

DRAFT

PARTNERING GUIDE

FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ENVIRONMENTAL MISSIONS

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**“FIX THE PROBLEM
NOT THE BLAME”**

Theme for Reese Air Force Base
Partnering Workshop

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Defense (DoD) is seeking better ways to build support for its environmental decisions, enhance implementation of those decisions, become more cost effective, deal with impacts, and anticipate and prevent unnecessary conflict. Partnering is one of a variety of tools to meet these needs.

DoD has successfully used partnering in construction, contracting, and other business relationships, and is now using it in environmental programs. Partnering is clearly useful for installation cleanup, which relies extensively on contractors. Partnering can potentially benefit DoD compliance, pollution prevention, and conservation programs as well.

The DoD initiative for environmental partnering originated with the Environmental Security Committee's 1993 recommendations to the National Performance Review. This *Partnering Guide* is a step in the implementation of the committee's recommendations. It was prepared under the sponsorship of DoD Environmental Programs, and an oversight panel of representatives from the Air Force, Navy, Army, and DoD guided the preparation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Institute for Water Resources.

The purpose of this guide is to encourage greater use of partnering at the policy, installation, and project levels of DoD compliance, cleanup, pollution prevention, and conservation programs. Partnering concepts, applications, and techniques that can be adapted to these programs are described. Since partnering is still evolving, the guide can also serve as a resource for those who want to innovate or try new approaches.

The guide is written for all stakeholders in DoD environmental programs. In the spirit of reinventing government, new approaches are offered for redesigning DoD's role as a good citizen here – at home – in the post-Cold War era. The DoD initiative is intended to encourage federal, regional, state, and local officials to formulate policies that support partnering. Guidance is provided for installation commanders who are seeking to understand partnering and to empower staff to use its principles. Managers and workers at installation cleanup projects will find tools and approaches that will permit them to implement those tenets. For state and federal regulators, it offers new routes from adversarial to cooperative relations. The guide provides stakeholders in the private and public sectors and

environmental organizations with ideas on how to work cooperatively with DoD agencies.

Chapter One reviews new partnering mandates and outlines financial, management, and other benefits. Chapter Two explains basic partnering concepts and provides a model that can be applied to DoD environmental programs. Chapter Three describes partnering with contractors, regulators, and the public. Chapter Four summarizes case studies that illustrate how these concepts are being put into action. Chapter Five describes practical techniques, and Chapter Six addresses frequently asked questions about the use of partnering in DoD environmental programs.

CHAPTER 1

PARTNERING IN THE DoD ENVIRONMENTAL MISSION

Organizations and people who share an interest in the success of environmental cleanup and protection often act as if they were adversaries. Ideas are sometimes rejected simply because another agency originated them. Information is withheld, and communication takes place only through formal channels. Specifications are rigidly enforced even when a cheaper solution is available.

Often the result is that costs soar, projects are delayed, and problems become worse while the bickering continues. At the heart of the problem is an adversarial relationship that can lead to an impasse in which no party's needs are met.

Partnering is designed to break down organizational barriers that block performance. It empowers organizational representatives to implement programs in a way that maximizes the resources of all participating groups. Partnering is a tool for creating a spirit of teamwork even though the participants represent different interests. It can help ensure an outcome that endures because all stakeholders are involved at the inception of a project in identifying the goals and strategic plans that will drive the process.

Use of Partnering in DoD's Environmental Mission

Partnering was first employed in the chemical and construction industries in an effort to reduce expensive litigation and delays. In the late 1980s, the Corps of Engineers and the Naval Facilities Engineering Command began to use partnering on construction projects. The result has been a significant savings in time and dollars.

As part of the Defense Performance Review, the Environmental Security Committee looked at the need for cooperative relationships. The committee evaluated partnering based on the criteria of the National Performance Review (September 1993), drawn from *Reinventing Government*.¹ The committee concluded:

¹David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector* (New York: Penguin Books USA Inc., 1993).

Partnering has proven itself to be of great value in promoting cooperative teamwork. Study group members are convinced that the application of partnering to DoD environmental issues will yield positive pay-offs for a quality environmental program. Partnering is quite consistent with the [performance review criteria], fostering a clear sense of mission among all participants, and promoting commitment to the mission among all; promoting appropriate empowerment, delegation, and assumption of responsibility among stakeholders; replacing mistrust and over-reliance on regulations with trust; and by being oriented to achieving mutually satisfying “win-win” outcomes beneficial to all stakeholders.²

The *Final Report* of the Environmental Security Committee for the Defense Performance Review specifically recommends “partnering at all program, as well as project levels with stakeholders, to accomplish common goals.”³

In testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services (Subcommittee on Military Readiness and Defense Infrastructure), Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Sherri Goodman stated:

Our new approach to environmental security reflects the President’s efforts to implement policies designed to create environmental partnerships. We shall pursue this approach through partnership with other federal agencies, states, industry, the public, and the Congress. . . . Partnerships are the way we work with others to break the regulatory gridlock on the cleanup process.⁴

Further impetus was provided by the *Interim Report* of the Federal Facilities Environmental Restoration Dialogue Committee (*The Keystone Report*), February 1993, published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DoD, and the *Report on the Form of Our Nation’s Defense and the Environment*, September 1990.

As the case studies in Chapter 4 indicate, all DoD Services have now begun using partnering to effect the department’s environmental mission. The Services use partnering on all levels – policy, program, and project – and engage state, local, and federal regulators in the process.

² *Cooperative Relationships/Partnering Study Group Report*, Defense Performance Review, Environmental Security Committee (July 1993).

³ Defense Performance Review: Environmental Security Committee, *Final Report* (15 July 1993), 4.

⁴ Statement of Sherri Goodman, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Environmental Security), before the United States Senate Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Military Readiness and Defense Infrastructure (June 9, 1993).

Benefits of Partnering in the DoD Environment Mission: Some Perspectives from the Field

The case studies in Chapter 4 also show that, although organizational mandates are important, the real impetus for partnering is the fact that the people involved in implementation are hearing that it works. Faced with difficulty in persuading organizations and people to work together, program implementers see partnering as a real-life solution. The following are some of the early results and comments from the field:

- Members of the Southeast Regional Implementation Team (RIT) of the Coastal America partnership discovered redundancies in aerial reconnaissance of whale migrations by individual agencies. The RIT added up agency expenditures for partial and incomplete coverage and found that one agency could conduct aerial reconnaissance of the entire area for less than the sum of the agencies' individual efforts. This information was passed along to the national level, and an agreement was signed in early 1994. Today, one agency provides the necessary information, achieving greater coverage at less cost.
- The Coastal America partnership provided assistance with the enactment of legislation that reduces the nonfederal burden for beneficial use of dredge material. This legislation removed a major barrier that was blocking a number of badly needed projects.
- The Bayou Bonfouca remediation project is now projected to be completed three to four years ahead of schedule. Participants give much of the credit to partnering. One said: "The process is working because people are talking to each other." Another added: "We all have a clear understanding of who is responsible for what."
- At Reese Air Force Base, a great deal of frustration was apparent with the cleanup effort's lack of coordination. Partnering improved the situation. Participants now say that "partnering saves everybody money up front because of technical and regulatory discussions before the scope of work is written."

- On the Baird & McGuire cleanup project, partnering helped break down a nine-month adversarial relationship between USACE and the contractor.

“As a result of partnering, we treat each other as human beings, the way we would like to be treated ourselves. Everything goes better, everything is smoother, we save money, and we end up with a good product.”

– Participant in Yorktown Naval Weapons Station Partnering

Opportunities to Use Partnering in the DoD Environmental Mission

Ultimately, the goal of partnering is the same as that of the National Performance Review: a government that works better and costs less. Because of this objective, DoD actively encourages the use of partnering in all four pillars of the department’s environmental mission: compliance, cleanup, pollution prevention, and conservation.

Compliance

- Partnering will increase the capacity to anticipate and avoid conflict situations, and should reduce Notices of Violation (NOVs) and Notices of Noncompliance (NONs).
- Partnering will build a team commitment to reducing the number of enforcement actions caused by facilities operations.
- New relationships established through partnering can keep compliance high, even as budgets drop.

Cleanup

- Partnering will encourage more efficient use of cleanup dollars by promoting better communication and teamwork among installations, contractors, and contract managers.
- Partnering will help reduce gaps between studies and actions.
- Partnering will help maintain performance despite projections of trends toward reduced budgets.

Pollution Prevention

- Partnering builds a proactive climate that anticipates problems and acts in a timely fashion to prevent them.
- Partnering with project managers, together with life cycle analysis of weapons systems, helps prevent pollution.
- Partnering among infrastructure designers helps identify approaches that reduce pollution, material, and procedures.
- In logistics, partnering among the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics (DCSLOG) and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) helps identify ways to dispose of pollutants. Partnering can help continue the reduction of the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) while budgets also decrease.

Conservation

- Partnering can be an indispensable link in the process of educating stakeholders in conservation techniques.
- Through partnering, facilities become the test sites for new techniques that are then disseminated in the private and public sectors.
- Partnering among stakeholders facilitates ecosystem management and sustainable use of training lands.

Conclusion

Partnering has proven successful at the project, program, and policy levels. DoD actively encourages the use of partnering in DoD's environmental mission. Partnering has value for each of the pillars of that mission. Above all, partnering provides a tool for removing the mistrust and miscommunication that blocks project implementation.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS PARTNERING?

Definition

Partnering is a way of working together that creates and nurtures a commitment between two or more stakeholders for achieving mutually beneficial objectives and for creating synergy by maximizing the effect of each stakeholders' resources. The partnering relationship is based upon trust, dedication to common goals, and an understanding of each other's expertise, expectations, and values. The critical elements of partnering include up-front visioning by the stakeholders on the use of their resources for problem solving, appropriate empowerment of personnel, and ongoing nurturing of the partnering process.

The Partnering Process

Partnering is a structured process that uses specific tools to accelerate the creation of teamwork. During the time that DoD agencies have been using partnering, new tools have been added to increase effectiveness, and that evolution is likely to continue. Figure 1 displays the major steps in a "typical" partnering process. A more detailed description is provided in Figure 2.

Figure 1. The Partnering Process

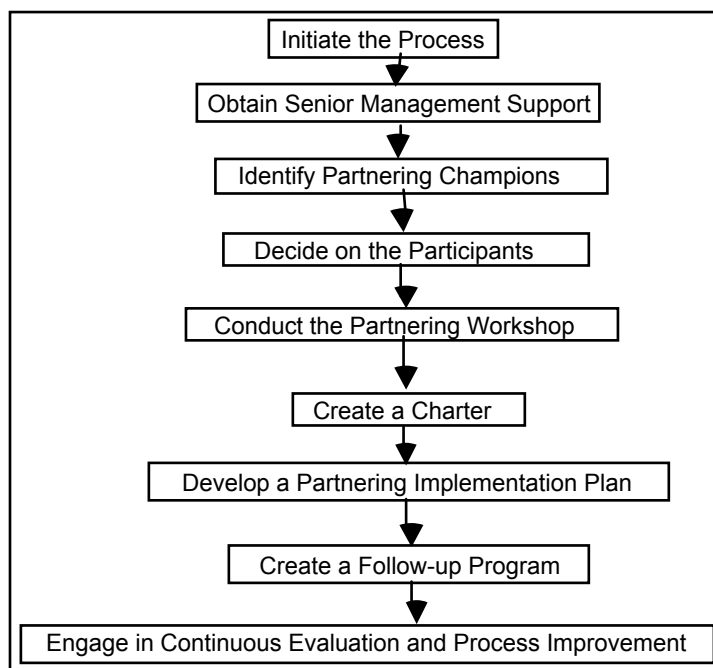


Figure 2. A “Typical” Partnering Process

Any of the parties involved can invite others to engage in partnering. Senior management then decides whether to commit to partnering, and managers often serve as “champions.” A decision is also made whether to include stakeholders other than DoD and federal and state regulators. They might include tribal governments, state or local governments, or community groups. Once the management of the invited parties makes a decision to join in the partnering enterprise, a team is identified of those people from each organization whose participation is essential for success.

