Business & Technology Advisory

September 2018

NRECA
America's Electric Cooperatives

Contributor Opportunity for U.S. Department of Energy MEEDS (Mitigation of External-exposure of Energy Delivery System Equipment) Project

What has changed?

For immediate consideration: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) awarded funding to DOE's National Laboratories and partners to support critical early stage research and development of next-generation tools, build capacity in the energy sector for everyday operations such as cyber-threat information sharing, and to fortify protection of the Nation's electric grid from cyber threats. One of the projects funded by DOE in this effort is MEEDS, which is focused towards small, rural utilities with resource constraints to address cybersecurity in their utility network. To support the MEEDS project, NRECA is looking for cooperatives who are willing to participate in an information assessment collection to help inform the software design for the proposed solution.

What is the impact on cooperatives?

NRECA has partnered with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) to assist with the MEEDS project. The project motivation and goals are as follows:

> *Securing the power grid from complex, non-linear, and evolving cyber threats requires continuous monitoring to identify, detect, and respond to threats to and vulnerabilities of critical cyber assets. Energy Delivery System (EDS) devices are often inadvertently exposed to the public-facing internet, a vulnerability that can be exploited by adversaries to cause damage to critical energy infrastructure operations and systems. It is essential to continuously monitor and detect any exposed devices so that these threats can be mitigated by owners and operators of EDSs and associated electricity infrastructure. In response to these challenges, PNNL and partners will design, develop, test, and deliver a threat intelligence and cyber risk management web-based solution of which the framework will be developed from existing [Shodan](#) technology. Shodan, is a search engine that allows the user to find specific types of computers connected to the public Internet using a variety of filters. Shodan monitors network security by helping users keep track of their computers that have direct access from the public internet.*

We believe that work in this area is necessary and that the MEEDS project is designed to succeed. We want to contribute to research that helps cooperatives address challenges that they face within their network. In support of this research effort:

1. On behalf of the MEEDS team, NRECA is seeking cooperatives who can participate in a web-based "pen and paper" exercise to help us collect information to support the design of the MEEDS solution. Cooperatives' participation in the information gathering phase is necessary to incorporate end-user feedback into the tool's design.

2. It is optional to share your name, job title, organizational affiliation. If you choose to share these details, the data will be anonymized and all responses will remain "Official Use Only" throughout the project.

3. The responses we collect with this request will be used only towards the MEEDS solution development. Cooperatives are welcome to provide other input in addition to answering the specific MEEDS design questions.

4. Travel is **not** required for this project. The responses will be collected via 10-12 multi-choice questions for an approximate time commitment of 10-15 minutes.

5. **All** cooperatives are eligible to participate and there is no requirement regarding SCADA, OMS, DA, AMI/AMR, IT or non-IT staff.

6. This project is a grant-funded effort from the U.S. Department of Energy. There is **no** cost share requirement or financial contribution for participating cooperatives

7. Interested cooperatives are requested to respond by emailing **Adaora.Ifebigh@NRECA.coop** before **September 23, 2018.**

8. The web link will be provided to each cooperative when you indicate your willingness to participate in this project.

What do cooperatives need to know or do about it?

By participating in this effort, cooperatives can:

1. Help improve the quality of tools that are aimed at empowering cooperatives to improve their cybersecurity resiliency.

2. Showcase cooperatives leadership in research that supports strengthening the electric grid and cyber-threat information sharing.

3. Highlight cooperatives' willingness to help the wider community benefit from state of the art research (cooperation among cooperatives).

Contact for Questions:

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