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Recently, I was asked to provide an expanded context for understanding how DOE topical committee activities can be coordinated with other Federal agencies. Here are some ideas derived from my participation with the Interagency Committee on Standards Policy and from direct participation in the development of OMB A-119 and Comment Resolution related to that Circular's development.

DOE Topical Committees are encouraged to coordinate their technical standards activities with other Federal agencies, consistent with internal guidance and guidance from OMB A-119. In essence, we should work with other Federal agencies to establish common positions on standards and coordinate on standards activities. Metrology is certainly an area where we expect coordination among DOE, DOD, NASA, and NIST to be highly beneficial with significant cost savings potentials. Of course, we also expect that such participation and coordination activities are directly related to DOE missions and functions. There are also Federal restrictions on establishing Federal Committees and opening meetings to the public (e.g., under the "Sunshine Act"), but these are well beyond the technical coordination authorized under OMB A-119.

Internal coordination and cooperation are also strongly encouraged. For instance, the Meteorology TC has the capability to provide support to all DOE Federal and contractor organizations interested in implementing the new ANS 3.11 standard on metrology, and on assessing successful implementation of that standard. In this manner, we expect that DOE TCs could share resources, procedures, and processes where this is cost-beneficial. This can clearly be extended to sister Federal agencies such as DOE and NASA, particularly where we have contractors in common.

Several of our topical committees have observers and participants from other Federal agencies, industry, and standards development organizations. The intent of this is to encourage coordination and cooperation on standards issues, to establish common positions, to establish common standards and terms, to establish interoperability, and to

reduce costs, as outlined in OMB A-119. We also hope that further coordination among Federal topical committee affiliates can result in shared efforts, resources and processes, and reduce overall costs to the government.

Many of our DOE topical committees have membership from both DOE Federal and contractor organizations. Others are strongly Federal in makeup, while still others are mostly contractor in makeup. In any case, the DOE TCs are chartered by the DOE Technical Standards Program, and thus are part of a Federal program, implementing Federal Law (PL 104-113) and Federal policy (OMB A-119). As such, TC representatives may be called on to represent DOE at meetings and workshops, consistent with their organization's missions, functions, and affiliations. If senior managers support such participation, and it is suitably reported to DOE, then contractor representation is appropriate, particularly where DOE Federal technical expertise is not available. Where topical committees are asked to support DOE policy development, then DOE participation may be reserved for Federal employees. Here, the role of contractors is usually directed to technical support and analyses. In the standards development arena, however, most areas are fully open to DOE contractor participation.

The degree of formality and informality for documenting sharing of resources among DOE and Federal participants in topical committee and technical standards activities can be outlined in DOE TC Charters, Charter supplements, or other documented means. As long as contractors and Feds adhere to FAR (Federal Acquisition Regulations) and don't encroach on the competitive aspects of small business requirements, or get into "Sunshine Act" provisions, then Federal Policy encourages the type of cooperation engendered by topical committees. Many DOE service organizations operate on a cost-recovery basis with other Federal agencies, so agency policy, availability, and mission must be factored in when considering sharing resources ad hoc.

In a nutshell, any DOE topical committee may serve to represent DOE in technical standards development activities. Coordination and sharing of resources across DOE and among Federal agencies is encouraged by DOE and Federal policy.