Project Final Report Synopsis (prepared by NCEI)
Arizona "Smart-NOI" State Innovation Grant
Final Report - November 18, 2003

This document is a brief synopsis of the Project Final Report issued by the Arizona DEQ on 18 November 2003.

- The project was completed on schedule and within budget.

- Arizona has developed and deployed a web-based, storm-water "Notice of Intent" to discharge permitting system that is constructed on a geographic information system (GIS).

- The AZ "Smart NOI" permitting program allows potential storm-water dischargers (most often land developers) to use the internet to apply for a discharge permit through a brief screening process that uses an interface with a GIS system programmed to make "intelligent" decisions about permitting these discharges based upon likely impacts to a receiving water body.

- The time for application and permitting has been cut appreciably - in most instances permits are granted immediately on line; or at most take a few days to process. A survey of applicants shows a great deal of satisfaction with the new system. AZ DEQ has been able to rely on the AZ Smart NOI system to free up staff to focus on compliance assistance and inspections. The Smart NOI permitting system also provides automated reporting to AZ DEQ staff enabling rapid review of permits.

- AZ DEQ reports that within 90 days of implementation, 10% of all stormwater permits were being granted through Smart NOI - within 5 years they hope to be conducting half of all of program permitting through the web-based system.

- Between May and November, the system granted 176 Smart NOI permits, denied 11 applications and waived permits for 26 applicants. Smart NOI has the capability of processing up to hundreds of permits per day; prior hand-processing of permits averaged 25 per day.

- No direct measures of environmental benefits were provided in the report. Evaluation of this project by NCEI could examine the denied permits to quantify and document the pollution prevention benefits. Another component of an NCEI evaluation could examine whether or not there is any deviation in circumstances under which permits are awarded under Smart NOI compared to the previous manual review system and consider whether any change resulted in an environmental improvement over the likely outcomes of manual permit review. An additional focus for an evaluation could be a comparison of the consistency ("repeatability") of criteria application between the old and new permitting systems.