

Final Rule Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) in Defense Environmental Restoration Activities[Federal Register: February 2, 1998 (Volume 63, Number 21)]

[Rules and Regulations]

[Page 5255-5268]

From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov]

[DOCID:fr02fe98-17]

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Office of the Secretary

32 CFR Part 203

RIN 0790-AG14

Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) in Defense Environmental Restoration Activities

AGENCY: Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environmental Security (DUSD(ES)), DOD.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 1996, the Department of Defense (DoD) is finalizing a rule to provide technical assistance to local community members of Restoration Advisory Boards (RABs) and Technical Review Committee (TRCs). RABs and TRCs are established to review and comment on DoD environmental restoration activities at military installations and formerly used defense sites within the United States and its territories.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This rule is effective February 2, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Patricia Ferrebee or Marcia Read, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environmental Security, 3400 Defense Pentagon, Washington, D.C., 20301-3400, telephone (703) 697-5372 or (703) 697-7475.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The official record for this rulemaking is kept in a paper format. Accordingly, DoD has transferred all electronic or digital comments received into paper form and placed them into the official record, with all of the comments received in writing.

The Department of Defense's responses to comments have been incorporated in a response to comments document, which has been placed into the official record for this rulemaking. The major comments and responses are discussed in the Response to Comments section of this preamble.

Any person wishing to review the official record, or be provided copies of documents in the official record, for this rulemaking should contact Patricia Ferrebee at Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environmental Security, 3400 Defense Pentagon, Washington, D.C. 20301-3400, in writing, or by telephone at (703) 697-5372.

Preamble Outline

- I. Legal Authority
- II. Background
- III. Summary of Significant Changes from Proposed Rule
- IV. Description of the Final Rule and Responses to Major Comments
 - A. TAPP Process
 - B. Eligible Applicants
 - C. Eligible Activities
 - D. Technical Assistance for Public Participation Provider Qualifications
 - E. Submission of Application
 - F. Appeals Process
- V. Administrative Requirements/Compliance with Executive Order
 - A. Regulatory Impact Analysis Under Executive Order 12866
 - B. Regulatory Flexibility Analysis
 - C. Paperwork Reduction Act
 - D. Unfunded Mandates

I. Legal Authority

This rule is issued under the authority of Section 2705 of Title 10, United States Code. Subsections (c) and (d) of Section 2705 encourage the Department of Defense to establish either a Technical Review Committee (TRC) or Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) to review and comment on DoD actions at military installations undertaking environmental restoration activities. Section 2705(e) permits the Department of Defense to obtain, from private sector sources, technical assistance to help TRCs and RABs better understand the scientific and engineering issues underlying an installation's environmental restoration activities. TRCs and RABs may request this assistance only if:

(1) The TRC or RAB demonstrates that the Federal, State, and local agencies responsible for overseeing environmental restoration at the installation and DoD personnel do not have the technical expertise necessary for achieving the objective for which the technical assistance is to be obtained; or

(2) The technical assistance--

(a) Is likely to contribute to the efficiency, effectiveness, or timeliness of environmental restoration activities at the installation; and

(b) Is likely to contribute to community acceptance of environmental restoration activities at the installation. Funding for this technical assistance program will come from the Environmental Restoration Accounts established for Army, Navy, and Air Force for operating installations, and from the DoD Component's base closure account for transferring or closing installations. For Defense Agencies the Defense-Wide environmental restoration account will be the source of funds for assistance at operating installations. The Environmental Restoration Account for Formerly Used Defense sites will fund technical assistance at formerly used defense sites.

[[Page 5256]]

II. Background

Over the past several years, the Department of Defense has

participated as a member of the Federal Facilities Environmental Restoration Dialogue Committee (FFERDC). This committee, comprised of a wide range of stakeholders, was chartered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop consensus policy recommendations for improving environmental restoration at Federal facilities. In February 1993, the FFERDC issued the ``Interim Report of the FFERDC: Recommendations for Improving the Federal Facilities Environmental Restoration Decision-Making and Priority-Setting Processes.'' This report recommended that Federal agencies become more proactive in providing information about restoration activities to stakeholders and that citizen advisory boards be established to provide advice to government agencies that conduct restoration at Federal facilities. This report also suggested the initiation of technical assistance funding.

The Department of Defense has issued policy for establishing RABs at its installations and formerly used defense sites. On September 9, 1993, the Department of Defense issued policy for establishing RABs at installations designated for closure or realignment under the BRAC Acts of 1988 and 1990 where property will be available for transfer to the community. On April 14, 1994, the Department of Defense issued RAB policy for non-closing installations as part of Management Guidance for Execution of the FY94/95 and Development of the FY96 Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP). The policy called for the establishment of RABs at DoD installations where there is sufficient, sustained community interest. Criteria for determining sufficient interest are: (1) a government agency request that a RAB be formed; (2) fifty local residents sign a petition requesting that a RAB be formed; (3) an installation determines that a RAB is needed; or (4) the closure or realignment of an installation involves the transfer of property to the community. On September 27, 1994, the Department of Defense and EPA issued joint RAB guidelines on how to develop and implement a RAB. Finally, on August 6, 1996, the Department of Defense proposed regulations governing the characteristics, composition, and establishment of RABs pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 1995 (61 FR 40764-40772).

