

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan

Action Summaries

August 17, 1999

This document provides updates on the Action items in the EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan, dated July 28, 1999. The plan is available on the EPA's web site at www.epa.gov/stakeholders

ACTION A(1): Develop Agency-wide Principles for Stakeholder Involvement.

Background: Although EPA recognizes that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to stakeholder involvement, Agency-wide principles can provide useful guidance to those planning stakeholder involvement activities.

Description: A work group has been organized to look into the desirability of EPA adopting a set of principles to guide stakeholder participation in Agency activities. The idea is that a set of expectations that is clear to both stakeholders and EPA employees would be to the benefit of everyone. The group recognizes that there are already customer service standards, which can serve as a starting point for thinking about what would be of greatest value. But these standards do not go far enough in describing what EPA staff should do to encourage and enable stakeholders to get involved in Agency processes in meaningful ways.

Current status: An internal workgroup has completed a second draft of the principles. This draft has been shared with all members of the EPA internal Stakeholder Involvement Network. The Draft Principles were presented at EPA's National Community Involvement Conference in May.

Performance measures:

- Product: Principles created

Time line: Draft principles have been developed and reviewed informally within EPA. They will be integrated into the proposed revisions of the 1981 EPA Policy on Public Involvement, which will be available for public comment in FY 2000.

Contact: Deborah Dalton, Deputy Director, Consensus and Dispute Resolution Program 202/260-5495

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION A(2): Encourage use of a common vocabulary, the typology of stakeholder involvement techniques, and a process model for early planning of stakeholder involvement to improve understanding among stakeholders.

Background: In the past, confusion has arisen over what stakeholder involvement entails in specific situations because people use the terms differently. When different participants have different expectations, frustration can result and the results of the activity can suffer. Furthermore, many EPA staff need guidance in planning stakeholder involvement processes.

Description: The Consensus and Dispute Resolution Program is developing a manual, "Better Decisions Through Consultation and Collaboration", which will give guidance and resource information to EPA employees on the vocabulary of stakeholder involvement, how to identify, select, plan and implement effective stakeholder involvement processes. In addition, various mandated stakeholder involvement and external review processes such as compliance with the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, EPA's Peer Review Policy and the Executive Order on Tribal Relations need to be integrated with other, more general stakeholder involvement planning activities. The manual will be distributed in hard copy and be available on EPA's intranet site. It is primarily aimed at Agency employees developing national or regional regulations, policies and strategies rather than community level programs. CDRP will conduct briefings of Agency management on the manual and will conduct several training courses per year for staff.

Current Status: The Manual is undergoing editorial review. On July 14-15, 1999, material from the manual was presented at the Office of Research and Development's "Communication and Stakeholder Involvement in the Risk Management Process" training.

Performance Measures:

Time line/Project Milestones:

January 1999 - Final design draft received for review
July 1999 - First training with the material in the manual
Oct. 1999 - Final manual available for distribution
Oct. 1999 - Management briefings - EPA headquarters
FY 2000 - Staff training

Follow-on activities related to this action item:

- May 20, 1999 - Working with Hostile Meetings and Difficult People training for EPA staff
- Fall 1999 - Initiation of a Distinguished Speaker Series for Stakeholder Involvement and Dispute Resolution

Contacts:

Deborah Dalton, Deputy Director, Consensus and Dispute Resolution Program

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EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION (A)(3): Establish a mechanism for identifying when Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) committees (either new or existing) are appropriate vehicles for stakeholder involvement, and establish a mechanism for strategically managing the Agency's advisory committees.

Background: FACA advisory committees are an excellent tool for the Agency to use to obtain group input from stakeholders. An advisory committee, however, is not an appropriate vehicle for all stakeholder involvement activities, for example when the goal is information exchange or obtaining individual stakeholder input. EPA's current advisory committees have arisen largely through a series of ad hoc decisions, resulting in little connection between the committees and no overarching strategic vision for linking their purposes, processes, or products. This action is intended to help EPA identify when advisory committees are appropriate, and to acquire more integrated, timely, and effective committee advice on the issues of greatest importance to the Administrator and the Agency.

Description: This action will explore the concept of forming an EPA Strategic FACA Forum of senior Agency executives to improve the Agency's advisory process. If the appropriate executives determine the concept has merit, such a Forum will be established to strategically manage EPA's advisory committees by identifying when advisory committees are appropriate to address issues and by seeking opportunities for integration and synergy between Agency advisory committees.

