

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
NEPA DETERMINATION**



RECIPIENT: Various (all Phase 1 competitors and selected Phase 2A competitors)

STATE: DC

PROJECT TITLE: Phase 1 and Phase 2A – American-Made TCU Energy and Food Sovereignty Nexus Prize

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number **Procurement Instrument Number** **NEPA Control Number** **CID Number**
IE-TCU-Prize-001

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Policy 451.1), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination	Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits), data analysis (including, but not limited to, computer modeling), document preparation (including, but not limited to, conceptual design, feasibility studies, and analytical energy supply and demand studies), and information dissemination (including, but not limited to, document publication and distribution, and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring. (See also B3.1 of appendix B to this subpart.)
A11 Technical advice and assistance to organizations	Technical advice and planning assistance to international, national, state, and local organizations.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to authorize the administration of the American-Made Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU) Energy and Food Sovereignty Nexus Prize to support the design and development of student-led demonstration projects that increase their knowledge on clean energy and food sovereignty on TCU campuses. Through a multi-phase competitive approach, this Prize aims to build the capacity of TCU students to use clean energy and grow food self-sufficiently with sources on Tribal Lands. Finalists in Phase 3 of the prize will attend and speak at the 2025 Indian Energy Program Review. The Prize would be administered by the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) in partnership with the Office of Indian Energy.

This ND covers the development of teaming, planning, and permitting (Phases 1 and 2A). Phase 2B (construction) and Phase 3 (presentation and awards) would be submitted for NEPA review after Phase 2B is complete, and up to twenty winners of Phase 1 and 2A are selected.

Phase 1: Teaming

Teams will recruit members and develop a plan for their energy and food sovereignty nexus demonstration projects.

Phase 2A: Planning and Permitting

Winning teams from Phase 1 will complete all preparatory work required needed for project installation, including budget, timeline, and necessary permits and permissions. At the end of Phase 2A, up to 20 winning teams will receive a cash prize to purchase equipment and begin installation of their demonstration projects, as well as be eligible to compete in the Phase 2B.

The types of activities associated with Phases 1 and 2A of the prize would be limited exclusively to outreach, stakeholder engagement, information dissemination, project planning, modeling, desktop-based and/or non-invasive site evaluation and selection, preliminary engineering/design, and document preparation. Such work is expected to be conducted from existing offices and meeting space and not require any materials beyond basic office supplies and computers. DOE has considered the nature of the proposed activities to determine potential impacts on sensitive resources, including those of a biological, ecological, cultural, and socioeconomic nature. DOE does not anticipate impacts on these resources which would be considered significant or require DOE to consult with other agencies or stakeholders.

Further NEPA review would be required prior to awarding cash prizes to teams who successfully complete Phases 1 and 2A. Each team is required to submit proposed project information to the cognizant Prize Administrator and must receive a NEPA determination prior to commencing work associated with subsequent phases.

Any work proposed to be conducted at a federal facility may be subject to additional NEPA review by the cognizant federal official and must meet the applicable health and safety requirements of the facility.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination.

The NEPA Determination applies to the following Topic Areas, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

Phases 1 and 2A

The NEPA Determination does not apply to the following Topic Area, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

Phase 2B and 3

Notes:

Office of Indian Energy (IE)
NEPA review completed by Dustin Hill, 9/19/2024

FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATIONS

The proposed action (or the part of the proposal defined in the Rationale above) fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D. To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposed action has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____



NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 9/23/2024

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

- ☒ Field Office Manager review not required
☐ Field Office Manager review required

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____

Field Office Manager

Date: _____