

Guidance DOCUMENTS

DOPAA DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Army Environmental Center is in the process of finalizing the *Guide to Development of the Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA)*. The purpose of this guide is to provide Army proponents, preparers, and other National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis participants with a more structured approach to creating DOPAAs that lead to more effective and defensible environmental documents. The guide incorporates the latest requirements specified in the yet to be published Final Proposed Rule for Army Regulation 200-2 (*Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*).

PURPOSE

The document provides guidance, recommendations, and suggestions for preparing a DOPAA that is consistent with NEPA and its implementing regulations, but specific to U.S. Army operations and activities. The information is presented in a simple, understandable, and manageable format, suitable for use throughout the Army. By following the approach and procedures presented in the guide, users can reduce or eliminate the typical problems often associated with NEPA analyses, such as reanalysis of a constantly changing DOPAA, project delays, and cost overruns.

The DOPAA Guide is divided into 5 sections:

- Chapter 1.0 – Introduction
- Chapter 2.0 - Identifies key players and describes their level of involvement in the DOPAA development process.
- Chapter 3.0 - Describes the components of a DOPAA, recommended formats to use, and the types of information that are normally included.
- Chapter 4.0 - Describes the steps involved in developing the DOPAA, including a review of methodologies for defining the proposed action and identifying possible alternatives.
- Chapter 5.0 - Lists the references that were used in preparation of the guide.

The DOPAA forms the framework for conducting an environmental impact analysis in accordance with the NEPA and its implementing regulations. Comprising much of the beginning portions of any Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the DOPAA defines the scope of the action as well as viable alternatives, and serves as the basis on which to predict potential impacts. Development of the DOPAA helps in early coordination with other Army offices and outside agencies and, in the case of an EIS, provides the foundation for conducting formal scoping. Most importantly, for the decision-maker, the DOPAA serves as the basis for understanding alternative approaches to meeting mission needs.

The guide has been prepared as a supplement to the Army NEPA manuals listed below for purposes of improving the DOPAA development process. It can be applied to nearly all Army NEPA analyses associated with on- and off-post training activities, materiel acquisition programs, facility construction and renovation projects, and other actions supporting installation operations.

- *NEPA Manual for Materiel Acquisition* (November 2000)
- *Environmental Impact Analysis Manual for Off-Post Training and Deployments* (August 1998)
- *NEPA Manual for Installation Operations and Training* (June 1998)

Once completed, it is expected that the guide will be made accessible on the Army Environmental Center web site and in the DoD Acquisition Deskbook (Reference Library/Army Documents/Discretionary Documents) by mid-2001.



***Questions concerning the
DOPAA Guide should be
addressed to the
US Army Environmental
Hotline
1-800-USA-3845***