



Office of Solid Waste

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# Environmental Fact Sheet

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## EPA Releases WIN/INFORMED Initiative Program Evaluation Program Area Analysis (PE PAA) Report

### What is the WIN/INFORMED Initiative?

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the states established the Waste Information Needs/Information Needs for Making Environmental Decisions (WIN/INFORMED) initiative to conduct a reassessment of the information needs of the hazardous waste management program and to design, develop, and/or implement changes to information management. This effort will make high-quality hazardous waste information more readily available to EPA, states, and tribes, who can use the data to support more effective implementation of the hazardous waste program. This effort will also result in more accurate and understandable information being made available to the public.

### How is the WIN/INFORMED Initiative Structured?

The WIN/INFORMED initiative has five phases:

- ! *planning*,
- ! *analysis*,
- ! *design*,
- ! *construction*, and
- ! *implementation*.

The planning stage which was completed in the fall of 1996 resulted in the development of Information Strategy Plans (ISPs). An ISP is designed to identify natural groupings of program functions and information needs, which are referred to as "program areas." The states and EPA chose to conduct separate *planning phases* to capture their own information needs.

In their ISPs, both states and EPA identified priority improvements to be made in the information and the information systems used to support program implementation. The state ISP identified three priority program areas for analysis:

- ! Universe Identification (UID),
- ! Waste Activity Monitoring (WAM), and
- ! Handler Monitoring and Assistance (HMA).

These areas all cover specific program implementation activities.

EPA's ISP included Permitting and Corrective Action (PCA) activities in their program implementation program area. Additionally, EPA selected Program Evaluation (PE) as a priority program area. States and EPA agreed to form a partnership to conduct the remaining phases for the program areas. The Program Evaluation Program Area Analysis (PE PAA) is the first Program Area Analysis (PAA) conducted under the partnership.

### **What Is a Program Area Analysis (PAA)**

A Program Area Analysis (PAA) examines each program area in detail, considering the adequacy of current information and information management procedures relative to identified program activities and information needs. This examination identifies specific areas where information and information management are not meeting current or anticipated information needs for program activities. The end goal of a PAA is threefold: (1) to recommend a baseline of *data elements* to track in the recommended automated systems, (2) to identify and recommend *automated systems* that will meet the needs of the program area, and (3) to identify *process improvements* that both streamline current processes and reduce burden. The analyses culminated in a report outlining findings and recommendations for consideration for implementation.

### **What is the Purpose of this Report?**

The purpose of this report is to present the results and recommendations of the *analysis phase* of the PE program area, covering plans, grants, and evaluations. The report is designed to communicate an overview of results of the PE PAA, including the specific data requirements related to hazardous waste program plans, grants, and evaluations.

This report also conveys general recommendations for managing information more effectively (e.g., user system requirements) and identifies potential process improvements for hazardous waste program activities related to plans, grants, and evaluations.

### **Overview of PE Findings and Recommendations**

The PE Team conducted interviews in which States, EPA Regions and HQ Offices of Solid Waste and Enforcement and Compliance Assurance participated. The interviews gathered information to determine what information and information management mechanisms are needed to fulfill programmatic activities associated with grants, plans, and evaluations. The Team also queried inter-

viewees on potential improvements to current processes. The findings and related recommendations gathered from the interviews follow.

## **Findings and Recommendations**

- ! Data Needs
  - Need base set of consistently defined national data for grants, plans and evaluations: Adopt data element list (see report appendices) as the current minimum set of data needs.
- ! Information System Needs
  - Develop a program accomplishments tracking system (PATS)
  - Investigate the Partnership 2000 system curently under development as a means to automate grants activities.
  - Continue improvements to current systems (RCRIS/BRS Oracle migration).
- ! Business Process Needs
  - Integrate and rank national (OSW and OECA) hazardous waste program priorities.
  - Issue national guidance concur- rently, and to a wider audience.
  - Streamline program planning process.

The PE Final Report was submitted to an Executive Steering Committee consisting of states and EPA regions and HQ executive management for review and acceptance of these recommendations. See Appendix C of the Report for a summary of the ESC's review.

## **For More Information**

The Program Evaluation PAA Final Report, this fact sheet, and other related materials are available in electronic format on the Internet through the EPA Public Access Serve <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/data/win> and the Association of States and Territories Solid Waste Management Organization (ASTSWMO) website <http://www.astswmo.org>. For additional information or to order paper copies of any documents, call the RCRA Hotline. Callers within the Washington Metropolitan Area must dial 703-412-9810 or TDD 703-412-3323 (hearing impaired). Long-distance callers may call 1-800-424-9346 or TDD 1-800-553-7672. The RCRA Hotline operates weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Write to the RCRA Information Center (5305W), US EPA, 401 M Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460.