

Environmental Review Questionnaire Project Proposers

At the direction of the Minnesota Legislature, the Office of the Legislative Auditor is evaluating Minnesota’s processes for environmental review and permitting. We are especially interested in learning more about your recent experiences with projects undergoing environmental review, for which environmental assessment worksheets (EAWs), scoping EAWs, or draft or final environmental impact statements (EISs) were prepared. In this questionnaire, we refer to these documents as “environmental review documents.”

If you have proposed multiple environmental review projects in the last two years, base your answers on your experience with the XXXXXX project. Space for your comments is available at the end.

Your name will not be made public. We will not report individual responses that include identifying information.

1. Your Questionnaire ID Number: XXX

Your ID is needed for our tracking but will not be used to identify you or your specific responses.

2. Please mark one phrase that best describes your level of involvement in the environmental review.

- | | (N=26) | <u>N</u> | <u>%</u> |
|---|--------|----------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Among the business’ chief contacts for the environmental review | 22 | 85 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Had little or no involvement | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Served as a consultant to the proposer | 4 | 15 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Other <i>(Please specify.)</i> | | | |

3. How easy were the following aspects of environmental review for your project? (Mark one per row.)

	Somewhat or Very Easy		Neither Easy nor Difficult		Somewhat or Very Difficult		Don't Know or Not Applicable	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
	a. Determining whether your project was required to undergo environmental review (N=26)	19	73	1	4	6	23	0
b. Understanding what steps were involved in the environmental review process (N=26)	11	42	3	12	12	46	0	0
c. Using resources and guidance intended to explain environmental review (N=26)	11	42	8	31	6	23	1	4
d. Determining who to contact about environmental review (N=26)	15	58	5	19	5	19	1	4
e. Collecting data and information needed for the environmental review (N=26)	4	15	8	31	14	54	0	0
f. Identifying all permits and approvals required for the project (N=26)	8	31	3	12	15	58	0	0
g. Working with the responsible governmental unit in charge of the environmental review (N=26)	14	54	6	23	6	23	0	0
h. Working with other government agencies also involved with the review (N=26)	8	31	7	27	10	38	1	4

4. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the following statements reflect your experiences with the environmental review of your project? (Mark one per row.)

	Somewhat or Strongly Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat or Strongly Disagree		Don't Know or Not Applicable	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>

Preparing Data for Environmental Review

a. Preliminary discussions with staff in the responsible governmental unit produced useful answers to your questions. (N=26)	16	62	4	15	6	23	0	0
b. While preparing your data submission, the amount of back-and-forth communication with staff from the responsible governmental unit was appropriate. (N=26)	17	65	5	19	3	12	1	4
c. The data requested for environmental review documents was reasonable. (N=26)	10	38	6	23	10	38	0	0
d. The resulting environmental review documents were about the right length and appropriately detailed. (N=26)	13	50	3	12	9	35	1	4

Work of the Responsible Governmental Unit and Other Government Agencies

e. The responsible governmental unit promptly reviewed your data submission. (N=26)	17	65	3	12	6	23	0	0
f. The responsible governmental unit staff who reviewed your data submission had sufficient expertise. (N=26)	16	62	3	12	5	19	2	8
g. Government staff review of your data submission did not unnecessarily duplicate work you had already performed. (N=26)	14	54	1	4	10	38	1	4
h. The responsible governmental unit brought consultants in at about the right time. (N=26)	9	35	4	15	4	15	9	35
i. The responsible governmental unit's use of consultants was appropriate. (N=26)	7	27	5	19	5	19	9	35
j. Other than the responsible governmental unit, government staff from other agencies were involved in your project to an appropriate extent. (N=26)	13	50	5	19	7	27	1	4
k. Staff from different government agencies were able to integrate their work on your project. (N=26)	10	38	4	15	7	27	5	19

Other Experiences

l. Information needed to obtain permits did not unnecessarily duplicate information needed for environmental review documents. (N=26)	9	35	5	19	12	46	0	0
m. Generally, comments made during the public comment period were useful. (N=26)	6	23	8	31	10	38	2	8
n. The responsible governmental unit had sufficient leadership to make the decisions needed to allow the process to proceed. (N=26)	16	62	4	15	6	23	0	0
o. Overall, the environmental review process worked well. (N=26)	13	50	5	19	7	27	1	4
p. Overall, the process would not cause you to reconsider expanding or building future projects. (N=26)	11	42	4	15	10	38	1	4

5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the costs and time needed for environmental review? (Mark one per row.)

