

2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Summary Proposal Deadline: Tuesday, December 1, 2020, 5:00 PM EST

PURPOSE

ELECTRI International invites summary proposals from research organizations and/or individual researchers interested in studying topics broadly relating to Electrical Construction (EC). The Foundation's interests include business aspects of running an electrical construction company, managing projects, supply chain management, field operations, and electrical systems design. The interests encompass all aspects of electrical construction from building systems, including low voltage systems, to transportation and infrastructure, to power generation, transmission and distribution.

ELECTRI's agenda process, via proposal submission and review, is open to any qualified organization or researcher interested in expanding the knowledge of electrical construction. ELECTRI's goal is to have highly qualified investigators and subject experts addressing important topics that will add value to the EC industry and its stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

Since 1901, the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) has represented electrical contractors, focusing its efforts on improving the contractor's ability to work efficiently and effectively. In December 1988, NECA established a separate, independent organization, **ELECTRI International - The Foundation for Electrical Construction Inc.** to serve as the guiding force in preparing the electrical contracting industry for the challenges of the 21st Century.

The Foundation promotes and advances the ability of electrical contractors to meet the demands of today and the challenges of the future. ELECTRI is an international organization through which leaders of NECA and other segments of the electrical contracting industry work together to fund, conduct, and coordinate the industry's most critical research and educational programs. The ELECTRI Council, made up of major contributors, directs ELECTRI's fund-raising and project development mission.

PROPOSAL TOPIC DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH METHODS

Each researcher may develop and submit only one proposal per research method.

Researchers are strongly advised to review the list of research projects that have received ELECTRI funding in the past (see <http://www.electri.org/content/funded-research-topics>) either to avoid repeating topics, or to use a previously funded topic as the basis for a follow-on research proposal.

Researchers are encouraged to develop and submit a concept paper that you believe is relevant to the EC industry. ELECTRI values your ideas. Several concepts may naturally combine under one project. **The Foundation's tendency is to encourage applied research.** Mail/e-mail surveys have proven to be less effective than interviews and/or company field visits. Research applied in companies has proven to be the most useful.

RESEARCH METHODS AND AREAS OF INTEREST

For the 2021 ELECTRI research cycle, the ELECTRI Council proposes three distinct research methods and has also recommended areas of interest to meet present and future demands of the EC industry. ELECTRI International is confident the following three research methodologies will provide electrical contractors with the most relevant industry information in a format that is more consumable for all ECs.

Proposed Research Methods:

Traditional ELECTRI Research – The selected researcher(s) will lead the project effort with support from an ELECTRI assigned task force. A mandatory three-page executive summary is required for all traditional research. ELECTRI expects the deliverable(s) from this type of research initiative to be submitted in final form no longer than six months following the award start date for the project.

Focus Group with Moderator Research – The focus group relies upon their industry knowledge to address areas of interest that require experience to best determine successful outcomes. It is the role of the moderator to propose processes that best engage the task force to produce quality deliverables that will benefit the industry. The moderator is responsible to guide and coordinate task force efforts and then produce final deliverables. Examples of final deliverables include whitepapers, webinars, videos, etc.) ELECTRI expects the deliverable(s) from this type of research initiative to be submitted in final form no longer than three months following the award start date for the project.

Subject Matter Expert Research – The selected researcher(s) will each be recognized as a specialist in the proposed area of interest. The researcher(s) will work with an ELECTRI assigned task force to provide information that helps bring together research and its impact on electrical contractors. The final deliverables will include both a whitepaper + educational webinar. ELECTRI expects the deliverable(s) from this type of research initiative to be completed no longer than three months following the award start date for the project.

Areas of Interest identified for each proposed research method:

Traditional Research

- What does a successful NECA contractor look like in the next five to ten years? Address any topic that applies to the rapidly changing future of the EC industry.
- The future of 5G: How will this technology impact Electrical Contractors and Construction.
- Identifying KPIs that lead to more successful projects by increasing margins and reducing risk.
- Micro Grid Systems: New opportunities for electrical contractors. How should solutions be designed and developed to help the industry adopt Micro Grid Systems?
- Utility Contractor Opportunities in Grid Modernization and Resiliency.

Focus Group with Moderator Research

- Future Disruptions – Supply Chain Impacts, The Rise of the “Super-Sub” such as mechanical and/or sheet metal contractors procuring Electrical; General Contractors and Owners Procuring Electrical; Electrical suppliers and vendors offering prefab and modular components.
- What constitutes success for ELECTRI? Is it time to reevaluate ELECTRI’s role in the industry?
- Succession plans that worked - Business Transfer

- How can contractors deal with and defeat unfair contract terms? How did we get here? How do we change course and regain control?