Current Status: One on one discussions have been completed with Agency senior executives whose offices utilize and manage FACA committees. Based on these discussions, the executives expressed a preference for using one of two existing forums to strategically manage the Agency's FACA committees, rather than creating something new. Discussions with the leaders of the two existing forums will take place in August to find the best fit for this new activity.

Performance Measures:

- **Process:** -Participation by enough EPA senior executives to cover majority of EPA's advisory committees
- **Products:** -Process to evaluate prospective stakeholder involvement opportunities and determine when advisory committee format is appropriate
- **Effects:** -Linkage of establishment and work of EPA's advisory committees with goals and objectives detailed in Agency's strategic plan; Communication and integration between Agency advisory committees considering related issues
- **Impacts:** -More integrated, timely, and effective advice on the issues of greatest importance to the Administrator and the Agency.

Time line/Project Milestones:

- Meetings with potential Forum participants–November 1998-April 1999
- Meetings with potential forum leaders - August 1999
- First meeting of Forum- Oct-Dec. 1999

Contacts: Tim Sherer, Office of Cooperative Environmental Management, 202/260-3085

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION A(4): Establish a roster of facilitators and mediators experienced in environmental stakeholder involvement and dispute resolution processes, and increase the number and flexibility of contracting mechanisms for accessing external facilitators.

Background: One of the key lessons learned from evaluations of CSI and other stakeholder involvement efforts is the importance of neutral facilitators to the success of the process. More contentious issues and programs that require consensus are in particular need of expert facilitation. In general, EPA is not in a position to serve as a neutral facilitator, since it usually has a position on the issue in question.

Description: The Consensus and Dispute Resolution Program has is developing and managing two mechanisms for obtaining trained facilitators and mediators: (1) An Agency wide Dispute Resolution Services Contract and (2) A National Roster of Environmental Dispute Resolution and Consensus Building Professionals. If resources permit, CDRP may also construct a third option (3) A Roster of Internal EPA Facilitators.

EPA currently has an Agency-wide contract to obtain facilitators and mediators (many of the CSI facilitators work under this contract mechanism). The current contract expires in March 1999. A new contract is in the final stages of "source selection" amongst bidders to an RFP released in June 1998. We expect award of the new contract in January, 1999 so that there is no lapse in service to agency program offices.

The National Roster of Environmental Dispute Resolution and Consensus Building Professionals is under development. EPA has designed the Roster qualifications with the input from professional facilitators and mediators, state dispute resolution program managers, and academics. EPA has also started the official clearance process under the Paperwork Reduction Act for the Roster. We expect the Roster, when implemented, to have between 200 and 400 names and qualifications of external facilitators and mediators. The Roster will be available for use by outside stakeholders.

The Roster of Internal Facilitators will be a list of EPA employees trained and experienced in facilitation and dispute resolution, who can be available for short periods of time on a collateral duty basis to assist EPA programs with short term facilitation or mediation needs.

Current Status:

- Dispute Resolution Services Contract: We are in the source selection phase of the analysis of the bids received in response to the RFP.
- National Roster of Environmental Dispute Resolution Professionals: We published the first Federal Register notice required by the Paperwork Reduction Act on November 23, 1998.

- Roster of Internal Facilitators: Pre-planning is being done to form a workgroup to design the roster and deal with questions such as ethics, conflicts of interest, collateral duty availability.

Performance Measures:

Time line/Project Milestones:

Dispute Resolution Services Contract:

Awarded to Marasco Newton: February 19, 1999

Publicity for contract availability: Feb. 1999

Intranet site available: Sept. 1999

National Roster of Environmental Dispute Resolution Professionals

ICR process initiated: November 23, 1998

ICR process completed/ received Office of Management & Budget approval July 12, '99

Application process initiated: September 1999

Training in roster management: December 1999 and ongoing

Guidance on contracting under the Roster: December 1999

Roster of Internal Facilitators

Workgroup formed: To be determined

Contacts:

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EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION A(5):Examine lessons learned from stakeholder involvement experience and use this information to improve EPA stakeholder involvement programs.

