



Recommendation No. 149

January 15, 2002

Stakeholder Input to SRS Budget Process

Background

At any given time Federal agencies are working on various phases of three fiscal year (FY) budgets concurrently. For example, in October 2001 while the FY 2002 budget is being executed, internal deliberations are underway for the FY 2003 budget and the requirements for the 2004 budget are being assembled. This "annual" budget process is how Federal agencies operate. For the Savannah River Site the budget process follows four steps: 1) site requirement development and planning; 2) internal DOE and Office of Management and Budget deliberations; 3) congressional action; and 4) execution.

Generally, the requirements development and planning phase starts about 2 years prior to the start of the fiscal year the work is executed. During this phase, the many and varied environmental and compliance requirements are assessed and the multi-fiscal year baseline estimates are updated. Activities for the budget year funding request are prioritized using the SRS Integrated Prioritization Process. The iterative results of this process is the communication tool which is better known as the SRS Environmental Management (EM) Integrated Priority List (IPL). The DOE Field Office normally submits the budget request to DOE Headquarters (HQ) in April and DOE internal review and deliberations phase lasts about 5 months until DOE-HQ submits the DOE budget to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in September. Prior to OMB submission, the DOE EM Office compares the budget requests across the complex to the budget targets issued by OMB and identifies and works issues with the Field Offices. EM forwards the resulting EM budget to DOE's Chief Financial Officer for submission to the OMB. Historically, at this point the budget process is "closed" to the public until the President's Budget is submitted to Congress the first week in February. For the next several months, the various congressional committees with jurisdiction over EM's program hold hearings and modify the budget as it makes its way through the legislative process. The committees usually conference in early Fall and EM is appropriated funding around September prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. Once funds are appropriated, DOE-HQ provides funding to the sites and the task of executing the budget begins.

Comment

There are many opportunities for stakeholder involvement in the budget process. However, the SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) is concerned about the lack of meaningful input in the budget process this past year and the lack of an established schedule for public involvement. It is imperative that stakeholders become part of the budget planning process from site requirement development through execution.

Recommendation

1. The SRS Citizens Advisory Board recommends that not later than April 19, 2002, SRS develop and submit to the CAB a schedule for annual stakeholder involvement in the budget process. This schedule should include specific dates for submission of information to the CAB and establish specific dates for CAB inputs throughout all phases of the budget process. Adequate time should be allowed to inform stakeholders so that their comments will have the maximum opportunity to impact the budget submission to DOE and to influence the development of the SRS Integrated Priority List.

References

1. U. S. DOE Office of Environmental Management, Stakeholder Input – EM's Budget Process, www.em.doe.gov/stake/budget/budpro.html.

Agency Responses

[Department of Energy-SR](#)