

# **GUIDELINES**

## **Public Communications Publications and Products**

### **10-5-07**

These guidelines are intended to assist DOE Office of Science and contractor public affairs staff in producing and coordinating high quality, effective publications supporting communications and public affairs missions.

#### **General Guidelines**

1. Public Communications materials are intended for distribution by DOE or its contractors to the public and stakeholders, and include those of more limited circulation that involve DOE policy changes or matters of public controversy, or concern. These include, but are not limited to, pamphlets, folders, booklets, posters, periodicals, newsletters and similar printed material. Public Communications materials do NOT include technical publications intended strictly for scientific audiences or web site design and content.

2. These products should:

- 1.) have a well-defined purpose that supports the accomplishment of DOE missions;
- 2.) reflect the Department and funding program's strategic vision, values, and goals by including explanations of why the Department is funding the research activity. Products should specifically identify the Department of Energy and the specific funding program as the sponsor of the research activities addressed in the publication or product;
- 3.) be written clearly and at a level appropriate for identified audience(s); and
- 4.) be cost-effective by avoiding unjustified use of multi-colors, high-cost paper stock, unusual formats, excessive print runs, or other features that add unnecessary costs.

3. Organizations originating communications products should assure and be able to demonstrate that the proposed product supports a mission of the Department and does not duplicate an existing publication. Products that could be seen as self-serving and/or primarily intended for image-building should be avoided. Both originating organizations and those reviewing draft products should consider the potential impact of the product on sometimes skeptical audiences. Will the public view the product as necessary and worthy of taxpayer resources to support its production or will the product be seen as excessive and wasteful, casting the Department and/or contractor organization in a bad light?

4. Whenever possible, originating organizations of a publication or product should identify secondary uses for it, such as publication of its content on web sites or other information systems.
5. A distribution plan should be developed for the product which should include justification for the number of copies to be printed and method(s) of distribution.
6. Evaluation mechanisms should be developed for larger distribution products to measure their effectiveness in communicating key messages to target audiences. Such mechanisms could include focus groups, customer surveys, peer reviews, or other similar techniques.

### **Determining the Need for Coordination and/or Review**

DOE Headquarters program and field organizations will coordinate public communications publications and products with their respective cognizant public affairs officers. M&O contractor organizations will carry out such coordination in accordance with the Contracting Officer's Guidelines and Procedures. Originating DOE organizations should consult with their supporting public affairs officers in Headquarters or the field, ideally when the publication or product is in the early planning stages.

In addition to the General Guidelines above which should be considered in developing plans for a publication or other public communications product, originating contractor and/or DOE field organizations must assure that the proposed product:

- 1) reflects the policies of the originating organization and has received appropriate local management approvals;
- 2) has been reviewed and, as necessary, approved at the appropriate level for any content involving intellectual property, Privacy Act information, classification or other restricted/controlled information, procurement considerations, legal concerns, or any other sensitive matters; and
- 3) reflects overall high professional quality in information content and production values.

Products should be coordinated with appropriate DOE Headquarters organizations when:

- 1) a quote or statement from a DOE official is proposed or desired;
- 2) DOE national policies or programs are described;
- 3) DOE field functional specialists determine the need; and/or
- 4) the content may be potentially sensitive or controversial.

All involved in the coordination process must be sensitive to the need for timely review of draft public information publications and products to assure their availability for maximum effect. At the same time, originators must recognize that larger or more complex products will necessarily require longer review time and should schedule appropriately.