

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**Superior Environmental Results Through Innovative Land Development Technical
Assistance and Permitting in New Hampshire
Cooperative Agreement # EI-97188001-0
Quarterly Progress Report
October 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009**

Project Synopsis

This quarter we selected and secured an outside Lean facilitator to assist us in developing the new processes for DES coordinated permit reviews and pre-application assistance, conducted four focus groups with municipal and developer representatives, conducted other outreach, and drafted an overall (state and local) coordinated project development and review process for participants in the Innovative Permitting Initiative. We also prepared and gave several presentations on the project and planned for a January meeting of our Advisory Group.

Please see the Narrative Discussion below and the Task Status Table for task-by-task detail on progress to date.

Narrative Discussion

In response to our solicitation, we received 12 proposals from individuals and firms to provide Lean facilitation support for our project. Based on our review of the proposals, we conducted phone interviews with four individuals/organizations and selected NH Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NHMEP). We prepared and submitted our contract for review and received approval from the NH Governor and Executive Council on November 24, 2009. NHMEP will assist us in designing and conducting successful Lean events, or “Kaizens,” to design new DES coordinated permit review and pre-application assistance processes. NHMEP will also provide additional facilitation assistance to implement these new processes and/or develop additional components of the program. This quarter IPI staff, together with NHMEP, prepared a “charter” defining the purpose and scope of the first event to define a coordinated permit review process. The first event begins on January 25, 2010. The second event is scheduled for early March.

This quarter IPI staff continued our work to understand the current timeframes for permit reviews within each of the subject permit programs and percentage of applications for which a request for more information is required to complete the review and issue the permit. This information provides baseline measures against which we can compare timeframes and performance under the new coordinated project review and pre-application processes.

Additional process improvement efforts within DES were undertaken in coordination with the IPI project:

- **Revised Permit Acceptance and Administrative Review Processes.** IPI staff prepared for and conducted the first day of a “lean event” to revise the Land Resource Management administrative procedures for accepting permit applications and conducting an initial “administrative” review for completeness. The “event” brought together 4 separate programs into a single, consistent process. This change is

expected to provide more consistency across programs, allow for greater staff flexibility and coverage, and eliminate repetitive and time-consuming steps. The new administrative review process also provides a starting point for coordinated DES permit reviews. IPI staff will continue to support implementation of the new process through the spring of 2010.

- **Reduction in permit re-work.** Formerly, GIS review for a parcel’s location and natural resource attributes was performed after the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act permit was issued. The late GIS review sometimes resulted in modifications of permits previously issued. GIS review has been moved to prior to the technical review, providing accurate site natural resource attributes, parcel location, related sites and subdivision information to the technical reviewer.
- **Re-Write of DES, Fish & Game, and Natural Heritage Bureau Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).** The process map created by the IPI project was used as a starting point to inform staff of the 3 agencies on how they currently interact during the wetlands permitting process. DES Management stated that the map was invaluable for getting us on “the same page” and gave all staff a process-based way of looking at what should be the content of the MOU and how requirements of all agencies should be stated. Work to refine the interactions between the 3 agencies will be brought into thinking and future work on the IPI coordinated permit review process.

Four focus group discussions were held this quarter, two with municipal representatives and two with developer representatives. Following a brief introduction to the project, participants were asked to weigh in on the concept of providing incentives for better development practices, the best practice areas under consideration, particularly how to address location choice, and how to improve coordination in project reviews conducted separately by DES and municipalities. These conversations confirmed the importance of improving state-local communication during project reviews for both municipalities and developers. In fact, improving this communication was viewed as more important for developers than process improvements for DES’s in-house review. IPI staff prepared a presentation and detailed summary of the focus group discussions as well as “lessons learned” from conversations with other states on their permit coordination and permit streamlining activities. This presentation will be given to the IPI Advisory Group and to a NH Legislative Study Commission in January 2010.

Other outreach activities included attending and presenting at the Homebuilders and Remodelers’ Association of NH’s conference in October, conducting an information and discussion session on the IPI at the NH Water Conference in November, and meeting with the NH Chapter of the Association of Consultant Engineers at their quarterly meeting in November.

Based on input from the IPI Advisory Group, the focus groups with municipal and developer representatives, and conversations with other states, IPI staff prepared a draft overall process for IPI project development and review. This overall process articulates, in general terms, the steps the applicant, the municipality, and the DES will follow from project conception, initial information gathering, pre-application meetings, and final permit review. It also captured ideas for specific outputs to be produced with each step. This draft overview process was shared with

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DES senior management and the IPI Advisory Group. It will continue to be refined based on continuing conversations with DES staff and external constituents, but provides an overview framework within to work to define the pieces of the IPI project.

