

## Comprehensive Benefit Evaluation Scoping Tool User Guide

1. Purpose: The purpose of the Comprehensive Benefit Evaluation Scoping Tool (C-BEST) is to assist Districts in implementing the ASA(CW) Counting All Benefits Policy Directive issued 5 JAN 2021.
2. When to use the C-BEST:
  - a. Project Delivery Teams (PDTs) should use the C-BEST early in the planning process. Generally, the tool should be utilized after the problems and opportunities have been identified (planning process step 1). However, the C-BEST can be used as early as during the project scoping meeting or planning charrette.
  - b. As the study advances, updates of the C-BEST should be made in conjunction with planning process step 2, inventorying and forecasting conditions, and step 3 – formulating alternative plans, as the proposed project effects may change as new alternatives are developed.
  - c. PDTs should revisit the C-BEST as necessary throughout the study. If later in the study process (post-Tentatively Selected Plan milestone meeting), a PDT becomes aware of project effects that were not previously anticipated, then the team should attempt to incorporate at least a qualitative assessment of the effects.
  - d. The C-BEST should be used to determine necessary modeling efforts needed to analyze the project effects to a level of detail sufficient to support decision-making.
  - e. A completed C-BEST or similar display of anticipated project effects by category, proposed measurement metrics, and recommended quantification efforts should be presented at the Alternatives Milestone Meeting (AMM).
  - f. The C-BEST should be included in the Plan Formulation Appendix of the feasibility report to show which benefit categories were considered and utilized, as well as those that were screened out because they would not be affected by the proposed project or were not relevant to the investment decision.
3. How to use C-BEST:
  - a. The C-BEST is an Excel Spreadsheet file with one tab at the bottom for each business line
  - b. Users should select the appropriate business line for the study, and then go down the sheet row by row to discuss each effect category with the PDT.
  - c. Users should fill out blank cells in the C-BEST and modify as necessary; Metrics should be clearly identified and relevant to decision making.
  - d. Additional effect categories should be added if they are not already listed.
4. Columns/Fields Description:

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### Indicators and Metrics

Columns A-H describe a sample of metrics and their qualities. Note that this list is not exhaustive and individual projects may have unique benefit categories. The PDT is encouraged to add metrics based on a project's circumstances.

- A. **Code:** This field provides a unique identifier for each project effect by assigning a combination of the National Account (Column B) and an ordinal number. The Code field can be useful in referring to and differentiating between effect categories during team discussions.
- B. **National Account:** This field identifies which of the traditional Four Accounts from the Principles and Guidelines that the effect should be considered under: National Economic Development (NED), Regional Economic Development (RED), Other Social Effects (OSE), or Environmental Quality (EQ).
- C. **Typical?:** This field identifies whether the effect category is typically evaluated and utilized in USACE planning studies. Effects that are not typical may require additional effort to evaluate and include in the study due to model development, approval for use, or potential policy exceptions.
- D. **Effect Category:** This field identifies the general category of project effect. It can be used to help study teams group project effects together or determine which effects within a category are most worthwhile to evaluate.
- E. **Effect:** This field identifies a unique name for each project effect. It can be the same as the effect category only when there is a single effect in that category.
- F. **Effect Description / Relationship to Project:** This field is a brief description of the effect and its relationship to the project. It should concisely describe how implementing the proposed project (or how not implementing the proposed project) will cause that effect.
- G. **Quantitative / Qualitative:** This field identifies whether the effect is best evaluated qualitatively, quantitatively, or semi-quantitatively.
  - Qualitative evaluations only describe the project effect using words and descriptors.
  - Quantitative evaluations measure the project effects numerically based on specific metrics.
  - Semi-quantitative evaluations use ranking and categories, such as high, medium, low, to evaluate. Order of magnitude reporting (ER 1156)
  - Provide guidance on when to use qualitative vs. categorical vs. semi-quantitative vs. quantitative
- H. **Metric(s):** This field indicates the metric by which the effect should be measured. Effects can be measured in many ways, such as dollars, acres of habitat restored, jobs created, qualitative description of social effects, etc.

