

PMC-ND  
(1.08.09.13)

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



**RECIPIENT:** [US Department of Energy](#)

**STATE:** DC

**PROJECT TITLE:** [Powering the Blue Economy: Ocean Observation Prize](#)

**Funding Opportunity Announcement Number** [Procurement Instrument Number](#) [NEPA Control Number](#) [CID Number](#)  
[GFO-OceanObservationPrize-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.)

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to authorize the administration of a prize competition, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)-led Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS), regarding ocean observing technologies, known as the Powering the Blue Economy™: Ocean Observing Prize (Ocean Observing Prize).

Through the Ocean Observing Prize DOE seeks to accelerate early-stage concepts which demonstrate marine energy system integration with ocean observation technologies. There are two proposed competitions under the prize, the DISCOVERY Competition and the DEVELOP Competition.

The first competition would be the DISCOVERY competition. The DISCOVERY competition is limited to submission of concept papers, which would include a technical narrative, as well as a short video pitch of the concept. Concepts papers would be accepted across five ocean observing themes: (1) Unmanned Vehicles; (2) Buoys, Floats, and Tags; (3) Ocean Communications and Underwater Navigation; (4) Extreme Environments; (5) Blue Sea Ideas. Applicant submissions across the five themes will be evaluated based on three criteria questions: (1) the scientific and societal value of the innovation, (2) market potential, and (3) technical feasibility. Up to six prizes would be awarded.

The second competition would be the DEVELOP Competition. The DEVELOP competition would include the fabrication and testing of systems under one specific theme. While it is anticipated that the second competition would focus on one of the tracks from the DISCOVERY Competition, the rules and topic area for DEVELOP are still under development. The DEVELOP competition is restricted until further NEPA review is completed. Additional NEPA review will be completed once the rules for DEVELOP are completed.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination.

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

[DISCOVERY Competition](#)

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

[DEVELOP Competition](#)

Notes:

Water Power Program  
Review Completed by Roak Parker 9.16.19

**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.

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."

A portion of the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review. The NEPA Provision identifies Topic Areas, Budget Periods, tasks, and/or subtasks that are subject to additional NEPA review.

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

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  Roak Parker Date: 9/16/2019  
NEPA Compliance Officer

**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: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Field Office Manager