Effectiveness of the NEPA Process

The adjacent charts illustrate how respondents rated the effectiveness of the NEPA process. For the purposes of these charts, “effective” means the NEPA process was rated 3, 4 or 5 on a scale from zero to five, with zero meaning "not effective at all" and five "highly effective."

Since the fourth quarter FY 1994, the number of respondents rating the NEPA process as effective for EAs has increased to over 60%. The EIS data do not show a clear trend and should be interpreted cautiously in view of the low numbers of EISs and respondents.

For this quarter, 17 of the 23 respondents for EAs and 2 of the 11 respondents for EISs rated the NEPA process as "effective." One EA respondent commented that part of the value of the assessment process was that it brought the project people (“let’s get everything we can”) and the program people (“let’s figure out what we really need”) together to a mutual point of agreement.

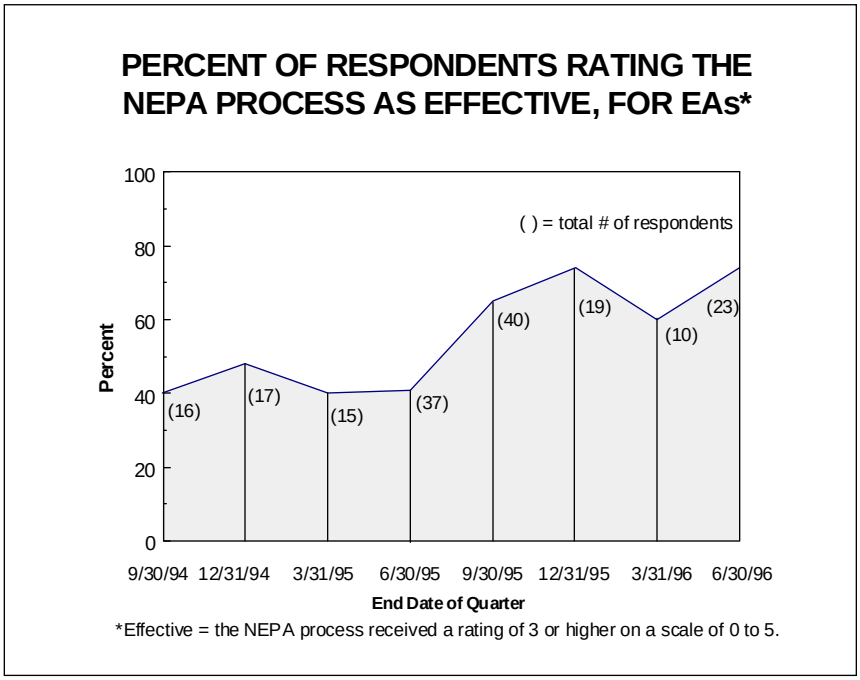


Figure 1

In one case, a respondent indicated that the results of an EA were used to facilitate eventual operation of a facility.

Another respondent indicated that the process provided a mechanism for public input on local issues associated with the proposed project. As a result, the project had a minimal impact on the environmen and, in at least one respect, improved the existing environmental quality.

Respondents gave several other reasons for high effectiveness ratings, including that an EIS provided a vehicle for several areas of planning and a future management tool, and that an EIS allowed the public to take a more active role in the decision making process.

One respondent who gave the NEPA process a low effectiveness rating noted that the NEPA process had little influence on the decision making for the project due to the narrow scope of the project and the lack of impact to sensitive resources.

