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Savannah River National Laboratory Regulatory Center of Excellence Charter

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Savannah River National Laboratory®

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1.0 Introduction

Due to the nature of DOE missions, especially Environmental Management's (EM's) goals to accelerate clean up and reduce environmental risk and liability, stakeholders and regulatory challenges are ubiquitous throughout the complex. To help address these challenges, the Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) Regulatory Center of Excellence (RCE) will bring together enhanced SRNL core competencies and Battelle Savannah River Alliance (BSRA) partner's world-class capabilities in complex system modeling, policy, and environmental expertise to develop science-driven, risk-informed, end states designed to deliver accelerated decision making and cost and schedule reduction to EM's cleanup and closure mission. The RCE will create a standing source of multi-faceted technical and regulatory expertise and training for Department of Energy (DOE) sites and programs by consolidating and leveraging SRNL's ongoing research and development (R&D) efforts, its academic connections and strategic partnerships, DOE's National Laboratory competencies, and corporate resources. As EM's corporate laboratory, through the RCE, SRNL can:

- Facilitate programmatic, policy and baseline changes that bring to bear the best remediation technologies and program practices,
- Support EM interests to leverage highly effective technical, regulatory, and communication approaches across the DOE complex to enable accelerated reduction of environmental risks and liability, while reducing costs and improving efficiency,
- Assemble and strategically engage the best experts (National Labs, Universities, and industry) to obtain independent inputs for DOE to influence adoption of risk-informed cleanup and closure actions,
- Provide counsel to facilitate stakeholder and regulator buy-in to implement innovative technologies that advance risk and liability reduction based on expert recommendations from trusted sources,
- Advise EM on communication strategies that build positive support for recommended technologies,
- Provide assistance as requested to the EM regulatory program offices across the DOE complex that are responsible for regulator interface and cleanup and closure program accomplishment.

Efforts that fall within the charter of the RCE include:

- Building a diverse network of experts and researchers to support DOE with regulators and community leaders to address emerging and existing regulatory compliance challenges, technical communication challenges, policy changes and community concerns through identification and implementation of innovative technologies, science-based, risk-informed approaches, and robust, constructive communications.
- Leveraging SRNL experience and best practices to support other DOE missions that involve complex environmental issues and require effective strategies for regulatory and stakeholder engagement.
- Recommending strategies to build upon existing community interactions to strengthen communications and mitigate stakeholder concerns.
- Providing counsel to federal program owners, other federal partners, state regulators, Tribal governments, local governments, redevelopment organizations, and members of the community in the development of risk informed strategies for environmental cleanup and closure within the bounds of their respective regulatory agreements.
- Developing comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategies, technological solutions and design and implementation of EM policy and regulatory coordination.

These efforts will drive success by ensuring and enabling fulfillment of environmental and regulatory requirements, DOE and EM priorities (including risk and liability reduction) and addressing and mitigating stakeholder concerns. The cornerstone of the RCE is building increased awareness and understanding of EM proposed mission activities that are critical to meeting regulatory compliance goals and gaining community support. Early and consistent communication and coordination will enable accelerated decision making and cost schedule reduction. These types of outreach and communication activities will help establish the RCE as a critical asset for the EM program, while also being a potentially valuable resource to other DOE offices, governmental entities, and industry.

2.0 Functions

2.1 Programmatic Support to DOE Sites

The SRNL RCE will, as requested, provide EM with innovative strategies to address mission-critical challenges impacting regulatory compliance at DOE sites. The SRNL RCE provides a unique approach to regulatory compliance and community engagement by engaging a team of scientists, former regulators, and communications experts. This team is available to assist DOE sites in developing strategies designed to enhance engagement with state and local regulators and communities affected by site activities. The SRNL RCE team draws upon the collective expertise of the SRNL, Longenecker and Associates (L&A) and SRNL's University Partners. As the leader of the Network of National Laboratories for Environmental Management and Stewardship (NNLEMS), SRNL also has access to experts across the national laboratory network. To enable expedited resolution of challenges, the SRNL RCE will reach out to NNLEMS and other DOE sponsored consortia for relevant subject matter expertise.

The SRNL RCE will work with DOE headquarters, DOE sites, and site contractors, to use ongoing R&D efforts to provide guidance and address proposed or anticipated regulatory decisions, policy changes and evolving directives and missions. This will support DOE sites in developing approaches that protect the environment and the people within the surrounding communities.

The SRNL RCE will support DOE with effective communication of regulatory and community concerns to federal and state regulatory agencies stemming from the full range of DOE mission activities. As field offices implement new programs, policies, and infrastructure, the SRNL RCE will serve as a critical resource for regulatory compliance by ensuring consistent, open communication with various stakeholders including elected officials, Tribal governments, stakeholders, and the local communities.