The initial partnering activity is a “team-building” workshop attended by the key representatives of the various parties and led by a neutral facilitator. This workshop usually begins with activities designed to help participants become comfortable with each other, followed by training on the principles of effective partnering. These activities are often followed by training in communication skills. Participants then develop common goals and agree on a process for resolving disputes quickly and effectively. Teams also discuss how to remove barriers to communication, how to ensure that decision making is delegated to members of the team, and how to bring about continuous quality improvement. These agreements are incorporated in a charter. Often the charter is enlarged and hung on the wall to remind team members of the commitments made. Some teams subsequently develop a formal plan that contains additional detail about implementation of the goals and objectives in the charter.

Teams also design a follow-up program to maintain the partnering spirit. Some teams use a periodic evaluation form or informal discussions. Many use brief follow-up or “maintenance” workshops that differ from previous team meetings in that they provide an opportunity, free from immediate crises, to look at how the team is working together. Members have the chance to identify problems or behaviors that prevent the team from being as effective as possible, and to act quickly to make changes.

The real practice of partnering occurs in the day-to-day interactions of team members. Teams work hard to ensure that regular team meetings and individual interactions express the spirit of partnership. Some teams also make a point of reinforcing team identity by developing a logo for the partnership that is used on doors, cars, coffee mugs, even T-shirts.

Principles of Partnering

Although partnering is a relatively simple process, it embodies several important management principles. They include the following:

Teamwork can overcome organizational impediments.

Any large organization creates barriers to implementation of partnering. These problems are multiplied when the proposed action requires the commitment of several organizations. Partnering addresses this problem by creating an ethic of teamwork that cuts across organizational barriers. The individuals on the team and the organizations they represent both commit to overcoming unnecessary organizational constraints.

“I keep stressing with my people that the partnering agreement is *not* the contract. When the agreement says that we’ll handle modifications and claims in 30 days, it doesn’t mean that it must take 30 days. If it can be done in 10 days, do it in 10!”

— Participant in Bayou Bonfouca Partnering

The team should be empowered down the line.

It does little good to create a partnering team if the members do not have the authority to make decisions. Organizations that are parties to partnering openly delegate decision making to those people on the team who are actually responsible for implementation. Representatives of each stakeholder organization involved in the dispute commit to a good faith effort to resolve the dispute among themselves. When decisions cannot be delegated to the team, issues are quickly elevated up the line for resolution at the first appropriate management level.

“It appeared to some that [one of the] participants had not been empowered by their supervisors or managers to make decisions. It made what could have been a productive meeting into a non-productive meeting, and caused a lot of extra meetings after the fact.”

– Participant in Yorktown Naval Weapons Station Partnering

The best approach to resolving disputes is to prevent them.

Partnering is itself a tool for dispute prevention. When people from all stakeholders are brought together on the ground, they can identify and resolve disputes before they escalate into organizational confrontation. Failure to address an issue quickly can lead to festering ill will, making resolution more difficult. Far more resources are needed to solve a problem when it is permitted to go unchecked.

“One benefit of partnering is that from the start we all have a clear understanding of who is responsible for what. This is a significant benefit because it cuts down on the potential for conflict. The consequences of conflict are much worse than the original problem, particularly if the problem is allowed to fester.”

– Participant in Bayou Bonfouca Partnering

Shared responsibility involves shared risks and benefits.

All partnering participants build a sense of responsibility toward the overall success of the project. This shared responsibility expresses itself in a commitment to the goals defined by the team and a willingness to pitch in and help solve other organization’s problems if that is what is needed to make the project successful. This commitment to team goals is reinforced by creating incentives for team success. The nature of the incentives depends on the project and often requires creativity and a willingness to find new ways of doing things. But incentives are meaningless unless there is also joint acceptance of the risks. The goals will not be achieved if all parties benefit when things go well, but only one party suffers if things go badly.

Partnering requires open communication and flexible boundaries.

Openness, honesty, and clear communication channels are needed for partnering to be effective. Frequently this requires more than just a positive

attitude; it also requires the removal of organizational barriers. In most bureaucratic organizations, patterns of communication are highly structured. Review and approval is required before organizational lines can be crossed. In partnering, every effort is made to remove these barriers, and teams report dramatically increased efficiency and reduced frustration.

Partnering strives to minimize artificial distinctions between organizations and instead create a team that works together to solve problems. In effect, partnering requires flexible boundaries between the organizations and reduction of the “not-invented-here” attitude that so often prevails when organizations try to work together. Every participant has access to technical information and may arrive at ideas to solve problems. Ideas are considered on their merits.

“I think our relationship was somewhat guarded in the past. . . . We were all searching for better ways to do business together. I think both sides recognized that we needed to find an alternative means to approach things.”

— Participant in Yorktown Naval Weapons Station Partnering

Partners maximize each other's resources.

In partnering, organizations work together to maximize each other's resources and produce a synergy that is superior to their individual efforts. The outcome is greater than the sum of its parts.

Conclusion

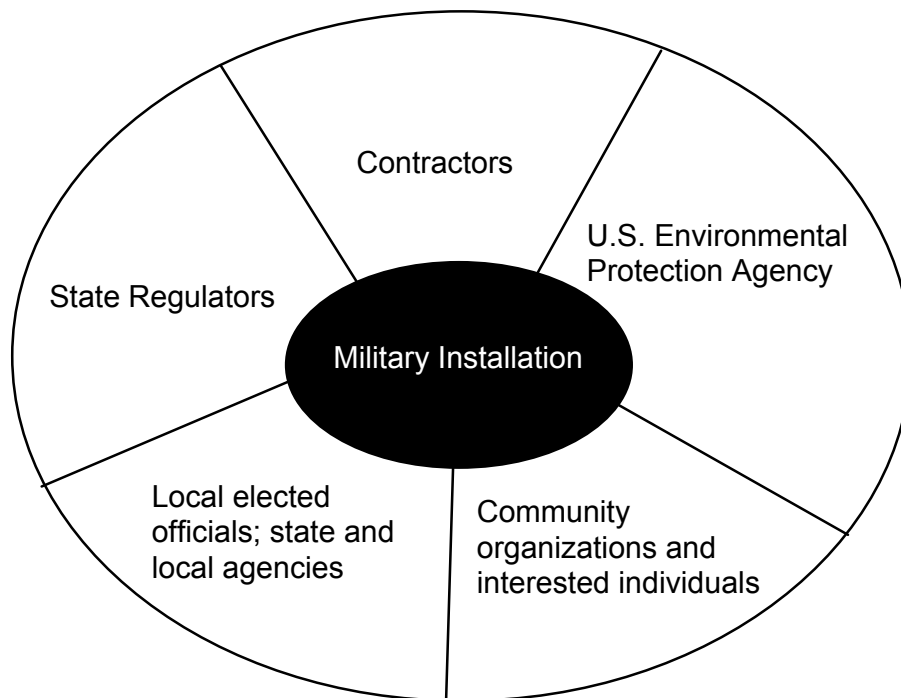
Partnering is a proven tool for dramatically improving working relationships between agencies and organizations that share a common interest in the success of an endeavor. The result can be a solution that is better than could be achieved by any of the organizations acting alone. Above all, by participating in solving problems, all organizations have a commitment to successful implementation.

CHAPTER 3

WHO ARE THE PARTNERS?

Environmental programs at military installations involve a variety of relationships that might be improved by partnering. Figure 3 shows the potential relationships. Installations may participate in partnering with contractors, regulators, state or local governments, or community groups and individuals.

Figure 3. Partners



Partnering with Contractors

Until recently, virtually all DoD partnering has taken place in connection with construction projects. Although not every partnering effort has been completely successful, partnering with contractors has generally proven useful in building a shared commitment to cost reduction, keeping to schedule, and accident prevention. Partnering has proven valuable in finding creative solutions that are in the interests of both DoD and the contractors. Since much of the environmental program is accomplished through contractors, there is considerable potential for partnering with contractors throughout the environmental mission.

The contract award process remains, of course, competitive. Under current procurement procedures, a Request for Proposal may discuss DoD's desire to engage in partnering but need not make partnering a requirement. Experience suggest that a procurement process that takes into account the experience of the contractor, rather than awarding the contract solely on a least-cost basis, produces a situation that is more amenable to partnering. Also, it is easier to create incentives for cost reductions or other efficiencies brought about by partnering if the contract itself is a Cost Plus Fixed Fee contract, rather than a Fixed Price Contract.

In the few instances where partnering has not been fully successful, one of the major problems has been employee turnover. In the Baird & McGuire case presented in Chapter 4, the contractor had virtually complete employee turnover, and the contractor's project manager changed a number of times. Under such conditions, most of the benefits of partnering are lost. Based on these experiences, employee turnover might well be a discussion topic in the partnering.

Partnering represents a change in the "arms-length" relationship that has traditionally been maintained with the contractor. This arms-length relationship has too often turned into building a "paper wall" to prepare for potential litigation, rather than solving problems. Often litigation has resulted from the soured relationships that resulted when the arms-length approach turned into an adversarial relationship.

The arms-length approach emphasizes the differences in the interests of DoD and the contractor. Partnering emphasizes the many common interests. But differences will occur. DoD does not relinquish its responsibility to enforce contracts nor its ethical obligations when it enters into partnering. In fact, differences should be explicitly discussed during partnering. But the shared interests of both parties are often better served by building a team.

Both the Corps of Engineers and the Naval Facilities Engineering Command have produced guides on partnering with contractors.

Partnering with Regulators

Historically, regulators have chosen to maintain a similar arms-length relationship with DoD, for many of the same reasons. Often the result is the same: Much energy is expended justifying positions and often there is more litigation than cleanup. In actuality, DoD and the regulators both want the same thing – effective cleanup at a reasonable cost to taxpayers and an effective program of compliance, pollution prevention, and conservation. Partnering is a tool for making certain that DoD and the regulators meet these objectives with minimal time and energy wasted due to "case-building."

Many of the case studies in Chapter 4 illustrate the benefits and the challenges of partnering with regulators, a relatively new application of partnering. The case studies also demonstrate that there is considerable promise and opportunity for innovation.

The willingness of regulators to enter into partnering is based largely on their confidence that the DoD entity is committed to an effective program. If that commitment is in doubt, regulators may be fearful that partnering undercuts their authority to impose necessary compliance. In examples such as the McClellan Air Force Base partnering, in which management of the cleanup program is virtually a joint responsibility, the relationship is built on DoD's demonstrated willingness to address the problems at the site.

At present, regional offices of EPA differ somewhat in their attitudes towards partnering, as do state regulators. This may change as familiarity with partnering grows, more success stories occur, and more training takes place.

Partnering with the Public

One of the potential new applications of partnering is with state and local agencies and interested individuals and groups from the community. Advocates for this use of partnering argue that it is a way to channel stakeholder participation productively. By including interested individuals and groups in decision making, potential critics may become supporters of environmental programs. Concern has been expressed, however, that this approach can make partners out of people who do not have any ultimate responsibility for implementing the program or being certain that the problem is solved.

Certainly there is little point in building an open, trusting, and empowered relationship with other agencies only to have implementation blocked by citizens who have been left out of the process. The Baird & McGuire remediation project in Massachusetts illustrates this dilemma. Partnering on the project has been effective in limiting claims, bringing flexibility to fixed price contracting issues, and overcoming an adversarial legacy. The partnering team includes a community member even though the team knows that most of the community is opposed to the project.

A similar situation exists in the New Bedford Harbor remediation project. Community representatives were not included in the partnering team because the local populace was not well organized or tied into local government, and because the general community feeling was against the project from the beginning. Incineration and ash disposal phases at the site may be suspended indefinitely because of local opposition.

On the other hand, on the Bayou Bonfouca National Priorities List Site, test burns have occurred and the project is three years ahead of schedule. In this case, EPA conducted a stakeholder involvement process that complemented the partnering process. EPA was chosen to take the lead because it was believed that the agency would be the most credible organization to the community. Several community concerns identified during this process led to the selection of mitigation measures that were satisfactory to the community, thereby permitting the test burns to take place.

Based on these cases, the question is not whether interested members of the public should be consulted – they should be – but whether partnering is the appropriate vehicle or whether utilizing stakeholder involvement would be more effective, or some combination of the two.

Stakeholders are those individuals or groups whose support or opposition could make a difference in whether a program is implemented and who are willing to commit the time, energy, and resources to influence the decision.

The difference between partnering and stakeholder involvement lies in the level of commitment necessary from the start. In partnering, the commitment to be a part of the team and ensure that the project is a success is made up front. Each team member has his or her personal reputation and that of their organization on the line from the beginning. In return, they have a full seat at the table. In stakeholder involvement, individuals and groups have many opportunities to influence decisions, but each group waits until it sees the final decision before deciding whether it will “get on board.” Individuals and groups have less control over the decision, but they also have the freedom to criticize it once it is made.