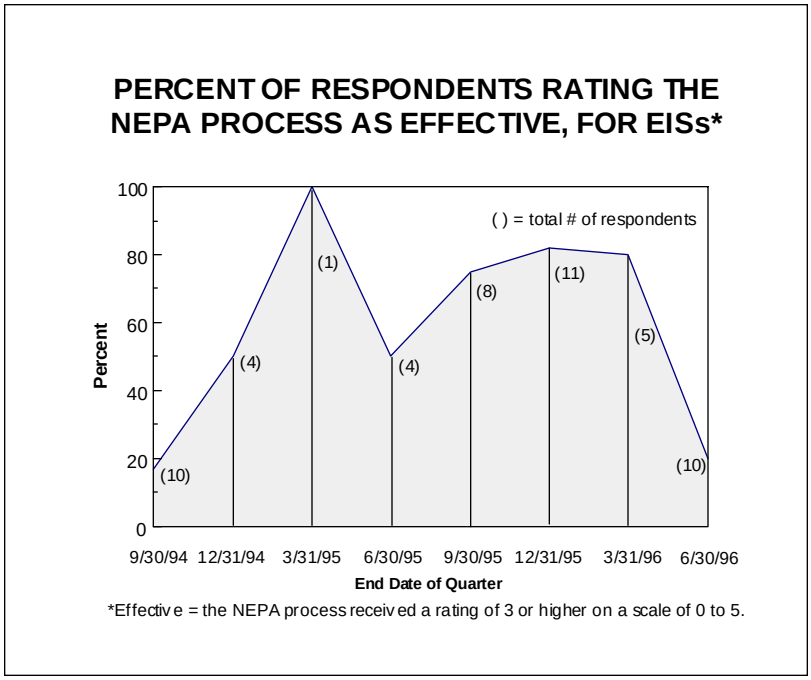
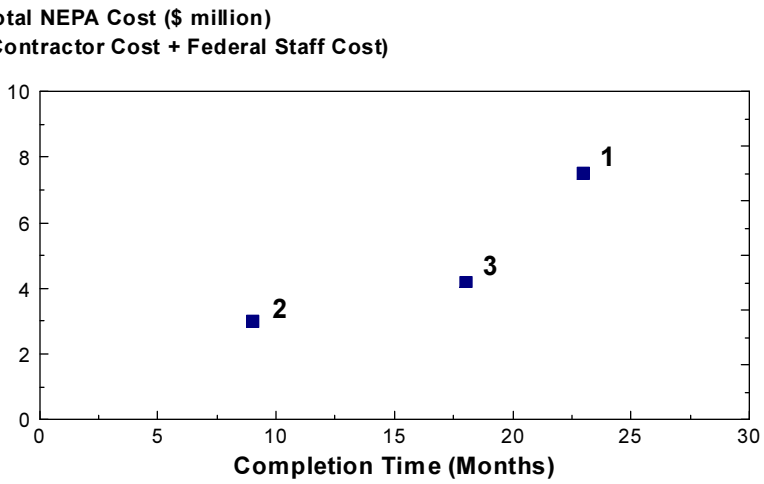


Figure 2

EIS Cost and Completion Times Data



* EIS #4 was adopted from the Navy; therefore, costs and completion time are not reported.

Figure 3

Completion Time Facts

- Three EISs were completed during the third quarter of FY1996, in 9, 18, and 23 months.
- Of 3 EISs reporting scheduling information, 1 was completed on schedule.
- The NEPA process was initiated early enough for 2 of the EISs to avoid being on a critical path. Respondents for 1 EIS disagreed about whether the NEPA process was initiated early enough.
- Cumulatively over the last year, the median completion time for 20 EISs was 22 months; the average completion time was 28 months.

Cost Facts

- Total NEPA process costs for the 3 EISs completed during the third quarter were $7.5 million, $3.0 million, and $4.2 million; corresponding contractor costs were $6.9 million, $2.4 million, and $3.6 million, respectively. A fourth EIS was adopted from the Navy and the cost is not included here.
- Budget data were reported for 3 EISs, one of which was completed within budget. The NEPA process costs for the other 2 EISs exceeded their budgeted costs by 7% and 17%.
- Total project cost was reported only for EIS #2, for which the NEPA process cost represented 10% of the total project cost.
- Cumulatively, over the last year, the median contractor cost for the preparation of 15 EISs was $3.0 million; the average cost was $3.9 million.

EISs

Fissile Materials Disposition
1 = Disposition of Surplus Highly Enriched Uranium, DOE/EIS-0240
EPA Rating: EC-2
($560,000 Federal cost, $6.9 million contractor cost; 23 months)

Nuclear Energy
2 = Medical Isotopes Production Project: Molybdenum 99 and Related Isotopes, DOE/EIS-0249
EPA Rating: LO
($620,000 Federal cost, $2.4 million contractor cost; 9 months)

Richland Operations Office/ Environmental Management
3 = Plutonium Finishing Plant Stabilization, Hanford Site, Richland, Washington, DOE/EIS-0244
EPA Rating: EC-2
($575,000 Federal cost, $3.6 million contractor cost; 18 months)

4 = Disposal of Decommissioned, Defueled Cruiser, Ohio and Los Angeles Class Naval Reactor Plants, Hanford Site, Richland, Washington, DOE/EIS-0259
EPA Rating: LO-1
(Adopted from the Navy)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) RATING DEFINITIONS

Adequacy of the EIS
Category 1 — Adequate
Category 2 — Insufficient Information
Category 3 — Inadequate

Environmental Impact of the Action
LO — Lack of Objections
EC — Environmental Concerns
EO — Environmental Objections
EU — Environmentally Unsatisfactory

EA Cost and Completion Times Data

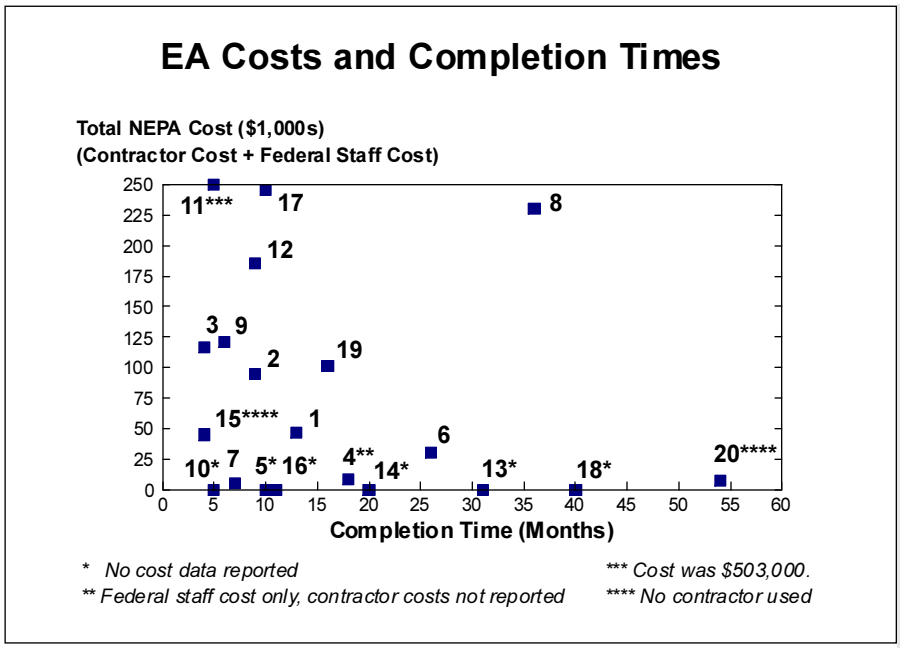


Figure 4

Completion Time Facts

- The median completion time for 20 EAs completed during the third quarter FY1996 was 11 months (range: 4 to 54 months).
- 6 of 14 EAs for which scheduling information was reported were completed on schedule.
- The NEPA process was initiated early enough for 9 EAs to avoid being on a critical path. Respondents for 2 EAs disagreed about whether the NEPA process was initiated early enough.
- Cumulatively for the last year, the median completion time for 69 EAs was 13 months; the average completion time was 18 months.

Cost Facts

- NEPA process cost data were reported for 13 EAs; the median cost was $101,000.
- The median contractor cost for the 11 EAs reporting such costs was $87,000.
- Budget data were reported for 8 EAs, 4 of which were completed within budget.
- Total project costs were reported for 4 EAs, for which the NEPA process costs represented .4%, .8%, 1.1% and 5.5%.
- Cumulatively for the last year, the median contractor cost for the preparation of 37 EAs was $85,000; the average cost was $101,000.

Errata:

On page 15 of the June 1996 Lessons Learned Quarterly Report, the correct completion time for EA#1 is 49 months. The correct cost for EA#5 is $12,000.

EAs

Albuquerque Operations Office/ Los Alamos Area Office

1 = Consolidation of Certain Materials and Machines for Nuclear Criticality Experiments and Training, LANL, Los Alamos, New Mexico, DOE/EA-1104 ($20,000 Federal cost, $27,000 contractor cost; 13 months)

2 = Facility Operations, Grand Junction Project Office, Colorado, DOE/EA-0930 ($23,000 Federal cost, $72,000 contractor cost; 9 months)

3 = Low Energy Demonstration Accelerator, LANL, Los Alamos, New Mexico, DOE/EA-1147 ($29,700 Federal cost, $87,500 contractor cost; 4 months)

Bonneville Power Administration

4 = Lower Red River Meadow Habitat Restoration Project, Idaho, DOE/EA-1027 ($8,000 Federal cost, contractor cost not reported; 18 months)

5 = Olympia South Tacoma Reconductor Project, Washington, DOE/EA-1114 (Costs unreported; 10 months)

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

6 = Programmatic EA for the State Energy Conservation Program (SECP), DOE/EA-1068 ($30,000 contractor cost; 26 months)

7 = Thermal Oxidation System Energy Recovery, Copper Center, Alaska, DOE/EA-1145 ($5,000 contractor cost; 7 months)

Idaho Operations Office

8 = Test Area North Pool Stabilization Project, INEL, Idaho Falls, Idaho, DOE/EA-1050 ($20,000 Federal cost, $210,000 contractor cost; 36 months)

continued next page

EA Cost and Completion Times Data

EAs (continued)

Naval Petroleum Reserves in California

9 = Western NPR-1 3-D Seismic Program at Elk Hills, California, DOE/EA-1124 ($11,000 Federal cost, $110,200 contractor cost; 6 months)

Nevada Operations Office

10 = Double Tracks Test Site, Nevada Test Site, Nye County, Nevada, DOE/EA-1136 (Costs unreported; 5 months)

Nuclear Energy

11 = Electrometallurgical Treatment Research and Demonstration Project in the Fuel Conditioning Facility at ANL-W, Idaho Falls, Idaho, DOE/EA-1148 ($189,700 Federal cost, $313,200 contractor cost; 5 months)

Oak Ridge Operations Office

12 = Proposed Lease of Parcel ED-1 of the Oak Ridge Reservation, DOE/EA-1113 ($65,000 Federal cost, $120,000 contractor cost; 9 months)

13 = Sale of Radioactively Contaminated Scrap Nickel Ingots at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Paducah, Kentucky, DOE/EA-0994 (Costs unreported; 31 months)

Oakland Operations Office

14 = Construction and Operation of the Explosive Waste Treatment Facility, LLNL, Livermore, California, DOE/EA-1106 (Costs unreported; 20 months)

15 = Decontamination and Waste Treatment Facility, LLNL, Livermore, California, DOE/EA-1150 ($45,000 Federal cost, no contractor used; 4 months)

Rocky Flats Operations Office

16 = Radioactive Waste Storage, Rocky Flats Site, Colorado, DOE/EA-1146 (Costs unreported; 11 months)

17 = Solid Residue Treatment, Repackaging and Storage, Rocky Flats Site, Colorado, DOE/EA-1120 ($26,000 Federal cost, $220,000 contractor cost; 10 months)

18 = Surface Water Structures Maintenance Activities, Rocky Flats Site, Colorado, DOE/EA-1093 (Costs unreported; 40 months)

Western Area Power Administration

19 = Estes-Marys Lake 69/115-kV Transmission Line Upgrade and Substation Expansion Projects, Colorado, DOE/EA-1074 ($15,000 Federal cost, $86,000 contractor cost; 16 months)

20 = Weld-Windsor 115-kV Transmission Line Project, Windsor, Colorado, DOE/EA-1095 ($7,500 Federal cost, no contractor used; 54 months)

Analysis Models and Codes Used in DOE EISs and EAs

Gary Palmer, DP Deputy NEPA Compliance Officer, has developed a summary of environmental impact analysis models and computer codes recently used in preparing DOE EISs and EAs. This summary, prepared with support from Los Alamos National Laboratory, identifies what models were used for specific NEPA documents and provides a brief description of each model. Included are models used for analyses of radiological and nonradiological impacts of normal operations and accident conditions, transportation, socioeconomics, and groundwater, and other environmental resources. In some cases, the models are identified as "EPA recommended" for use in certain regulatory applications. DP intends to keep its compilation of models updated and will provide copies, on request. Comments are welcome. For further information and to receive a copy, please contact Gary Palmer at (202) 586-1785 or Ellen Taylor at (301) 916-7732.

Cumulative Topical Index to Quarterly Reports on Lessons Learned in the NEPA Process

The following is a topical index for this and all previous editions of the Lessons Learned Quarterly Reports. The index will be revised and published annually. If you would like a copy of any back issue of the Quarterly Report, please call Joanne Geroe, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance, at (202) 586-8397or by fax (202)586-7031. We suggest you keep a file of these reports for future reference.

Fold the back of this page over and tape/staple closed.

Evaluation Form

How are we doing?

Does the format of the Lessons Learned Report help you understand the information? Do you have any suggestions for improvements? _____

_____

Which sections do you consider to be the most helpful? The least helpful? _____

_____

What should be added to the report to make it more useful? _____

_____

Please offer any other suggestions on how we may improve the Lessons Learned Quarterly Report. _____

_____

_____

Your name (optional) _____

FROM:

Stamp

Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance, EH-42
Attn: Joanne Arenwald Geroe
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0119