Our efforts continued on the task of defining best land development practices for four topic areas: location choice, stormwater management, energy efficiency, and water conservation. Numerous conversations with technical staff and outside contacts with expertise in the four topic areas were conducted. For location choice, a conceptual illustration of a GIS-based map of preferred locations for development was prepared. The map used existing data identifying existing community center areas across the state (i.e., higher-density, mixed use areas representing the core of current cities and towns) and key natural resource data layers. The illustrative map was presented and discussed with the Advisory Group and at the Focus group sessions.

Having completed the initial analysis of the existing permit programs and processes, we have identified several significant challenges to successfully coordinating these programs in house. Among the challenges are (1) the various statutory timelines and requirements unique to each permit program and (2) the fact that these programs use independent databases using different software platforms to track projects and currently lack any mechanism for cross-referencing projects across programs. This quarter IPI staff worked to clearly identify and understand the various statutory time requirements for reviews and notice requirements and began an effort to identify common data elements across programs. In addition, we initiated discussions with our Information Technology staff in an effort to identify an interim approach to allow for greater electronic communication and information sharing within DES and between DES and local municipalities.

In terms of the schedule for the project, we are currently about three months behind the new timeline previously proposed for the various tasks under the project. The primary reason for the delay is the decision to solicit outside consultant assistance in the development of the specifics of the new processes, which added about four months to our timeline. We believe, however, that bringing in an outside consultant experienced in process improvement exercises will provide valuable support moving forward and greatly increase the likelihood of success for our project. We will evaluate the project's schedule next quarter and, in communication with our EPA project manager, further revise our timelines as necessary at that time.

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Project Tasks and Status

Task #	Task Name	Task Description	Start Date	End Date (old dates in parans)	Task Status/Activity this Quarter
	Pre-Administration	Formal Acceptance of Grant by NH Governor and Executive Council	EPA grant award (approx. Oct 1, 2008)	Jan 14, 2009 (Approx 45-60 days after EPA grant award)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed in prior quarters.
1	Form Innovative Permitting Advisory Group	Establish and Support Core Advisory Group	Project start (officially is NH G&C approval on 1/14/09)	Formed April 2009/ On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory Group meeting planned for January 8, 2010. Meeting materials distributed to the group included: a summary of focus group comments and “lessons learned” from other states; and a draft overall project development and review process for IPI projects.
2	Recruit DES Pilot Staff	Identify and Solicit Participation of DES Project Staff (Permitting and Technical Assistance)	Project start	12 months (6 mos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified and solicited staff to participate in future “kaizen” event to develop the new IPI coordinated permit review process.
3	Identify Needs and Recruit Consultants	Identify Needs and Secure Required Consultant Support	2-4 months	On-going/ grant completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected a LEAN Consultant and successfully completed the NH contracting process, including approval by the NH Governor and Council (November 24, 2009).

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4	Develop a Coordinated Permitting Procedure	DES Permit Process Evaluation and Coordination Strategy Development	Project start	10 months for draft/ 12-13 months for final (5-8 mos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed a draft overall project development and review process for IPI projects based on input from the IPI Advisory Group, comments from focus group discussions, meetings with DES staff, and conversations with other states. Conducted focus groups with municipal representatives and developers/contractor representatives, which included extensive discussion on opportunities for improved internal DES review and improved coordination of reviews between DES and municipalities.
5	Develop DES Pre-application Meeting Process	Pre-Application Meeting Requirements and Processes (for DES and applicants)	Project start	10 months for draft/ 12-13 months for final (4-6 mos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted focus groups with municipal representatives and developers/contractor representatives, which included discussion on improving the pre-application interactions between DES and applicants and on improving coordination with municipalities during the pre-application phase.
6	Define Guidelines and Information on Best Practices	Identify standards for higher environmental performance of land development projects	Project start	10 months for draft/ 12-13 months for final (4-6 mos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to do research on four areas: location choice, stormwater management, energy efficiency, and water conservation. Conducted focus groups with municipal representatives and developers/contractor representatives, which included extensive discussion on the “conceptual map” and potential guidelines for identifying preferred locations for future development as well as other “best practice” focus areas.