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### Assessment of Metric as Decision Criteria

Columns I-M are the primary columns to be completed by the PDT. They assess the relationship of a given metric to the project's problems and opportunities and describe the value of measuring the metric. After identifying relevant metrics, the PDT should complete this section to gain a deeper understanding of how the metric may be used throughout the decision-making process.

- I. **Relationship of Metric to Problems & Opportunities:** This field should be completed by the PDT. As part of the planning process, metrics should be related back to the problems and opportunities of the project.
- J. **Metric Use in Planning:** This field should be completed by the PDT. After considering the relationship of the metric to problems and opportunities, the PDT should consider the decision-making capability of the metric. Will this metric inform the planning process, or can the metric only register the impacts of potential alternatives?
  - o Can metric be used to distinguish between alternatives or just register FWOP and Recommended Plan Impacts?
- K. **Level of Effort to Measure (None, Low, Medium, High):** This field identifies the level of effort to measure a given effect. The PDT should augment the default level of effort depending on the specific circumstances of their project.
- L. **Value Added to Decision Making (None, Low, Medium, High, Critical):** This field identifies the value added from the measurement of an effect.
- M. **Potential EJ Impacts:** This field identifies whether a given metric has potential environmental justice impacts. The PDT should consider the environmental justice profile of their project area and consider if an effect could positively or negatively impact EJ groups.

### Methods used to Qualify and/or Quantify the Metrics

Columns N-R describe some of the typical methodologies that can be used to qualify and/or quantify a metric. Columns M-O provide examples of Corps-certified models for a given mission area and describe the way it can be utilized to measure the metric.

- N. **Typical Model 1 (Ex: Beach-Fx):** This field uses an example of a model typical to the mission area (CSR, FRM, etc.) and provides an example of how its results could be utilized to describe the given effect.
- O. **Typical Model 2 (Ex: G2CRM):** This field uses another example of a model typical to the mission area (CSR, FRM, etc.) and provides an explanation of how its results could be utilized to describe the given effect.
- P. **Typical Model 3 (Ex: RECONS, IMPLAN, REMI, RIMS II):** This field uses another example of a model typical to the mission area (CSR, FRM, etc.) and provides an explanation of how its results could be utilized to describe the given effect.

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- Q. **Other Modeling Options:** This field provides examples of other modeling options that can be used to measure the metric. If an atypical model, such as a one-time-use model is being considered by the PDT, it should be added here.
- R. **Other Modeling Option Limitations:** This field should be completed by the PDT to describe the limitations of using various modeling options.

### 5. How to Integrate EJ into the Planning Process and C-BEST

#### IDDN

- i. **Identify** disadvantaged communities in the project area. The initial screening should be done using a tool like the EPA's EJScreen or the CEQ's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.
- ii. **Describe** the identified EJ communities, the specific challenges they face, and how positive or adverse effects could be measured by a given metric.
- iii. **Develop** opportunities and objectives to mitigate adverse effects or maximize positive effects.
- iv. **Narrate** the story of the EJ groups and the expected effects of a project on them.

### 6. Tips and "C-BEST" Practices

- a. The primary goal of this tool is to relate problems and opportunities back to a real-world effect. The PDT should use this tool iteratively as they progress through the SMART Planning process.
- b. The local sponsor is often the greatest resource for identifying additional benefits. Given their specific local knowledge of issues, the sponsor should be one of the PDT's primary sources of information for formulating a comprehensive benefits analysis.
- c. This scoping tool does *not* contain an exhaustive list of all possible benefit categories. Many projects will have benefits unique to their specific circumstances, and some projects will require unique metrics and measurement methodologies. The benefit categories provided should be used as a starting point and augmented or expanded as necessary.