A(5)(a) Distribute the report on the survey of stakeholder involvement in EPA rulemaking,

Background: Several actions are designed to increase our understanding of factors that contribute to successful stakeholder involvement programs and to document what we are doing and how we could do better. The results of these studies will be used to improve EPA's planning, management, and operation of stakeholder involvement efforts.

Description: During the summer and fall, 1998, a masters thesis student from the University of Wisconsin, Ellen Levin, surveyed more than 75 EPA workgroup leaders in charge of developing EPA regulations regarding what stakeholder involvement activities they were including in their rule development, why and what improvements, if any, they thought would be helpful.

Current Status: The final report is undergoing internal review.

Performance Measures:

Time line/Project Milestones:

- Complete data analysis and recommendations: December 1998
- Present preliminary findings and recommendations to EPA Steering Committee and Stakeholder Involvement Network: January 1, 1999
- Final report/thesis submitted to EPA, and interim executive summary placed on the intranet May 1999
- Fall '99 - finalize executive summary and assess next steps

Contacts:

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EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION A(5)(b): Conduct a telephone survey to learn how other federal agencies or other suggested organizations plan and carry out their stakeholder involvement work.

Background: The Report of the Common Sense Initiative Council's Stakeholder Involvement Workgroup, June 3, 1998, included an annotated list of stakeholder involvement guides and manuals, including some from other Federal agencies and organizations. A survey could yield other tools and methods of creating an Agency culture and processes that encourage stakeholder involvement.

Description: In order to learn from the best practices and lessons learned from other organizations, a telephone survey is being conducted of other Federal Agencies and other organizations.

Current Status: Personnel from fourteen different Federal Agencies have been interviewed. A summary report has been drafted.

Performance Measures:

- Process - The survey is completed and results distributed.
- Product - New tools, processes, and/or best practices are utilized by EPA staff

Time line/Project Milestones:

- Survey completed - Summer, 1999.
- Results provided to the internal stakeholder involvement network - September 1999
- Posted on the intranet and internet site and share with external stakeholders, as appropriate - October 1999

Contact: Kathleen Bailey, Office of Reinvention, 202/260-3413

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION A(5)(c): Look at pilot testing innovative approaches to stakeholder involvement in developing broad-based, multi-media environmental agendas.

Northwest Indiana Pilot: As part of a geographic initiative aimed at addressing a broad spectrum of environmental problems in an area dominated by one industrial sector, the City of Gary, Indiana, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and U.S. EPA Region 5, are proposing to increase the involvement of local units of government in regional environmental planning. To enhance local capacity, these efforts would integrate local economic, industrial, social, recreational, ecological and transportation plans with federal and state environmental regulatory agendas.

Background: Region 5 is working with IDEM to address years of environmental degradation in Northwest Indiana. This area houses approximately 40% of the steel making capacity of the Nation and the presence of this industry heavily influences many of the planning efforts of the area. The regulatory agencies are using available regulatory and voluntary tools to address the problems and create a safer and more viable environment for everyone in the area.

Description: In an attempt to develop an environmental “vision” for the area, facilitated discussions will be held between senior federal, state, city and county officials. These discussions will delineate areas of mutual cooperation and benefit, potential roles and responsibilities and how local plans and needs can be melded with Agency and state work plans to achieve the agreed upon vision. Discussions will include local government participation in standards setting, permitting, enforcement targeting and partnering with local industries.

Current Status: The project is only beginning, and is being revised to start with facilitated discussions concerning expansion of the Gary airport, a current and controversial issue, before working on broader issues.

Performance Measures: Progress will be measured by the degree(s) of participation of the local units of government, the participation of all levels of government in assisting in the implementation of a locally adopted vision, the documented instances of the various units of government affecting the decisions of another through collaboration and documented efficiencies resulting from improved communication and levels of knowledge.

Projected Milestones:

- C July-Aug., 1999: completion of draft work plan & marketed to all involved units of government.
- C September-October, 1999: Secure facilitator and design initial meetings with senior local, state and federal officials.
- C October, 1999: Convene a facilitated meeting between the Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management, EPA and region 5 to discuss the project, its needs and agree on a course of action.
- C November 1999: Implement the project
- C TBD: Administrative “fast track” designed and in-place to expedite transactions and communications between and among the participating governments.
- C TBD: Workshops, sponsored by the local units of government, held to assist citizens of the project and how the improved interaction will facilitate the implementation of local plans and designs and community generated development efforts..

c March 2000, first progress report completed and submitted to the participating governments.
Parties reach decision to continue or conclude.

