

CASTING for a Better NEPA Outcome

THE CHALLENGE: Implementing NEPA costs too much, takes too long, and amounts to too little according to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) in their report, [National Environmental Policy Act - A Study of Its Effectiveness after Twenty-five Years](#). Too many of NEPA's lingering challenges are still with us today, 20 years after that report.

WHAT CAN IMPROVE NEPA OUTCOMES? Reducing chronic NEPA ills would help. An efficient process would cut NEPA costs; reduce process time; make NEPA documents less encyclopedic and more useful; support public outreach; improve cumulative environmental effects analysis; and help agencies achieve sustainability goals.

HOW? The Consolidated Annual Sustainability Tool Integrating NEPA Guidance (CASTING) was developed through consultations with agencies and stakeholders. CASTING uses the flexibility of recent CEQ NEPA guidance on cumulative effects analysis (CEA), programmatic NEPA analyses, ISO 14001 EMS integration, climate change/GHG analysis, mitigation and monitoring, adaptive management, categorical exclusions, and public collaboration.

THE NEPA DOCUMENT: The CASTING product is an attractive, colorful state-of-the-environment annual report with an updated CEA and accompanying draft FONSI for public comment to ensure NEPA compliance. The annual report includes the required content and annual "hard look" analysis of proposed actions of an EA/EIA. Cumulative effects analysis, monitoring, enhanced public outreach and adaptive management are key elements that make CASTING work.

CASTING helps agencies focus on achieving their environmental and sustainability performance and compliance goals and reduces burden of multiple NEPA documents.

BENEFITS:

- Cuts agency costs: Replaces most EAs and sharply reduces costs of EISs.
- Provides the leaders and commanders with much more flexibility, enhancing mission support.
- Reduces time between planning and implementation.
- Focuses on measuring actual impacts, monitoring, and using adaptive management.
- Helps agencies, installations, and communities achieve regional sustainability goals.

PILOT PROJECTS: We have briefed CEQ on CASTING. See an early concept of CASTING, originally called SIRS, at the CEQ Pilot Project Candidates [web site](#). We continue to meet with federal agency leaders and regulators, update them on CASTING progress, and receive feedback to improve this NEPA/Sustainability process. The first CASTING pilot project is in progress at a military installation. Contact us to learn more.

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