

EPRI Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Innovators Forum – FAQs

What is the ICT Innovators Forum?

The Forum is a new EPRI collaborative project designed to increase the alignment and application of research between electric utilities and industry solution providers. This forum will include innovators and vendors working to accelerate the commercialization of standards-based integration technology solutions, based on the priorities of electric utilities and forum members.



Why is EPRI doing this?

To advance the industry by improving alignment between Utilities and Solution Providers, to sharpen the focus and prioritize EPRI research plans, and to accelerate the commercialization of EPRI ICT R&D.

Aren't others already doing what EPRI is proposing?

EPRI is uniquely qualified to provide this service. As a not-for-profit, public-benefit organization, EPRI must remain vendor-neutral. Furthermore, EPRI has extensive real-world, hands-on technical experience with innovative technologies and exposure to utility plans through projects and participation with standards bodies.

Who can join the ICT Innovators Forum?

Vendors, integrators, consultants, and solution providers all make up the ICT Innovators of tomorrow!

Don't solution providers already participate in EPRI programs?

A few solution providers are currently members of EPRI's ICT program, but that offering is not intended as a forum for Vendor-Utility interaction.

How will EPRI handle innovators' concerns about sharing their future plans?

This is an open forum, but only for the members of the project. Participants can choose what information they want to share and what they don't. For the surveys, all responses will be aggregated and reported such that individual participants' roadmaps are not exposed.

How will EPRI determine which topics will be the subject of a survey?

The project participants (along with EPRI ICT member utilities) will help determine the survey topics and help craft the questions. And of course they will all receive the aggregated, but anonymized results.

How do utilities participate? Will they be joining this project?

It is not anticipated that utilities will join this project as it is tailored to the solution provider or vendor community, but utility members of the EPRI ICT program will respond to the surveys and share in the results. We also anticipate that many of the project's webcasts, which are to be selected in accordance with the participants' interests, will be joint utility and vendor presentations. The panel sessions at the

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annual face-to-face meeting will be orchestrated to involve utilities, as well. Follow-on meetings with vendors can involve the utilities if they so desire.

[How would the interaction work if survey results created additional questions?](#)

Utility members of the ICT programs will be involved in developing the surveys. Questions would be addressed in follow-on sessions that could include utilities if they so desire.

[What minimum level of participation is required to start the project?](#)

We have intentionally priced this project to attract broad participation and expect to exceed the minimum level of funders. The eventual scope of the project will depend on both the level of participation and the participants' expressed interests. We can start with as few as five participants, but the scope of project at that level may be limited.

[We are a member of an ICT project set for 2014: how does this project compare?](#)

This project will start in 2015 (after 2014 memberships expire). It will provide more value for solution providers at a lower cost. As a project specifically intended for solution providers, it will also allow EPRI to better respond to utilities' concerns that our relationships with vendors might lead to favoritism.

[How do vendors get involved in addressing the gaps identified by the project?](#)

Work directed at closing the gaps will not be performed by this project. EPRI intends to take the identified gaps and incorporate them into EPRI base research programs or work with the solution providers in our test lab or demonstration projects to close these gaps.

[Will EPRI perform pilots with solutions suggested by the mapping of capabilities and needs?](#)

Such pilots would not be performed as a part of this project. However, the role of matchmaker would be appropriate within the bounds of the project: EPRI would work to connect potential solution providers with utilities that have expressed corresponding needs or wants. It will be up to the utilities to decide if they would like to partner with the providers that match their needs. This is why it is important to develop both the utility and solution provider surveys at the same time.

[Is the scope of this project limited to ICT topics?](#)

The initial scope of this project includes ICT (including ICT for Transmission, ICT for Distribution, ICT for DER, Enterprise Architecture, AMI Systems), Cyber Security, and Distribution Automation. EPRI would communicate other identified interest areas to the appropriate EPRI Program Managers. This is the first EPRI project that has proposed this sort of solution provider interaction. Lessons learned in the course of this project could be beneficial to the other research areas, and other EPRI programs are following our activities with interest.

[Still have technical questions about the research or deliverables?](#)

Please contact Walt Johnson, Technical Executive at HWJohnson@epri.com or 650-855-2013.

[How can I join?](#)

Please contact Scott Sternfeld, EPRI's ICT Technical Advisor, at SSternfeld@epri.com or 843-619-0050 to assist you with the contract agreement.