Subject Matter Expert Research

- The US Department of Defense is pushing for a Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) - <https://www.acq.osd.mil/cmmc/index.html> How much will this cost contractors? What is needed to obtain this certification? Will other owners be looking for similar certifications in the future?
- Tool Matrix - What tools best support specific workflows, integrations with current tech stacks, analytics, etc. for MEP contractors?
- Evaluate MCAA Labor Factors. Determine if this productivity tracking methods is applicable and beneficial for electrical contractors

PROJECT COST

Overhead costs and travel cost to attend the 2021 July Council Meeting in Chicago should be included in the proposed budget for each project submitted. A maximum of 10% may be charged for an indirect cost rate with proper documentation. ELECTRI expects to select up to eight projects to be identified and moved forward for full proposal consideration by the ELECTRI Council at its January 2021 meeting. Annual project funds will be categorized as “standard”, “special”, and “futurist.”

CONTRACT TIME

Project duration is a critical part of the proposal. Topics are of essential importance to the EC industry and projects need to be completed expeditiously. Projects should be initiated as soon as possible after award of contract (January 22, 2021) and must be completed according to the timing detailed in each of the three methodologies above. ELECTRI anticipates that each contract will be finalized within 30 days of the award notification. The researcher’s anticipated time frame for project execution should be clearly stated in the proposal.

SUMMARY PROPOSAL

1. PLEASE note that the **proposal body must fit the one-page format, or it will not be accepted.** This one-page summary format allows the ELECTRI International Program Review Committee to evaluate the information more efficiently.
2. ELECTRI International will request submittal of full proposals based on project selections made by its Program Review Committee.
3. ELECTRI International will provide feedback on each summary proposal, upon request.
4. **Electronic submittals are required** and ELECTRI will provide a receipt confirmation by email. Please send your e-mail document as a Word (*.doc, *.docx) attachment to ELECTRI Administrator **Laura Holmes at Laura.Holmes@electri.org** . Please name the subject line as: **2021 Summary Proposal.**

5. **Only summary proposals received by 5:00 PM EST on December 1, 2020** will be accepted and included in the review process.
6. **Late submissions of summary proposals or those that do not follow submission guidelines will not be considered.**

SUBMISSION FORMAT FOR SUMMARY PROPOSAL

Cover page

Submit a cover page that includes the following information:

- For each participating researcher: Name, title, institution, address, e-mail address(es). Also provide the phone and fax numbers for Principal Investigator.
- Brief summary of the Principal Investigator's qualifications to complete the proposed research successfully. Clearly identify previous research in this topic area and any resulting publications.

Proposal Outline

The summary proposal (**one page only**) should include brief descriptions of the following:

1. **Title of project *and* a single figure for the estimated total budget.** Details are not necessary, but the total should include administrative costs and travel to the July 2021 Meeting in Chicago.
2. **A letter of support**, from a NECA Contractor, NECA Chapter or ELECTRI Council member in promotion of the proposal.
3. **A three-minute video** submitted via **YouTube**.
4. **Purpose and justification:** Describe how the project is relevant and useful to the electrical contractor and define the intended audience of the final product (e.g. Electrical Contractor Executives, Project Managers, other organizations). Explain what conditions in the electrical contracting industry justify the need for this research.
5. **Outcome and dissemination:** Describe the format of the physical end product/publication (manual, video, on line, or other) *and* how you think this product will be used by the intended electrical contracting audience at the time of publication and into the future 3, 5, or 10 years out. Indicate whether this research project is one that could be considered as a seminar to be taught through NECA Education in a live or on-line format. Offer any other options for disseminating these research results that can be used to reach the intended audience.
6. Clearly state whether this project is considered the first of a series or if it will be self-contained. Although it is recognized that future research opportunities are often identified as a project is carried out, **ELECTRI International discourages projects that will extend into follow-up phases unless a clear and strong justification is provided.**
7. **Brief description of work plan or method of research:** The Summary Page should also include related research projects completed by the proposed researcher or team. Please indicate if you plan to use undergraduate or graduate students in the research process. Additionally, since ELECTRI promotes applied research, a demonstration of the research in an industry setting is encouraged.
8. Clearly state your willingness to accept the terms of the ELECTRI Research Agreement.

TIMELINE

DATE OF 2021 RFP:	<u>FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2020</u>
Deadline Summary Proposal Submission:	<u>Tuesday, December 1, 2020 - 5:00 pm EST</u> A cover sheet and one-page summary of the proposed project must be submitted electronically to laura.holmes@electri.org with the subject heading: 2021 Summary Proposal . Please review RFP information and format.
Notification of Full Proposal Submission:	<u>Friday, December 11, 2020</u> Researcher will be notified if his/her proposal has been selected for further review and requires submission of a full proposal. See section on information for full proposals.
Deadline Full Proposals Submission:	<u>Friday, January 11, 2021 - 5:00 pm EST</u> If requested, researcher must submit full proposal electronically to laura.holmes@electri.org with the subject heading: 2021 Final Proposal .
Proposal presentations to the ELECTRI Council:	<u>January 20-22, 2021</u> (Virtually via Zoom) Researchers will be invited to present the project proposal to the Foundation's ELECTRI Council who will select final projects for funding. Pre-approved travel and related costs will be reimbursed.
Announcement of Research Grant:	<u>Friday, January 29, 2021</u> Research grant announcements will be confirmed electronically.

