

EM Performance Management Plan for the Accelerated Cleanup of the INEEL
Frequently Asked Questions
(June 18, 2002)

Q. Why is the Department of Energy revising the cleanup plan for the INEEL?

A. The current baseline plan for the cleanup of the INEEL projects that cleanup will not be completed until 2070. That represents almost 70 more years where workers, the public and the environment will be subjected to the risks associated with having nuclear and hazardous waste sitting over the Snake River Plain Aquifer. DOE believes that, by adopting a new and innovative strategy, wherein risk is actually *reduced*, by finishing the cleanup sooner, rather than merely *managed* until 2070, that the citizens of Idaho, the environment and the U.S. taxpayer benefit.

Q. How is this new plan related to the “Top-to-Bottom” Review, published in February 2002?

B. In part, the “Top-to-Bottom Review” concluded that DOE’s contract management practices, cleanup strategy and internal business processes are not structured to support accelerated risk reduction. In response, DOE undertook a complex-wide effort to first, meet with state and federal regulators to negotiate “letters of intent” which formalize agreements with the regulators to pursue an accelerated, risk-based cleanup strategy at each EM site, then to develop specific plans to implement those “letters of intent” in accordance with the recommendations of the “Top-to-Bottom Review”. *This plan will implement the “letter of intent” signed by DOE, the state of Idaho and the EPA in May 2002.*

Q. What’s different about this approach to cleanup?

A. This plan relies on cooperation between the regulators and DOE to integrate the scheduling and implementation of the INEEL’s governing regulatory agreements. It assumes that the work described in the plan is managed as a single project, eliminating the multiple funding vehicles under which the work is presently conducted. It proposes an investment strategy wherein cost savings from the consolidation of the EM footprint at INEEL are re-invested into cleanup, and it proposes that the landlord function at the site be transferred to another DOE office in order to strengthen the Lab’s position for new missions.

Q. How will the new plan be implemented?

A. The plan was developed with two specific objectives in mind. The first was to reduce risk and protect the Snake River Plain Aquifer. The second was to consolidate EM activities and re-invest the savings into cleanup. The plan will be implemented through nine “strategic initiatives” which were developed to meet these objectives, and are described in the plan.

Q. When will cleanup actually be completed under the new plan, and what does “completed” mean?

A. This plan envisions that, by 2012, all materials will have been placed in safe storage, ready for disposal. By 2020, all active cleanup work will have been completed, and

there is the potential to accelerate this to 2016. The only cleanup-related work continuing after 2020 will be shipping the spent fuel to a repository; retrieving, treating, packaging and shipping high level waste calcine to a repository and the final dismantlement of EM buildings. These post-2020 activities will be complete by 2035.

Q. How does “funding” play into the plan?

A. Since risk reduction, rather than risk management, will be a key operating philosophy of the accelerated cleanup plan, appropriated funds will be prioritized across the INEEL EM Program based on what work actually reduces risk, rather than on programmatic or “stovepiped” priorities. DOE believes that by adopting this kind of risk-based prioritization system and by managing the cleanup as a single project, appropriated annual funding can be stabilized.

Q. What kinds of cost savings are envisioned by implementing this plan?

A. By adopting the initiatives described in this plan, and by radically altering the cleanup culture at the INEEL from “business as usual” to “finish the job and move on to other missions”, DOE believes that lifecycle costs for the cleanup can be reduced by as much as \$19 billion.