Contact: Marilou Martin (312)353-9660, e-mail: martinmarilou@epamail.epa.gov

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION A(5)(d): Develop performance measures to evaluate improvements in stakeholder involvement.

Background: There is a need for EPA to measure and evaluate its progress in improving stakeholder involvement as an Agency.

Description: This action requires a series of steps:

A. Identify, document and crosswalk performance measures that are in place for different stakeholder efforts within EPA. The Office of Reinvention will review project-specific performance measures to determine Agency-wide performance-measures in stakeholder involvement.

B. Identify and crosswalk results from in-depth evaluations (*e.g., Evaluation of XL Stakeholder Processes*) of different projects and programs stakeholder involvement efforts.

C. Report on the Agency's Stakeholder Involvement Performance, including the results of the performance measures on the items in the Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan, and summaries of lessons learned from in-depth evaluations.

Current Status: A series of brainstorming meetings will be conducted with Offices and programs that are actively involved with stakeholder issues, including the office of Environmental Justice, The National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, and the Community-based Environmental Protection (CBEP) Program, by the end of September 1999. Identification of in-depth evaluations is underway.

Performance Measures:

- Product measures: (1) Development of Agency-wide performance measures for stakeholder involvement; (2) Production of a stakeholder involvement performance report suitable for wide dissemination within the Agency.
- Results measure: Effective, credible portrayal of EPA's performance; incorporation of lessons learned into the next generation of EPA's Stakeholder Involvement programs.

Timeline/Projected Milestones: Agency-wide action plan measures, September, 1999

Identification of in-depth evaluations, November, 1999

Report on measures and results, March 2000

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EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION B (1): Compile a directory of Internal Experts in Stakeholder Involvement at EPA, and post it on internet and intranet sites.

Background: Across the Agency, expertise exists on how to effectively inform and involve stakeholders in our work, but no central clearinghouse has been established to provide information on who these experts are, in which areas they specialize, and how to reach them.

Description: OCEMR will compile a directory that lists EPA staff with expertise in stakeholder involvement. Details will include each person's program office, location, area of expertise, phone, fax, and e-mail. It will be made available both as hard copy and online. The directory will be a resource for EPA staff who have responsibility for planning or conducting stakeholder involvement activities. A subset of this directory may include individuals on the roster of internal facilitators, as referenced in Action A(4).

Current Status: In the spring, OCEMR sent an e-mail request to more than 200 EPA staff who have indicated interest in, responsibility for, and/or expertise in working with stakeholders (see Action B(2)). The request included a voluntary form to fill out if recipients wish to be included in the directory. The initial version of the Directory listing approx. 60 staff was distributed internally, and it is being updated to include approx. 90 staff.

Performance Measures:

Time Line:

- Initial version of the Directory was made available in the Lotus program both as hard copy and on the intranet. It was distributed at the EPA Community Involvement Conference in Kansas City - May '99
- Directory will be updated - Fall 1999
- Directory will be posted on the internet

Contacts: Margaret Morgan-Hubbard, Leanne Nurse, Office of Communications, Education, and Media Relations, 202/260-4360.

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION B(2): Establish a network of staff across the Agency working in stakeholder involvement.

Background: As the Agency has strengthened its commitment to stakeholder involvement, responsibility for working with stakeholders has been assumed by increasing numbers of EPA staff across headquarters and throughout the regions and labs. While some staff already are experienced in this area, others may primarily have a technical background or be new to EPA and would benefit from access to information, training, and colleagues with experience to offer.

Description: OCEMR will identify individuals involved in stakeholder work throughout the Agency and compile their names and details into a central listing. The list will form the basis for establishing a network to provide opportunities for interaction among those with stakeholder involvement responsibilities. It also will enhance EPA's overall expertise in involving stakeholders in the Agency's work. The network will serve as a feedback mechanism for improvements and new ideas. Meeting will be held on an ad hoc basis.

A core list of approximately 200 EPA staff has already been compiled. Sources for the list include the following: participants from last year's Community Involvement Conference; individuals with FACA responsibilities; regional office Public Affairs Directors; program office Communications Directors; and other sources. The list has begun to be used to alert recipients to meetings and useful background information on working with stakeholders. It also will be used to compile a directory of Internal Experts (see B 1).

