U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Office of Science

Updates from the SC User Facilities Subcommittee

Persis S. Drell

Stanford University

July 17, 2026

Facilities Subcommittee, Science and Energy Advisory Committee (SCAC)

OVERVIEW

What We'll Cover

01 **Facilities Subcommittee Charge**

02 **Membership**

03 **Scope of Work**

04 **Process & Timeline**

05 **Evaluation Rubric**

06 **Ground Rules**

07 **Early Perspectives**

08 **Advice Requested from SCAC**

OUR MANDATE

Facilities Subcommittee Charge

The Under Secretary for Science
Washington, DC 20585

March 26, 2026

Dr. Persis Drell
Chair
Office of Science Advisory Committee

Dear Dr. Drell:

A major component of the Office of Science (SC) mission involves planning, constructing, and operating world-leading research facilities. With its stewardship of 28 scientific user facilities, serving over 43,000 users annually, SC is unique in both the federal science and technology ecosystem and the global scientific community. SC user facilities host a broad array of major scientific tools and unique technical capabilities. These range from the most powerful microscopes and nanoprobes for studying atomic-level structures of new materials and biomolecules to the world's highest performing and most capable supercomputers for running experiments autonomously with artificial intelligence and for modeling fundamental processes of subatomic particles.

The process SC employs to identify new or upgraded facilities has been facilitated by input from the scientific community for over four decades. In 2023, SC, through the then-existing program specific advisory committees, gathered community input to identify which new or upgraded facilities would best serve their communities' needs over the next decade. The committees were asked to assess these potential construction projects with respect to two criteria: 1) potential to contribute to world-leading science and 2) readiness for construction. Note that each of the proposed facilities/upgrades that were considered in this assessment had an estimated construction cost over $100M and that the list of projects considered did not include many of the activities that were already underway.

For consideration in this charge, a summary of the proposed facilities/upgrades considered in the 2023 assessment is appended. For completeness, the document has been augmented to include the status of ongoing facility construction/upgrades that were not included in the original assessment. And, recognizing the evolution of the fields since 2023, additional proposed facilities/upgrades identified by the programs were added.

I am asking the SC Advisory Committee (SCAC) to form a subcommittee to review the summary of proposed facilities and upgrades, identify any gaps, and then prioritize the new or upgraded facilities that are most crucial to the needs of the nation for the next ten years (2026-2036) and bring that report to the SCAC for consideration. In addition to delivering world-leading scientific capabilities for SC missions, the prioritization should consider how the proposed facilities integrate with and support the Genesis Mission for artificial intelligence and quantum information sciences, as well as other Administration priorities in fusion, microelectronics, biotechnology, and discovery science.

It may facilitate the work of the advisory committee to consider prioritization in the context of budget opportunities. For example, if either $2B, $4B, or $6B is available for proposed new facilities and upgrades over the next decade, what would be the highest priority facilities to include?

I look forward to hearing your findings and thank you for your help with this important task. I will appreciate receiving an interim report by July 2026 and a final report by December 2026.

Thank you again for advising the Office of Science in this important activity.

Sincerely,

Darío Gil

Darío Gil
Under Secretary for Science

Enclosure:
Facilities List

Facilities Subcommittee, Science and Energy Advisory Committee (SCAC)

2026–2036

PLANNING HORIZON

The subcommittee's report will help shape the Office of Science's next decade of major facility investments.

FROM DARIO GIL, UNDERSECRETARY FOR SCIENCE

Charge — Excerpts

> *"…review the summary of proposed facilities and upgrades, identify any gaps, and prioritize the facilities most crucial to the needs of the nation for the next ten years (2026–2036), and bring that report to the SCAC."*

> *"The prioritization should consider how the proposed facilities integrate with and support the Genesis Mission for AI and quantum information sciences, as well as priorities in fusion, microelectronics, biotechnology, and discovery science."*

> *"I will appreciate receiving an interim report by July 2026 and a final report by December 2026."*

WHO'S INVOLVED

Membership of the Facilities Subcommittee

Persis S. Drell
Stanford University

Tammy Ma
Lawrence Livermore National Lab

Ed Seidel
University of Wyoming

Derek Sutherland
Realta Fusion

Cynthia Friend
Kavli Foundation

Mayly Sanchez
Florida State University

A.N. Sreeram
Dow (Retired)

