



ESA•FHWA News

Web-Based Section 7 Consultation • Volume One • March 2009

Welcome!

Welcome to our premier issue of *ESA•FHWA News*, a newsletter for users of FHWA's web-based Section 7 consultation tool.

What is the *ESA•FHWA Site*?

The *ESA•FHWA Site* is an online tool that helps project proponents:

- improve quality of BAs submitted for consultation with federal agencies
- expedite internal assurance reviews
- increase consistency among projects and regions
- reduce project delays due to incomplete BAs and requests for additional information
- promote accountability and transparency through tracking and reporting

What's new?

- nationwide rollout
- ongoing site updates and functional improvements
- opportunities to get involved

Can you help?

Visit the *ESA•FHWA Site* and let us know what improvements we can make to better meet your needs.

Stay tuned!

More updates will be announced in our June 2009 issue of *ESA•FHWA News*.

Opportunities for Involvement

We need to hear from you! Remain engaged and help us make the June 2009 *ESA•FHWA Site* Nationwide Rollout the best it can be!

1. Complete our survey at <http://ESAFHWA.org>
2. Submit a feedback form at <http://ESAFHWA.org>
3. Send us an email at support@esafhwa.org
4. Become a member of the Informal Vetting/Testing Group. We need your help! Share your perspective and input on the next round of system upgrades and functionality improvements. Interested in participating? Email support@esafhwa.org.



Meet the Nationwide Rollout Delivery Team

Nationwide Rollout Project Lead

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Updates and Progress

ESA•FHWA Pilot Site and Survey

The initial pilot site was launch in 2008 in three states: New York (March), Washington (June), and Texas (October).

In January 2009, FHWA conducted a survey of pilot site users. The responses were encouraging!

Respondents identified these site qualities:

- faster
- more collaborative
- efficient information sharing
- solution for staff-turnover
- administrative record
- central document repository
- standardized forms
- project-specific teams
- workflow consistency
- accountability and status tracking

Respondents answered “yes” to these statements:

- 96%** easy to use
- 96%** would recommend to other states and for other uses
- 85%** useful for building administrative record
- 84%** improves communication
- 81%** provides more information
- 60%** saves time
- 58%** helps produce higher quality documents
- 54%** used to review a BA
- 42%** used to write a BA

Respondents gave these testimonials:

- “ The site is very easy to use. I like the e-mail notification when a document is ready for review. ...[E]xcellent for allowing reviewers to peruse documents at their convenience and the availability of info... in one location is a great feature. ”
- “ Aside from a higher quality document, we have a standardized document. This is SUCH an important utility of this package. ”
- “ It’s a great tool. I just think it will take some time and a few minor improvements. ”

ESA•FHWA Site Nationwide Rollout

In June 2009, FHWA plans to launch a revised and updated ESA•FHWA Site for nationwide use. The site will reflect initial site upgrades and improvements identified through the pilot site and the user survey. Additional upgrades and improvements will be considered as additional feedback and input are received. Remember, we want to hear from you!

Planned Rollout Upgrades

These upgrades will be implemented as part of the nationwide rollout.

- removal of personal data from user profiles
- archive feature with multiple search options
- FAQ and search tools
- one main portal and three regional portals
- automatic email notification

Potential Rollout Upgrades

These upgrades are being considered for implementation as part of the nationwide rollout.

- examples of successful BAs and complete initiation packages
- enhanced performance and tracking metrics
- real-time feedback and suggestion feature
- file compression (Zip) feature
- enhanced site navigation and user interface
- template with capability for ongoing improvements
- “Draft Only” folder for improved BA document organization
- checklist functionality

Potential Future Upgrades

These upgrades are being considered for implementation subsequent to nationwide rollout (based on available funding).

- inclusion of Section 4f review
- inclusion of NEPA CE and EA review
- addition of GIS mapping and analytic tools
- addition of tools to facilitate access to relevant information for project teams and decision makers