GUIDELINES FOR THE FULL PROPOSAL

Researchers will be notified by **December 11, 2020**, if ELECTRI requests a full proposal based on the **summary proposal**. In preparing the final proposal, please follow the outline below. The goal is to receive and review proposals that succinctly and clearly display project objectives.

1. Cover Page (1 page maximum)

- a. Applicant(s) (include name, mailing address, e-mail address, phone and fax of primary applicants and subcontractor).
- b. Title of project and category of research.
- c. Project Summary (define the objective and final product and explain why it is needed).

2. The Proposal (5-page maximum)

- a. Introduction and Justification: Describe the problem or issue to be addressed, the construction industry conditions, and current practices related to this research, and specifically what is needed to address these issues.

- b. Goals and Objectives: Describe major product(s) or purpose of the project and how the product(s) will be used by electrical contractors and the electrical industry at publication and on into the future for 3, 5, or 10 years. Who specifically will be the intended audience of the research results?
- c. Work Plan: A detailed description of what deliverables will be produced and when they will be completed. A schedule that includes completion and major milestone dates is very important. List the timing of any project task force meetings and the objectives of these meetings; list personnel who will be required and which segments of the electrical contracting and electrical industry allies will be included.
- d. Product Information Dissemination: Will the final product be introduced at seminars at the NECA national convention or other forums? Will articles be developed for industry press to define progress and results of the project? Is this product one that could be considered as a course to be taught through NECA Education in a live or on-line format? What other mechanisms could be used to disseminate the results to both contractors and to other members of the construction industry?
- e. Benefit to the Industry: Define direct benefits to contractors, distributors, utilities, manufacturers, or other industry allies at the time of publication and on into the future for 3, 5, or 10 years.

3. Personnel (Half-page per researcher)

Provide a short biography for each project researcher. Clearly indicate relevant qualifications and status of previous/current ELECTRI International research.

4. Budget (Separate page – 1-page summary)

It is not necessary to include budget notes unless ELECTRI requests further information on a specific item. Include sufficient funds for travel costs to the July 2021 ELECTRI Council meeting in Chicago.

5. Research Agreement

State whether you are willing to accept the terms of the ELECTRI Research Agreement.

FINAL PROPOSAL ELEMENTS, REVIEW, AND PROJECT MONITORING

1. **Electronic submittals are required** and ELECTRI will return a receipt confirmation by email. Please send your e-mail document as a Word attachment to: Laura Holmes at laura.holmes@electri.org with the subject line: **2021 Final Proposal**.
2. The total proposal, including cover and budget pages, shall not exceed eight (8) pages, unless there are more than two researchers and the biographies require more than one page.
3. The final proposal must be in the Foundation office by **Friday, January 8, 2021 by 5:00 PM EST**.
4. A Task Force will be assigned to monitor each project.
5. **The products of all funded research projects become the property of ELECTRI International. All copyrights and royalties resulting from the final products of the funded proposal will become the exclusive property of the Foundation.**
6. The following limitations will apply to the budget:
 - a. Fringe benefit costs require proper documentation.
 - b. Automobile travel is to be calculated at the prevailing federal per mile rate for 2021.
 - c. A maximum of 10% may be charged for an indirect cost rate with proper documentation. This may be achieved by requesting a shared cost arrangement with a research entity.
7. A Research Agreement is available for your reference by contacting the ELECTRI International office.

PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The schedule for payment of the negotiated budget will be as follows: 25% after the first phase of the project; 25% upon completion of the second phase of the project, as determined by the parties; 25% upon completion of the third phase of the project, as determined by the parties; and 25% upon acceptance of the final report/product by ELECTRI International. The payment schedule may be modified by mutual agreement.

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

The ELECTRI Council is responsible for approval of project funding. Each final proposal will be reviewed by the ELECTRI Council at its January meeting, January 20-21, 2021. If you are selected to submit a final proposal, you will make your presentation virtually.

Proposals not selected for funding by the Foundation will not be returned to the applicant and may be considered for ELECTRI funding in 2022. Proposals of interest to the Foundation may be subject to revision and negotiation. Final acceptance of project results will be based on review and acceptance by the Task Force and ELECTRI International Staff. A contract detailing the scope of the work and the negotiated budget will be executed prior to the start of the project.

MONITORING FORMAT

All projects selected for funding will be monitored by a Task Force composed of members of the ELECTRI Council, technical experts according to project scope, and a Foundation executive staff member.

ELECTRI CONTACT INFORMATION

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DMS 10918960v1