Bindu Nair — DOE, Designated Federal Official

Hannibal Joma — DOE (Retired), Subject Matter Expert

SCOPE OF WORK

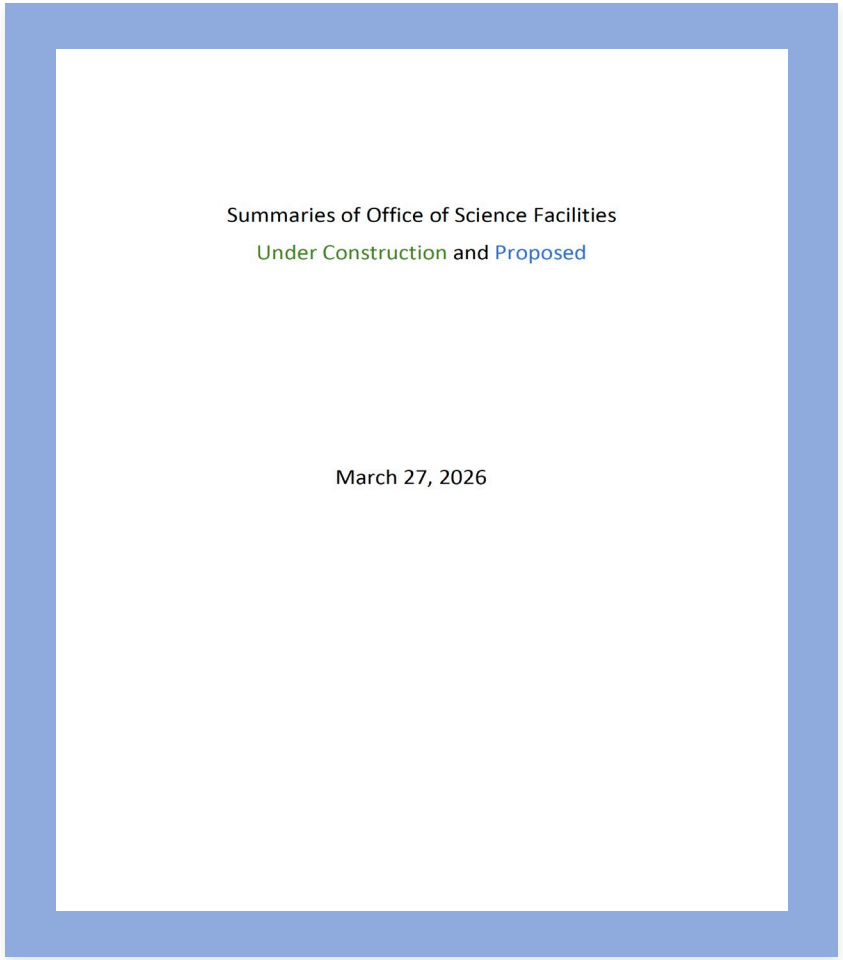
Projects to Be Prioritized — and Why

A document on the SCAC website lists projects under construction and proposed projects. The subcommittee will focus on proposed projects. We are also invited to identify gaps.

OUR CHARGE SUGGESTS:

It may facilitate the work of the advisory committee to consider prioritization in the context of budget opportunities. For example, if either $2B, $4B, or $6B is available for new facilities and upgrades over the next decade, what would be the highest-priority facilities to include?

Total proposed: **>$22B**



Source: SCAC website — Proposed & Under-Construction facilities (Mar. 27, 2026).

HOW WE'RE WORKING

Process & Timeline

INPUT GATHERING

FACA prioritization reports

FACA Chairs, prioritization leads & Associate Directors across Office of Science

April – June

Input from BES, BER, HEP, NP

July – September

Input from FES, ASCR & SCAC subcommittee input

Other Community Input

- Meetings with reps from user groups
- Lab Directors
- Webinar/townhall September 17, 2026

ANALYSIS

- Many hours of virtual (Zoom) working sessions
- In-person meeting in October
- Discussions guided throughout by a shared rubric for evaluation

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Rubric for Evaluation



Illustrative scoring — format only.

GROUND RULES

Some Guardrails to our Process

Confidentiality is very important

We're working hard but won't give substantive updates on our recommendations until the November SCAC meeting.

Projects listed as ‘Under Construction’ will not be delayed to start new projects.

Set realistic expectations

Our recommendations won't make everyone happy but we are hopeful they will be seen as reasonable and will be supported by the community.

We are declining invitations to speak while the process is underway

We plan to separately prioritize computational infrastructure and other projects initially

In the end they may need to be merged

EARLY PERSPECTIVES

Thoughts from the Subcommittee

1. We do not anticipate removing items from the list of proposed projects provided by DOE. Our assignment is to recommend prioritization of the projects to be initiated in the next decade.

2. Some projects will benefit from more R&D before moving into construction to ensure a solid understanding of scope and technical risk. This will help avoid future cost overruns and delays

3. National labs are impacted by aging infrastructure and will need SLI and other investments to ensure safety and successful project delivery.

4. Executing projects as expeditiously as possible benefits all projects. Stretching projects out increases costs.

5. All the projects on the list will deliver great science. We will not be able to afford all of them on the timescales the community would like to see.

Advice from SCAC:

- Advice on process?
- Advice on prioritizing?
- Advice on communication?
- Advice on how to express prioritization? (Ordered list, or prioritized buckets of projects?)

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Office of Science

Thank You

Interim report: July 2026 • Final report: December 2026

Facilities Subcommittee, Science and Energy Advisory Committee (SCAC)