

**GENERIC CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR GENERAL AGENCY ACTIONS,  
PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONAL LABORATORY,  
RICHLAND, WASHINGTON**

**Proposed Action**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Pacific Northwest Site Office (PNSO) proposes to perform administrative, planning, non-experimental research, and technical assistance or exchange activities. Covered activities are limited to those included within 10 CFR 1021 Appendix A which covers general agency actions.

**Location of Action**

The proposed action would occur on the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) campuses in Richland and Sequim, Washington, and at other locations throughout the U.S.

**Description of the Proposed Action**

The proposed action would include general PNNL business activities, award of contracts, a variety of information gathering techniques including literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits; data processing and analysis, including but not limited to statistical analyses, simulation, and computer modeling; document preparation; information disseminated by electronic and hard copy publication and distribution, oral presentation, and electronic communication; technical advice, assistance, and exchange, including technical consulting, outreach, and education to international, national, state, and local organizations. Examples of each covered area are provided below; covered actions are not limited to these examples.

Examples of routine DOE business actions include:

- financial management and planning
- program and project planning
- auditing and assessments

Examples of contract awards include:

- technical, professional, or consulting contracts
- purchase of equipment, goods, and supplies
- technical support contracts awarded to subcontractors
- leasing facilities or equipment

Examples of information gathering activities include:

- accessing published data and literature through online databases and clearinghouses
- exchanging information and data at professional conferences
- soliciting data, published information, and expertise from trained professionals and recognized experts
- auditing internal and external scientific projects and/or programs

Examples of data analyses include:

- extracting, classifying, inspecting, cleaning, transforming, or modeling data
- application of statistical, structural, exploratory, and confirmatory models
- computer simulation and visualization

- data mining
- modeling supporting development of artificial intelligence systems

Examples of document preparation include:

- writing, drafting, or other organization of data and information in preparation for dissemination
- reviewing, editing, proofing, and circulating draft documents internally or externally for peer review

Examples of information dissemination include:

- publishing data, information, and research results
- sharing data, information, and research results among colleagues, universities, government agencies, other institutions, and the public via presentations, trainings, electronic, or other media

Examples of technical assistance and exchange include:

- providing technical support to a university student or researcher
- advising a Native American tribe based on the findings of scientific research
- providing technical assistance on the operation of a scientific instrument while hosting an international scientist on the PNNL campus
- serving on multidisciplinary teams supporting other governmental agencies
- identifying and analyzing another country's energy, security, and environmental resources, needs, and options
- appointment to advisory groups or participation in workshops

Covered activities do not include actions that have the potential to cause significant impacts on sensitive resources.

## **Biological and Cultural Resources**

The proposed actions do not include ground disturbance, alteration of historic structures, direct interaction with sensitive species, or alterations of native habitats, and are not likely to result in adverse impacts to sensitive biological or cultural resources. Use of this categorical exclusion (CX) as the sole National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) coverage is likely inappropriate if there is any potential adverse effect to biological or cultural resources.

## **Categorical Exclusion to Be Applied**

Because the proposed action is to perform administrative, non-experimental research, and technical assistance/exchange activities, the following CXs, as listed in the DOE NEPA implementing procedures at 10 CFR 1021 Appendix A would apply:

**A1 ROUTINE DOE BUSINESS ACTIONS:** Routine actions necessary to support the normal conduct of DOE business limited to administrative, financial, and personnel actions.

**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.

**A11 TECHNICAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO ORGANIZATIONS:** Technical advice and planning assistance to international, national, state, and local organizations.

**A12 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING:** Emergency preparedness planning activities, including, but not limited to, the designation of onsite evacuation routes.

**A14 APPROVAL OF TECHNICAL EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENTS:** Approval of technical exchange arrangements for information, data, or personnel with other countries or international organizations (including, but not limited to, assistance in identifying and analyzing another country's energy resources, needs and options).

Generic CXs are authorized by 10 CFR 1021.410(f) for recurring activities to be undertaken during a specified period of time, after considering potential aggregated impacts.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

The proposed activity meets the eligibility criteria of 10 CFR 1021.410(b) because the proposed action does not have any extraordinary circumstances that might affect the significance of the environmental effects, is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during environmental impact statement preparation.

### **Summary of Environmental Impacts**

The following table summarizes environmental impacts considered when preparing this CX determination.

<b>Environmental Impacts Considered when Preparing this CX</b>	
<i>Would the Proposed Action:</i>	Evaluation:
Result in more than minimal air impacts?	The proposed actions would not cause impacts to the air or change releases to the air.
Increase offsite radiation dose measurably?	The proposed actions would not affect offsite radiation dose.

Require a radiological work permit?	The proposed actions would not require a radiological work permit.
Discharge any liquids to the environment?	The proposed actions would not discharge any liquids to the environment.
Require a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures plan?	The proposed actions would not require a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures plan.
Use carcinogens, hazardous, or toxic chemicals/materials?	The proposed actions would not use carcinogenic, hazardous, or toxic materials.
Involve hazardous, radioactive, polychlorinated biphenyl, or asbestos waste?	The proposed actions would not produce or involve hazardous, radioactive, polychlorinated, biphenyl, or asbestos waste.
Cause more than a minor or temporary increase in noise level?	The proposed actions would not cause an increase in noise.
Create light / glare, or other aesthetic impacts?	The proposed actions would not create light, glare, or other aesthetic impacts.
Require an excavation permit (e.g., for test pits, wells, utility installation)?	No excavation permits would be required by the proposed actions.
Disturb an undeveloped area?	No disturbance of undeveloped land would occur due to the proposed actions.
Result in more than minimal impacts on transportation or public services?	The proposed actions would have no more than minimal impacts on transportation or public services.
Disproportionately impact low-income or minority populations?	The proposed actions would not disproportionately impact low-income or minority populations.
Require environmental or other permits from federal, state, or local agencies?	The proposed actions would not require any permits from federal, state, or local agencies.

## **Compliance Action**

I have determined that the proposed action satisfies the DOE NEPA eligibility criteria and integral elements, does not pose extraordinary circumstances, and meets the requirements for the CXs referenced above. Therefore, using the authority delegated to me, I have determined that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation. This determination must be reviewed at least once every 5 years.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom McDermott  
PNSO NEPA Compliance Officer

cc: ES Norris, PNNL