

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
National Center for Environmental Innovation (NCEI)
State Innovation Grant Pre-proposal FY 2007

Pre-proposal Project Summary

Project Title: Web-based Applications for Environmental Permitting

State Agency Applicant: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

State Project Manager:

Chris Bowman, Environmental Manager
(614) 644-2052, FAX (614) 644-2745
Email: chris.bowman@epa.state.oh.us

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Lazarus Government Center
50 W. Town St., Suite 700
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, OH 43216-1049

Total Project Cost: *[\$(Budgetary Information Withheld by U.S. EPA)]*

Project Period: October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008

Summary Statement:

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposes to purchase software to enable the submittal of federal permit applications, and other regulatory document submissions, on-line. The Agency also proposes to streamline the permitting process by linking the on-line application to the Agency CORE database to pre-populate the application for existing permit holders, and provide on-line validation as an administrative technical assistance tool.

This proposal is not in cooperation with or funded by another federal or EPA program.

This proposal does not need regulatory flexibility from existing federal, state or local requirements.

I am aware of and support this pre-proposal:

Laura Powell, Acting Director
(614) 644-2782
laura.powell@epa.state.oh.us

Pre-proposal Project Narrative

The Ohio EPA intends to use this grant to develop a web-based application and reporting system to satisfy two groups of activities defined in the State Innovation Grant Request for Proposal: 1) focus on national environmental protection priorities; and, 2) innovation in environmental permitting.

The proposal addresses reduction, or elimination, of pollutants discharged to the air or water, or from solid waste (including hazardous waste) by streamlining the permitting process allowing greater resources to be devoted to permit oversight rather than permit administration. The proposed project focuses on priority environmental issues including the reduction or elimination of water pollution authorized under Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act, the enhancement of the provision of a dependably safe drinking water supply under Sections 1442(a) and (c) of the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the operation of hazardous waste management systems under the Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 8001.

A web-based permit application and reporting system will provide a useful information technology option to the regulated community in Ohio. Ohio EPA believes web-based systems are “innovation friendly”. The customer does not see the complexity behind the scenes. The customer experiences the ease of web-based business technology. Ohio’s use of web-based application and reporting services, and the performance improvements expected from web-based business solutions, will be of interest to other states. Ohio will share information on the integration, and effectiveness, of web-based applications with other states.

These goals will support environmental requirements of permittees, address multi-media environmental issues, and support state environmental programs. The proposal will ensure the development and maintenance of data resources that can be easily shared.

The web-based permitting proposal is aimed at the public, specifically the regulated community segment of the public, but also the public at large. Applications that are received via the web are easily public noticed on the web, which is a long term goal of Ohio EPA. In that respect, the proposal has the potential to reach all of Ohio’s citizens.

Ohio EPA purchased custom off the shelf (COTS) environmental reporting software from enfoTech and Consulting, Inc. (enfoTech), in 2006. The E2 software allows permittees with Discharge Monitoring Report or Drinking Water Report data submittal requirements (and other data submittal requirements that may be added in the future) to submit the data through a web-based data entry module (DEM). The COTS software is in the process of being integrated into Ohio EPA’s new internet portal called the “Business Gateway”. The web DEM is connected to the Agency’s database. Data submitted through the web DEM will go through a validation process prior to submittal. The validation process greatly reduces the chance of reporting errors. On-line submittal of data is efficient for the user. The user gets almost immediate feedback on their data submission requirements and status. Ohio EPA expects to benefit from the ease of use

through increased reporting compliance and increased data accuracy. The data Ohio EPA pushes to the appropriate federal databases will be superior in quality. The enfoTech web DEM procedures appear to be compliant with Cross Media Electronic Reporting Requirements (the state of Michigan has submitted a complete application for CROMERR delegation utilizing enfoTech software).

enfoTech markets another software product that supports the on-line submittal of federal environmental permit applications. Ohio EPA proposes to purchase enfoTech's ePermits COTS software framework with this grant. The framework is enfoTech's secure Internet and XML based system that allows regulatory agencies to accept and process permit applications on-line. The software would be integrated with the Ohio EPA Business Gateway to significantly improve data quality, save resources, and improve business processes. The actual on-line applications must be developed by the individual Divisions within Ohio EPA, and linked to the framework. For example the surface water NPDES Consolidated Permits Program application forms would be developed by the Division of Surface Water. Some of the forms can be purchased as a COTS module from enfoTech, or they can be developed in-house. Regulated facilities would have the ability to apply for permits, pay required fees, and track application status on-line utilizing the services of the Business Gateway.

Many Programs within Ohio EPA can benefit from web-based applications and reports. The Division of Surface Water (DSW) intends to develop a comprehensive set of web-based application forms for the NPDES Program, including all individual and general permit forms for all manner of permitted discharges. The ePermits software is also appropriate for developing web DEMs to capture annual report data. Examples include:

Clean Water Act Part 401/404 certification mitigation requirement reports
Clean Water Act Part 503 Annual Sewage Sludge Report requirements.

