Offsite Renewables Exception

To address situations where due to scale, high energy intensity, or grid issues, buildings are physically incapable of achieving net zero energy performance through on-site renewables, even after applying all available design and technology considerations, the Institute is creating the following new exception. This exception allows projects with these limitations to be developed in a way that creates similar ecological and community benefits as projects with onsite renewables.

I06-E15 OFF-SITE RENEWABLES

Projects which are unable to provide renewables onsite because they fall under one or more of the project types listed below may locate renewables offsite, as long as the relevant criteria, which follow, are met:

1. Tenant improvement projects where there is no ownership interest by the project owner or developer in the core building HVAC systems, and/or the building envelope or grounds;
2. Projects which even after the highest level of efficiency is attained are unable to offset their energy use onsite due to project density/height or inherently very high baseline EUI's (such as a hospital or data center); or
3. Projects that are not able to provide on-site renewables due to substantial limitations of the local grid to absorb the generated energy, or jurisdiction-related limitations (such as military restrictions on wind turbine placement).

REQUIREMENTS

ALL PROJECTS TYPES - OFFSITE RENEWABLES MUST:

1. Be located within the same regional grid;
2. Be located consistent with the sensitive sites criteria of the Limits to Growth Imperative,
3. Be located to meet the previously developed requirement of the Limits to Growth Imperative, or be installed in a way to allow continuation of ecologic or natural resource functions (e.g. solar panels installed in pasture land in a way to allow continued grazing).

If the team is unable to meet this requirement, they must show "best effort" to do so, including at a minimum:

a) pursuing participation in a community solar program
b) placing renewables on its own or others' remote facilities such as underutilized warehouses, and
c) working with at least three utility scale providers to provide renewables which meet the criteria.

If after making such "best efforts" the project team is unable to locate offsite renewables consistent with these criteria, the team must:

- describe its efforts in a written report and
- submit the report to the Dialogue for approval before locating the renewables on a site that does not meet requirement #3.

4. Provide additionality,
5. Be physically identifiable (i.e., location and attributes known rather than a generalized power purchase) and specifically attributed or allocated to the project for a minimum of 15 years* through a recognized ownership structure such as a Power Purchase Agreement. *Tenant improvement project's PPA term may match the term of the overall project lease.
6. Be directly metered, with a public meter in the project showing current output in real time and over the year; and
7. Be clearly and visibly explained in detail at the LBC project site.

HIGH DENSITY/HIGH EUI BUILDINGS MUST:

1. Target and achieve a level of energy efficiency consistent with net zero energy projects of their building type and climate zone, based on ILFI approval of an energy professional's energy model for the project.
2. Provide a mechanism to reinforce the targeted level of energy efficiency.
3. Minimum onsite renewable energy requirement:
    a) For existing buildings: Projects must perform a Solar Site Assessment of the existing roof from a qualified contractor. For those portions of the roof which have a Total Solar Resource Fraction (TSRF) of 75% and greater, projects must install a minimum 75% of the maximum solar capacity (based on DC – nameplate), based on standard industry practice for PV installation and maintenance accessibility.
    b) For new construction: Projects must be designed and include solar photovoltaics on a minimum of 75% of the total roof area, using standard industry practice for PV installation and maintenance accessibility within that 75%. Systems shall be designed to provide a minimum TSRF of 75% and greater.

PROJECTS WITH UTILITY BASED RENEWABLE CONSTRAINTS MUST:

1. Advocate to the electrical utility to allow as much on-site generation as feasible.
2. Work with the utility in a good faith effort to investigate any identified technical, legal, financial, or policy limitations, and seek to implement all reasonable solutions. The results of the effort shall be provided in a local grid advocacy report.
3. Include the maximum renewables on-site allowed by the utility after the team's advocacy and technical work.
4. Achieve highly efficient energy use intensity based on either:
    a) A maximum energy usage calculation of net positive energy performance based on the amount of renewable generation technically feasible on site (absent utility constraints); or
    b) Target and achieve a level of energy efficiency consistent with net zero energy projects of their building type and climate zone, based on ILFI approval of an energy professional's energy model for the project.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

The specific documents required to show compliance with this Exception will be determined with the Institute for specific project circumstances but is likely to include:

- I06-a Exception Narrative
- I06-c Technical Documents (e.g. grid limitation documents, energy study, solar site assessment, PV generation information) and
- I06-d Photographs.

Please contact ZE.support@living-future.org for further information.