	Somewhat or Strongly Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat or Strongly Disagree		Don't Know or Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. The amount of time the responsible governmental unit took to compile the environmental review documents was about right. (N=26)	11	42	5	19	9	35	1	4
b. The amount of time available for citizens and others to become informed about the project was about right. (N=26)	17	65	3	12	6	23	0	0
c. The amount of time available for citizens and others to provide comments on the project's environmental review documents was about right. (N=26)	19	73	3	12	4	15	0	0
d. Timelines for the environmental review process were spelled out, even if they had to be adjusted over time. (N=26)	20	77	3	12	3	12	0	0
e. The environmental review process generally proceeded without undue delay. (N=26)	13	50	3	12	10	38	0	0
f. The time and costs needed for environmental review were reasonable relative to possible environmental risks posed by the project. (N=26)	5	19	5	19	16	62	0	0
g. The costs of environmental review were reasonable in the context of overall costs of your proposed project. (N=26)	8	31	4	15	14	54	0	0
h. The time and costs needed for environmental review would not cause you to reconsider expanding or building future projects. (N=26)	9	35	5	19	11	42	1	4
i. The time and costs needed for environmental review would not be a driving factor in deciding whether to build future projects within Minnesota or outside the state. (N=26)	9	35	6	23	11	42	0	0

6. How satisfied were you overall with the work of the responsible governmental unit overseeing the environmental review? (Please mark one.)

Somewhat or Very Satisfied		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied		Somewhat or Very Dissatisfied		Don't Know or Not Applicable	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16	62	5	19	5	19	0	0

7. With about how many state agencies and local units of government did you interact during the preparation of the environmental review documents? (Mark one.)

	(N=26)	N	%
<input type="checkbox"/> a. One (If you marked "one," please skip to Question 9.)		1	4
<input type="checkbox"/> b. Two to three		9	35
<input type="checkbox"/> c. Four to six		12	46
<input type="checkbox"/> d. Seven or more		3	12
<input type="checkbox"/> e. Don't know or can't recall		1	4

8. If the project involved more than one government agency, what is your impression of how well the different government agencies worked together or coordinated their activities? (Please mark one.)

	(N=26)	N	%
<input type="checkbox"/> a. Not applicable—the project involved only one government agency		1	4
<input type="checkbox"/> b. Positive impression		7	27
<input type="checkbox"/> c. Neutral impression		4	15
<input type="checkbox"/> d. Mixed impression		8	31
<input type="checkbox"/> e. Negative impression		4	15
<input type="checkbox"/> f. Don't know how well the agencies worked together		1	4
<input type="checkbox"/> g. Not aware of how many government agencies were involved		1	4

For the final two questions, if you have been involved with multiple environmental reviews in the past two years, please base your answers on your general experiences over that time, not just the most recent project.

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very good and 5 being very poor, how would you rate the environmental review process in achieving the following objectives? (Mark one per row.)

	Somewhat or Very Good		Acceptable		Somewhat or Very Poor		Don't Know or Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Providing usable information to the public on the primary environmental effects of a project (N=26)	13	50	8	31	5	19	0	0
b. Providing usable information to project proposers on the primary environmental effects of a project (N=26)	12	46	9	35	5	19	0	0
c. Providing the public with systematic access to decision makers involved with environmental reviews (N=26)	12	46	8	31	5	19	1	4
d. Encouraging accountability in public decisionmaking on permits and approvals for projects with potential environmental impacts (N=26)	9	35	12	46	4	15	1	4
e. Delegating responsibility for environmental review to the government unit most closely involved in a project (N=26)	15	58	6	23	5	19	0	0
f. Reducing delay in collecting and analyzing information on environmental impacts (N=26)	8	31	6	23	11	42	1	4
g. Eliminating duplication of effort in collecting and analyzing information on environmental impacts (N=26)	9	35	6	23	10	38	1	4
h. Reducing uncertainty in obtaining project approvals (N=26)	9	35	6	23	10	38	1	4
i. Reducing uncertainty about a project's potential environmental effects (N=26)	11	42	9	35	6	23	0	0
j. Understanding the impact that a proposed project will have on the environment (N=26)	13	50	7	27	6	23	0	0
k. Avoiding or minimizing adverse environmental effects of proposed projects (N=26)	11	42	9	35	6	23	0	0

10. Do you have either comments about the environmental review process or suggestions for what you would like to see changed?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

Please return it in the postage-paid envelope by September 9, 2010.