Ohio EPA's Office of Information Technology Services (OITS) will provide Agency project management and oversight for the customization and installation of the ePermits framework within the Business Gateway, and the link to the Agency database. OITS will work with the programmatic Divisions to set up regular meetings and communication tools and avenues for project status and updates to ensure project deliverables will be met on time. OITS will also work with the programmatic Divisions to develop web DEMs to link to the ePermits framework.

Two important environmental outputs will be timely permit processing through use of a web-based application system and improved permit compliance, both being fundamental goals of the Agency and USEPA.

Results can be measured in part based on the increase in use of web DEM permit applications over hardcopy submittals. Web-based data quality improvements will be measured against hardcopy submittals. Pre-submittal validation is part of the web-based application process. Ohio EPA believes that providing this business option to

customers will streamline application processes saving customers and Ohio EPA time and money.

Many beneficial short term outcomes are expected to result from the implementation of a web-based application and report ability. Principal among these is a better understanding of permittees available options for submitting required data, and a better understanding of what is required and when. An expected intermediate outcome is an improvement in the quantity and quality of data submitted to the Agency, and reductions in discharges and emissions associated with more efficient data review and response to apparent violations. Long term outcomes include meeting Ohio's water quality goals and other public health and environmental improvements.

There are no collaborations or partnerships planned. The Ohio EPA Business Gateway is a high profile Agency project. It is anticipated that there will be widespread interest in Ohio's development of it's Business Gateway, and the services offered on the Business Gateway, among the States. Ohio has long been a leader in data automation, and the Business Gateway and web DEMs are the next logical step. The Business Gateway will provide a bridge between efficient service, and health and environmental benefits.

Pre-proposal Budget Summary

[Budgetary Information Withheld by U.S. EPA]

* including fringe and overhead

The project is planned for federal fiscal year 2008 (October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008).

Project Schedule and Timeline	
Purchase ePermits framework	10/01/2007 – 01/31/2008
Customize ePermits framework	02/01/2008 – 09/30/2008

Environmental Results Past Performance

- Grant Title: Permit Streamlining, 104(b)(3) Grant
 Grant No.: U.S. EPA Grant No. CP96516601
 Project Duration: October, 2004 through September, 2007 (project completed and grant closed by June, 2006)
 Scope: Implement the recommendations of the Permit Streamlining Group: 1) draft and schedule issuance of new categories of general permits; and, 2) categorize low hazard minor NPDES permits, streamline issuance of these and coordinate with Ohio EPA district offices to “roll over” these permits.
 Accomplishments: Issued numerous general NPDES permits. Low hazard permits are now able to be “rolled over” in SWIMS. Developed Projected Effluent Quality and Compliance Inspection Tracking programs. Updated and automated the administrative process to issue an NPDES permit. Incorporated the Pretreatment NPDES program into SWIMS.
- Grant Title: Integration of Wet Weather Control Strategies, 104(b)(3) Grant
 Grant No.: U.S. EPA Grant No. CP97559501
 Project Duration: Through December, 2006
 Scope: Evaluate whether necessary CSO requirements are being placed into NPDES permits. Develop a tracking log system that shows by facility the required control documents and review status. Develop an inventory of communities with SSOs. Assist Ohio Department of Health as appropriate to draft home sewage treatment system rules.
 Accomplishments: Updated NPDES permit CSO requirements. Developed CSO LTCP tracking log. SSO community inventory developed. The Ohio Department of Health finalized updated rules for the design, maintenance, location, operation and installation of household sewage treatment systems.
- Grant Title: Identification and Trend Monitoring of Environmentally Sensitive Watersheds where Alternative MS4 Storm Water General Permits are Applied, 104(b)(3) Grant
 Grant No.: U.S. EPA Grant No. CP997560201
 Project Duration: October, 2002 to September, 2006
 Scope: To integrate knowledge of watersheds with NPDES permitting approaches for an alternative MS4 storm water general permit for sensitive watersheds, and to determine the success of the general permit through permit compliance reviews, compliance field inspections and environmental monitoring.
 Accomplishments: Identification and selection of sensitive watersheds. Development of an alternative MS4 general permit. Baseline water quality assessment of selected watersheds.

Programmatic Capability

Ohio EPA successfully closed out its NEIEN 2002 grant achieving 100% of project goals and spending all awarded grant monies.

Ohio EPA has completed most of the project goals for NEIEN 2003. Ohio EPA is waiting for the Ohio Department of Health to establish an e-beaches node client to exchange bathing beach data. The Ohio Department of Health is also working on a Trading Partner Agreement. When that is completed the final grant report will be submitted.

Ohio's NEIEN 2004 grant agreement is on track and Ohio EPA has submitted semi-annual reports on time and in the required format over the course of the grant period.

Ohio EPA began work under the NEIEN 06 grant which involves the conversion from PCS to ICIS, and a CROMERR implementation project.