Quarterly meetings have been held, the first in August, 1998. The group provided ideas on what should be in the Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan, with several individuals volunteering to take the lead on specific actions. Smaller groups volunteered to help create principles for stakeholder involvement, and to design and comment on the web site.

Current Status:- Quarterly meetings continue to be held, and are lead by the Office of Policy and Reinvention

Performance Measures:

Time Line:

-The core list will be refined during the remainder of this year and made available as an initial hard copy alphabetical list early in 1999. It also will be converted into a Lotus program and made available at the same time.

Contacts: Margaret Morgan-Hubbard, Leanne Nurse, Office of Communications, Education, and Media Relations, 202/260-4360.

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION (B)(3): EPA's National Community Involvement Conference

Background: *As an expansion of EPA annual Superfund Conference, and in response to EPA's increasing work with communities, EPA's first National Community Involvement Conference (NCIC) was held in August, 1998 in Boston. It had nearly 250 attendees, and was a great success. The purpose of the NCIC is to provide networking and training opportunities to all EPA program staff who directly interact with communities.*

Description: *EPA's 1999 NCIC was held from May 25-27 in Kansas City Missouri, and had 280 attendees. The Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances (OPPTS) co-sponsored the 1999 conference with the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER). There were planning workgroup members from a number of headquarters offices and several Regions.*

Current Status: *The third NCIC is scheduled to be held in San Francisco from August 27-September 1, 2000. The EPA Office of Water (OW) has the lead for planning.*

Performance Measures: *The performance measures for the 1999 conference were presented in the form of a participant evaluation form. The evaluation forms were mostly positive, with some suggestions as to how the conference could be improved for 2000. A Lessons Learned document was also created. Some very successful elements include the field trips, new this year, and sessions on conflict resolution and community profiling. For more information, please see the website for this conference: www.emsus.com/99conference. Abstracts of all presentations will be added to this site.*

Time line/Project Milestones:

- Conference held annually

Contacts:

For the 2000 NCIC: Jori Copeland (202) 260-1905 or Michael Kronthal at (202) 260-2277, Office of Water (OW)

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION B(4) Publicize the availability of stakeholder involvement resources within the Agency, i.e. (Intranet site)

Background: The Stakeholder Intranet Web Site was conceived as a means to make stakeholder resources more readily available for EPA staff members. The site will also educate EPA staff about how to conduct effective stakeholder involvement and provide a forum for planning stakeholder activities.

Description: The Stakeholder Intranet Web Site has five main purposes. The first is to provide a forum for sharing best practices/lessons learned and stakeholder involvement materials. Secondly, it will provide the medium to publish and promote successful stakeholder projects. Thirdly, it will provide a tool for posting events and outreach information. Forth, it will publicized the availability of assistance from external experts in managing stakeholder involvement processes. And lastly, will provide links to other intranet resources.

Current Status: In April, 1999, the site became available for use by EPA personnel. It is being updated as needed.

Performance Measures: A survey will be conducted to determine if the following performance measures are being met: Do users find the information they need and want from the web site? Is the web site responsive to user needs as they are identified? Are users relying on the web site as a means of staying informed about stakeholder involvement activities at the EPA (versus other communication mechanisms)?

Project Milestones:

- November 1998: The contractor began requirements analysis for the prototype. The Office of Reinvention provided feedback on the requirements of the website for use in development of a prototype.
- December 1998: An outline of the content structure delivered to the Office of Reinvention. The Office of Reinvention provided feedback as to the content and the site structure.
- January 1999: The site content was gathered and integrated with the selected content structure and interface design.
- April 15, 1999: The site became available for use by EPA personnel

Contacts:

Kim Green-Goldsborough, 202-260-4297, or Kathleen Bailey, 202-260-3413, Office of Reinvention

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION B(5): Build and maintain an Agency-wide database of stakeholder organizations and representatives interested in environmental and human health protection.

Background: A number of program offices and regional offices within the Agency maintain their own databases of stakeholder organizations for purposes of outreach related to their own activities. The Office of Communications, Education, and Media Relations (OCEMR) also maintains a master list of stakeholder organizations in its capacity as resource to the Administrator's Office on stakeholder organizations. At present, however, no centralized database exists that captures the outreach work that is taking place across the Agency.

