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## [IREC publishes a slick playbook for evaluating grid modernization plans](#)

May 7, 2020 by [Chris Crowell](#)



Grid modernization is a cool thing to say and support, but it is also a nebulous term, which makes it difficult to implement. What counts as “modern?” And how can we be sure the pursuit of new technology doesn’t actually just lead to fancier, expensive toys that aren’t utilized to their potential? These aren’t new questions for utilities and their regulators, but with generation growing more distributed and involving more stakeholders and possibilities – and the looming impacts of climate change –the answers need to be the right ones.

To help us all navigate the pursuit of grid modernization, the [Interstate Renewable Energy Council \(IREC\)](#) and [GridLab](#) have published “[A Playbook for Modernizing the Distribution Grid; Volume I: Grid Modernization Goals, Principles and Plan Evaluation Checklist](#)” (or GridMod Playbook, for short). It’s an evaluation toolkit to ensure that efforts to modernize the U.S. electricity grid are more efficient and impactful.

What’s especially valuable about this first volume to me is that it isn’t just a whitepaper of conclusions. Instead, the bulk of it is a series of informed if-this-then-ask-this questions to more thoroughly and uniformly evaluate potential grid modernization pathways.

The GridMod Playbook provides a framework to help regulatory stakeholders navigate, analyze and make more informed decisions about grid modernization proposals, plans and investments. This resource, the first volume in a series, articulates key goals and principles for grid modernization and presents an evaluation checklist for assessing the merits of proposed grid modernization efforts.

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OMCO Solar is a manufacturer of solar racking and tracker systems. OMCO offers two fixed-tilt systems, Field-Fast™ and Choice™, as well as its OMCO ORIGIN™ Single-Axis Tracker. Learn more at [omcosolar.com](http://omcosolar.com)

“The Playbook will help stakeholders and regulators determine whether or not grid modernization plans and investments are compatible with and supportive of critical public policy objectives—including the expansion of renewable energy, the decarbonization of the electricity system and the beneficial electrification of the transportation and building sectors,” said co-author Sara Baldwin, Vice President, Regulatory for IREC.

Considerable investments in the grid will be needed in the coming decades to address aging infrastructure and changing demands on the electricity grid; however, not all investments may be warranted or beneficial, either from an economic or carbon reduction standpoint.

“Grid modernization plans and investment proposals are complex regulatory filings, full of technical jargon and acronyms. The Playbook helps demystify these plans by providing a clear evaluation framework, assessment questions, glossary of terms and specific examples for easy reference,” said Curt Volkmann, President of New Energy Advisors and co-author.

As more utilities and states undertake efforts to modernize the grid with new technologies and infrastructure, the Playbook will provide a key navigational tool to enable the swift evolution of the grid and support public policy and clean energy objectives.

[Check it out for yourself here.](#)

**Tags:** [grid modernization](#), [IREC](#)

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