The proposed of a RAB is to bring together people who reflect the diverse interests within the local community, enabling an early and continual flow of information among the affected community, the Department of Defense, and environmental oversight agencies. Recognizing the importance of citizen participation in the environmental restoration process, Congress authorized the provision of technical assistance to aid public participation in Section 326 of NDAA-95. In response to this authority, the Department of Defense published a Notice of Request for Comments (May 24, 1995, 60 FR 27460-27463) on alternative methods for funding technical assistance. In 1996, Congress revised this authority in Section 324 of NDAA-96. This final rule establishes regulations for DOD Components to provide technical assistance to RABs and TRCs, and details the specific requirements for obtaining this assistance consistent with this new authority. Proposed regulations regarding the characteristics, composition, and establishment of RABs were previously published on August 6, 1996 (61 FR 40764-40772).

The Department of Defense published a proposed rule, Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) in Defense Environmental Restoration Activities, on December 27, 1996 (61 FR, 68174-68197). Public comments on this proposed rule were considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into this final rule.

III. Summary of Significant Changes From Proposed Rule

The substance of this final rule does not differ significantly from the proposed rule published on December 27, 1996. Principal among the changes is the addition of an appeals process, described more fully in Section IV of this preamble and located in Section 203.19 of the final rule. Because of devolvement of the Defense Environmental Restoration Account, the authority to grant waivers, in section 203.4, has been delegated to the DoD Component Secretary, or equivalent, for the installation in question. In addition, the Department of Defense has, in section 203.10, clarified the types of projects that will be eligible for TAPP funding.

IV. Description of the Final Rule and Responses to Major Comments

This rule finalizes the proposed rule ``Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) in Defense Environmental Restoration Activities'' (61 FR, 68174-68197). This section explains the DoD's final action, based on the rationale presented in the proposed rule and the DoD's review of the public comments.

To facilitate the reader's review of this final rule and to streamline the overall structure, this section also contains the DoD's responses to the most significant comments after each of the topics discussed. If a particular section does not contain a response to comment section, then either no comments were received on that topic, or the Department of Defense has chosen to place its response in the background document entitled ``Technical Assistance for Public Participation Response to Comments Background Document.'' This background document contains a complete discussion of the DoD's responses to comments and can be found in the docket for this rulemaking. This document provides a complete record of the public comments followed by the DoD's responses.

A. TAPP Process

An overview of the process by which community members of RABs and TRCs can obtain technical assistance is provided in Sections 203.4 and 203.5 of the final rule. The process begins with an evaluation by the community members of RABs and TRCs of their technical assistance needs and whether these needs can be met by existing avenues of support. These other available sources of assistance can include the installation's restoration contractors, installation or other DoD personnel, RAB or TRC members, volunteer sources from within the community, or state, local, or federal personnel responsible for the oversight of restoration activities at the installation. If these sources cannot provide the needed assistance, or if the selection of an alternate provider will contribute to environmental restoration activities and the community acceptance of such activities, the community members of RABs and TRCs may submit to the installation a request for technical assistance. This request should specify in as much detail as possible the type of assistance requested, the timeframe for which the assistance is required, and, if known, one or more potential providers.

Based upon the details provided in the request, the installation commander or other designated authority will determine whether the project meets the eligibility requirements outlined in this final rule.

If the project is not approved, the RAB/TRC will receive a written explanation for that decision. If the project is approved, the installation commander will forward the application to the appropriate contracting authority. The contracting authority will issue

[[Page 5257]]

purchase orders to obtain the desired technical assistance subject to certain funding limitations. If multiple purchase orders are needed to assist community members of a particular RAB or TRC, the combined sum of these purchase orders cannot exceed \$100,000 or, during any one year, the lesser of \$25,000 or 1 percent of the installation's projected environmental restoration cost-to-complete. Note that these limitations refer to the maximum allowable technical assistance funding per RAB/TRC. Resources available within a given year may vary. In addition, the funds to support RABs and TRCs and now TAPP derive from the same budget that funds installation environmental investigations and cleanup.

The government is required to follow the rules and regulations for purchase orders as outlines in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) (48 CFR Part 13). As a result, the government cannot direct awards to a specified supplier unless the procurement is under \$2,500, and then only if the cost is comparable to other suppliers. For procurements over \$2,500 but under \$100,000, the acquisition is reserved for small businesses, unless there is a reasonable expectation that small businesses could not provide the best scientific and technological sources consistent with the demands of the proposed acquisition for the best mix of cost, performance, and schedules. Furthermore, the award must be on a competitive basis. The Department of Defense will solicit bids from those providers meeting the criteria and will select a provider offering the best value to the government.

Should the procurement process identify a qualified respondent other than the proposed provider(s) identified by the RAB/TRC, or fail to identify any qualified respondents, the RAB/TRC will be consulted prior to the award of a purchase order. If the Department of Defense determines that the TAPP request represents an eligible project for which no funds are available, it will ask the RAB or TRC to specify whether the project should be reconsidered upon the availability of additional funds.

Community members of RABs and/or TRCs must comply with the reporting requirements established in Section 203.14 of this rule.

Response to Comments

One commenter indicated that the language in the proposed rule seems to indicate that support is only to be provided for projects that will assist in improving public support of DoD cleanup projects. The commenter noted that the public may have alternate viewpoints on such issues as: the need for cleanup, risk levels, technology to be used, etc.

