



Citizens Advisory Board
Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory

Science and Technology Budget for Fiscal Year 2003

The Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) understands that the Science and Technology portion of the Defense Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Program in the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s proposed budget would be significantly reduced (from around \$250 million in Fiscal Year [FY] 2002 to \$92 million in FY 2003) and that the entire budget for Science and Technology would be managed by DOE Headquarters. In the past, each site received Science and Technology funding and the Department used various Focus Areas to establish priorities. The CAB is disturbed that the Focus Groups have been disbanded without the replacement process being communicated to the public.

The INEEL CAB recommends that DOE immediately clarify the transition from management of Science and Technology development efforts by Focus Groups to management by DOE Headquarters. Smoothly and rapidly transitioning from the Focus Groups to DOE Headquarters management is imperative in light of the potential for inefficiency, costly project delays, and loss of dedicated, highly qualified scientists and engineers. Loss of critical personnel may well preclude eventual continuation of these development projects. In addition, project restart after stopping and reassignment or loss of personnel comes with substantial inefficiencies.

The INEEL CAB recommends that DOE identify which Science and Technology projects will continue to receive funding. All technology development needs that are critical to successful implementation of the Accelerated Cleanup Program should be funded. The INEEL CAB believes that the Environmental Science and Technology Program is essential to successful completion of the cleanup mission. The CAB is concerned that \$92 million may not be adequate to address the very real, high costs of meeting the technical challenges presented by the Accelerated Cleanup Program in the years ahead.

The INEEL CAB recommends that DOE move quickly to develop and implement a process for identifying which science and technology projects should continue into subsequent fiscal years. The processes used by the Focus Areas in the past had allowed for identification of priorities based on technical merit, and a replacement process must similarly support objective technical review.

The INEEL CAB further recommends that the process of identifying science and technology priorities be based on risk reduction, technical merit, and compliance considerations.