



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF  
ENFORCEMENT AND  
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

April 1, 2005

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Evaluation of Superfund Alternative Sites Approach

**FROM:** Susan E. Bromm, Director /s/  
Office of Site Remediation Enforcement

Michael B. Cook, Director /s/  
Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation

**TO:** EPA Regional Superfund Legal Branch Chiefs  
EPA Regional Superfund Program Branch Chiefs  
EPA Regional Superfund Data Managers

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In the transmittal memorandum to the Revised Superfund Alternative Sites (SAS) Guidance (6/17/04), EPA committed to an 18 month pilot of the SAS approach (June 2004 - December 2005). Since the Revised SAS Guidance was issued, the SAS approach has received additional feedback from EPA's Inspector General, the Office of Management and Budget and the Superfund 120-Day Report. This continued focus on the SAS approach emphasizes the importance of the promised evaluation. We are starting the early phases of the evaluation now, recognizing that there is work we can do before the pilot period ends. This memorandum outlines the evaluation goals and phases. We will be asking for your assistance in several phases.

**Goal:** Evaluate the SAS approach, outcomes and concerns raised by stakeholders. We plan to accomplish this in four phases.

**Phase 1** involves a rigorous review of the SAS data in CERCLIS to ensure that only sites meeting the SAS criteria are flagged SAS. Ensuring that only those sites that meet the SAS criteria are flagged SAS in CERCLIS is a critical step in accurately reporting the universe, determining the subset of sites for Phase 3, and responding to stakeholder concerns. As part of this review, Regions will soon be asked to review (*i.e.*, to "QA/QC") a matrix of the current CERCLIS data for SAS-flagged sites.

**Phase 2** has two elements: a) a check-in with stakeholders to confirm our understanding of their concerns; and b) an evaluation of the data to identify a subset of SA sites to examine more closely. We will invite stakeholders (*e.g.*, Regions, States, Natural Resource Trustees, community groups, PRP groups) to review our understanding of their concerns and offer

additional input so that we can address the concerns as part of the evaluation. Then we will identify a subset of SA sites on which to perform a comprehensive evaluation of the SA approach.

**Phase 3** is an in-depth review of a subset of SA sites, agreements, and work products to evaluate how well the SA approach (as outlined in the Revised SAS Guidance) is working, what the outcomes to date reveal about the approach, and how stakeholder concerns are addressed. We will again be asking for your assistance to look at such things as, *e.g.*, how site stakeholders are notified about an SA site, negotiation issues, analysis of final agreements, and how work products at SA sites compare to those at NPL-listed sites. Interviews with Regional staff, in person or by phone, will occur during this phase.

**Phase 4** is the preparation of a written report summarizing the evaluation findings and offering recommendations for improving the SAS approach.

During the evaluation period we will continue to take action to improve the transparency of the SAS approach and to finalize complementary guidance, such as the Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) Guidance.

Principal contacts for the evaluation are:

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Advanced thanks for your attention to and assistance with this national evaluation. Please contact any of those listed above with questions about or thoughts on the evaluation.