There may be situations where partnering is an appropriate tool for involving individuals and groups from the community. In other circumstances, DoD may be unwilling to extend formal “partnering” to organized groups but will consult with them closely via other forums. In some circumstances, stakeholders themselves will be unwilling to enter into partnering, for fear they will be “co-opted” or lose their independence.

If a DoD facility decides against including individuals or groups from the community through partnering, then it should consider developing a stakeholder involvement program. The stakeholder program should be interactive, providing opportunities for the community to genuinely influence the decision, even though the final decision is retained by the partnering agencies.

Examples of a stakeholder involvement approach are the Restoration Advisory Boards (RAB) currently being established at DoD sites. These RABs are jointly sponsored by EPA and DoD, and are intended to bring together people who reflect diverse interests within a local community. The boards will provide advice to installation decision makers in an effort to accelerate cleanup and/or conversion of the installation. Guidance issued by EPA and DoD explicitly states: "While the RAB consists of community members, the RAB is not the public and the DoD installations must continue to fulfill statutorily mandated public involvement requirements."⁵

The use of advisory groups and task forces is constrained by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Specifically, any advisory group that strives to reach a consensus falls under the act, and Department of Defense and Office of Management and Budget approval are required to establish the committee. Members of RABs will provide advice as individuals and will not attempt to reach a group consensus. Thus the RABs will not come under FACA.

A variety of other approaches to stakeholder involvement could be employed. Among them are community workshops, public meetings, interviews, and public information techniques.

Conclusion

Partnering with contractors is a proven approach, with considerable potential for application to DoD's environmental mission. Partnering with regulators is a new application that holds considerable promise. At present, the interests of state regulators and EPA regions in partnering is evolving.

One potential use is to provide a forum for addressing the concerns of state and local governments, as well as community groups and private individuals. Building relationships between agencies makes little sense if the program fails because of community opposition or failure to involve communities in the decision-making process. Both stakeholder involvement and partnering are useful vehicles for obtaining the commitment of local governments and communities to workable implementation plans.

⁵ Restoration Advisory Board Implementation Guidelines, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Defense, Draft Version 2.2 (May 1994).

CHAPTER 4

PARTNERING IN ACTION

DoD use of partnering in environmental decisions is growing at the national, installation, and project levels. An oversight panel of representatives from Air Force, Navy, Army, and DoD recently conducted an appraisal of partnering throughout the Services. Interviews were conducted at sites representing a variety of circumstances in which partnering is used within DoD. Seven cases are reported here. Some are still in progress, and future events could change the midstream evaluation of the effectiveness of these uses of partnering.

The case summaries cover these basic topics:

- Who was included in the partnering;
- Why partnering was initiated;
- What were the management attitudes toward partnering;
- What were the partnering activities in which the parties participated;
- What were the results of partnering; and
- What were the lessons learned.

Partnering at the Policy Level

Coastal America

Coastal America involves more than 20 federal agencies, including DoD agencies and more than 100 nonfederal partners in cooperative site-specific projects. The 10 key federal partners are the Departments of Agriculture, Defense (Air Force, Army, Navy), Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, and Transportation; the Environmental Protection Agency; and the Council on Environmental Quality. These agencies entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing them to work jointly to restore coastal environments. More than \$10 million has been committed to 24 projects in 15 states, with nonfederal partners providing a 100 percent match to federal dollars.

The partners initially established a Principals Group of members at the assistant secretary level, a National Implementation Team (NIT) mirrored by seven RITs (later expanded to nine), and a Coastal America office originally at the President's Council on Environmental Quality and currently at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Responsibility for chairing the Principals Group rotates among the members. The Principals, NIT, and RIT members meet at national workshops.

Although commitment at national levels is strong, it is perceived as uneven at the regional levels. Some difficulties with implementation have been observed at both the national and regional levels. Communications problems are most likely to occur at the middle management level, partly due to confusion over the nature of the Coastal America goals at the regional and implementation levels.

Coastal America seeks people who have already demonstrated their willingness and ability to work collaboratively and have an open mind about participating. This differs from the traditional team-building approach in which emphasis is placed on changing behavior and attitudes of participants who represent a broader cross-section of viewpoints.

Coastal America's accomplishments include developing a new national policy, preparing regional planning, and addressing a variety of local projects. Coastal America has been successful in helping enact legislation regarding a requirement that affects the nonfederal share in dredging projects. This requirement had previously blocked a number of significant projects.

The Northeast RIT adopted a strategy of integrating environmental concerns with the process of rebuilding and renovating the transportation infrastructure along the Connecticut coast. A project to restore access to historic anadromous fish spawning habitat was established in the Albemarle-Pamlico Sound watershed of North Carolina and Virginia. Permit processes have been expedited because active participation by affected federal and nonfederal stakeholders in project design encourages early resolution of potential issues.

Coastal America illustrates that partnering can be employed at the national level with a large number of actors over a diverse range of issues. It also indicates, however, that difficulties can arise in obtaining commitments to work together at the middle management level across agencies, even if senior management directs a cooperative approach.

Coastal America selects individuals who are willing to work in a cooperative manner. This case illustrates the challenge of communicating goals or outcomes developed in a spirit of partnership so that responses will be made in the same spirit by multiple layers of bureaucracy in a number of organizations.

Partnering at the Installation Level

Naval Weapons Station Yorktown

Approximately 50 sites at the Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Virginia, have been identified as contaminated, with many sites covered by both the Comprehensive

Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). The mission of the station is to load weapons. Historically, any hazardous wastes that were produced or used in this process were disposed of in the easiest possible manner. Today, it is problematic whether all the waste sites can be identified, and significant concerns exist over hazardous waste affecting the groundwater and the many wetlands on this 10,000-acre installation.

Partnering was used to develop the first Navy Federal Facilities Agreement (FFA) in Virginia. The FFA is a cooperative interagency agreement describing a step-by-step plan for the cleanup process and including deadlines for the completion of activities and penalties if those dates are missed.

Initial work on the FFA was begun without the use of partnering. The agencies involved had very different ideas about how to approach the cleanup, and each agency produced a draft version of the agreement. The team learned about the success of partnering in the construction sector and decided – since they were so far apart – to use partnering as a way to understand what each organization needed from the agreement.

The first partnering session was held in January 1993. Participants included the Navy, EPA, and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Navy showed a major commitment to the partnering process by including representatives from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, as well as two divisions. EPA sent five representatives from its regional office and a representative from EPA's headquarters. The Commonwealth of Virginia played an observer role.

Altogether, 23 people attended, and a facilitator ran the meeting. The primary focus was to identify the interests of each party and find ways to help meet those needs. By the end of the session, the participants had agreed that EPA's draft would be used as a starting point, priorities and problems had been identified, and work had been done on the issues to be addressed in the FFA. Participants were more optimistic than they had been before and were agreed that communication had been improved. No partnering charter was developed, but participants planned tentatively to sign the FFA in April 1993. (It was actually signed in May 1994.)

A second meeting was held two months after the first session and was planned as a two and one-half day business meeting, with no specific plan to foster the partnering relationship. Nor was the meeting facilitated. More than 30 people attended, including five lawyers. On the first day, the group found itself in serious disagreement and, as one individual put it, "It was as if nobody had agreed to anything." The failure to include the legal perspective at the first meeting created significant difficulties. It appeared that even people from the same agency did not have a common understanding of what had been agreed to at the first meeting. The two groups, regulators and Navy, went separately into caucus.

On the second day, the senior Naval representative (who had also been present at the partnering workshop) stepped in and served in the role of facilitator in an attempt to get the process underway once more. The group agreed to be cooperative and by the third day had salvaged a sense of willingness to work together toward an FFA document that all parties could live with.

Following that meeting, a smaller, higher level group met to set policies and define those areas where agreement could be reached. All subsequent meetings relative to preparing the FFA were telephone conference calls, with drafts sent back and forth.

Partnering efforts are planned or underway among the relevant Navy units and contractors for the actual site cleanup work at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown.

The initial working relationship was characterized by distrust coupled with a lack of understanding of each other's objectives and organizational limitations. The partnering meeting moved the group to the verge of a new kind of relationship, but the team fell back into the old relationship in the subsequent meeting. Preparing a partnering charter and summarizing agreements reached could have helped. The failure to include important players such as lawyers can create problems. The process would probably have been smoother if the organizations involved had done some partnering internally, before coming together .

McClellan Air Force Base

The McClellan story in California is one of moving from crises to collaboration, externally and internally, and from collaboration closer to partnering. Officials at McClellan Air Force Base (AFB), the highest ranked AFB on EPA's National Priorities List, first acknowledged the pollution problem in 1979. When soil and groundwater contamination was first discovered at McClellan in the early 1980s, there was a climate of distrust among the base personnel, regulatory agencies, and the public. In recent times, McClellan's environmental program has received national recognition and is touted by regulators as a model. This leadership role evolved from cooperative working arrangements that culminated in a unique voluntary partnership called the Environmental Process Improvement Center (EPIC).

EPIC is a partnership alliance made up of a loosely knit network of organizations, including McClellan AFB, EPA Region IX, and the California Environmental Protection Agency. The EPIC alliance works on environmental issues in the areas of technology, research, training, and support. Its purpose is to improve utilization of resources by streamlining management, administrative, and regulatory processes through the demonstration of technical advances.

The EPIC council is composed of key environmental leaders for the local and federal regulatory agencies and McClellan. The council and its work groups meet quarterly or more frequently to set objectives, track progress, and develop strategic plans. Innovation, long-range thinking, and challenging the status quo are frequent by-products of the council meetings.

The council participated in team-building sessions to develop cohesiveness and clarify goals and roles. These sessions advanced the “culture change” necessary to implement Total Quality Management (TQM) in environmental business. All EPIC parties now have reached consensus on the importance of customer focus and continuous process improvement.

Several tangible benefits have been realized. With EPIC as the hub, other environmental partnerships have been formed. These include the Western Governors’ Association Develop On-Site Innovative Technologies (DOIT) Partnership, the Clean Sites Public Private Partnership, and the California EPA Environmental Test Center Partnership. All are aligned with McClellan’s goal of leveraging valuable resources through partnering and using the base as a proving ground for innovative technologies. Successful joint demonstrations of new technologies, such as Dual Phase Vacuum Extraction and Soil Vapor Extraction, are underway on base.

EPIC’s informal cooperative arrangements offer the possibility of increased efficiency and effectiveness in addressing environmental concerns. In conjunction with private industry, EPIC has worked to accelerate cleanup, develop new technology, prevent pollution, and serve as a clearinghouse for technical information and public input. McClellan was recently named a National Restoration Test Site, and EPIC was praised by President Clinton.

The impetus for working collaboratively with the community was initiated by U.S. Representative Robert T. Matsui, later joined by U.S. Representative Vic Fazio. General Hammond was a strong supporter. However, commitment from the top has varied substantially in subsequent years due to normal differences in management philosophy. At the traditional manager level, partnering has sometimes been perceived as threatening, and good leadership is required from senior management on a continuing basis to overcome this perception. Sacramento Air Logistics Center (SC-ALC) is doing internal partnering, as it attempts to overcome the difficulties created by variable support from the participating organizational entities.

McClellan illustrates that crises can set in motion an evolution toward partnering. It also shows the need for continuous commitment by senior management through changes in personnel. Further, it suggests the difficulties of partnering at a large installation with divergent perspectives and interests. It also shows that internal

partnering and organizational development can be important to effective external partnering.

Marine Corps Air Base Yuma

Soil and groundwater contamination from the Marine Corps Air Base Yuma led to the establishment of a cleanup program in 1985. To date, 12 of 14 identified sites have undergone sampling. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) requested further examination, and Yuma sites were listed on EPA's National Priority List in 1990. An FFA was signed in January 1992.

After the agreement was signed, the program struggled. Subsequently, the Navy Southwestern Division Facilities Engineering Command decided to use partnering on all Southwestern Division (SW) sites. The SW Division empowered project level team members. The participants included the Navy Southwestern Division Facilities Engineering Command, EPA, ADEQ, and the prime contractor. A key stakeholder, contracting/procurement, was left out, and this ultimately led to delays in contracting.

The ADEQ enforcement person supported partnering and remarked how easy it was to establish better relationships with others on the team. However, the ADEQ organization apparently had mixed feelings about partnering.

The initial meeting, employing an outside facilitator, lasted two days and included team-building exercises, communication and trust building, identification of common goals, and development of critical performance elements.

Several follow-up sessions have been held, using videotapes on topics relating to team building and communication. A "refresher" meeting was also held. Subsequently, new people have replaced the original partnering team and have updated the performance process. However, many feel that the process degenerated during the first year.

The partnering process allowed FFA deadlines to be revised without violating laws. Understanding of the interests and needs of the other parties, especially those of DoD and regulators, has grown.

The experience at Yuma shows that partnering can work despite differing levels of senior management support, but it would have worked better with full support. The Yuma partnering also indicates the importance of a process for initiating replacement team members and the need for someone at higher levels to be closely involved with the project to help new members. Some participants complained that team building took too much time and created a greater sense of empowerment than was realistic. The

Yuma case also shows the importance of doing a stakeholder assessment so that critical interests are not left out.

Reese Air Force Base

As with most AFBs, Reese in Texas initiated environmental cleanup efforts in the early 1980s at the beginning of the Installation Restoration Program (IRP). Reese is not on EPA's National Priority List; however, early investigation and cleanup efforts were established under CERCLA. As a result, both federal and state environmental laws are considered when appropriate and applicable. IRP studies concluded that groundwater and soil at 13 sites on the base were contaminated with chlorinated solvents and jet fuel products. The most significant groundwater contamination is believed to be associated with flightline maintenance activities where discharges of chlorinated solvents occurred. By mid-1993, a variety of coordination problems had been experienced. Much time, effort, and money was expended with minimal results.

Historically, the IRP at Reese AFB was centrally managed at the Major Command (Randolph AFB), and no IRP staff members were located at Reese. In the early 1990s, decisions were made to restructure IRP project management at Reese. In mid-1993, a full-time IRP Remedial Project Manager was hired with the intent that management of the IRP at Reese would become an installation function rather than remain as a Major Command function.

To resolve problems associated with regulatory agency coordination, a two-day environmental partnering seminar was held at Reese in June 1993. Attending that meeting were the Reese AFB principal stakeholders (commanders and project managers); HQ Air Education and Training Command (AETC); USACE (service agent); Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), the state regulatory agency; and EPA. The meeting was conducted by USACE and was modeled after similar partnering meetings held by USACE prior to the beginning of major construction projects. A professional facilitator led the meeting, and the theme was "Fix the Problem, Not the Blame."

After an overview of partnering, the meeting members proceeded through norm identification, goal identification as separate groups, work team development, and goal identification as a team. This process led to drafting of a partnering agreement, which was followed by review, signing of the agreement, and planning to meet the partnering objectives. Participants agreed that the meeting was an extremely useful session. A copy of the one-page agreement was enlarged on fluorescent yellow poster paper and hangs in the IRP office at Reese AFB.

The partnering work group adopted the name “Reese AFB Environmental Restoration Working Group” (ERWG) and meets once a month, rotating the location of the meeting to reduce the travel burden. During these meetings, attention is given to the process of partnering. When circumstances cause the group to reach an impasse, reference to the partnering goals usually helps bring the group back on track. Participants have not observed a need for a formal follow-up partnering workshop. New members are “informally socialized” into the group.

ERWG members agree that partnering has been successful at Reese AFB with respect to all aspects of the IRP, including resolution of a number of issues related to IRP investigations. It is anticipated that partnering will be carried into the construction of a remedial action projects. The USACE project managers noted that individual partnering agreements will be developed for each “construction project.”

Through the partnering agreement, Reese AFB solicits regulatory concurrence in prioritizing IRP projects. Due in part to the partnering processes, Air Force and regulatory project managers are becoming more proactive and are anticipating (rather than reacting to) project needs. Through candid exchanges between Air Force and regulatory decision makers, issues such as institutional limitations on both sides are becoming better understood, as are the challenges facing environmental restoration at military bases. Improved understanding translates into a willingness to work together to complete the cleanup job.

At the policy level, Reese AFB lobbied the TNRCC to adopt a state policy to use state risk reduction regulations in association with the EPA “contained in” policy to define a more fiscally defensible mechanism for disposal of Investigation Derived Wastes. At the project level, Reese AFB and TNRCC have resolved virtually all technical issues relevant to an administrative order on consent (for corrective action), which will be issued by TNRCC.

Members have found the monthly partnering meetings to be productive. Even if agenda topics for the next meeting are not identified at the conclusion of a session, subjects usually arise during the month that warrant the next meeting. In fact, most members believe that progress is slowed when a monthly meeting is skipped. Members of the ERWG come from technical backgrounds, and participation by legal staff is rare. Most members also believe that cleanup progress is hastened through “decision by consensus of ERWG members” rather than unilateral decisions. Most also believe that the partnering process should have started earlier.

The members agree that success is dependent on the individuals in the partnering work group. Partnering works best when members work to define common goals and build confidence that all members are working toward achieving those goals. Several

have stated that successes would be harder to come by without regular face-to-face contact.

The Reese AFB experience illustrates the utility of IRP-level partnering and also the difficulty of making the transition from Air Force policy to completed projects.

Partnering at the Project Level

Baird & McGuire National Priorities List Site

The Baird & McGuire Site (B&M) is located 10 miles south of Boston. Twenty years ago, the well water in communities surrounding Baird & McGuire was found to be contaminated with dioxin. All wells were closed, and the community was forced to find other sources of drinking water. Higher than usual levels of cancer have appeared in adjoining communities, and the site is high on the National Priorities List.

The project has three construction phases, beginning with Phase 1 site preparation and construction of a groundwater treatment plant. In Phase 2, the USACE is working with EPA and contractors to construct and install an on-site incinerator. Phase 3 consists of diverting a small river, excavating polluted sediments, and then returning the river to its bed. Phase 1 is completed, and construction of Phase 2 began in 1992. Construction of the incinerator was slated to take one year with subsequent operation to last for two to three years depending on production efficiencies. The work is being accomplished under a firm fixed price service contract valued at approximately \$58 million.

Nine months into the incineration segment of the B&M remediation project, the parties were in an adversarial position. Project completion was in doubt, and public concerns were growing. Despite the objections of some project team members, partnering was begun in an attempt to assure that the project would go forward. Participants in the partnering workshop included EPA; the State of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection; the Baird & McGuire Citizens Task Force, representing a segment of the local citizenry; and the USACE New England Division. Although one segment of the local populace is represented, the USACE project manager indicated that the majority of the public are, and have been, against the project.

The USACE, using EPA funds, and the contractor shared the costs of the partnering workshop. An external facilitator was engaged, and a one and one-half day formal workshop was held in April 1993. The agenda covered basic elements of partnering according to the USACE partnering model. The format, however, did not allow for full development of those elements, and some participants did not attend the entire session. Working relationships had had nine months to fester into a "very adversarial situation," so participants entered the workshop with a negative experience coloring their

openness to partnering. The workshop did result in a signed partnering agreement, and work continues on the project.

The contractor's original site staff definitely felt empowered, but numerous personnel changes have strained the partnering relationship. No plans were made for follow-up meetings. However, the contractor has indicated a desire for a final meeting to evaluate the effectiveness of partnering on this project, although none of the contractor's original site personnel remain on the project.

The partnering team now conducts task force meetings to which the community is invited. Early meetings were well attended, but attendance slacked off as the project progressed, and the issues became more technical.

As of April 1994, there have been no claims on the project. One dispute arose and was satisfactorily handled through the use of an alternative dispute resolution process. It is not clear whether the project will be completed as scheduled. The test burn has been postponed because of public concerns over the safety of incineration as a process to remove contaminants.

Some working relationships between USACE site staff and environmental regulators have become more open and effective as a result of partnering. It has also helped in dealing with a fixed price contract and has enabled partners to find approaches that helped the contractor. This good working relationship served to enhance the credibility of the project within the community, at least until concerns about incineration as a safe process were raised.

The B&M case shows the utility of beginning partnering soon after the notice to proceed. A history of negative experience makes it difficult for a climate of trust and open communication to develop. New project personnel need to be informed about partnering and what it means for their own activities and responsibilities. It is important that the highest level person representing each stakeholder group at the initial partnering session remain involved in the project.

One of the lessons learned is that success cannot be measured solely by improvements in internal operations. The challenge is to get the project operational, and this requires public support. It is also important to involve members of the public, even on technical issues. Team members observed that it is helpful to have individuals with good "people skills" on the project. This helps not only in the project working groups, but also when interacting with the local community.

The Baird & McGuire case illustrates the problems created by personnel turnover and the importance of trying to find ways to bring new personnel into the partnering team. It shows how a good relationship between government agencies can affect

interactions with the community. It also illustrates how different organizational structures among the partners can make partnering difficult.

New Bedford Harbor

The remediation of the New Bedford National Priorities List project consists of five sequential components: site preparation; construction of a water treatment plant; dredging of contaminated materials and water treatment with filters, settling, and ultraviolet light; incineration; and ash disposal and capping the disposal site. Dredging began in April 1994, but the incineration and ash disposal phases may be suspended indefinitely because of local opposition.

The USACE New England Division is managing the contract for EPA. All five components are part of one fixed price contract that was awarded in August 1992 to a contractor selected for expertise, not as the lowest qualified bidder. The contract contained a clause indicating that the partnering process would be used on the project.

Because of the high visibility of the project, a partnering workshop was held in June 1993 on the job site and jointly facilitated by the USACE Chief of Construction and the president and CEO of the contractor. Because the group was already working well together, the short sessions skipped many of the team-building activities and focused on identifying perceived objectives common to all. A signed partnering agreement was produced.

Stakeholders who participated in the workshop included EPA; Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection; USACE New England Division; and the contractor selected to undertake the work. As mentioned earlier, community representatives were not included because the local populace was not well organized or tied into local government and general community feeling was against the project from the beginning.

EPA representatives supported partnering but were not fully convinced that it was necessary. The USACE and its chief of construction were familiar with and endorsed the use of partnering on this project. The contractor CEO and vice president supported partnering.

In addition to the individuals mentioned above, participants included the site project manager, project controller, project engineer, and site safety and health officer. USACE representatives also included the contracting officer, project manager, resident engineer, engineer, mechanical engineer, construction manager, and office engineer. The remedial project manager represented EPA.

Although no follow-up partnering sessions have been held, the almost continuous flow of information between USACE and the contractor has enabled the latter and its subcontractor to mitigate costs relative to the incineration phase of the project, which had already been delayed eight months by bid protests and a regulatory rule change. By April 1994 there had been some change orders and modifications to the contract but no claims.

Participants say that partnering is working on the project level, but it is not getting support at program and policy levels, primarily from the regulators. The small number of individuals involved and the strong commitment by USACE and the contractor's senior management were seen as major reasons for the smooth functioning of the partnering process relative to the physical aspects of the project.

New Bedford demonstrates the danger of evaluating partnering success primarily in terms of contractor-government relationships. The case also illustrates the utility of writing partnering into the construction project. It shows, however, that cost savings from improved relationships become meaningless if the project cannot be built because of community opposition. It suggests the importance of relating community involvement to the partnering process.

Bayou Bonfouca

Bayou Bonfouca is a remediation project in Louisiana that is required because creosote washed into the bayou and seeped into the groundwater. The site is on EPA's National Priorities List. The project consists of two phases: the first is running trial burns, and the second includes pumping and cleaning the groundwater, and excavating the plant site and the bottom of the bayou to prepare for incineration.

Partnering was introduced by participants who had prior good experiences using the process on other construction jobs. In fact, the USACE Chief of Construction was a champion of partnering. Participants at the initial partnering workshop included EPA, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), USACE New Orleans Division, and the contractor. In all, 23 participated for one and a half days.

The contractor and USACE shared the cost of the initial workshop. Participants developed subordinate objectives that would represent success for all stakeholders. They identified team norms, including mutual respect, openness, honesty, trust, professionalism, team playing, understanding the other position, and "walking the talk." They also discussed barriers to team effectiveness, produced a partnering agreement, and developed a partnering evaluation form.

One and half years into the project, the team held a self-facilitated partnering “booster shot” at which they celebrated successes and delineated outstanding issues. The team employs the partnering agreement as a constant symbolic reminder used for reference when issues arise.

The project is expected to be completed early than scheduled, and few modifications and claims have arisen. One reason is that EPA carried out a public involvement program that produced satisfactory mitigation measures for the burning.

The case shows that partnering can be useful when working on a job with significant complexity. Partnering helped establish a clear understanding of responsibilities. Information, such as sample agreements, was sent to participants prior to the partnering workshop. Participants felt that the good relationships they built will last through the operational stages.

Bonfouca illustrates that partnering can produce significant savings even on projects that are highly controversial. It also shows the importance of explicitly sharing interests and goals and developing joint statements of partnering norms. It suggests the effectiveness of formal means of evaluating the process and demonstrates the symbolic importance of the partnering agreement. Although showing respect for the law, it also shows that the law need not be constraining.

Conclusion

The selected cases illustrate uniqueness and commonalities in partnering approaches. Partnering is undertaken for many reasons, such as the high visibility of a project, existing adversarial relations, prior successes with partnering, or pressure from regulators or political figures.

At a minimum, the partners usually include state and federal regulatory agencies, contractors, DoD installation representatives, project representatives, and other federal agencies. Often the question arises as to other participants who should be included. Attitudes toward partnering are variable among regulators and can also vary within installations and projects, especially given personnel turnover. Outside facilitation is generally used, but internal facilitators are sometimes employed instead, especially after the process has begun.

The most successful partnering efforts develop joint statements of norms, institute internal evaluations, develop and actively refer to a charter, and establish joint goals. It is important to devise means to sustain the partnering effort. A follow-up process is critical. One way to improve follow-up is to link into other processes, such as continuous quality management.

These studies affirm the ability of partnering to produce tangible results. Litigation can be avoided, project completion can be speeded, and claims reduced. Open communication and trust are enhanced. Permits can be accelerated and legislation promulgated. Partnering can bring flexibility to problems that appear to be intractable.

CHAPTER 5

A "HOW TO " GUIDE TO PARTNERING

This chapter provides guidance on how to carry out the basic steps in the partnering process. Since partnering is a rapidly evolving field, this information can be seen as a framework from which to build partnering processes to fit specific circumstances.

The major steps in the partnering process are displayed in Figure 4. The following are suggestions for how to implement each of the steps.

Initiating the Process

The first step is for one of the parties to invite the others to participate in partnering. There is no standard way to make the first approach. Sometimes partnering is proposed by senior officials, other times by mid-level people or an organization's attorneys.

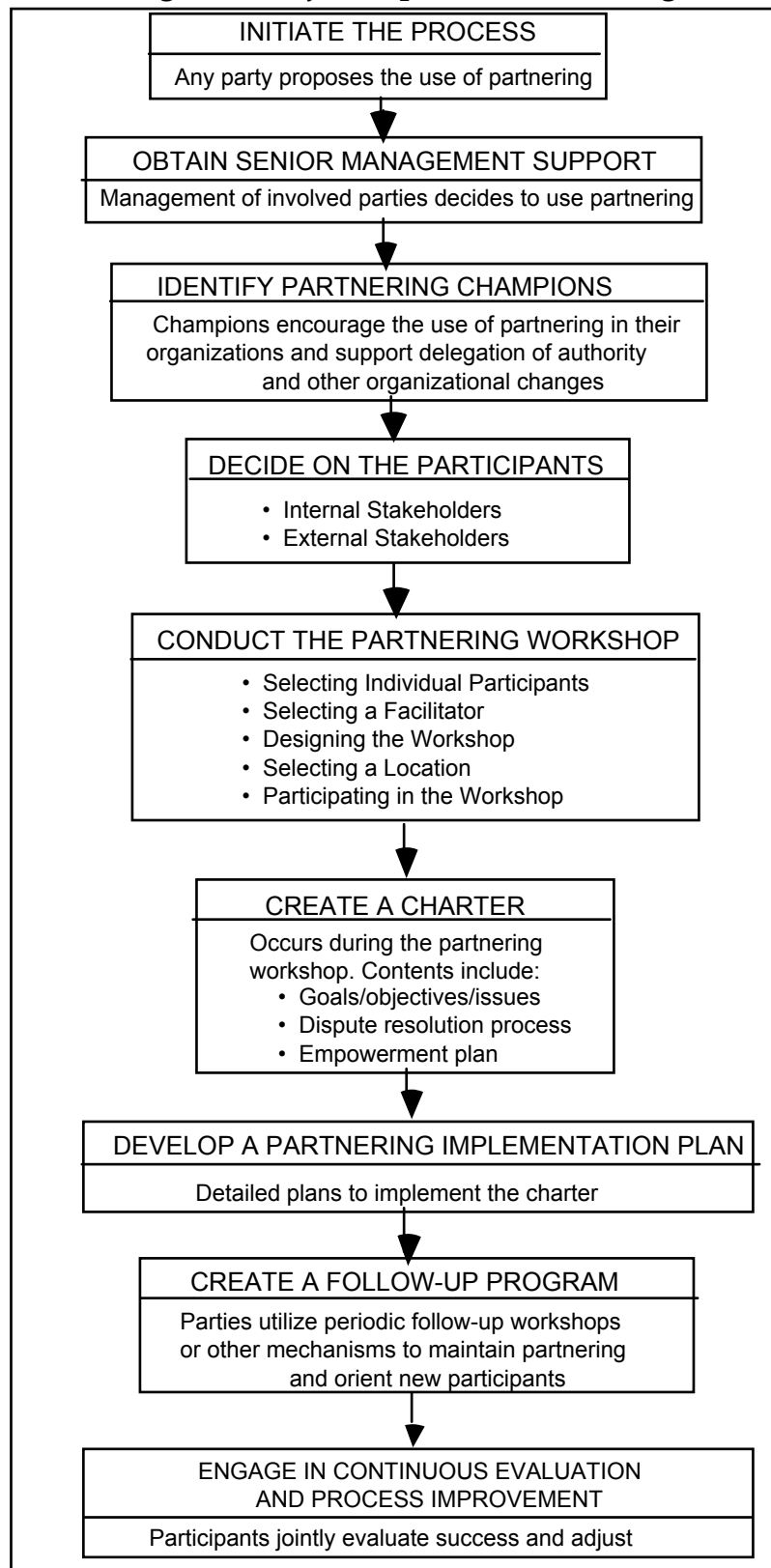
Many potential partners will be predisposed to enter into partnering because they have heard about it from other sources. The Construction Industry Institute, for example, actively encourages contractors to engage in partnering. A number of regions of EPA have already entered into partnering agreements and are enthusiastic, as is EPA management. DoD elements have partnering relationships established with EPA and state regulatory agencies in Florida, California, Massachusetts, Texas, Missouri, and other states.

Partnering is something entered into voluntarily. If people are talked into partnering but don't really believe in it, this will show up in a lack of commitment during the partnering.

Obtaining Senior Management Support

As a starting point, copies of this guide could be provided to prospective partners for distribution to management. If the management of any of the parties is uncertain whether to commit to partnering, the most credible source of information will be another manager (preferably of equivalent level or higher) who has had experience with partnering. A meeting of senior managers from the potential participating organizations could be held, or managers from another organization that has used partnering could meet. Participants can then ask questions and begin to talk among themselves. An alternative is to bring in a partnering consultant who can explain the process. This is somewhat less credible because the managers see the consultant as "selling" partnering, but this approach does get managers talking to each other.

Figure 4. Major Steps in the Partnering Process



Two Levels of Management Support

“I am totally convinced that we have the support of the Base Commander. I feel as if our people have been delegated the authority to take care of problems.”

∞ ∞ ∞

“My management calls partnering ‘hand holding,’ but they let us try it to see if it helps.”

– From the Reese AFB Partnering

Identifying Partnering Champions

Most people who have been involved in partnering talk about the need for a champion to sell the process. The champion actively encourages the use of partnering throughout the organization and defends it if it comes under attack. This means that the champion must make a personal commitment; the role must be heart-felt. He or she is most likely to be found in an organizational role that places a high value on what partnering can accomplish (e.g., a chief of construction or an attorney who supports a preventive approach to dispute resolution) or uses similar tools and concepts (such as TQM).

At the operational level, champions make a commitment to keep track of and care for the process itself. This means providing administrative and logistic support, distributing information, setting up follow-up meetings, making sure that plans are prepared, tracking completion, and thinking about how the team could work together more effectively. Ideally, at least one person in each partnering organization will take responsibility. If only one person on the team, or one organization, plays this role, the danger is that other participants will soon see that person or organizations as responsible for the partnering and avoid taking personal responsibility for its success.

Deciding on the Participants

Increasingly, partnering involves numerous parties. In cleanup programs, the partnering team typically consists of the DoD agency, the state regulator, and EPA. But

the partnering team could also be expanded to include additional entities such as other federal, state, or local officials; or, under some circumstances, private individuals or community organizations such as environmental groups or landowners.

The advantage of including stakeholders in partnering is that by participating in the process they will become more committed to making the program happen. This may speed up implementation significantly. But to make it work, stakeholders must be given a real seat at the table. This means extending them the same commitments provided to other partners: mutually supporting each other's goals, resolving issues by collaborative problem solving whenever possible, and, when there are disputes, employing agreed-upon dispute resolution methods.

Internal Stakeholders

A starting point in identifying stakeholders is to think of the representatives of each organization as being embedded in a web of existing relationships, as shown in Figure 5. At the heart of the "web" are the partnering team members, the people directly involved in the immediate project. Each of these team members reports back to another organizational team (a "home" team) whose support may be important both to the effectiveness of the individual team members and the enterprise itself.

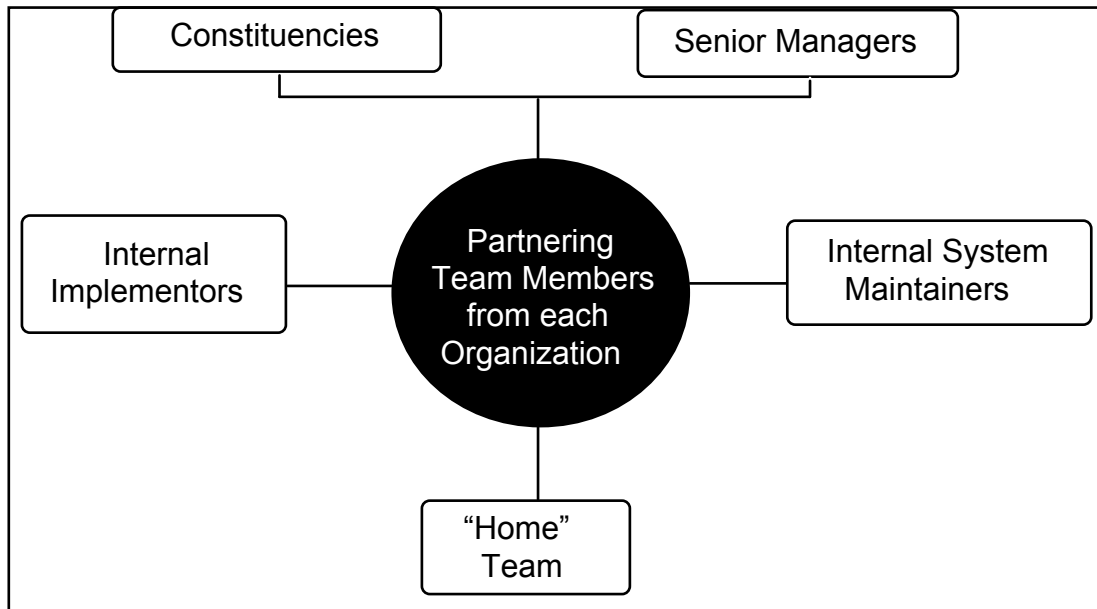
The partnering team also reports to a senior manager, who is likely to respond both to external constituencies (groups/interests) and internal constituencies (other senior managers). These constituencies may react strongly to the idea of the organization working in a partnering relationship, or to specific decisions made by the team. The team will need to rely upon other parts of their own organization for assistance in implementing the program. Each organization also has people whose job is to maintain important systems such as procurement, legal, and human resources. Each of these systems must conform to policies and regulations. The partnering team may be calling on many of the "system maintainers" to help them arrive at new ways to partner more efficiently and effectively.

Each of these relationships brings resources to the partnering enterprise, but also puts constraints on the ability of individual members of the partnership team to act.