The commenter believes that support should be provided to explore these issues as well, not just projects which validate DoD decisions.

In response, the Department of Defense intends that support be provided to allow the RAB/TRC members to better understand and provide input into DoD's decision process, and does not agree with the commenter that the rule implies that support will be provided only for projects that validate DoD's position.

Some commenters expressed concern that approval for TAPP projects

goes through the installation commander.

In response, the installation commander has ultimate authority for the installation restoration program at his/her installation, and the Department of Defense feels it is the responsibility of that commander (or other service-designated authority) to make the decisions affecting the installation's cleanup budget and its ability to meet cleanup goals and requirements. Each installation commander or designated authority will receive guidance to help determine approval processes for potential TAPP projects. In the event the RAB does not agree with the decision of the installation commander, it can appeal the decision through the appeals process outlined in section 203.19 of this final rule.

Several commenters questioned the funding process to be used. For instance, one commenter inquired whether RABs would have access to a full year's allowance (presumably meaning the full annual funding amount of \$25,000 or 1% of the installation's total projected environmental restoration cost-to-complete), even if the first project is less than that amount. Other commenters wanted to clarify whether approval would be subject to available funding, or if there was instead a ``guarantee'' of support. Finally, several commenters stated that TAPP support should be readily available, or projects could suffer while waiting.

When RABs/TRCs identify a need for technical assistance, the Department of Defense will program funds for TAPP support. The sources of TAPP funding are the Environmental Restoration Accounts established for the DoD Components. Therefore, it competes with study, cleanup, and even RAB funding. The installations, with input from their RAB/TRCs, will have to determine how tradeoffs will be made between these important activities. It is DoD's intention that once a project is identified and approved, the procurement of a provider will occur as quickly as possible to avoid potential impacts on installation schedules. However, procurement of the assistance provider is subject to availability of funds.

Each DoD Component will establish procedures for TAPP funding. They will not automatically set aside \$25,000 or 1% of the installation's total projected environmental restoration cost-to-complete for each RAB/TRC for TAPP each year, because some RABs/TRCs may not need TAPP support. There are no restrictions to having more than one TAPP project a year as long as the annual limit of \$25,000 or 1% of the installation's total projected environmental cost-to-complete is not exceeded.

Commenters questioned whether the criteria established for obtaining technical support can ever be met. For example, the first criteria states that TRCs and RABs may request assistance only if they demonstrate that the Federal, State, and local agencies responsible for overseeing environmental restoration at the installation do not have the technical expertise necessary for achieving the objective. The commenter believes this argument will be difficult to make. Additionally, the commenter wants to know what is required to show that support isn't available through these sources? The commenter continued in his argument that the criteria for obtaining assistance were unlikely to be met. He stated that the criteria regarding enhancing the timeliness of restoration activities at the installation is certainly not helped by the involvement of a new contractor. Finally, the commenter stated that the final criterion that the technical assistance will contribute to community acceptance of the installation's restoration activities, is likely not to be met by bringing in outside

opinion.

In response, the criterion cited by the commenter was imposed by the NDAA of 1996 and are intended to conserve limited resources for TAPP funding and to encourage the use of all available resources. The Department of Defense anticipates that much of the technical expertise required by RABs will be available through existing installation environmental restoration contractors or through the regulatory and/or installation or other DoD personnel working on the program. The Department of Defense encourages the use of these resources to the maximum extent possible, and notes that commenters from some RABs were quite

[[Page 5258]]

vocal in their support for these avenues of support. Other sources of support, such as volunteer services from local universities or other experts or assistance from states and local health and environmental organizations, should also be considered to preserve limited TAPP resources. However, there may be circumstances, such as specific knowledge of local environmental conditions or knowledge of an alternative technology, which require expertise not available through Federal, State, or local oversight agencies. In these instances, the only requirement is that the RAB provide a statement in their request for technical assistance that states why their requirements cannot be met by those agencies. The Department of Defense also points out that the criterion noted above is one of two criteria for obtaining assistance, either one of which is sufficient. The full text of the second criterion cited by the commenter refers to enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, or timeliness of environmental restoration activities. To that end, the Department of Defense believes that an informed RAB membership is better able to contribute to the restoration program than one unfamiliar with technical details.

Finally the Department of Defense believes that community acceptance may be enhanced through the contributions of outside sources of expertise, particularly when that source can verify to the community that the proposed restoration activities advocated by the Department of Defense are appropriate. Community acceptance is greatly influenced by community understanding. Technical assistance is intended to increase the RAB's understanding of the DoD environmental restoration program so that they may make meaningful contributions to the process. As RAB input is incorporated into the restoration program, environmental restoration becomes a cooperative effort involving all stakeholders. Carefully defining the type of assistance needed will limit the possibility that the introduction of a new contractor will hinder rather than enhance community understanding.

B. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for TAPP are community members of RABs or TRCs established in accordance with 32 CFR part 202 (61 FR 40764-40772). Furthermore, the RABs or TRCs must have at least three community members to ensure community interests are broadly represented. The applicant must certify that the request represents the wishes of a simple majority of the community members of the RAB or TRC. Certification includes, but is not limited to, the results of a roll call vote of community members of the RAB or TRC documented in the meeting minutes.

