



## National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Determination Categorical Exclusion

<b>Recipient:</b>	<b>DefenseWerx and additional recipients to be determined</b>
<b>State:</b>	<b>Multiple</b>
<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>Partnership Intermediary Agreement and OCED/EERE Voucher Opportunities 1, 2, 3, and 4</b>
<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Award Number:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>OCED NEPA Control Number:</b>	<b>OCED-PIA-001-CX</b>

**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. Through one or more Partnership Intermediary Agreement (PIA), DOE would expand its capabilities to connect and engage with the broader energy and national security ecosystem and address gaps facing companies, organizations and communities seeking to engage with DOE and/or develop, scale, commercialize, deploy, and adopt technologies relevant to DOE's mission.

Potential PI activities would include facilitating and/or managing innovation hubs and/or public-private partnerships; performing technology and market research and scouting; acting as an independent facilitator between DOE programs and projects, DOE National Labs, and external solution providers; and facilitating rapid prototyping, demonstration, deployment, and/or manufacturing, in furtherance of DOE's mission.

DOE is currently proposing to execute a PIA with DefenseWerx. Further, through the PIA with DefenseWerx, DOE's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) and Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) are proposing to issue vouchers to support work in three areas of opportunity:

- Voucher Opportunity 1 (VO-1) – Pre-Demonstration Commercialization Support
- Voucher Opportunity 2 (VO-2) – Performance Validation, Modeling, and Certification Support
- Voucher Opportunity 3 (VO-3) – Clean Energy Demonstration Project Siting/Permitting Support
- Voucher Opportunity 4 (VO-4) – EERE Commercialization Support

The focus of VO-1 'Pre-Demonstration Commercialization Support' is to address key adoption risk areas including bankability studies, manufacturing / supply chain assessments, and other technoeconomic analyses.

The focus of VO-2 'Performance Validation, Modeling, and Certification Support' is to enable evaluation of technology performance under certification-relevant operating conditions, accelerated lifetime testing to test for failure modes, and access to advanced modeling and digitization resources.

The focus of VO-3 'Demonstration Project Siting/Permitting Support' is to enable expert assistance to educate AHJs on new clean energy technologies being demonstrated and ultimately deployed at scale in the next 5/10 years, understand their benefits and challenges, understand siting and permitting best practices developed by similar jurisdictions, develop and/or propose streamlined permitting processes, understand training needs for jurisdictions' personnel (including fire, health, and safety personnel), and mitigate community acceptance concerns.

The focus of VO-4 'EERE Commercialization Support' is to enable market research, business plans, fundraising road-mapping (from both public and private sources), and other commercialization strategy assistance for companies who have received funding from DOE's RD&D programs.

Activities funded under VO1, VO3, and VO4 would be limited to administrative activities including (but not limited to) paper studies, virtual or in-person meetings, development of studies, recommendations, and best practices.

Activities funded under VO2 would include administrative activities and could include limited laboratory work to test functionality of existing prototypes in controlled environments. All laboratory work would occur in existing facilities purpose-built and currently operating for the intent of executing lab testing and verification. Adverse impacts to sensitive resources are not anticipated as a result of this work.

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:

1. DOE's decision to execute a PIA with DefenseWrx and any other PIs, and
2. The four Voucher Opportunities (Pre-Demonstration Commercialization Support, Performance Validation, Modeling, and Certification Support, Clean Energy Demonstration Project Siting/ Permitting Support, and EERE Commercialization Support)

OCED may issue voucher opportunities and other DOE offices may issue voucher opportunities or mechanisms to provide financial support through the PIA with DefenseWrx (or other PIs) in the future. These activities will be subject to additional NEPA review when sufficient information is available for DOE 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: