**Proposal to Convert ESIP Energy and Climate Cluster into a Working Group**

*(May 3, 2012)*

The Energy and Climate Cluster started work at the ESIP Summer meeting in 2010 and has generated strong momentum through cross-agency collaboration and membership participation. A key project that has been planned for over a year now is “Dynamic Decision Tools Catalog and Community of Practice”. The idea originated at the ESIP Summer 2011 meeting in Santa Fe by Alison LaBonte (now at DoE) when she was a AAAS Fellow at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Through multi-agency, university and industry collaboration, the EC Cluster has developed a white paper identifying the needs from the agencies (currently, DOE and USGS) as well as stakeholder needs, and some ideas on how these can be addressed by ESIP membership and leverage ESIP organization structure. This white paper will be used by the agencies to identify funding to sponsor this effort. Funding opportunities have been identified from DOE, USGS and AWWI. ESIP is uniquely positioned to play a coordinating role due to its neutral position as a multi-agency supported organization with strong technical capabilities and a history of established community of practice. Interested parties, including ESIP members, will be able to apply for this funding directly while ESIP will play a coordinating role. This work leverages substantial previous ESIP work (e.g., Semantic web, Drupal, Air-quality), and could serve as a Rosetta-stone for other future work.

Once approved as a Working Group, the Energy and Climate team will be seeking seed money from the ESIP Finance and Appropriations Committee to support a graduate student level effort to launch this project at the ESIP Summer 2012 meeting, while we wait for the program funding from sponsoring agencies. This initial work in phase 1 will focus on data gathering and an initial prototype. AWWI may also come up with small matching funds for phase 1. ESIP member universities can encourage graduate student candidates to apply for work in this phase. Subsequent Agency sponsorships will lead to building an operational system. DOE and USGS could serve as initial sponsors (phase 2), while EPA, Fish and Wildlife, BLM, Reclamation could come later (phase 3). Users could provide test-beds (e.g. Western Governors Association, AWWI); DOE, USGS may suggest locations/projects.

Going forward, the ESIP Energy and Climate working group will explore other topics that overlap energy and climate domains.  This would include data and models for the impact of changing climate conditions on energy supply and demand, emphasizing the water usage needs of energy companies and climate change impacts on water availability. Also, big data is going to be a driver for the Energy-Climate nexus; exponential growth in data is expected in coming years as energy is at the heart of the nation’s economic engine. ESIP can play a significant role in facilitating information access and building a community of practice.

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