



**Department of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

**RECORD OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (CX) DETERMINATION**

**OFFICE: Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE)**

**STIMULUS PROPOSAL: Interoperability Standards and Framework (EISA Sec.1305)**

**BACKGROUND:** The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

The Department of Energy's (DOE's) regulations that implement NEPA require it to determine whether a proposal (in this case the proposal to fund third party research and analysis) requires that an EIS, an Environmental Assessment (EA), or a Categorical Exclusion (CX) be prepared. An EA is a concise public document that provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact. A CX refers to a category of actions that DOE has determined do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. As such DOE need not prepare and EA or an EIS for categorically excluded actions.

All of DOE's CXs are listed at 10 CFR 1021, Appendices A and B to Subpart D. The use of CXs provides a way for DOE to streamline the NEPA review process and preserve its resources for environmentally significant proposals. The CXs are applicable to all DOE "actions" which by definition include projects funded by DOE but undertaken by a third party. DOE regulations define "action" to include "a project . . . as discussed at 40 CFR §1508.18, that is subject to DOE's control and responsibility." 10 CFR §1021.104(b). The CEQ regulations at 40 CFR §1508.18 define major federal action to include "projects and programs entirely or partly financed, assisted, conducted, regulated, or approved by federal agencies."

In order to conclude that a proposed action is categorically excluded, DOE is required by regulation to first determine that: 1) the action fits within a categorical exclusion, 2) there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the action that may affect its significance, and 3) the action is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts.

In this CX Determination, DOE describes the proposed action and explains why it is categorically excluded.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** OE plans to use \$10 million to support the development and implementation of interoperable standards and framework to ensure effective and consistent application of Smart Grid technologies. The Recovery Act directs this funding to implement EISA section 1305, which designates the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) with primary responsibility to coordinate the interoperability framework development.

Smart Grid investments qualifying under ESIA may include any of the following:

- o Execute the Interagency Agreement with the NIST on Smart Grid interoperability framework development.
- o Work with the IEEE Standards Board and its Smart Grid Committee to engage a broad Smart Grid community in interoperability standards and protocols development
- o Engage other qualified standards organizations and assemble a technical assistance team comprising experts from the GridWise Architecture Council, IEEE Smart Grid Committee and national laboratories, as well as other subject-matter-experts active in the Smart Grid community.

**CX TO BE APPLIED:** The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix A to subpart D of Part 1021- Categorical exclusions applicable to general agency actions, specifically:

A1 Routine actions necessary to support the normal conduct of agency business, such as administrative, financial, and personnel actions.


A9 Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, audits), data analysis (including computer modelling), document preparation (such as conceptual design or feasibility studies, analytical energy supply and demand studies), and dissemination (including, but not limited to, document mailings, publication, and distribution; and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring.

A11 Technical advice and planning assistance to international, national, state, and local organizations.

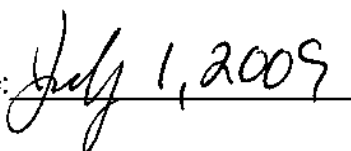
**RATIONALE:** The planned activities will involve the utilization of existing facilities and infrastructure to accomplish the goal of establishing a Smart Grid. The actions identified in the CX above has been determined by DOE in the past to not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment.

**DETERMINATION:** Based on OE's review of the above information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Brian Mills  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
Office of Electricity Delivery  
and Energy Reliability

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Stimulus Proposals Description –

**Program/Project Activity:** Interoperability Standards and Framework (EISA Sec.1305)

**Program Office:** Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability

**POC (Name, email, phone):** Eric Lightner,  
eric.lightner@hq.doe.gov, 202.586.8130

## 1. What are you going to accomplish with the stimulus funding:

\$10 million will support the development and implementation of interoperable standards and framework to ensure effective and consistent application of Smart Grid technologies. The Recovery Act directs this funding to implement EISA section 1305, which designates the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) with primary responsibility to coordinate the interoperability framework development.

## 2. Description of Milestones:

Please see associated excel file for milestones and schedule information.

## 3. Procurement Plan:

Interagency Agreement with NIST/Department of Commerce

- o Execute the Interagency Agreement with the NIST on Smart Grid interoperability framework development.
- o Work with the IEEE Standards Board and its Smart Grid Committee to engage a broad Smart Grid community in interoperability standards and protocols development
- o Engage other qualified standards organizations and assemble a technical assistance team comprising experts from the GridWise Architecture Council, IEEE Smart Grid Committee and national laboratories, as well as other subject-matter-experts active in the Smart Grid community.

## 4. Program Goals:

This plan supports the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability's Research and Development Division's strategic plan by addressing the following items that were identified as "strategic opportunities":

- o Development of measurement and verification protocols for evaluating customer efficiency gains and corresponding reductions in carbon emissions, from leveraging Smart Grid infrastructure

## 5. Support of President's Energy Goals:

This activity will support the President's energy goal by helping to invest in a Smart Grid with the development and implementation of interoperable standards and framework to ensure effective and consistent application of Smart Grid technologies. This interoperability framework will play enabling role for innovation in the way electricity is transmitted and monitored.

## 6. Major Implementation Issues:

Reaching consensus can take a significant amount of time. These standards are a critical factor in Smart Grid deployment, and therefore this has high political and industry interest.

**7. Job Details:**

Based on DOE methodological approach, this program will create 84 direct jobs and 20-40 indirect jobs.

**8. Future Budget Needs:**

None anticipated.

**9. Leads:**

- Lead manager – Eric Lightner, [eric.lightner@hq.doe.gov](mailto:eric.lightner@hq.doe.gov), 202.586.8130
- Lead basic science implementation officer – N/A
- Lead national laboratory – N/A

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