

## **Topic Area 13- Strategic Needs Blue Sky Office Hours Q&A**

### **Q: Is there now more emphasis on this area? Why wasn't it getting funded previously?**

A: The reason why there have previously been program directed research funded and less of the blue sky type areas is because of the way that the program was funded. There's now a separate control line which opens up the environment to where it's not tied directly to a specific program. Blue sky areas previously existed but were difficult to pull funding from multiple programs.

### **Q: I have an idea related to materials science, but it's not clear that it fits well in topic 11. Should I submit to topic 13?**

A: It depends on the area of the proposal that you're thinking of. If the majority of the work takes place in that materials science area then it should go in that topic area. If it is really cross cutting or novel and doesn't fit well it would be better to put it in this blue sky area.

### **Q: As a follow up, the idea I'm considering here is focused on nuclear energy, but it also has a connection to defense because we've seen uh security threats in places and we want to know how do irradiated materials respond if they're under military threat. That's not something that's directly called out in topic 11 even though some of the science might actually be the same as what topic 11 does. Would that be viewed as within scope?**

A: It depends where the thrust of the research is. It's important to make a clear case that the research is focused in the NE mission space.

### **Q: Aside from the award size what is the difference between the blue sky area and the grand challenge area?**

A: I think that those have to do with the scope of those different areas. The award size typically correlates with the overall scope of the project from a grand challenge, the Integrated research project, which are up to \$3 million. They require a multi university team and it's usually more of a broader consortium style where you're addressing a specific technical gap in multiple ways. This strategic needs blue sky area is a much more limited budget. It's intended to be more blue sky, more exploratory, while the grand Challenge IRP is trying to address the technical need for multiple different directions with a larger group.

### **Q: Is a single researcher or small team acceptable for the blue sky area?**

A: We don't put any restrictions on your team makeup other than non-university partners can only have 20% of the overall project funding.

If the best team for your project is a very small team or an individual investigator with some graduate students, that's your prerogative.

### **Q: Should these projects be high risk, high reward projects or do they need to be on the safer side?**

A: That's not the sole intention of this call but that would be an aspect that would fit this topic. The high risk high reward aspect is what's meant in the blue sky part of the topic area language.

**Q: Is the area of sensor development to monitor oxygen in liquid sodium a better fit for Topic Area 9 or the Strategic Needs Blue Sky topic area?**

A. This topic would fit in Topic Area 9.