2.2 University Engagement

The SRNL RCE will engage DOE sites, DOE regional university partners, Battelle Savannah River Alliance (BSRA) university partners, directed institutions (e.g., Consortium for Risk Evaluation with Stakeholder Participation (CRESP)), and national laboratories to provide important national and regional research data, which can then be readily shared across the DOE complex and national laboratory community. The SRNL RCE will seek to support opportunities to increase awareness of topics critical to DOE EM success through educational support activities and mentorship. Educating the next generation of regulators and scientists is imperative to future DOE mission success. While the SRNL RCE will remain separate and distinct from the existing Minority Serving Institutions Partnership Program (MSIPP), SRNL RCE will coordinate with EM-3.2 Office of Technology Development, who provides oversight of MSIPP, including SRNL counterparts who execute MSIPP, and promoting environmental justice (including Executive Order 14008, Justice 40 Initiative) as part of MSIPP. This coordination will allow sharing of best practices with regards to communication and heightened awareness of concerns from the affected communities. No MSIPP funding will be provided for SRNL RCE efforts.

2.3 Addressing Climate Change

The SRNL RCE will serve as a resource for DOE to evaluate the impacts of climate change on current projects, identify mitigating measures and resiliency actions to reduce those impacts, and communicate

analyses to stakeholders. Meaningful collaborations will aid in developing and implementing climate resiliency efforts. The SRNL RCE will also leverage R&D from across the NNLEMS in support of the federal government's commitment to ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to accelerate transition to pollution free electricity generation and use of electric vehicles.

2.4 Environmental Justice Initiative

The SRNL RCE will support DOE's environmental justice related efforts through strategic coordination and partnerships with DOE site communities. The SRNL RCE is available to support EM, as needed, regarding the Administration's Justice40 initiative. Incorporation of the socio-economic dimensions of DOE mission activities into decision making is a necessary component of Environmental Justice and Energy Equity initiatives. RCE will support DOE with prioritizing engagement with, and investment in, those communities most impacted by DOE sites and activities (both past and present).

2.5 Communications about the SRNL RCE

The SRNL RCE will work with DOE EM for the development and deployment of an outreach strategy, designed to build awareness of and support for the SRNL RCE among stakeholders. The SRNL RCE will utilize a documented review and release process for all generated material intended for release to the public. The SRNL RCE will coordinate with DOE EM to address emergent areas of concern and focus efforts on high priority challenges. Increased awareness and support are expected to generate task requests for the SRNL RCE's assistance from DOE sites and programs.

2.6 Tasking

Requests for the SRNL RCE's assistance will be reviewed and prioritized by the SRNL RCE's Core Committee with consultation from EM headquarters. The SRNL Business Systems will be used to ensure adequate contracting, conflict of interest reviews (with consultation with DOE), and funding. Requestors will receive notification of receipt of project requests, completion of the request review and projected date of delivery of support. Central to the SRNL RCE's mission is strategic communication including development of communication plans and engagement strategies. In most cases, the SRNL RCE will recommend strategies for communicators at the site level to execute.

As the EM laboratory, the SRNL will support the successful acceleration and completion of EM missions. The SRNL RCE, as a component of SRNL, is committed to the growth and advancement of SRNL as an independent laboratory and will continue to pursue opportunities for the growth of SRNL capabilities and expertise. The SRNL RCE is simultaneously committed to transparency and open communication with EM and will continuously work with EM to prioritize the mutual success of DOE EM missions and objectives.

3.0 Committees

The Regulatory Center of Excellence Core Committee will consist of no more than six members that represent key facets integral to success including SRNL leadership, communications, and scientific, regulatory and policy expertise. The SRNL RCE Core Committee will be comprised of scientific and communications experts from SRNL; and regulatory and policy experts from Longenecker & Associates, and a BSRA University Partner. The SRNL RCE Core Committee may create temporary focus committees to research and facilitate unique challenges or to assist DOE sites on emergent concerns. These committees will focus on short-term objectives and strategies that will drive critical long-term mission success. Focus committees will leverage the expertise of individuals from other national laboratories, universities, or regulatory agencies who have critical knowledge necessary to address the proposed objectives.

4.0 Work Plan / Deliverables

At the beginning of each fiscal year, the RCE, in collaboration with DOE, will identify key focus areas and objectives for EM review prior to the beginning of the fiscal year in a Fiscal Year Work Plan. Within these focus areas, specific projects will be identified and selected from task requests that are generated via SRNL RCE outreach. Recognizing that emerging issues evolve, the RCE will work with EM headquarters to adjust the work plan as needed during the year. The RCE activities and accomplishments will be documented and presented in an Annual Report after the conclusion of the calendar year.

5.0 Funding

The Regulatory Center of Excellence efforts are initially funded under the EM Laboratory Policy Office. Funding for additional requested activities will be provided by the requesting organizations (including EM program offices, site offices, and stakeholder organizations). Annual funding will be dependent on programmatic needs as identified in the Fiscal Year Work Plan. In instances where requesting sites or organizations lack the communication/engagement resources necessary to effectively engage stakeholders to address unplanned needs, the RCE's Core Committee will work with EM to identify resources that can be leveraged to provide necessary support.