If all the potential internal stakeholders in the partnering workshop are included, the number might be very large. On the other hand, if key internal stakeholders continue to operate in an adversarial model, sustaining the teamwork necessary for effective partnering becomes difficult. So choices about which internal stakeholders are most likely to have an impact on the project need to be made. Some partnering teams accommodated a large number of organizational stakeholders in partnering workshops by having multiple sessions or reserving the partnering workshop for those who will be

a continuing part of the partnering team, but holding briefings or training sessions on the principles of partnering and the goals upon which the partnering team has agreed.

Figure 5. The Web of Organizational Relationships



External Stakeholders

As the cases in Chapter 4 illustrate, partnering on most environmental cleanup projects involves a DoD agency, EPA, and the state regulator as the core team. The main question is whether to include other federal, state, or local agencies, or private organizations (e.g., environmental or business groups) or individuals (e.g., affected landowners, adjoining residents, etc.). At McClellan Air Force Base, numerous community organizations play an active role through task forces and public involvement programs, but the core team remains the three agencies. The Coastal America partnership includes a number of federal agencies and works with – but does not include as formal partners – a number of local agencies and private organizations.

“If we had included a contract person as part of the team, it would have gone much faster because of the heavy workload in Contracting.”

– From the Yuma Marine Corps Base Partnering

The Baird & McGuire study includes the co-chair of the Baird & McGuire Citizens Task Force in partnering meetings.

When there are external stakeholders, the real choice is whether to use partnering, stakeholder involvement, or some combination of the two. Stakeholders could be seen as those who have an economic stake in the decision, those who could gain or lose use of a resource, those who have legal responsibility to oversee the program (e.g., regulatory entities) or whose mandate is impacted (e.g., local governments), those who believe their health or safety could be impacted, or those who are concerned about the philosophy or values that guide the decision.

Depending on the issue, “stakeholders” could be highly organized and well-funded organizations or groups, or they may be just a group of neighbors who are afraid the program is going to affect them. The key is that they believe their lives or the interests of their organization are affected somehow by the decision.

The stakeholders change with each issue. A decision about an environmental cleanup issue may be of interest primarily to other federal agencies, state regulatory agencies, local governments, interest groups representing environmental or economic interests, and people living near the facility. But if the issue involves transportation of weapons, then new people, groups, and organizations – those living near roads along which the weapons may travel – will become stakeholders.

Stakeholders also seek different levels of involvement. It helps to think about stakeholders in terms of orbits of interest or involvement. In the inner orbit, we find those we call “co-decision makers” – such as other agencies or organizations with a legal or financial stake in the outcome. Included might be regulatory agencies, tribal governments, or contractors. At the next orbit are agencies or groups that review the technical adequacy of the work but are not directly involved in the decision being made. A third orbit is that of the active participants, which might include such organizations as:

- Citizens from communities adjoining the installation;
- Property owners who may be affected;
- Environmental groups and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs);
and
- Business and community organizations concerned with economic development or land-use planning.

The co-decision makers, reviewers, and active participants are those that are most often thought of as “stakeholder groups.” They will normally participate as a matter of course, and the challenge is to find a way to channel their participation productively.

Still further out in the orbit are people who write letters or may show up at public meetings. They could be called the “observers.” They are the people who read the newspaper or watch television, and may even belong to private organizations, but do not become personally involved unless they are convinced that something is going fundamentally wrong. Otherwise they are willing to allow the active participants to represent them.

The following are some criteria for consideration when deciding which stakeholders to include:

The potential participant brings something to the table.

When partnering involves a DoD agency and a contractor, both parties bring resources with them, and both will share in the risks and benefits from the decisions made. This is also true when regulators are involved. Even if regulators bring no new financial resources, they lend their credibility, which is an asset they want to protect and can be at risk. Stakeholder groups bring whatever political capital they have to expend with elected officials, the media, and others.

The potential participant shows willingness to make an up-front commitment to be part of the team.

Many stakeholder groups are accustomed to waiting to see what decision is made and then deciding whether to support it. Partnering offers these groups a chance to influence the decision, but in return they are asked to make a commitment. Representatives of single-interest groups often feel that just by admitting the legitimacy of other interests they water down the potency of their own position. They have to move past this threshold to be a partner.

The potential participant makes the commitment of time and resources necessary to take part.

It takes time and money to participate in a partnering process. It doesn't work for any partner to be there only part of the time. If other agencies, individuals, or groups are unwilling to make this commitment, the partnering process will flounder.

The interested group is well-defined and organized.

An interested group of people – neighbors, for example – may have a legitimate interest in the decision, but not be part of an organized group. It is difficult to include an unorganized group of people in partnering. It is important to ask, Who can make commitments on behalf of the group? How would it be determined whether the group

is fully representative? Sometimes an existing organization, such as a homeowners' association, can represent neighbors. But often the officers of the association were elected without any connection to the issue at hand and so may not be representative.

Agreement must exist that the potential participant represents the group or interests that the participant claims to represent.

Partners should be able to make binding commitments and also maintain commitment to the philosophy and principles of partnering. Community or environmental interests are often represented by more than one group, each with a slightly different focus or political philosophy. It is often not clear whether an environmental representative, for example, can make commitments for the entire environmental community. One option is to convene the groups and ask them to select someone to represent them. But there must be full commitment to partnering, not merely an agreement to send a representative. It is useful for groups to put mechanisms in place to ensure that the representative continues to represent the will of their groups.

If the process will include stakeholders other than EPA and the state regulator, it is advisable to reach agreement with these agencies first, then approach the other parties. The invitation will be more credible if it comes from DoD and the regulators, not just from DoD. When regulators are involved in determining who else should be invited, there is less danger that people will think DoD is "stacking the decks."

Conducting the Partnering Workshop

The next step in most partnering is a team-building session, sometimes referred to as the "partnering workshop." The steps involved in preparing for and conducting the workshop are: (1) selecting the individual participants; (2) selecting a facilitator; (3) designing the workshop; (4) selecting a location; (5) participating in the workshop; and (6) creating a charter.

Selecting the Individual Participants

Individual participants should make a personal commitment to working in a collaborative manner and have good "people skills." But if they occupy a key role organizationally, it may be necessary to include people who will need to learn new skills and attitudes in order to have effective partnering.

Selecting a Facilitator

A facilitator is usually needed to design the partnering workshop, lead it, and conduct any training that is a part of the workshop design. Facilitators are trained specialists who help people design effective meetings and then serve as the meeting leader on behalf of the group. Facilitators are experts on how groups work together, as distinct from being experts on a subject matter such as engineering, environmental cleanup, regulatory law, etc. The facilitator's job is to take care of *process* so that participants can focus on the *content* of the meeting.

The idea of facilitation is to remove process issues – such as how the workshop is run – as a source of dispute by delegating those decisions to a third party who is impartial about the substantive outcome and who will act on behalf of all participants. Without a facilitator, the risk exists that the group will engage in competition, struggles for leadership of the meeting, and disagreements over what should be included on the agenda. A skilled facilitator will be able to suggest activities that will speed up the process of becoming acquainted and will know how to create a safe structure for dealing with conflicts. Once the team begins developing agreements, the team often starts dictating its own agenda and takes a more assertive role in prescribing its needs.

With internal partnering that involves only DoD entities, department facilitators may be available. At McClellan AFB, for example, internal partnering sessions are facilitated by individuals from the base Total Quality Office's Teambuilding Center. If the partnering involves external organizations, it may not be possible to use facilitators associated with any of the parties.

Designing the Workshop

It is useful for the facilitator to meet with the principals from each of the parties, as a group. The purpose of this first meeting is for the facilitator to assess whether there is a common understanding and shared expectations for the partnering process. The meeting is also an opportunity for the team members to share their thinking about what they want to accomplish in the workshop and its duration and location.

Occasionally, organizations ask the facilitator to conduct interviews with the team members prior to the workshop to identify attitudes, level of commitment, issues, or concerns. By summarizing the issues at the workshop, the facilitator can speed up the process of identifying issues candidly and objectively.

When working with the facilitator to design the workshop, team members should concentrate on what they hope to accomplish rather than try to prescribe the exact activities that will occur. The facilitator can take these expectations and draft a format that will meet those hopes. However, participants should have the opportunity to review a draft format.

Typically the workshop itself will last two or three days. The agenda will usually include the following basic elements:

1. Activities designed for “getting to know each other”;
2. A “self-perception” exercise, such as use of the Myers-Briggs or Acumen Leadership Style Inventory;
3. Training in the skills and principles of effective team action. Skills to be taught might include:
 - How to listen effectively;
 - How to disagree without being disagreeable; and
 - How to support each other’s ideas.

Principles to be taught might include:

- Why use win/win decision making;
 - Why people support what they help create;
 - Why problems are best addressed by using a systematic problem-solving process; and
 - How to share leadership and participation in decision making.
4. Activities designed to develop team agreement on:
 - Goals and objectives;
 - Dispute resolution procedures; and
 - The charter, a document containing partnering goals, objectives, and agreements on how the team will work together.

Selecting a Location

The initial partnering is best held off-site, away from phones and other disturbances. Dress should be comfortable. It is often helpful to take some meals together and to avoid meeting in a facility owned by any of the participants. Meeting locations have symbolic as well as practical functions, so the “turf” should be as neutral as possible.

Participating in the Workshop

All team members should participate in the partnering workshop. Important changes in relationships can take place during the workshop, and any team member who does not participate could slow the whole team.

Creating a Charter

The charter or agreement is prepared during the partnering workshop, but since it is so essential to partnering it deserves special emphasis. Normally the contents of the charter or agreement includes:

- A commitment to engage in partnering;
- A commitment to honest and open communication;
- A commitment to collaborative problem solving and a dispute resolution process; and
- A statement of the goals and objectives of the partnering effort.

The charter should be signed by all participants. Often the charters are then duplicated with the signatures on them and distributed to team members and other organizational stakeholders. This reminds the team members of their commitment and also sends a signal to their subordinates and others in the organization that the participants' credibility is on the line.

If specific targets are set in the charter, they should be balanced between realism on the one hand and genuine commitment and effort on the other. In the excitement of first coming together as a team, it is possible to have an inflated sense of how much change can be accomplished. Unrealistic goals can discourage a team as much as goals that are too modest. Figures 6, 7, and 8 show sample agreements from partnering at Bayou Bonfouca, Baird & McGuire, and Reese Air Force Base.

Developing a Partnering Implementation Plan

Some organizations add substance to the charter after the workshop by developing a more detailed implementation plan for the charter. Figure 9 shows an example from Reese Air Force Base. For most DoD agencies, this step is optional, although the Navy requires the preparation of an implementation plan. A Partnering Implementation Plan might include:

1. The roles and responsibilities of each organization as it relates to the team;
2. Measurable objectives related to each goal;
3. A written description of the dispute resolution process;
4. A communications plan indicating how the team will consult with other stakeholders, whether internal or external;

5. Mechanisms for sharing risks and benefits; and
6. A process to orient new members of the team.

Usually these topics are discussed, at least briefly, in the partnering workshop, but the plan spells out a concrete program for action.

Some teams have found it useful to develop a “graphic plan” – that graphically portrays the roles and relationships, problem-solving process, or issue-resolution process. Figure 10 presents an example from the MCLB Barstow Partnering Process. The graphics can even be in the form of a cartoon – whatever form captures the key concepts and communicates them effectively. The graphics are distributed throughout the offices where the team works. Experience shows that graphics are referred to more often than written plans.

Figure 6. Bayou Bonfouca Partnering Agreement

We, the Bayou Bonfouca Superfund Project team, commit to work together with the spirit of openness and trust and to respect the goals and needs of all stakeholders.

Our team is founded on principles of:

- Teamwork
- Mutual respect
- Openness
- Honesty
- Trust
- Professionalism
- Understanding of one another's position
- Walking the talk

With the objectives of:

- Completing the project on schedule;
- Completing the project within budget;
- Developing and maintaining good community relations by minimizing impact to the community at large and coordinating actions through EPA lead;
- Pursuing shared savings through value engineering;
- Developing and maintaining an awareness of safety – daily throughout the project – in order to achieve zero lost time accidents;
- Establishing a forthright approach to modifications and claims in order to avoid litigation;
- Remediating the site in accordance with the NCP;
- Implementing TQM concepts, specifically in administration, engineering, construction, and operations;
- Providing contractors the opportunity to make a reasonable profit; and
- Enhancing reputations of all the stakeholders with respect to public perception of remediation/Superfund efforts.

We, the undersigned, in an effort to achieve the intent of the partnering process, commit to the above principles and objectives.

Figure 7. Baird & McGuire Partnering Agreement

Partnering Agreement

Among EPA, USACE, Mass. Dep., Baird & McGuire Task Force, OHM

We, the partners of the Baird & McGuire Superfund Site, agree to work together as a cohesive team to produce a quality project, that protects and informs the surrounding community in accordance with the contract, on time, within budget, safely while enabling the contractor to earn a fair profit. Members of the partnering team will deal with each other in a fair, open, trusting, and professional manner. In that spirit, we are committed to the following concepts:

Communication

1. Communicate problems openly and as early as possible.
2. Establish and maintain community relations through open lines of communication by keeping the public informed and an integral part of the cleanup process.
3. Resolve problems and make decisions at the lowest possible level in a timely manner.
4. Maintain a professional atmosphere of mutual respect and resolve personal conflicts immediately.
5. Communicate problems openly before resorting to written correspondence.
6. Develop a periodic evaluation program on the partnership's effectiveness.

Performance

1. Produce a quality product the first time through an effective and committed quality management program. (QA & QC)
2. Complete project ahead of, or on, schedule. (Avoid delays.)
3. Perform work in a safe manner minimizing recordable lost time injuries, and maintaining the utmost concern for public safety in the surrounding community.
4. Promote pride in workmanship by all members of the partnering team.
5. Minimize formal disputes. (No litigation.)
6. Ensure successful project completion.

Agreed to this date May 26, 1993

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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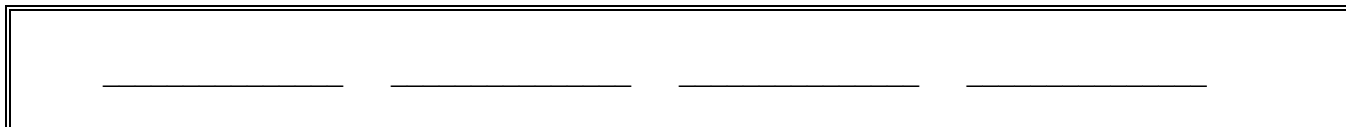
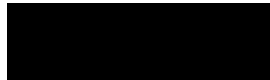


Figure 8. Reese Air Force Base Partnering Agreement

PARTNERING AGREEMENT

Reese Air Force Base
 Texas Water Commission
 U.S. Air Force, Air Training Command
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

We, the members of this partnering team, agree to commit ourselves in a team effort to clean up the environment in a responsible manner, taking into consideration environmental risk, available resources, and regulatory requirements. The following goals are considered mutually and jointly beneficial to all parties to successfully achieve environmental restoration at and around Reese Air Force Base.



- Improve communications
 - Point person identification
 - Team member empowerment
 - Avoid surprises
- Re-establish public confidence
 - Demonstrate a teamwork approach
- Establish a problem resolution process
 - Quasi formal
- Long-term commitment to the process
 - Instill a shared vision
- Return to business as usual
 - Air Force Mission
 - Management of environmental impact

Figure 9. Reese Air Force Base Partnering Implementation Plan

PHASE I: ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

ISSUES

- Work Plan
 - Needs process improvement
 - Recommend partnering agreement
 - Levels of resolution
 - informal - technical
 - Quasi-point people
- Output Goals
 - No future enforcement actions
 - No forced regulatory agreements
 - Dispose of waste from GW remediation project
 - Define and manage TCE plume
 - long-term sampling plan
- P/R
 - Submit review times/due dates
 - Communication - TWG/TRC
 - Understanding each other's constraints
 - Prioritizing problems
- Resolve problems with the formation of TRC/TWG
 - Set up TRC/TWG
 - members
 - point people
 - charter
 - within 30 days
- Address public confidence
 - Issue press release/conference on work date/plans
 - Finalize and implement CRP
 - how clean is clean?
 - who says so?
 - what regs say so?
 - who or what enforces/applies?
 - how will all (TWC, EPA) order, permits, etc. fit together?
- Start to repair environmental damage to groundwater (initiate interim remedial measures)
 - Establish realistic timeline
 - No future constraints (idealistic)

PHASE II: STRATEGIES

Reese Restoration Working Group Prioritized Agenda

1. Committee administration rules
2. FY94 program submittal
 - disposal of waste
- 3a. Review of MAP-MTG
 - meshing of orders
- 3b. Identify applicable "rules"
 - measures of merit - no more NOV's
4. Revised work plan additional RI



Figure 10. MCLB Barstow Graphic Teamwork Plan

Developing a Dispute Resolution Plan

Of the topics to be included in the Partnering Implementation Plan, a Dispute Resolution Plan may be the least familiar element. Dispute resolution processes should be appropriate to the specific circumstances of each team. The following are some of the points that might be addressed in the Dispute Resolution Plan:

1. Agree to pursue a win/win outcome.

The basic commitment is to look for “win/win” solutions rather than “win/lose” or “winner-take-all” outcomes. Without an understanding that all parties must be satisfied to achieve resolution, the rest of the dispute resolution process often breaks down.

2. Openly disclose interests.

Agreement, up front, to provide full disclosure of interests can build a team relationship. Often participants do not let the others know their real interests for fear that will strengthen the other party’s hand. But during decision making, the parties cannot take each other’s interests into account unless everyone has been candid and open.

3. Agree to follow the process on all disputes.

If the team sets up a dispute resolution process, team members should be expected to use that process. It is inappropriate for team members to use other processes unless the dispute resolution process has failed. This means that regulatory bodies should avoid filing NOV’s, stakeholders should avoid taking the dispute to the media, agencies should avoid using budgeting as a hammer, and so on, until the dispute resolution process has been tried.

4. Avoid negotiating through the media.

It is useful to establish ground rules for how and when team members deal with the media. Generally speaking, team members should avoid comments to the media about any dispute currently being addressed by the team. Comments by one of the parties may be perceived as jockeying for negotiating position or abrogating the dispute resolution process. Either way, it can create bad blood that makes resolving the issues that much harder.

5. Recognize that timely resolution is crucial.

Some teams establish deadlines on how long an impasse will be tolerated before the issues must be moved to the next stage in the dispute resolution process. Nothing is more likely to push a team member outside the agreed-upon process than the failure of the partners to address concerns in a timely manner.

6. Quickly assemble those who are needed to resolve the issue.

Timely resolution is aided by a commitment from each organization to assemble quickly all those who are needed to resolve the issue.

7. Use different approaches for different types of disputes.

It is helpful to establish various dispute resolution mechanisms to settle different types of disputes. Technical disputes may be resolvable with additional research or more discussion among technical staff. Third-party technical experts can also be helpful in these situations. For example, a technical issue might be resolved by having all sides present their information and interpretations to a panel of experts or a disputes review panel, who would render a nonbinding opinion. But if a dispute is over political philosophy or values, technical information alone is not going to solve the problem. In such a case, it may be more effective to get the dispute elevated as quickly as possible to the level of decision makers who can resolve such issues.

8. Commit to advocate for the decision when necessary.

In some cases, decision-making authority resides outside the power of the partnering organizations. An example would be a cleanup plan that does not have sufficient funding from Congress. Even if everybody in an agency is supportive of the plan, it cannot make Congress produce a larger budget. What team members can do, when such circumstances arise, is agree to advocate, jointly and individually, the recommendations of the team to whoever has final decision-making authority.

Creating a Follow-up Program

Follow-up programs can be instrumental in maintaining a spirit of partnering. Experience shows that without follow-up sessions, the “We/They” adversarial mentality can creep back in. There have been several cases where partnering was considered an initial success, but without follow-up sessions, misperceptions and miscommunication developed and the relationship soured.

Typically, the follow-up program consists of periodic workshops. Follow-up sessions differ from normal team meetings in that, instead of concentrating on immediate work tasks, they focus on how the team is communicating, whether there are unresolved issues, whether roles and responsibilities are clear, how well the team is doing in meeting its goals, how well the dispute resolution process is working, and what problems exist with “parent” organizations. Follow-up sessions may also include brief refresher training sessions. Typically follow-up sessions last at least one day, with some partnering teams allowing two days. Usually a facilitator is retained to lead these sessions, and attendance should be given high priority.

Several individuals experienced at partnering recommend holding follow-up sessions at approximately quarterly intervals. However, successful partnering efforts have used other approaches. In one case, the partnering participants filled out a

quarterly questionnaire that addressed issues such as how the team was communicating and what unresolved issues needed to be addressed. This questionnaire is used as a diagnostic device, with team sessions called as needed to address any problems. In other cases, periodic conference calls are used to identify problems or concerns.

Another reason for periodic follow-up sessions is the inevitable changes in personnel that can be expected. In the Baird & McGuire case, for example, the contractor's staff changed completely during the course of the project, and there were seven changes in project manager. Without constant re-education in the principles of partnering, personnel changes will inevitably water down the commitment to partnering.

Orientation for new members is important. The team as a whole should take responsibility for this orientation, not just the individual organization for which the new team member works.

At McClellan Air Force Base, all members of SC-ALC's Environmental Management (EM) staff have attended "Seven Habits Training," a 40-hour program held over a two-month period, to improve cooperation and teamwork within the Environmental Management Division (EMD). Further, internal partnering efforts have been undertaken, led by trained facilitators from the on-base Total Quality Office's Teambuilding Center and involving EM with Public Affairs, EM and the Surgeon General, and other on-base entities. At these partnering workshops, participants develop memoranda of understanding and work to foster a greater sense of teamwork.

Beyond sustaining the commitment of team members, there is also a need to sustain or expand the understanding and commitment of individuals in procurement, design and engineering, legal, human resources, and virtually any other part of the organization involved in establishing requirements or procedures that impact the operation of the team. This is especially true at the installation level where IRP calls for coordination among actors over a variety of projects.

One of the ways to obtain this support is by doing internal partnering. Those people involved in the inter-organizational team could participate in an internal partnering workshop with representatives of all the support organizations. An alternative is to provide brief training programs for all support staff.

Engaging in Continuous Evaluation and Process Improvement

One of the critical tools for developing effective teamwork is periodic evaluation of how well the team is doing. Typically this is done by establishing objectives and criteria in the initial partnering workshop or in the Partnering Implementation Plan. The criteria for measuring team success usually includes measures of productivity (cost, schedule, profitability, safety) and process, or how well the team did in resolving disputes and bringing about organizational improvements. Periodically the team should evaluate how well it is meeting these objectives and take corrective action as needed. When the partnering is finished, a final session to evaluate the effectiveness of the partnering effort, recognize achievement, and identify lessons learned is useful.

A sample evaluation questionnaire is shown in Figure 11. Other teams have used outside parties to conduct interviews with team members and selected representatives of participating organizations to solicit perceptions of the productivity and effectiveness of the team. This information can then be summarized and provided as a stimulus to the team at follow-up sessions.

Conclusion

Although this guide provides many of the basics, partnering is evolving so rapidly that those who are thinking of using partnering should feel free to try new forms or approaches. One of the best sources of information is DoD staff who have participated in successful partnering efforts. It can be helpful to track people down and talk to them directly, and then design a process that meets your specific requirements.

Figure 11. Sample Partnering Evaluation Form

The Partnering Rating Form developed by the group will be completed by participants on a monthly basis. The intent of the form is to monitor the effectiveness of the overall partnering effort – not to rate how “the other guy” is doing.

Chapter 6

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTNERING

The following are responses to some of the questions about partnering that are raised most frequently:

What Are The Legal Constraints On Partnering?

Partnering alters the traditional “arms-length” relationship between the DoD agency and other agencies, contractors, communities, or stakeholders. The arms-length relationship often turns into an adversarial relationship that can lead to situations in which none of the parties achieve their objectives. But as DoD agencies move out of this adversarial relationship, there are genuine constraints on ethical conduct that must still be observed.

All DoD employees must meet the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (Part 1 of Executive Order 12674 and 5 C.F.R. Part 2635 Regulation August 1992) and the DoD Joint Ethics Regulations (DoD 5500 - 7 - R, August 1993).

The basic thrust of these standards and regulations is that federal employees act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual.

The obligation of a federal employee is to avoid any actions that create the appearance of violating the ethical standards in federal or DoD standards or regulations. If there are questions, consult with a DoD Ethics Counselor.

