

Project Types & Definitions

Note: Virtually all research and development (R&D) funded by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is applied (as opposed to basic/fundamental research). For our purposes in the Budget Justification, all research will be considered to be applied research unless you specifically designate it as “basic research” by identifying it with the word “basic” immediately at the end of the title. If you judge a project to be technology transfer or a study, also include it under research or development, but you need not identify it as other than applied research or development.

The definitions we are using this year are as defined in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-11 (2004). These definitions are used by USGS and most other Federal research agencies. In order to be consistent and facilitate comparisons across government agencies, we are using OMB’s definitions. BLM’s historical descriptions may, however, assist you in classifying your projects.

Applied Research – (OMB Definition): “Applied research is defined as systematic study to gain knowledge or understanding necessary to determine the means by which a recognized and specific need may be met.”

BLM Historical Description of Applied Research: Systematic, critical, intensive investigations directed toward development of new or fuller scientific knowledge and understanding of the subject under investigation. A research project provides fundamental knowledge required for the solution of social, economic, biological, political, technical, or physical problems. Projects are focused to address specific “researchable” problems recognized by the Bureau. They usually have applicability beyond a particular place (site) and time and are usually directed at development of new methodologies and technologies. Applied Research is synonymous with research as generally used in the BLM.

Basic Research – (OMB Definition): “Basic research is defined as systematic study directed toward fuller knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and of observable facts without specific applications towards processes or products in mind.”

BLM Historical Description of Basic Research: Theoretical/experimental research conducted to develop hypothesis/theories to acquire new knowledge on phenomena or observable facts without directly giving consideration to specific application/uses. The BLM does not normally fund, participate in or conduct basic research.

Development – (OMB Definition): “Development is defined as systematic application of knowledge or understanding, directed toward the production of useful materials, devices, and systems or methods, including design, development, and improvement of prototypes and new processes to meet specific requirements.”

BLM Historical Description of Development: The systematic process of identifying, adopting, and utilizing knowledge and understanding gained from research, directed toward the production of useful materials, devices, systems, or methods, including design and construction of prototypes and processes. The focus is toward developing and evaluating the feasibility and practicability of proposed implementation (or development) of a particular methodology into daily use, which is the process of technology transfer. One of the prime results of a development effort is proof of design concept; another is the development of application packages for use by Field Offices.

Technology Transfer (BLM Historical Description): Includes, but is not limited to, information dissemination. Technology transfer is a process built into all research, development, and studies to ensure that new technologies are adopted into the accepted way of performing everyday functions or solving everyday problems. An example is an in-depth Manual explaining how a new technology is to be incorporated into existing procedures, techniques, and training.

Study (BLM Historical Description): The collection and analysis of data to investigate natural resource interaction for solving or better understanding a specific management situation. Studies are usually site-specific and use existing methodologies and technologies. Results are usually not suitable for technology transfer outside the local Field Office area. Studies do not include projects of an operational nature, such as inventories, monitoring, or literature searches.