeting's notes while participating in the meeting. Each TSRG member shall review the meeting notes to ensure accuracy. The meeting notes for any TSRG meeting, regardless of whether regularly or specially scheduled, shall accurately and with sufficient detail reflect the Utility rationale with respect to the common and/or Utility-specific Technical Standards that are the subject of the relevant TSRG discussion, any updates/modifications made to the Technical Standards and communications to non-Utility members of the TSRG made with regard to those Technical Standards and any updates/modifications that are discussed at the TSRG meeting. Differences of opinion regarding Technical Standards shall be accurately and descriptively recorded in the notes of the meeting at which they were raised.

The reviewed notes shall be made available on a publically accessible website - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-technical-standards-review-group#membership-https://sites.google.com/site/massdgc/home/interconnection/technical-standards-review-group>.

<https://sites.google.com/site/massdgc/home/interconnection/technical-standards-review-group->

Reports, documentation, presentations and other information referenced in the relevant notes shall also be available on the [publicly](#) accessible website with the understanding and agreement that, absent the specific adoption/endorsement by the Utilities, the material is complementary to a position or opinion taken by a TSRG member, not as an official portion of a common or Utility-specific Technical Standard or relevant Manual.

TSRG members are able to consult with outside technical experts to inform their participation in TSRG discussions.

The meetings of the TSRG shall be open to the public as observers only. In the event that a TSRG member wishes to have a subject matter expert present on a specific agenda item, he/she shall seek and obtain the approval of both the Chair and Vice Chair. That subject matter expert will be able to engage in discussion with the members of the TSRG.

Agendas

Each member of the TSRG may add agenda items for the regularly scheduled TSRG meetings. Agenda items may be added until one week prior to the notice of the meeting. In the event that the agenda for a particular meeting contains too many items to be addressed at a single meeting, excess agenda items may be moved to the next regularly scheduled meeting by the Chair and Vice-Chair; provided however, that the agenda for the next regularly scheduled meeting shall reflect a balance of Utility and non-Utility agenda items. The discussion at any TSRG meeting shall be confined to the topics set forth in the agenda.

Conduct

It is expected that TSRG members shall adhere to the following standards of conduct:

1. TSRG members will make every attempt to attend all meetings in person, to be on-time, and to review all documents disseminated prior to the meeting. If a member cannot attend a meeting, the member ~~should~~must inform, via telephone or email, the Chair and Vice Chair prior to the meeting and identify the alternate that will be attending in their place. As a result of extenuating circumstances, Group members may participate in a meeting by means of a conference telephone or other equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time.
2. TSRG members are charged with participating in a constructive forum where diverse points of view are voiced and examined in a professional and balanced way. Personal attacks are not permitted.
3. All TSRG members agree to act in good faith in the discussions. 'Good faith' means that members will be forthright and communicative about the interests and preferences of their organization.
4. It is the responsibility of the TSRG members to keep their organizations informed of developments at TSRG meetings.
5. No member of the TSRG shall speak on behalf of the TSRG without the unanimous approval of the TSRG members.

These guidelines may be changed or repealed at any regular meeting by the unanimous consent of all of the members of the TSRG; provided, however, that any proposed changes to these guidelines shall be submitted to the Chair and Vice Chair sufficiently in advance of the meeting at which they are to be addressed so that the proposed changes may be included as an agenda item and circulated to all TSRG members. Any guideline may be suspended at any regular meeting or special meeting for that meeting only by the unanimous consent of all present.