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Task #	Task Name	Task Description	Start Date	End Date (old dates in parans)	Task Status/Activity this Quarter
7	Develop Enhanced Technical Assistance Process	Develop guidance and procedures for providing technical assistance on higher environmental performance standards	8 months (2 mos)	11 months for draft/ 12-13 months for final (6-8 mos)	No progress – work on this task will follow additional progress on above tasks.
8	Develop Development Project Evaluation Procedures	Develop procedures for evaluating the environmental performance of development projects	8 months (2 mos)	10 months for draft/ 12-13 months for final (6-8 mos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on existing best practices and the identification of potential best land development practices for NH includes considering how the implementation of various practices might be demonstrated and the effect of using the best practices measured.
9	Develop Pilot Program Materials and Outreach	Develop informational materials on the pilot program and procedures	4 months	12 months for drafts 14 months for final	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared introductory presentations for the focus group discussions. • Prepared a presentation for the NH Legislative Land Use Commission.
10	Identify and Recruit Participants	Solicit potential participant municipalities and developers (applicants) to participate in pilot	4 months	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified several potential municipal partners during the focus group discussions and outreach presentations. • Encouraged focus group participants to consider future participation.

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Task #	Task Name	Task Description	Start Date	End Date (old dates in parans)	Task Status/Activity this Quarter
11	Plan and Conduct Public Involvement	Develop and implement a plan to ensure broad public input to pilot program development and implementation (incorporates elements of other tasks)	Project start	On-going/ grant completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted focus groups with municipal representatives and developers/contractor representatives, organized and facilitated by the Regional Planning Commissions (assistance paid for under another funding vehicle). • Attended and gave introductory presentation on the IPI at the Homebuilders and Remodelers' Association of NH's annual conference in October. • Conducted a session on the IPI at the NH Water Conference in November. • Attended quarterly meeting of the NH Chapter of the Association of Consultant Engineers in November.
12	Conduct Project Pilots	Process pilot program participants through pre-application meeting, provision of technical assistance, and coordinated permitting (target: 20 projects)	9 months - ongoing	On-going/ grant completion	No progress.
13	Evaluate Pilot Program, Develop Case Studies, and Transfer Innovation	Evaluation and Reporting of Benefits, Challenges, and Opportunities of Pilot Program	6-8 months	On-going/ grant completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzed permit databases for baseline data on permit timeframes and percentages requiring additional information to complete the review to compare results of innovative permitting approach.
14	Report Progress and Project Administration	Periodic reporting, recording keeping, quality assurance, and overall project management	3 months	On-going/ grant completion +120 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fourth progress report submitted October 12, 2009.

Projection of Future Activities

Next quarter we will conduct at least two facilitated 3-day workgroup sessions to define new procedures under IPI and begin to develop supporting materials to implement these new processes (e.g., instructions, application). Additional facilitated sessions will be held as needed. We will continue to assist staff with steps to implement the new combined administrative review process for the 4 target permit programs.

We will continue work on articulating best practices, including approaches for measuring the environmental benefits provided. As necessary, we will consult with technical experts to solidify our understanding of the four best practice focus areas.

We will also provide direct outreach to individuals and organizations on our stakeholder list and update our website to communicate our progress and concepts to date and solicit input. We will be meeting specifically with the NH Municipal Association about the project and discussing opportunities for them to assist. Finally, we will plan four additional focus groups to review the IPI proposed procedures with municipal and developer representatives for later spring 2010.

We will provide regular updates to our Advisory Group, including regular reports out from the facilitated “kaizen” sessions, and plan a next quarterly meeting for April 2010.

Financial Report

Through December 30, 2009, we have expended \$79,423 of the grant award. The breakdown of expenditures is reported in the table below.

Time expended by state-funded personnel on the project is being tracked using a specific timesheet code. During this quarter, \$16,224 in match was recorded. The total value of match time to date is \$73,284 (which equals around 48% of total project cost to date).

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Expenditures and Match Totals to Date

Object Class Category	Approved Budget	Expended from Grant	Match	Total Project Costs to Date
1. Personnel	\$236,848	\$44,565	\$49,076	\$93,641
2. Fringe Benefits	\$133,866	\$23,991	\$24,208	\$48,199
3. Travel	\$2,600	\$237		\$237
4. Equipment	\$1,800	\$1,716		\$1,716
5. Supplies	\$4,508	\$1,085		\$1,085
6. Contractual	\$51,500	\$7,200		\$7,200
7. Construction	\$0	\$0		\$0
8. Other	\$16,411	\$31		\$31
9. Total Direct Charges	\$447,533	\$78,826	\$73,284	\$152,109
10. Indirect Costs	\$12,186	\$597	\$638	\$1,235
11. Total	\$459,719 (Share: Recipient: 40.18%; Federal: 59.82%)	\$79,423 (Share: 52%)	\$73,922 (Share: 48%)	\$153,345 (33% of Budget)
12. Approved Assistance Amount	\$275,000	29% Expended		