



Federal Interagency Working Group on Brownfields

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA's Brownfields Initiative strategies include funding pilot programs and other research efforts, clarifying liability issues, entering into partnerships, conducting outreach activities, developing job training programs, and addressing environmental justice concerns.

INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP SUPPORTS BROWNFIELDS

The Interagency Working Group on Brownfields was established in July 1996 as a forum for Federal agencies to exchange information on brownfields-related activities and to develop a coordinated national agenda for addressing brownfields.

THE NEED FOR A FEDERAL INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP

Communities with brownfields sites often face other concerns such as unemployment, substandard housing, outdated or faulty public infrastructure, crime, and a poorly-skilled local workforce. Although Federal and State programs may be in place to address these local issues, too often the programs operate in isolation. The Brownfields Initiative provides an opportunity for Federal agencies to work together in a more integrated fashion toward sustainable redevelopment. The Interagency Working Group makes the Brownfields Initiative more effective through the coordination of agency efforts and resources. Representing a wide range of Brownfields stakeholders, the collaboration of diverse backgrounds, expertise, and experience of each agency helps make the initiative a success.

COORDINATION PROMOTES MORE EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT

Through the Brownfields Initiative, communities can leverage a myriad of public and private sources of capital and technical support that can ensure successful redevelopment. Brownfields assessment and

cleanup activities can be linked to health and workforce development programs through the creation of temporary and permanent jobs. Brownfields projects can be coordinated with transportation planning, ensuring access to transportation for new workers in redeveloped areas. Reuse options can include not only new economic and industrial opportunity, but development of urban agriculture and green spaces. Close cooperation from the beginning of a Brownfields pilot may also decrease the likelihood that agencies will duplicate efforts, work at cross purposes to each other, or confuse community leaders and civic groups.

WHO'S INVOLVED?

Currently, the following Federal agencies are participating in the Interagency Working Group:

- Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Department of Commerce (DOC)
- Department of Defense (DOD)
- Department of Education (ED)
- Department of Energy (DOE)
- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Department of the Interior (DOI)
- Department of Justice (DOJ)
- Department of Labor (DOL)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Department of the Treasury (Treasury)
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)
- General Services Administration (GSA)
- Small Business Administration (SBA)

BROWNFIELDS NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ACTION AGENDA

The Interagency Working Group has developed a brownfields strategy that will link more effectively environmental protection with economic development and community revitalization programs, and guide the Brownfields Initiative into the future. The Action Agenda includes more than 100 commitments from the members of the Interagency Working Group.

SHOWCASE COMMUNITIES

The members of the Interagency Working Group are collaborating on the selection of ten Brownfields Showcase Communities. The Showcase Communities provide an opportunity to concentrate Federal, state, and local efforts around brownfields to produce environmental cleanup, stimulate economic development, and revitalize communities. The Showcase Communities serve as models for cooperative efforts to support local brownfields initiatives.

MOUs

Agencies use Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to establish policies and procedures between agencies and support projects of mutual interest. EPA currently has five MOUs with: the Department of Interior's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA); the Department of Housing and Urban Development; the Department of Labor's Employment Training Administration (ETA); the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA); and, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

TAPPING REDEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

HUD, EDA, NOAA, and DOT are integrating brownfields into their planning processes, ensuring that brownfields cleanup and redevelopment are eligible expenses for their project funds. They are removing internal barriers and encouraging their field offices to work with communities on brownfields projects.

LINKING GREEN SPACES AND BROWNFIELDS

DOI and USDA support citizen groups and local and state governments to help ensure that redevelopment includes green spaces in areas that suffered from urban blight.

CREATING JOBS AROUND BROWNFIELDS THROUGH JOINT PARTNERSHIPS

DOL, ED, HHS, and VA are connecting their missions with brownfields activities to ensure sustainable communities. They help create and maintain job opportunities and provide the link between environmental cleanup and workforce development.

COORDINATING FEDERAL LANDS WITH BROWNFIELDS

GSA, DOD, DOE, USDA, and DOI are responsible for managing vast tracts of property in this country. These agencies are taking actions to use brownfields principles to ease the reuse of Federal properties—benefiting the communities, the environment, and furthering the mission of the responsible agencies.

FINANCING BROWNFIELDS

Financial agencies such as Treasury, FDIC, and SBA play a key role in the brownfields arena. Building on the President's tax incentive proposal, agencies that deal with financial policy are at the forefront of coming up with innovative ways to provide incentives and support for investing in the cleanup and reuse of brownfields.

PROVIDING CERTAINTY TO BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT

EPA and DOJ work closely with the states to clarify regulatory oversight roles and offer a variety of tools to assist brownfields redevelopment. This work helps to provide buyers, sellers, investors, and communities with the certainty they need to redevelop brownfields properties.

OFFERING TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO LOCAL CLEANUP EFFORTS

EPA, GSA, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers offer their technical services to communities to assess and clean up property. Their specialized skills further support brownfields redevelopment.

CONTACTS

For more information about EPA and other Federal agency brownfields activities, contact:

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