Description: OCEMR has taken responsibility for creating a shared Agency-wide database of organizations that have a stake in EPA's activities. The database will have details on each organization that enable Agency staff to better target and leverage its outreach work. Additional intended outcomes include more efficient use of stakeholder groups' limited time and a broader range of organizations involved in public participation activities. OCEMR held initial discussions with several program offices on its parameters.

Current Status: The draft data is being loaded in a Lotus Notes database. Several hundred organizations and their representatives are included. OCEMR is reviewing topical categories that will be congruent with Agency issues.

Time Line:

- contract funding secured and a statement of work developed - Feb. 1999

Contacts: Margaret Morgan-Hubbard, Leanne Nurse, Office of Communications, Education, and Media Relations (OCEMR) 202/260-4360

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION B(6): Organize and conduct EPA Reinvention Conference/Training to Transfer Successful Stakeholder Involvement Approaches within EPA Programs

Background: For several years, EPA has been working to reinvent the implementation of environmental programs by exploring innovative approaches that promise better results at less cost. New ways of doing business have been tested through pilot programs, such as Project XL and the Common Sense Initiative, and through core Agency programs at Headquarters and in the Regions. These efforts are revealing important lessons about how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental programs, including efforts to improve stakeholder involvement. To ensure continued progress towards meeting reinvention objectives, the Agency's Reinvention Advisory Council (RAC) seeks to test, evaluate and where appropriate, transfer innovative approaches within EPA programs.

Description: EPA will organize forums for staff to share innovative approaches to environmental issues including stakeholder involvement. The objective is to make staff aware of new approaches, to encourage thinking about how new approaches could be used to improve efficiency and effectiveness within their area of responsibility, and ultimately, to transfer successful approaches as broadly as appropriate within Agency programs. To prepare staff, EPA will develop background papers describing the innovation being presented.

Current Status: Preliminary topics identified for forums include regulation development, permitting, and compliance assistance. Stakeholder involvement will be addressed in each of these forums (or possibly as a separate forum).

Performance Measures:

- **Process:** post-training questionnaire, e.g., training design, participant involvement, etc.
- **Products:** number of forums, number of staff attending, number of EPA offices sending staff, number of background papers on innovative topics.
- **Effects:** transfer of innovation to other programs.

Time line/ Project Milestones: These forums will be scheduled as part of the Innovations Task Force Implementation Plan.

Contact: Sandy Germann 202/260-5410, or Jeff Morin, Office of Reinvention, 202/260-5067.

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION B(7): Create Project or Program-specific guidance materials

Action (B)(7)(a): Create a manual on Constructive Engagement

Background: The Computers and Electronics Subcommittee of the Common Sense Initiative developed the concept of a Facility-Based Alternative System of Environmental Protection. The goal of this System is to enhance environmental, health and safety performance; increase regulatory flexibility; and increase engagement of and accountability to communities and workers. One of the objectives of the Alternative System of Environmental Protection is constructive engagement between industry, workers, communities and government to achieve alternative system goals and objectives. Constructive engagement means developing and continuously improving a cooperative partnership between a facility's management and workers, government and a community to plan, monitor, and evaluate a facility's environmental activities. The capacity to effectively participate includes each party having timely access to relevant information, sufficient technical understanding and expertise, and the resources to effectively participate.

Description: The Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, Environmental Assistance Division, Community Based Programs Branch (OPPT/EAD/CBPB), along with the Alternative Strategies Workgroup in the Computer and Electronics Subcommittee of the Common Sense Initiative has developed a Constructive Engagement Resource Guide. The overall goal of this project is to improve the understanding and technical expertise of constructive engagement. The Guide will help people who are considering entering into a community engagement project to make informed decisions as to whether constructive engagement is the right approach for their situation. The guide is intended for use by all stakeholders and is meant to help them overcome obstacles that in the past have made it difficult to achieve success in community engagement. The guide will be broadly applicable to many industry sectors and types of facilities. It will not only tell users where to find resources, it will also give them practical advice and present case studies. The case studies will be selected to illustrate specific points that are critical to successful engagement.

