



## **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Determination**

### **Categorical Exclusion**

**Recipient:** DefenseWerx and additional recipients to be determined

**State:** Multiple

**Project Title:** OCED Voucher Opportunities 9 and 10

**Funding Opportunity Announcement Number:** N/A

**Award Number:** N/A

**OCED NEPA Control Number:** OCED-PIA-002-CX

**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:**

#### **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION APPENDIX, NUMBER, AND DESCRIPTION:**

A8 – Awards of Certain Contracts: Awards of contracts for technical support services, management and operation of a government-owned facility, and personal services.

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.

B3.6 – Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects: Siting, construction, modification, operation, and decommissioning of facilities for small-scale research and development projects; conventional laboratory operations (such as preparation of chemical standards and sample analysis); and small-scale pilot projects (generally less than 2 years) frequently conducted to verify a concept before demonstration actions, provided that construction or modification would be within or contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area (where active utilities and currently

used roads are readily accessible). Not included in this category are demonstration actions, meaning actions that are undertaken at a scale to show whether a technology would be viable on a larger scale and suitable for commercial deployment.

#### **Rationale for Determination:**

In November 2023, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) issued a Broad Agency Announcement indicating an interest in entering into one or multiple agreements with Partnership Intermediaries (PI) to work with DOE's Office of Technology Transfer, other DOE programs, and DOE National Laboratories and Facilities. DOE subsequently executed a Partnership Intermediary Agreement (PIA) with DefenseWerk. Through the PIA with DefenseWerk, DOE's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) and Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) issued vouchers to support work in several areas of opportunity including 'Pre-Demonstration Commercialization Support', 'Performance Validation and Modeling and Certification Support', 'Demonstration Project Siting/Permitting Support' and 'EERE Commercialization Support'. OCED is currently proposing to issue two additional voucher opportunities under the PIA:

- Voucher Opportunity 9: "Planning and Validation of Industrial Decarbonization Projects" would support owners or operators of industrial/manufacturing facilities and technology development companies as they develop and implement decarbonization projects for industrial facilities. Within this opportunity, support would include: assessment and validation of current emissions and opportunities for decarbonization; planning (including financial modeling) for implementation and execution of decarbonization projects; independent validation of decarbonization opportunities based on new technologies; third-party assessment and validation of industrial decarbonization technologies, practices, and claims; and performance validation support for industrial decarbonization technology developers. Supported activities would include paper studies and limited carbon emission testing at existing facilities and for existing processes.
- Voucher Opportunity 10: "Manufacturing Conversion, Retooling, and Retrofitting Support." would support domestic manufacturers with feasibility and engineering studies to convert, retool, or retrofit their existing facility to produce components that are necessary for the following sectors: clean hydrogen, long duration energy storage, direct air capture, carbon capture, advanced nuclear, industrial decarbonization. Within this voucher opportunity, support would include feasibility and engineering studies, review of existing equipment, processes, staff qualifications, workforce needs, and certifications.

DOE does not anticipate that adverse impacts to sensitive resources would result from the execution of either voucher opportunity.

**Consultations (Section 106 NHPA, Section 7 ESA, etc.):** None required.

☒ 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 1501.9(e)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.1(g)(3)) 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.

☐ DOE has determined that work to be carried out outside of the United States, its territories and possessions is exempt from further review pursuant to Section 5.1.1 of the DOE Final Guidelines for Implementation of Executive Order 12114; "Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions."

☒ The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

☐ A portion of the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

**Notes:** This Categorical Exclusion Determination applies to OCED's proposal to issue Voucher Opportunities 9 and 10. OCED may propose to issue additional voucher opportunities through the PIA with DefenseWerx (or other PIs) in the future. These activities will be subject to additional NEPA review when sufficient information is available to conduct a meaningful analysis of potential impacts to the human environment.

**SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.**

OCED NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

Date: