ECR Quarterly Forum
Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place, NW
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MEETING SUMMARY

Participants:

Leila Afzal, NOAA
Dinah Bear, CEQ
Kathleen Binder, DOE
Chip Cameron, NRC
Jerry Delli Priscoli, IWR/USACE
Kirk Emerson, USIECR
David Emmerson, OMB/DOI
Megan Gemunder, DHS
Elena Gonzalez, DOI
Nelson Gonzalez, VA
William Hall, EPA
Jim Havard, EPA
Paul Hoffman, DOI
Judy Kaleta, Transportation
Bob Manley, Navy
Lynda O'Sullivan, Air Force
Sarah Palmer, USIECR
Jim Payne, DOJ
Joseph Rail, Navy
Shayla Simmons, DOI
Martha Twarkins, USDA/FS

1. Introduction Kirk Emerson opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda.

2. Analysis of 2006 ECR Reports: Dave Emmerson presented the final version of the Analysis of the 2006 ECR reports. Dave reported that the main differences between the final version and the first draft of the analysis, distributed for comment in February, are:

- Two tables deleted—they dealt with numerical indicators of activity, and several agencies had expressed concern about the data in the reports.

- The language is tightened up. The final version is shorter, but contains more substance.

- The text discussing unassisted conflict resolution has been moved to footnotes, in keeping with the consensus definition of ECR, which is environmental conflict resolution that is assisted by a third party neutral.

- The Analysis links next steps and draft 2007 template.

- Addition of an Executive Summary.

Dave also discussed the major findings of the Report, and the steps that agencies are taking to implement the ECR Memorandum.

2. Draft Template for 2007 Reports.

The group then began discussing the draft template for the 2007 reports, raising the following issues and concerns:

A. Standardization

- One of the challenges is tabulating information. While questions 2 and 3 allow for tabulation, we should develop more questions of this nature, getting away from questions that ask for narrative. This would lead to greater standardization.
- While standardization is good, it might be too soon to try and standardize everything. Some agencies might feel the template is a "test" if it seeks too much standardization.
- Reports should be used by agencies to measure their own progress, not necessarily to compare one agency against another.
- Some agencies like the nebulous nature of the first report.
- Tabulating can be done anonymously, without attribution, if that is a concern.

B. Linking to Mission:

- The report needs to link answers to missions—show how activity relates to mission. It should ask what percentage of ECR is spent on mission activity. There are a limited number of missions—its not infinite, which means this can be done. ECR is a means, the end is mission delivery.
- We all have different missions—in some agencies environmental issues are tangential, rather than the driver of our mission.

C. General Thoughts:

- Perhaps we should get back to the 2 tier system set up by the memo—the agencies that use ECR frequently would report one way, infrequent users, another.
- We are wary of requiring too much case-level information because of the burden it might place on agencies.
- The 2007 template asks for more information than the previous template, it is like increasing speed from 10 to 60 mph.

- Although agencies have different missions, one common concern is the desire to save money.
- We need to use ECR in anticipation of conflict rather than using it just in reaction to conflict. Sometimes you use ECR before conflict has happened.

3. Case Study –Navy Partnering Program at Indian Head

The meeting concluded with Joseph Rail, a Project Manager in the Department of the Navy, giving a presentation on how the Navy is collaborating with others, sometimes with the help of third-party neutrals, to facilitate site closeouts and avoid unnecessary investigations.

4. Next Steps and Announcements

- The 2006 ECR Report Synthesis will be posted on the web along with the individual agency reports.
- The draft ECR 2007 reporting template will be recirculated with a request for comments in the next few weeks.
- The U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution distributed a fax-back form to identify agencies interested in participating in the sponsorship and/or program planning for the 5th national ECR conference in Tucson, May 2008. For more information, contact Tina Gargus at gargus @ecr.gov.