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04/22/08

LAND RESEARCH PROGRAM MID-CYCLE SUBCOMMITTEE
DRAFT CHARGE
May 8, 2008
Pensacola, FL

1.0 Objectives. The objectives of this mid-cycle review are:

? Primarily to evaluate the progress made by the Office of Research and Development's (ORD's) Land Research Program relative to the commitments it made following its last review (December 13-15, 2005), and

? Secondarily, to obtain advice and feedback on issues related to the future directions of the research program and measures of success.

2.0 Background Information. Independent expert review is used extensively in industry, federal agencies, Congressional committees, and academia. The National Academy of Science has recommended this approach for evaluating federal research programs.[1]

For the Agency's environmental research programs, periodic independent reviews are conducted at intervals of four or five years to characterize research progress, to identify when clients are applying research to strengthen environmental decisions, and to evaluate client feedback about the research. Mid-cycle evaluations are an important part of this program review process. Scheduled midway through the review cycle, these independent assessments give ORD an opportunity to gauge the program's progress relative to the commitments it made following its last review.

For the upcoming mid-cycle review, the Land Research Program is preparing a progress report that will provide the context for our discussions during the meeting. The report outlines the changes implemented by the program in response to the major recommendations from its 2005 review. The Multi-Year Plan for Land Research was completed in July, 2007 (Link) and it will be provided to the Subcommittee for their review. These and other documents are pertinent for the Subcommittee to be able to address the draft charge questions.

This review is not intended to be the in-depth technical evaluation of a full program review. Presentation time will be minimized in favor of discussion.

1 Evaluating Federal Research under the Government Performance and Results Act (National Research Council, 1999).

3.0 Draft Charge Questions for ORD's Land Research Program. ORD is interested in receiving feedback concerning the following questions:

1. How responsive has the Land Research Program been to the recommendations from the 2005 BOSC program review?
2. How clear is the rationale for the revised Land Multi-Year Plan, and are the revisions consistent with the advice given by the BOSC?
3. In response to the 2005 BOSC review, the Land Research Program made a significant shift into the emerging research area of nanomaterial fate, transport, prevention and mitigation topics. How can Long Term Goal 2 be more effectively restructured to reflect materials management research, as well as the growth in nanomaterials research?
4. Please rate the progress made by the Land Research Program in moving the program forward in response to the BOSC review of 2005 by assigning a qualitative score, i.e., exceptional, exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or not satisfactory.

The score should be in the form of one of the adjectives defined below. This uniform rating system is intended to promote consistency among BOSC program reviews. The adjectives should be used as part of a narrative summary of the review, so that the context of the rating and the rationale for selecting a particular rating will be transparent. For mid-cycle reviews, the rating should be based on the quality, speed, and success of the program's actions in addressing previous BOSC recommendations. The adjectives to describe progress are:

o **Exceptional**: indicates that the program is meeting all and exceeding some of its goals, both in the quality of the science being produced and the speed at which research result tools and methods are being produced. An exceptional rating also indicates that the program is addressing the right questions to achieve its goals. The review should be specific as to which aspects of the program's performance have been exceptional.

o **Exceeds Expectations**: indicates that the program is meeting all of its goals. It addresses the appropriate scientific questions to meet its goals, and the science is competent or better. It exceeds expectations for either the high quality of the science or for the speed at which work products are being produced and milestones met.

o **Meets Expectations**: indicates that the program is meeting most of its goals. Programs that meet expectations live up to them in terms of addressing the appropriate scientific questions to meet their goals, and work products are being produced and milestones are being reached in a timely manner. The quality of the science being done is competent or better.

o **Not Satisfactory**: indicates that the program is failing to meet a substantial fraction of its goals, or if meeting them, that the achievement of milestones is significantly delayed, or that the questions being addressed are inappropriate or insufficient to meet the intended purpose. Questionable science is also a reason for rating a program as unsatisfactory for a particular long-term goal. The review should be specific as to which aspects of a program's performance have been inadequate.

4.0 Potential Subcommittee Approach for Mid-Cycle Review

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- Hold one (1) administrative call in the month preceding the face-to-face meeting.
  - allows the subcommittee Chair to make review and writing assignments

- Hold two (2) teleconference calls prior to the face-to-face meeting.
  - allows the ORD to present background and other relevant materials to the subcommittee
  - allows the subcommittee to ask clarifying questions

- EPA shall distribute background materials and documents requested by the Subcommittee in advance of the teleconference calls.

- Hold a one-day face-to-face meeting for the mid-cycle review.
  - The meeting will include brief ORD presentations on program progress and discussions with members of the Land Mid-Cycle Subcommittee.
  - The meeting will conclude with the presentation of a draft letter report that addresses all of the charge questions.

- If needed, hold one (1) teleconference call within one month following the face-to-face meeting to finalize the draft letter report.

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