Response to Comments

Commenters requested clarification on the definition of community members of RABs or TRCs, specifically whether state and local government officials could be considered community members for purposes of this final rule.

The Department of Defense considers state and local government employees on the RAB or TRC to have full membership in that body. However, for purposes of determining TAPP projects, the Department of Defense intends that RAB/TRB community members be limited to residents of the community affected by or potentially affected by the installation. In situations where community residents are also members of the Federal, state or local government, their participation in the TAPP process would not be excluded, provided they were not expressing opinions clearly derived from their status as government employees. As with the proposed RAB rule, however, the Department of Defense intends that the actual operations of individual RABs and TRCs be determined largely by the participants, and encourages each organization to develop its own guidelines for determining both membership at large and the subset of community members eligible to assist in the development of TAPP projects.

C. Eligible Activities

TAPP procurements should be pursued by the RAB or TRC only to the extent that Federal, State, or local agencies responsible for overseeing environmental restoration at the facility do not have the necessary technical expertise for the proposed project, or the proposed technical assistance will contribute to the efficiency, effectiveness, or timeliness of environmental restoration activities at the installation and is likely to contribute to community acceptance of those activities.

The list of eligible activities, section 203.10, of this final rule has been expanded to clarify eligible projects and provide examples. The final rule now provides that eligible projects include those projects designed to:

- (1) Interpret technical documents, such as installation restoration program site investigation, engineering, and decision documents; risk assessments, including baseline and ecological risk assessments conducted by the installation; and health assessments, such as those conducted by Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).
- (2) Assess technologies.
- (3) Participate in relative risk evaluations.
- (4) Understand health implications.
- (5) Provide technical training, where appropriate.

Response to Comments

Several commenters wanted the list of eligible projects expanded to include some form of community outreach and the ability to generate new or primary data. In response, DoD believes community outreach should not be a part of the TAPP program. Community outreach is a fundamental part of an installation's community relations program, and should be conducted within the context of that program. One mechanism used successfully by many installations is the development and publication of fact sheets or newsletters, providing important information to the general public about the installation's restoration program. This activity is funded by the installation's environmental restoration and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) funding, which covers administrative costs incurred by the RABs. The Department of Defense

believes that the goal of the TAPP program is to enhance participation through increased understanding of the technical issues of the cleanup program, and maintains that the limited funding available for that purpose should be directed at that goal.

The generation of new data is the responsibility of the lead agency--in this case the Department of Defense. Furthermore, the Department of Defense works closely with the regulatory agencies to develop investigation strategies to ensure potential hazards are adequately characterized. This consultation and coordination is an important part of the partnership the Department of Defense maintains with regulatory agencies as cleanup proceeds. If the RAB identifies a circumstance where additional data collection may be necessary, these concerns should be communicated to the Department of Defense, where the final decisions on the restoration program reside, or to the appropriate regulatory agencies if the Department of Defense is not responsive.

D. Technical Assistance for Public Participation Provider Qualifications

The Department of Defense has determined that the technical assistance

[[Page 5259]]

providers must possess certain minimum credentials. These include:

- (1) Demonstrated knowledge of hazardous or toxic waste issues and/or laws.
- (2) Academic training in a relevant discipline (e.g., biochemistry, toxicology, environmental sciences, engineering).
- (3) Ability to translate technical information into terms understandable by lay persons.

In addition, technical assistance providers should possess the following credentials to ensure they will be qualified to assist the community members of RABs and TRCs in understanding the environmental restoration program:

- (1) Experience working on hazardous or toxic waste problems.
- (2) Experience in making technical presentations.
- (3) Demonstrated writing skills.
- (4) Previous experience working with affected individuals or community groups or other groups of individuals.

The technical assistance provider's qualifications will vary according to the type of assistance to be provided. Community members of the RAB/TRC may suggest additional provider qualifications as part of the application for technical assistance. These additional qualifications may be used by the Department of Defense to target the most appropriate providers during the procurement process. Examples of such criteria could include prior work in the area, knowledge of local environmental conditions or laws, specific technical capabilities, or other relevant expertise.

Response to Comments

One commenter noted that non-profits and universities should be eligible TAPP contractors.

In response, it was not the Department of Defense's intent to exclude qualified TAPP providers from eligibility, in either the proposed TAPP rule or this final rule. However, the use of purchase orders to obtain support does require the Department of Defense to

follow procurement policies outlined in the FAR (48 CFR Part 13). Purchase orders are generally reserved for small businesses unless one of several situations apply. In circumstances where small businesses cannot be identified that meet the criteria for procurement, a contract can be awarded to a qualified bidder that is not a small business. Examples of such circumstances include situations where conflict of interest precludes otherwise acceptable small businesses from participation, where knowledge of specific technical capabilities or of specific proprietary technologies is required. The Department of Defense recognizes that in many instances, RAB requirements for support will specify criteria for the potential provider that may be met only by non-profits or universities, and envisions no difficulties in awarding procurements to these types of institutions. As part of the guidance under development for this program, the Department of Defense will provide information to assist RABs and the DoD contracting officers in determining appropriate circumstances for contracting with technical assistance providers that are not small businesses.

E. Submission of Application

The applicant must submit a TAPP application to begin the TAPP procurement process. The application form is included as Appendix A of this part and can be obtained from the DoD installation, the military department headquarters, or directly from the Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environmental Security, 3400 Defense Pentagon, Washington, D.C. 20301-3400, telephone (703) 697-5372 or (703) 697-7475.

The applications will not be considered complete until the following data elements have been entered into the form:

- (a) Installation.
- (b) Source of TAPP request (name of RAB or TRC).
- (c) Certification of majority request.
- (d) RAB/TRC contact point for TAPP project.
- (e) Project title.
- (f) Project type (e.g., data interpretation, training, etc.).
- (g) Project purpose and description (descriptions, time and locations of products or services desired).
- (h) Statement of eligibility of project.
- (i) Proposed provider, if known.
- (j) Specific qualifications or criteria for provider.

Response to Comments

A few commenters argued that the application process is too complex. They noted that support might be required just to prepare the project description and/or the application.

The principal requirement for the RABs in applying for technical assistance is to develop a project that meets their needs in understanding some aspect of the installation's restoration program. Once this need has been communicated to the Department of Defense, the government assumes the responsibilities for obtaining and monitoring the performance of the technical assistance provider. The application form merely formalizes the process the RABs should go through to develop their project requirements. Additional details, such as information about a potential technical assistance provider, are optional and are only intended to help speed up the procurement process.

Other commenters stated that RABs and TRCs should have access to additional support, either through an additional purchase order or

through access to third party expertise, such as could be provided by Technical Outreach Services to Communities (TOSC) providers, in order to determine the requirements for their TAPP project. (TOSC is a program of the Environmental Protection Agency's Hazardous Substance Research Centers to provide information, technical and educational training, workshops, and site assistance for communities and RABs dealing with hazardous substance issues.)

In response, the Department of Defense believes the RABs, in concert with other members of the public, if necessary, are best positioned to determine their needs for technical support. The Department of Defense, State, and local government members of the RAB will be available for support in developing and preparing a TAPP request, should the RAB community members desire their input. Furthermore, guidance to assist communities and DoD installations with this program is currently under development by the Department of Defense and will be available to RAB members.

One commenter stated that preparation of the TAPP request imposes too much burden on the RAB with no reimbursement for time and effort. The commenter believed that this effort should be an eligible expense.

The Department of Defense reiterates that the TAPP request merely puts in writing the desires of the community members of the RAB to procure technical assistance. As such, the principal required information is a description of the proposed project. The Department of Defense has minimized the burden to community members of RABs/TRCs by developing a short application form and performing the contract administration.

F. Appeals Process

Although not specifically raised as an issue by commenters, the Department of Defense recognizes that disputes can arise at several junctures in the TAPP process. Three situations in which disagreements could occur are:

[[Page 5260]]

(a) The RAB/TRC may dispute the findings of the installation commander that the proposed TAPP project is ineligible, either because of the failure of the RAB to adequately consider alternate sources of assistance or because the project does not meet the eligibility criteria established in the final rule.

(b) The RAB may dispute the findings of the contracting officer that (1) the preferred provider is inadequate, (2) the preferred provider is not cost effective, or (3) other providers identified in the acquisition process more clearly meet the requirements of the task.

(c) After the selection of a provider, a dispute can arise because the government contracting officer and the RAB/TRC do not agree that the provider has met the terms of the procurement. In this situation, the process outlined in the FAR (48 CFR Part 46) would apply.

There is a sincere desire by the Department of Defense to avoid disputes and to foster an atmosphere of cooperation between the RAB or TRC and the installation. Each DoD Component has a hierarchical organizational structure with clearly defined chains-of-command. In the event that disputes do occur, appeals will be considered within the chain-of-command, and, in general, will be resolved at the lowest possible level. The highest level of appeal will be at the DoD Component Deputy Assistant Secretary level with authority over the

environmental restoration and BRAC environmental programs. In all cases, inherently governmental functions, such as records of decision, are not subject to appeal, and issues regarding contracting must be governed by the FAR (48 CFR Part 37).

V. Administrative Requirements/Compliance With Executive Order

A. Regulatory Impact Analysis Under Executive Order 12866

Under Executive Order 12866 (October 4, 1993, 58 FR 51735), the Department of Defense must determine whether this regulatory action is ``significant'' and therefore subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the requirements of the Executive Order. Under Section 3(f), the order defines a ``significant regulation action'' as an action that is likely to result in a rule: (1) Having an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, or adversely and materially affecting a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local or tribal governments or communities (also referred to as ``economically significant''); (2) creating serious inconsistency or otherwise interfering with an action taken or planned by another agency; (3) materially altering the budgetary impacts of entitlement, grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations or recipients thereof; or (4) raising novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President's priorities or the principles set forth in this Executive Order.

Pursuant to the terms of this Executive Order, the OMB has determined this rule is a ``significant regulatory action'' because it may raise novel legal or policy issues. As such, this action was submitted to the OMB for review, and any comments or changes made in response to the OMB suggestions or recommendations will be documented in the public record.

B. Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 requires that agencies evaluate the effects of rules for three types of small entities:

- (1) Small Businesses (as defined in the Small Business Administration regulations);
- (2) Small organizations (independently owned, non-dominant in their field, non-profit); and
- (3) Small government jurisdictions (serving communities of less than 50,000 people).

The Department of Defense has considered the interests of small businesses and small organizations by means of the use of purchase orders to obtain technical assistance. As stated in the FAR (48 CFR Part 13), those purchase orders under \$100,000 are reserved for small businesses, unless it can be demonstrated that small businesses are unable to provide the necessary service or product. Only a limited number of small non-profit organizations are expected to be affected by this program as it is likely that only those non-profit organizations located near Department of Defense installations with ongoing environmental restoration programs will, in most cases, provide the requested technical assistance. The Department of Defense was careful not to impose additional reporting requirements on the public and to stay within the reporting requirements quota for procurements. In keeping with the Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAP), the

Department of Defense has sought to increase the dollar amount of small purchase orders to simplify the procurement process. The Department of Defense has deliberately written the regulations to encourage small entities to apply. Given the limited funding available to this program and the process outlined of Section 203.4 of this final rule, it is not expected that this rulemaking will have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities and, therefore, no Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is necessary.

C. Paperwork Reduction Act

Pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the reporting and record keeping provisions of this final rule were submitted to the OMB for review under Section 3507(d) of the Act.

The collection of information is necessary to identify products or services requested by community members of RABs/TRCs to aid in their participation in the Department of Defense's environmental restoration program, and to meet Congressional reporting requirements.

Respondents are community members of restoration advisory boards or technical review committees requesting technical assistance to interpret scientific and engineering issues regarding the nature of environmental hazards at an installation. This assistance will help communities in participating in the cleanup process. The information, directed by 10 U.S.C. 2705, will be used to determine the eligibility of the proposed project, begin the procurement process to obtain the requested products or services, and determine the satisfaction of community members of RABs/TRCs receiving the products and services.

D. Unfunded Mandates

Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA), Pub. L. 104-4, establishes requirements for Federal agencies to assess the effects of the regulatory actions on State, Tribal, and local governments and the private sector. Under section 202 of the UMRA, the Department of Defense generally must prepare a written statement, including a cost-benefit analysis, for proposed and final rules with ``Federal mandates'' that may result in expenditures to State, local, and Tribal governments, in the aggregate, or to the private sector, of \$100 million or more in any one year. When a written statement is needed, section 205 of the UMRA generally requires the Department of Defense to identify and consider a reasonable number of regulatory alternatives that achieve the objectives of the rule. The provisions of section 205 do not apply when they are inconsistent with applicable law. Moreover, section 205 allows the Department of Defense to adopt an

[[Page 5261]]

alternative other than the least costly, most cost-effective, or least burdensome alternative if the Secretary publishes with the final rule an explanation why that alternative was not adopted. Before the Department of Defense establishes any regulatory requirements that may significantly or uniquely affect small governments, including Tribal governments, it must have developed under section 203 of the UMRA a small government agency plan. The plan must provide for notifying potentially affected small governments, giving them meaningful and timely input into the development of the Department of Defense's regulatory proposals with significant Federal intergovernmental

mandates, and informing, educating, and advising them on compliance with the regulatory requirements.

The Department of Defense has determined that this rule does not contain a Federal mandate that may result in expenditures of \$100 million or more for State, local, and Tribal governments, in the aggregate, or the private sector in any one year. Thus, today's rule is not subject to the requirements of sections 202 and 205 of the UMRA.

List of Subjects in 32 CFR Part 203

Administrative practice and procedure, Technical assistance, Public assistance programs, Environmental protection, Federal buildings and facilities, Organization and functions (Government agencies).

Title 32 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter I, Subchapter M, is amended to add part 203 to read as follows:

PART 203--TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (TAPP) IN DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

Sec.

- 203.1 Authority.
- 203.2 Purpose and availability of referenced material.
- 203.3 Definitions.
- 203.4 Major components of the TAPP process.
- 203.5 TAPP process.
- 203.6 Cost principles.
- 203.7 Eligible applicants.
- 203.8 Evaluation criteria.
- 203.9 Submission of application.
- 203.10 Eligible activities.
- 203.11 Ineligible activities.
- 203.12 Technical assistance for public participation provider qualifications.
- 203.13 Procurement.
- 203.14 RAB/TRC reporting requirements.
- 203.15 Method of payment.
- 203.16 Record retention and audits.
- 203.17 Technical assistance provider reporting requirements.
- 203.18 Conflict of interest and disclosure requirements.
- 203.19 Appeals process.

Appendix A to Part 203--Technical Assistance for Public Participation Application Request Form

Authority: 10 U.S.C. 2705.

Sec. 203.1 Authority.

Part 203 is issued under the authority of section 2705 of Title 10, United States Code. In 1994, Congress authorized the Department of Defense (DoD) to develop a program to facilitate public participation by providing technical assistance to local community members of Restoration Advisory Boards (RABs) and Technical Review Committees (TRCs) (section 326 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995, Pub.L. 103-337). In 1996, Congress revised this authority (section 324 of the National Defense Authorization Act for

Fiscal Year 1996, Pub.L. 104-112). It is pursuant to this revised authority, which is codified as new subsection (3) of section 2705, that the Department of Defense issues this part.

Sec. 203.2 Purpose and availability of referenced material.

(a) This part establishes the Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) program for the Department of Defense. It sets forth policies and procedures for providing technical assistance to community members of TRCs and RABs established at DoD installations in the United States and its territories. This part sets forth the procedures for the Department of Defense to accept and evaluate TAPP applications, to procure the assistance desired by community members of RABs and TRCs, and to manage the TAPP program. These provisions are applicable to all applicants/recipients of technical assistance as discussed in Sec. 203.4 of this part.

(b) Any reference to documents made in this part necessary to apply for TAPP (e.g., the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars or DoD forms) are available through the DoD installations, the military department headquarters, or from the Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environmental Security (DUSD(ES)), 3400 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-3400.

Sec. 203.3 Definitions.

As used in this part, the following terms shall have the meaning set forth:

Affected. Subject to an actual or potential health or environmental threat arising from a release or a threatened release at an installation where the Secretary of Defense is planning or implementing environmental restoration activities including a response action under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act as amended (CERCLA), corrective action under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), or other such actions under applicable Federal or State environmental restoration laws. This would include actions at active, closing, realigning, and formerly used defense installations. Examples of affected parties include individuals living in areas adjacent to installations whose health is or may be endangered by the release of hazardous substances at the facility.

Applicant. Any group of individuals that files an application for TAPP, limited by this part to community members of the RAB or TRC.

Application. A completed formal written request for TAPP that is submitted to the installation commander or to the identified decision authority designated for the installation. A completed application will include a TAPP project description.

Assistance provider. An individual, group of individuals, or company contracted by the Department of Defense to provide technical assistance under the Technical Assistance for Public Participation program announced in this part.

Assistance provider's project manager. The person legally authorized to obligate the organization executing a TAPP purchase order to the terms and conditions of the DoD's regulations and the contract, and designated by the provider to serve as the principal contact with the Department of Defense.

Community Co-chair. The individual selected by the community

members of the RAB/TRC to represent them.

Community member. A member of the RAB or TRC who is also a member of the affected community. For the purpose of this part, community members do not include local, State, or Federal government officials acting in any official capacity.

Community point of contact. The community member of the RAB or TRC designated in the TAPP application as the focal point for communications with the Department of Defense regarding the TAPP procurement process. The community point of contact is responsible for completing the reporting requirements specified in Sec. 203.14 of this part.

Contact. A written agreement between the installation or other instrumentality of the Department of Defense and another party for services or supplies necessary to complete the TAPP project.

[[Page 5262]]

Contracts include written agreements and subagreements for professional services or supplies necessary to complete the TAPP projects, agreements with consultants, and purchase orders.

Contracting officer. The Federal official designated to manage the contract used to fulfill the TAPP request by the RAB or TRC.

Contractor. Any party (e.g., Technical Assistance Provider) to whom the installation or other instrumentality of the Department of Defense awards a contract. In the context of this part, it is synonymous with assistance provider.

Cost estimate. An estimate of the total funding required for the assistance provider to complete the TAPP project.

DoD Component. The military services including the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force and those defense agencies with an environmental restoration program.

DoD Component Deputy Assistant Secretary. The individual in the office of the Secretary of the Army, Navy, Air Force responsible for making environmental decisions for their component or the director of the Defense Agencies.

DoD Installation. A facility that is controlled or operated or otherwise possessed by a department, or agency of the United States Department of Defense within the United States and its territories. In the context of this part, formerly used defense sites (FUDS) are included within the definition of a DoD Installation.

DoD RAB Co-chair. The individual selected by the installation commander, or equivalent, to serve as the installation co-chair of the RAB, represent DoD's interests, serve as liaison with community RAB members, and advocate RAB concerns within the installation staff.

EPA. The United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Firm fixed price contract. A contract wherein funding is fixed, prior to the initiation of a contract, for an agreed upon service or product.

Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS). A site that has been owned by, leased to, possessed by, or otherwise under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense. The FUDS program does not apply to those sites outside U.S. jurisdiction.

Purchase order. An offer by the Government to buy supplies or services from a commercial source, upon specified terms and conditions, the total cost of which cannot exceed the small purchase limit of \$100,000. Purchase orders are governed by Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) (48 CFR part 13), and the Simplified Acquisition

Procedures (SAP).

Restoration Advisory Board (RAB). The RAB is a forum for representatives of the Department of Defense, local community, and EPA and/or State, local, and tribal officials to discuss and exchange information about the installation's environmental restoration program. The RAB provides stakeholders an opportunity make their views known, review progress and participate in dialogue with the decision makers.

Statement of Work. That portion of a contract which describes the actual work to be done by means of specifications or minimum requirements, quantities, performance dates, time and place of performance, and quality requirements. It is key to any procurement because it is the basis for the contractor's response and development of proposed costs.

TAPP approval. Signifies that the Department of Defense has approved the eligibility of the proposed TAPP project and will, subject to the availability of funds, undertake an acquisition to obtain the services specified in the TAPP application submitted by the RAB or TRC. The government will conduct the acquisition in accordance with all of the applicable rules and requirements of the FAR and the SAP. Approval does not constitute an agreement to direct an award to a specific source if such an action would be contrary to the FAR.

