

Superfund Optimization Strategy: Extracting Lessons Learned from 640 Optimization Recommendations

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Background/Objectives. Under EPA's 2012 National Strategy to Expand Superfund Optimization Practices from Site Assessment to Site Completion the Strategy, EPA expanded its remedy optimization program, tripling the average number of optimization and technical support events performed to about 21 per year from 2011 - 2015. By expanding the optimization program, EPA has realized benefits from optimization, such as increasing remedy effectiveness, improving technical performance, reducing costs, moving sites to completion, and lowering the environmental footprint of remediation activities, at a larger number of sites.

Approach/Activities. In FY 2015, EPA collected information from site project teams on the status of the optimization and technical recommendations from 61 projects conducted between 2011 and 2015. The in-depth analysis of the individual recommendations at these projects is yielding insightful information on how optimization practices are moving "upstream" to the early stages of projects, and which beneficial outcomes are typically incurred in each phase.

Results/Lessons Learned. Through a close analysis of the more than 640 individual recommendations made over the four years, we are learning about the nature of the specific technical practices that are helping us achieve the optimization goals.