Current Status: In July, 1999, OPPT released the publication: Constructive Engagement Resource Guide: Practical Advice for Dialogue Among Facilities, Workers, Communities and Regulators (May 1999)

Performance Measures:

-Products: A Constructive Engagement Resource Guide has been developed and is available to those interested in stakeholder involvement activities. Up to five free copies of the Guide (EPA 745-B-008) may be requested from the National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP): 1-800-490-9198, or via fax: 513-489-8695, or online at <http://www.epa.gov/ncepihom> The Guide can also be downloaded from EPA's Stakeholder web page at <http://www.epa.gov/stakeholders>.

Time line/Project Milestones:

- A recommendation concerning constructive engagement was presented to the Common Sense Initiative Council on December 17, 1998, and endorsed by the Council.
- The Guide was published and distributed in July, 1999

Contacts: Judy Kendall, 202-260-1802, and John Bowser 202/260-1771

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION B(7)(b): Create a guidance manual for use by pilot project sponsors, and other stakeholders, involved in Project XL.

Background: Past, present, and potential participants in Project XL have identified the stakeholder process as an area in which all stakeholders (e.g., project sponsors, direct participants, commenter) would appreciate and benefit from guidance. To ensure that the final product meets the needs of the target audiences,, the first draft of the guide was prepared in consultation with a diverse stakeholder group.

Description: This guide is designed to clarify roles and responsibilities, enumerate guiding principles, and present ideas, tools and resources for conducting successful stakeholder involvement processes. It is based on the experiences, both success and failure, of others involved in XL and a variety of other stakeholder-based projects.

Current Status: The final version has been posted on the XL website and paper copies are also available.

Performance Measures:

- **Process:** The goal is to have the guide used in each of the remaining 40 XL projects. As a result of using the guide, the desired outcome is a stakeholder process where the participants are familiar with the process, and collaborate to develop mutually acceptable project proposals. Through specific Project XL evaluations, we will assess the frequency that the guide has been used and to what degree participants attribute the outcomes to the use of the guide.

Time line/Project Milestones:

- Comments & illustrations incorporated - Dec. 1998
- Document completed - March 1999
- Paper copies of the guidance manual available - May 1999

Contacts: Kimberly Green-Goldsborough, Office of Reinvention, 202/260-4297

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION B(8): Establish an Internet site for stakeholder involvement

Background: The Stakeholder Internet Web Site was conceived as a means to make the stakeholder involvement process more accessible for interested parties. The site will also promote and distribute stakeholder activity information to interested individuals and groups at the federal, state and local levels.

Description: The Stakeholder Internet Web Site has five main purposes. The first is to describe to interested parties the process and expectations of becoming a stakeholder. Secondly, it will clarify the roles and responsibilities of becoming a stakeholder. Thirdly, it will clearly state the processes for stakeholder involvement in a variety of different contexts. Fourth, it will assist stakeholders in acquiring tools and information they need to be effective stakeholders. Last, it will reach out to encourage stakeholder involvement and capture the enthusiasm of community action groups.

A contract was awarded by the Office of Reinvention to Marasco Newton Group, Ltd., in October 1998 to create a Stakeholder Internet Environmental Protection Web Site. Marasco Newton worked with EPA staff to gather web-based content for the site, develop the site information organizational structure, and the interface design.

Current Status: The site was available for use in April 1999, and is undergoing ongoing improvement based on user feedback and availability of new information.

Performance Measures: A survey will be conducted to determine if the following performance measures are being met: Do users find the information they need and want from the web site? Is the web site responsive to user needs as they are identified? Are users relying on the web site as a means of staying informed about stakeholder involvement activities at the EPA (versus other communication mechanisms)?

Project Milestones:

- August 1998: A basic site was opened as part of the Reinvention Web site.
- November 1998: The contractor began requirements analysis for the prototype. The Office of Reinvention will provide feedback on the requirements of the website for use in development of a prototype.
- December 1998: An outline of the content structure will be delivered to the Office of Reinvention. The Office of Reinvention will provide feedback as to the content and the site structure.
- February 1999: The site content was gathered and integrated with the selected content structure and interface design and published to the public internet server.
- April 1999 - The web site became available for stakeholder use.

Contacts: Kim Green-Goldsborough, 202-260-4297, Kathleen Bailey, 202-260-3413, Office of Reinvention

EPA Stakeholder Involvement Action Plan - Action Summary

ACTION B(9): Explore, identify, and address stakeholder capacity-building needs.

B(9)(a): EPA will work with the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) to identify needs and explore the potential establishment of regional resource centers to support stakeholder involvement processes around the country.

Background: Many stakeholders need technical assistance to participate fully in environmental decision-making. It is important for the Agency to understand stakeholder groups' needs, interests, priorities, and circumstances, including their limitations and external influences.

Description: The purpose of ELI's study was to examine and identify approaches to building the capacity of communities (with a focus on individual citizens and local non-profit groups) to participate in environmental decision-making. While the report lays out a plethora of choices, it does not include specific recommendations on the best way to build stakeholder capacity.

Current Status: ELI has completed their report, and the Agency is reviewing the report.

Performance Measures:

- Report Completed

Time line:

- ELI completed the research report entitled, Building Capacity to Participate in Environmental Protection Agency Activities: A Needs Assessment and Analysis - June 1999
- Report published and distributed - July 1999
- Cooperative Agreement funded to address next steps - July, 1999

Contact: Helga Butler, Office of Reinvention 202/260-4179 or Kathleen Bailey, Office of Reinvention 202/260-3413

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Action B(9)(b): Continue to provide targeted communications about Agency activities and products to key stakeholder groups.

Background: Each year, the Agency produces a wide range of information products for stakeholder organizations including brochures, TV and radio PSAs, and on-line information. Though existing guidelines for producing these products have been helpful, not all products adequately reflect the needs and priorities of their intended audience(s). In addition, one office contemplating a new product may not be aware that a similar product has already been produced or is being planned in another part of the Agency.

Description: The Office of communications, Education, and Media Relations (OCEMR) is intensifying its efforts to better target the Agency's communications to specific stakeholder needs and priorities. The production and dissemination of EPA products has been a major area of focus. OCEMR has issued revised interim guidelines for producing Agency stakeholder products and issued these guidelines for internal use and feedback. The guidelines place a stronger emphasis on up-front definition of intended audience needs; encourage greater initial audience input into their design; call for intensive investigations into existing products so as to avoid duplication; and require plain language text that is relevant to the concerns of audiences.

Current Status: OCEMR's revised product review guidelines are available internally at intranet.epa.gov/ocemr-review. Latest revisions include a clearer display of "What material is Reviewed by OCEMR" and "What Generally is Not Reviewed by OCEMR". OCEMR staff will issue a proposed table of contents for a comprehensive rewrite of existing policy manuals later this summer ["Developing Products for the Public" and "Publication Management"].

Time Line: Revised interim guidelines for EPA communications products (print, broadcast, online) have been refined with program and regional input and will be on the Intranet by April 1, 1999.

Contacts: Margaret Morgan-Hubbard, Doris Fairley, Office of Communications, Education, and Media Relations 202/260-5965.

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ACTION B(9)(c): Create a listing of technical assistance available to stakeholders as well as options on how to provide it.

Background: Technical assistance means a variety of things. To some, it can mean getting the money to hire a convener/facilitator to bring people together to address an environmental problem. For others, it can mean directly accessing the services of a local university economist or scientist. Because of the variety of types and sources of technical assistance, it is often difficult for stakeholders, particularly environmental, environmental justice, and community groups, to know where to find and how to access technical assistance.

Description: EPA will post on the stakeholder involvement web site, the types and locations of EPA technical assistance. As a second step, EPA will make web connections to external sources of technical assistance, as appropriate, e.g. those referenced by the Environmental Law Institute in Action B(9)(a).

Current Status: As the Stakeholder internet site was being developed, the contractor found other EPA sites to link to the Stakeholder site, and make note of those which offer technical assistance. A list of these was circulated to internal stakeholder liaisons at headquarters and in the regions to see if any internal technical assistance resources were missed or if external resources can be recommended. The internet site was available to use in April.

Performance Measures:

- **Products:** It is on the internet site.
- **Effects:** It is being used. A potential side-effect is that EPA and others will have information to inform discussion and decisions about what other technical assistance is needed.
- **Impacts:** Stakeholders are more easily able to access technical resources.

Time line/Project Milestones:

- Feb. 1999 - Contractor will have initial list which will be circulated internally
- April 1999 - Posted on Stakeholder internet site; Update quarterly based on internal and external feedback.

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