



LABORATORIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY INITIATIVE REGIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE SESSION OUTLINE

Overview of Labs21 Initiative

Through an innovative collaboration among the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the Laboratories for the 21st Century initiative was launched in 1999 to support industry, university, and government laboratories nationwide in an attempt to:

- Lower laboratory utility and operating costs,
- Reduce health and safety risks,
- Improve facility management,
- Reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and
- Provide leadership in laboratory design and operations.

The initiative is currently in an initial, pilot phase. Working with a technical team of laboratory experts, EPA and DOE are recruiting laboratories to join Labs21 as pilot partners, developing an education and training program, and developing a series of tools for the laboratory design community. An annual conference attracts more than 300 laboratory design and operational professionals from across the country.

Regional Centers of Excellence

An important long-term goal of the initiative is to provide technical assistance and information to participating Labs21 Partners, which will include both public and private sector laboratories around the country. One approach for accomplishing this goal is to train, certify, and coordinate a network of Regional Centers of Excellence.

The Centers could help promote the Labs21 initiative, recruit Labs21 Partners, provide technical assistance to Partners, document case studies of innovative laboratory practices, and sponsor education and training programs. In working with specific Partners, the Centers could build upon and tailor the Tool Kit of resources developed by the Labs21 program.

The Centers could work with the following types of Partners and Supporters:

- Major private industries that operate laboratories.
- Product manufacturers that supply laboratories.
- Small research laboratories.

- University laboratories.
- High school laboratories.
- Government laboratories—national, state, and local.
- Professional firms that design and build laboratories.
- Agencies responsible for evaluating construction and operations of laboratories.

Each Center is expected to be unique, designed to meet the specific needs of the laboratories in the region. The Centers can work with the rich diversity of laboratories (e.g., mining, manufacturing, forestry, fishery, chemistry, biotech) in their region. Activities and programs would be designed to address the needs of Partners, drawing on the expertise of the Labs21 technical team and in coordination with other Centers around the nation.

Purpose and Scope of NREL Labs21 Session

On January 31, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) will host a session from 3:30 to 5:00 pm to explore the feasibility of a Rocky Mountain Center of Excellence. Led by EPA's Labs21 program manager, Phil Wirdzek, and Labs21 team member, Kath Williams, this session will allow Rocky Mountain regional stakeholders to learn about the Labs21 initiative, meet other potential collaborators, and define "next steps" for a potential Rocky Mountain Center.

The session will cover the following topics:

- Define Center of Excellence concept
- Identify issues involved in establishing a "model" Center:
 - Potential market and audience served
 - Services to be provided
 - Potential sources of funding
 - Strategies to achieve sustainable funding
 - Resources available to support Center
 - Linkages with governmental agencies and other regional groups
- Identify regional needs for technical, financial, and political support
- Define "next steps" in establishing Center