Some Pointers from Legal Counsel

Federal ethics regulations govern transactions with “prohibited sources” – any nonfederal person or organization that does business with or is trying to influence a decision of a federal agency. Here are two key points to remember during partnering:

- State agencies, local officials, and even nonprofit organizations, are “prohibited sources” if they are trying to influence federal decisions.
- During the course of partnering, nonfederal parties cannot pay for your meals or lodging.
- Nonfederal parties must be shielded from access to information that would give them preferential treatment in obtaining another contract.

Beyond issues of ethics, legal considerations arise whenever any of the parties in a partnership are also parties to litigation. Once there is litigation, even if it does not appear to bear directly on the issue, it will be necessary to consult with the Department of Justice, which manages litigation. Even in those circumstances, partnering may be desirable, possibly removing the issue or the party from litigation. But it is a good idea to talk to the Department of Justice to establish the guidelines within which the partnering can work.

DoD attorneys encourage DoD agencies to engage in partnering, because partnering is a preventive approach that can dramatically reduce the need for litigation. But it is important to remember the ethical and legal sideboards that must be observed even during partnering.

Will Personal Relationships Become So Strong that Laws and Regulations Won't Be Enforced Properly?

This fear is probably overstated, although reasonable caution is legitimate. DoD must observe legal and regulatory constraints, and there are ethical standards that will need to be met. Regulators must be credible to the public they represent, and contractors must protect their economic viability. On the other hand, a great price can be paid for the "wall of paper" that is created to protect the agencies in the event of litigation.

An example of the kind of issue that might come up is whether to relax specifications or criteria at the request of one of the partnering parties. This decision may be within the discretion of the agencies. In the past, such decisions often became the subject of interagency disputes or contract claims. One of the purposes of partnering is to create a sense of "team," reducing struggles of this kind. But relaxing a specification or criterion should not be done just to "get along" or make people happy. Rather the choice should be measured against the goals agreed upon by the team and the intent of the specification or standard, and the decision should be based on these principles.

Partnering stresses the commonality of most interests and creates a willingness to support each other in meeting those interests that may not be common, so long as they are not in conflict. When the potential for conflict arises, there are agreed-upon dispute resolution mechanisms that permit the conflicts to be addressed and resolved before they begin to affect the team's productivity.

Is Partnering All Relationship and No Substance?

This concern just doesn't fit the facts. Partnering results in tangible, measurable results, as shown in Chapter 4. This is particularly easy to see when partnering is used at

the project level. There are demonstrable savings in cost, time, and safety. It is sometimes more difficult to measure the benefits of partnering when implementing a program or developing a policy, but people who have participated in partnering at these levels believe that it was well worth the effort.

How Much Does Partnering Cost?

The most expensive aspect of partnering is the staff time spent in the partnering workshop and follow-up sessions. This is an up-front expenditure that can save a great deal in the long run. Experience with partnering demonstrates that a preventive approach to issues usually saves staff time over the life of the program or project, including costs of litigation and overhead.

The facilitator is the next largest up-front cost. Facilitators range in cost from \$500 to \$2,000/day. Some teams use two facilitators. If the facilitator is going to work with the team throughout the process, the budget should also include time at maintenance meetings and time for any other appraisals or analysis that the team wants the facilitator to provide. The total cost for a facilitator depends upon the needs of the particular partnering effort.

The third cost factor is the travel expense associated with the initial team-building session. This includes transportation, meals, and lodging. The final cost factor is the cost of meeting room space for the initial team-building session and periodic maintenance sessions.

How Do We Find Time for Partnering?

Partnering is actually a way to reduce work, but it is a preventive rather than fire-fighting approach. One of the barriers to partnering is the attitude that building relationships is a luxury, something to be done when there is plenty of time. In fact, it is often problems with relationships that create extra work – and work that is nonproductive.

How Do We Change People Who Are Stuck in the Traditional Way of Doing Things?

Organizational change requires training, incentives, and peer pressure. Some people will be excited by the opportunity for innovation. Participation in an internal team-building session provides training as well as peer support for making changes. Management may also need to issue clear policy guidance and provide incentives for those people who engage in partnering. When possible, it is useful to surround the

partnering team with people from support organizations who are enthusiastic about partnering.

What If Other Stakeholders Fear that DoD Agencies Will Dominate the Partnering Relationship?

To allay this fear, it is useful to provide these stakeholders with names and phone numbers of stakeholders who have participated in partnering. It can also help to bring in people who have participated in partnering to talk with concerned stakeholders. Ultimately, of course, the only proof that partnering is a process for equals is actual experience of the process.

What About People Who Don't Want to Take Any Risk?

One of the primary reasons people refuse to accept risk is because they have no strong incentives for doing so. If they work in an organizational climate in which there are few personal rewards for taking risks, and lots of dangers, then their response makes sense. Management must provide strong incentives for taking risk, and when there is a problem, fix the problem rather than fix blame.

What Do We Do if Conflict Occurs after Partnering Efforts?

Experience shows that once a dispute arises, it is important to address it promptly and resolve it before it escalates. If collaborative problem solving proves ineffective, it may be helpful to use a designated alternative dispute resolution (ADR) technique to obtain resolution. The fact that such an agreement is in place – so that participants know what happens if they reach an impasse – may keep the impasse from occurring.

Do We Really Need to Use Outside Trainers or Facilitators?

Answering this question reinforces the perceived “neutrality” or credibility of the facilitator. If you are doing internal training or team building, DoD trainers or facilitators may be credible. If you are involved in multi-organizational partnering, then the neutrality of the facilitator is very important. Typically the cost of the facilitator is small compared with the cost of staff time.

Is Partnering Just the Newest Management Trend?

Partnering is a powerful tool for improving efficiency and effectiveness. But its ultimate value rests on the willingness of DoD employees to use it and make it a success. If it saves time and money, it will last.

PARTNER 'TIL YOU DROP

T-shirt on construction site

Appendix I

USE OF A NEUTRAL FACILITATOR

The Role of a Facilitator

The following are some of the things a facilitator does to help bring about an atmosphere conducive to collaborative problem solving:

Assists with designing the meeting: Facilitators suggest workshop or meeting formats that avoid pitfalls or have proven effective in addressing issues. For example, a facilitator may recognize when a format is likely to push participants into taking adversarial positions or start proposing solutions before there is agreement on the definition of the problem. The facilitator may then suggest an alternative format that addresses the same issues but does so in a way that is less likely to be adversarial.

Helps keep the workshop on track, focused on the topic: Facilitators are skilled at pointing out when the discussion has drifted, or at restating the purpose of an activity. Facilitators also play the “traffic cop” role of regulating how long people speak or putting limits on such behavior as accusations or emotional tirades. Often this is accomplished by working with participants to establish ground rules that everybody feels are fair. That way, when a facilitator intervenes, everyone understands that the intervention is on behalf of an effective meeting, not because of prejudice or bias.

Clarifies and accepts communication: One of a facilitator’s primary tasks is to be sure that everybody feels that they have been listened to and understood. The facilitator may do this by providing a verbal summary of what was said, by relating one participant’s ideas to another, by inviting expansion of a comment, or by asking clarifying questions. Sometimes a facilitator will write a summary of comments on a flip chart or will be assisted by another staff person called a *recorder*, who keeps a summary of comments on the flip chart. A facilitator might also point out when a participant’s contribution was cut off and invite him or her to complete the idea.

Accepts and acknowledges feelings: During disputes, people are often upset or angry. Telling them not to feel that way simply makes those feelings stronger. In some disputes it is necessary to let everybody ventilate their feelings before it’s possible to begin talking about solutions. The facilitator will structure a situation in which it is safe to express feelings, without those feelings causing a permanent breach in communication between the parties. Even in normal problem solving, strong feelings may emerge. The facilitator will make sure these feelings are acknowledged so that they do not continue to build in intensity.

States a problem in a constructive way: Often problems are stated in such a way that they seem like efforts to fix blame or accuse the other parties of unacceptable, dishonest, or even illegal actions. This simply causes the other parties to counter with blame and accusations of their own, making the conflict escalate. A facilitator can help by restating comments so that they do not imply blame of any party or so that they define the problem without implying there is only one possible solution.

Suggests a procedure or problem solving approach: During a meeting a facilitator may suggest a procedure, such as brainstorming or a structured sequence of problem-solving steps, to help the group work more effectively. Or a facilitator may help break an impasse by suggesting alternative ways of addressing the issue or even suggesting a break.

Summarizes and clarifies direction: Often participants become so involved with the subject being discussed that they lose track of the overall picture. So a facilitator may restate the purpose of the meeting or clarify its direction, (e.g., “We’ve completed the first two issues, now we’re ready to start talking about alternatives for . . .”).

Does consensus testing: One of the important responsibilities of a facilitator is to sense when participants are coming to agreement and verify that it has been reached by stating the potential basis for agreement and checking to see whether that statement has support from the participants. Since the facilitator doesn’t make decisions for the group, this responsibility takes the form of saying something such as: “It sounds as if you are in agreement that . . . Is that acceptable?” Such agreements are usually written on the flip chart by either the facilitator or recorder.

Because the facilitator needs to remain neutral on the outcome of the meeting and wants to create a climate for collaborative problem solving, there are also certain behaviors a facilitator should avoid, such as the following:

- Judging or criticizing the ideas of participants.
- Using the role of facilitator to push his or her own ideas.
- Making significant procedural decisions without consulting the participants.
- Taking up the group’s time with lengthy comments.

Selecting a Facilitator

Many of the partnering workshops to date have used two facilitators, particularly if the team was relatively large (more than 15 participants). One facilitator will lead the meeting, while the other offers observations about how the group is working together, or provides training.

Typically the facilitator is not someone associated with any of the parties and has no vested interest in the decision being made. This is to make sure that no one fears that the way a meeting or workshop is being run gives any particular organization an advantage.

It is helpful – but not mandatory – for the facilitator to be familiar with the organizations involved and the subjects of discussion. As a minimum, the facilitator needs to know enough to be able to follow the discussion. Since agencies often use numerous acronyms and technical jargon, this can be an important point. On the other hand, if the facilitator is too directly involved in the subject matter, he or she may have opinions that make it hard to remain neutral, or he or she may be seen by one of the parties as biased or partial towards a particular point of view or organization.

There are many levels of skill and experience among people who call themselves facilitators. Some have just completed their training, while others may have 20 years of facilitation experience in a variety of circumstances. Typically, their fees reflect these differences (although some relatively junior facilitators may seek “senior facilitator” fees). Facilitator fees range from \$500/day (in 1994 dollars), to \$2,000/day. A fully qualified facilitator can normally be hired in the \$800 to \$1,200/day range.

It is not mandatory that the facilitator have conducted a session labeled *partnering*. It is important, however, that the facilitator have extensive experience conducting team-building sessions, preferably including some experience with cross-organizational teams (temporary teams drawn together from many parts of the organization) or multi-party teams. The facilitator should also have experience teaching such skills as active listening, congruent sending, interest based-negotiation, and the skills of being an effective member of a team. Another consideration in selecting a facilitator is the facilitator's continued availability to lead follow-up sessions and make assessments of how the team is doing.

Training offices may already be using facilitators as part of your program or may otherwise know skilled local facilitators. On occasion, it may be possible to use an internal facilitator. The two issues that have to be considered are the acceptability of the facilitator to all parties and the skill level required for the particular meeting. An outside facilitator is much more likely to be acceptable if there is any kind of dispute. Outside facilitators, because they spend their entire professional life doing facilitation, may – but do not always – have a higher skill level or base of experience.

Appendix II

ACRONYMS

ADEQ	Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
AETC	Air Education and Training Command
AFB	Air Force Base
B&M	Baird & McGuire National Priorities List Site
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
DCSLOG	Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DOIT	Develop On-Site Innovative Technologies
EM	Environmental Management
EMD	Environmental Management Division
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPIC	Environmental Process Improvement Center
ERWG	Reese Air Force Base Environmental Restoration Working Group
FACA	Federal Advisory Committee Act
FFA	Federal Facilities Agreement
IRP	Installation Restoration Program
LDEQ	Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIT	National Implementation Team
NON	Notice of Noncompliance
NOV	Notice of Violation
RAB	Restoration Advisory Board
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RIT	Regional Implementation Team
SC-ALC	Sacramento Air Logistics Center
SW	Southwestern Division
TQM	Total Quality Management
TRNRCC	Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
TRI	Toxic Release Inventory
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers