



XL Project for Labs21 Partners



WHAT IS PROJECT XL?



Project XL, which stands for "eXcellence and Leadership," is a national initiative that tests innovative ways of achieving better and more cost-effective public health and environmental protection. The information and lessons learned from Project XL are being used to assist the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in redesigning its current regulatory and policy-setting approaches. Project XL encourages testing of cleaner, cheaper, and smarter ways to attain environmental results superior to those achieved under current regulations and policies, in conjunction with greater accountability to stakeholders. It is vital that each project tests new ideas with the potential for wide application and broad environmental benefits. As of September 2000, twenty-nine pilot experiments are being implemented and over twenty additional projects are in various stages of development.

SUMMARY OF THE XL PROJECT FOR LABS 21 PARTNERS

Working together, EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) are developing a voluntary initiative, Laboratories for the 21st Century (Labs21), to improve the environmental performance of the nation's laboratories. The goal of Labs21 is to improve laboratory energy and water efficiency, encourage the use of renewable energy sources, and promote environmental stewardship in U.S. laboratories. This initiative evolved out of EPA's recent efforts to improve the environmental performance of its own laboratories.

Through the XL Project for Labs21 Partners, EPA will offer the possibility of regulatory and administrative flexibility for laboratories that want to improve their environmental performance even further. In the first stage of this project, EPA will work internally and with laboratories to synchronize Labs21 and XL application and review processes. During the second stage, EPA will develop and issue case-specific agreements for testing innovative ways to maximize environmental performance at laboratories. These agreements may grant specific regulatory or administrative flexibility. This XL project, EPA's 31st, was signed on September 7, 2000.

SUPERIOR ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

By applying the Labs21 approach at its own facilities, EPA has realized a number of environmental benefits:

- Through modifications to EPA's National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory (NVFEL) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, annual electricity demand will be reduced by 68 percent, energy use per gross-square-foot by 66 percent, and annual water consumption by 80 percent.
- Upgrades at EPA's laboratory in Ada, Oklahoma, will reduce energy consumption in excess of 60 percent-about 1.7 million kilowatt hours per year.
- Installation of a one megawatt solid oxide fuel cell at EPA's Fort Meade, Maryland, Environmental Science Center is expected to achieve an electrical efficiency of 58 percent and annual reductions of 4,100 tons of carbon dioxide, 100,000 pounds of sulfur dioxide, and 41,000 pounds of nitrogen oxide per megawatt of generated electricity.

FLEXIBILITY

Offering the possibility of exploring environmental innovations through Project XL may make it possible for Labs21 Partners to realize and even improve upon these environmental results

Specific flexibilities will be analyzed and granted, if appropriate, in the second stage of the project in order to facilitate environmental performance at laboratories as part of case-specific agreements.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

EPA has identified an initial set of stakeholders who will actively contribute to the continued development of the XL Project for Labs21 Partners. These stakeholders to date have assisted EPA in identifying possible general areas for regulatory flexibility for laboratories and in structuring EPA's partner recruitment efforts. As the Labs21 initiative moves forward and EPA negotiates case-specific agreements through Project XL, the existing process for stakeholder involvement will ensure that the laboratory community and stakeholders are kept informed and that their input is solicited in regard to any flexibility.

APPROACH TO BE TESTED

How can flexibility under environmental regulations and policies help promote environmental performance at laboratories in the United States?

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FOR ELECTRONIC INFORMATION

More information about the XL Project for Labs21 Partners, or the Project XL Program, is available on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/projectxl> under "Information on Specific XL Projects," or via Project XL's Information Line at (202) 260-5754.