

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
September 30, 2008 - December 30, 2008**

Project Synopsis

Efforts in this first quarter of the project focused on completing the necessary administrative procedures to accept the grant, prepare an initial (FY 09) and future budget (FY 10/11), and create the new position to be dedicated to this project. In addition, we conducted initial efforts to communicate more broadly with DES staff, particularly those involved in permitting land development projects; prepared a draft Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); and conducted preliminary research on existing best practices and higher performance standards (e.g., National Association of Home Builders Green Building ProgramTM, The Sustainable Sites Initiative Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks (Draft 2008)), and contacted NH Bureau of Training on providing training and assistance on LEAN in Government procedures, which appear to provide a promising approach for this project for identifying improved and new permitting and technical assistance procedures. DES staff also has started to prepare the Public Involvement Plan for this project. Please see the Task Status Table for task-by-task detail on progress to date.

To date, we have received approval to accept and expend funds in FY 09 and to create the new position to be dedicated to this project from the NH Fiscal Committee (December 16, 2008) and expect final approval from NH Governor and Council on January 14, 2009. We also have submitted our proposed budget for FY 10/11 as part of the standard state budgeting process. Finally, we have received approval from NH Administrative Services, Department of Personnel for our new position and will post and fill that position as quickly as possible following approval from Governor and Council.

The initial meeting with DES permitting staff was very productive and provided an opportunity to introduce the project in greater detail to the full staff, answer questions, solicit initial input on the project, and encourage their future participation. As part of this initial communication, we conducted a pre-meeting attitude survey of permitting-related staff, which indicated very strong support (generally greater than 90%) for the project in general and the specific elements proposed. We had a response rate of around 51%. Follow-up discussions with specific staff members and outside organizations will proceed once the project is fully staffed to ensure the new staff dedicated to this project can participate fully in these conversations.

Narrative Discussion

Approval to accept and expend the funds awarded under this grant was delayed due to timing issues (the initial grant award was received too late to submit for approval at the October meetings of the NH Fiscal Committee and NH Governor and Council) and a misunderstanding of the need to request approval for both acceptance of the new funds and creation of the new position to be created using these funds, which caused us to miss the deadline for submission for approval in November. We anticipate full approval by January 14, 2009.

At this time, we anticipate no additional issues with proceeding according to our final workplan for the project following full approval from NH Governor and Council authorizing us to accept and expend the grant funds.

Project Tasks and Status

Task #	Task Name	Task Description	Start Date	End Date	Task Status
	Pre-Administration	Formal Acceptance of Grant by NH Governor and Executive Council	EPA grant award (approx. Oct 1, 2008)	Approx 45-60 days after EPA grant award	Received approval from NH Fiscal Committee to accept and expend funds for FY 09 and to create a new position under this grant on December 16, 2008. Will proceed to NH Governor and Council for approval at their next meeting, January 14, 2009.
1	Form Innovative Permitting Advisory Group	Establish and Support Core Advisory Group	Project start	On-going	Solicited suggestions for members from DES and EPA staff.
2	Recruit DES Pilot Staff	Identify and Solicit Participation of DES Project Staff (Permitting and Technical Assistance)	Project start	6 months	Conducted in-house DES briefing of all permit program staff on December 2, 2008. Conducted pre-project attitude survey of permit program staff and solicited initial suggestions for project.
3	Identify Needs and Recruit Consultants	Identify Needs and Secure Required Consultant Support	2-4 months	On-going/ grant completion	Held preliminary discussions with NH Bureau of Training on potential for LEAN in government training and specific assistance for SIG project. Scheduled preliminary conversation with potential LEAN training consultant for December 30, 2008.
4	Develop a Coordinated Permitting Procedure	DES Permit Process Evaluation and Coordination Strategy Development	Project start	5-8 months	No specific progress, except see above note on LEAN training and assistance, which will be primarily directed at developing new coordinated permitting procedures.

Task #	Task Name	Task Description	Start Date	End Date	Task Status
5	Develop DES Pre-application Meeting Process	Pre-Application Meeting Requirements and Processes (for DES and applicants)	Project start	4-6 months	No progress.
6	Define Guidelines and Information on Best Practices	Identify standards for higher environmental performance of land development projects	Project start	4-6 months	Conducted preliminary research on existing higher performance standards, e.g., National Association of Home Builders Green Building Program™; The Sustainable Sites Initiative Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks (Draft 2008).
7	Develop Enhanced Technical Assistance Process	Develop guidance and procedures for providing technical assistance on higher environmental performance standards	2 months	6-8 months	No progress.
8	Develop Development Project Evaluation Procedures	Develop procedures for evaluating the environmental performance of development projects	2 months	6-8 months	No progress,
9	Develop Pilot Program Materials and Outreach	Develop informational materials on the pilot program and procedures	4 months	12 months (on-going outreach)	No progress.
10	Identify and Recruit Participants	Solicit potential participant municipalities and developers (applicants) to participate in pilot	4 months	On-going	No progress.
11	Plan and Conduct Public Involvement	Develop and implement a plan to ensure broad public input to pilot program development and implementation (incorporates	Project start	On-going/ grant completion	Began drafting public involvement plan. Conducted initial outreach to DES in-house staff.

Task #	Task Name	Task Description	Start Date	End Date	Task Status
		elements of other tasks)			
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	No progress.
14	Report Progress and Project Administration	Periodic reporting, recording keeping, quality assurance, and overall project management	3 months	On-going/ grant completion +120 days	Submitted draft QAPP to EPA on December 5, 2008. Initial progress report submitted December 29, 2008.

Projection of Future Activities

With the anticipated approval to accept and expend a portion of the funds awarded under the grant for FY 09, work on this project will proceed according to our final workplan. Initial efforts upon approval from NH Governor and Council will focus on filling the full-time position to be dedicated to this project, continuing preliminary research on best practices, conducting initial in-house training on LEAN techniques for developing improved processes with a pilot application to the SIG project, finalizing the public involvement plan and continuing initial outreach to outside organizations and with specific DES personnel, and establishing the Innovative Permitting Advisory Group.

Financial Report

At this point, there have been no financial expenditures charged to the grant. Expenditure of funds is contingent on approval to accept and expend the funds by the NH Fiscal Committee and NH Governor and Council.

Time expended by state-funded personnel on the project will be tracked in the future using a specific timesheet code. During this quarter, only the time of the Project Manager has been tracked; the Project Manager has recorded a total of 135 hours, which includes time to prepare the preliminary work products under the project (as noted above) as well as to conduct internal DES and state-level administrative activities to budget for and accept and expend grant funds and to create a new position to work under this grant.