TAPP project description. A discussion of the assistance requested that includes the elements listed in Section 203.10 of this part. The project description should contain sufficient detail to enable the Department of Defense to determine the nature and eligibility of the project, identify potential providers and estimate costs, and prepare a statement of work to begin the procurement process.

Technical assistance. Those activities specified in Sec. 203.10 of this part that will contribute to the public's ability to provide input to the decision-making process by improving the public's understanding of overall conditions and activities. Technical assistance may include interpreting technical documents; assessing technologies; participating in relative risk evaluations, understanding health implications; and, training.

Technical assistance does not include those activities prohibited under Section 203.11 of this part, such as litigation or underwriting legal actions; political activity; generation of new primary data such as well drilling and testing, including split sampling; reopening final DoD decisions or conducting disputes with the Department of Defense; or epidemiological or health studies, such as blood or urine testing.

Technical Review Committee (TRC). A group comprised of the Department of Defense, EPA, State, and local authorities and a public representative of the community formed to meet the requirements of 10 U.S.C. 2705(c), the Department of Defense Environmental Restoration Program. Primarily functioning to review installation restoration documents, these committees are being expanded and modified at installations where interest or need necessitates the creation of a RAB.

Sec. 203.4 Major components of the TAPP process.

(a) The Department of Defense will issue purchase orders to technical assistance, facilitation, training, and other public participation assistance providers subject to the purchase limit per order as resources continue to be available. If multiple purchase orders are needed to assist community members of a particular RAB or

TRC, the combined sum of these purchase orders cannot exceed \$100,000 or, during any one year, the lesser of \$25,000 or 1 percent of the installation's total projected environmental restoration cost-to-complete. Note that these limitations refer to the maximum allowable technical assistance funding per RAB/TRC. Resources available within a given year may vary. These limitations apply unless a waiver is granted by the DoD Component Secretary or equivalent for the installation in question. The \$100,000 total and \$25,000 annual limitations may be waived, as appropriate, to reflect the complexity of response action, the nature and extent of contamination at the installation, the level of activity at the installation, projected total needs as identified by the TAPP recipient, the size and diversity of the affected population, and the ability of the TAPP recipient to identify and raise funds from other sources.

(b) Community members of the RAB/TRC will provide a description of the services requested (TAPP Project Description) and, if desired, the names of one or more proposed technical assistance providers to the DoD RAB Co-Chair, who will ensure the application is submitted to the installation commander or other designated authority and to the appropriate DoD contracting office. Technical assistance providers proposed by the community members of a RAB or TRC at each DoD installation that meets the minimum set

[[Page 5263]]

of organizational qualifications guidelines provided by the Department of Defense in Sec. 203.12 of this part will be added to the governments list of bidders for the proposed procurement.

Sec. 203.5 TAPP process.

This section provides an overview of the TAPP process. Specific details referred to in this section can be found in subsequent sections of this part.

(a) TAPP funding. Funding for this TAPP program will come from the Environmental Restoration Accounts established for Army, Navy, and Air Force for operational installations. The funding for Defense Agencies' operating installations will be from the Defense-Wide Environmental Restoration Account. Funding will be from the component's base closure account for transferring or closing installations. Funding for Formerly Used Defense Sites will come from the Environmental Restoration Account established for Formerly Used Defense Sites. After justification of the TAPP proposal, each DoD Component will make funds available from their individual installation's environmental restoration or BRAC accounts, considering a number of factors related to the restoration program at the installation and its impact upon the community. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Closure status.
 - (2) Budget.
 - (3) Installation restoration program status.
 - (4) Presence (or absence) of alternate funding.
 - (5) Relative risk posed by sites at the installation.
 - (6) Type of task to be funded.
 - (7) Community concern.
 - (8) Available funding.
- (b) Identification of proposed TAPP project. Eligible applicants of

RABs and TRCs, established in Sec. 203.7 of this part, should determine whether a TAPP project is required to assist the community members of the RAB or TRC to interpret information regarding the nature and extent of contamination or the proposed remedial actions. Eligibility requirements for TAPP projects are described in Secs. 203.10 and 203.11 of this part. In keeping with the requirements of 10 U.S.C. 2705(e), the RAB or TRC must be able to demonstrate that the technical expertise necessary for the proposed TAPP project is not available through the Federal, State, or local agencies responsible for overseeing environmental restoration at the installation, or that the selection of an independent provider will contribute to environmental restoration activities and the community acceptance of such activities. In addition, the Department of Defense encourages the RAB or TRC to seek other available sources of assistance prior to submitting a request for TAPP in order to preserve limited resources. These sources include DoD's installation restoration contractor, or other DoD contractors or personnel, EPA or state regulatory personnel, volunteer services from local universities or other experts, or assistance from state and local health and environmental organizations.

(c) TAPP project request. The RAB or TRC should notify the installation of its intent to pursue TAPP upon the determination that other sources of assistance are unavailable or unlikely to contribute to the community acceptance of environmental restoration activities at the installation and should prepare a formal request specifying the type of assistance required and, if desired, one or more sources for this assistance. Details concerning this request are stated in Sec. 203.9 of this part. The RAB or TRC must certify to the Department of Defense that the TAPP request represents a request by a majority of the community members of the RAB or TRC. The RAB or TRC should ensure that the request meets the eligibility requirements specified in Secs. 203.10 and 203.11 of this part. Furthermore, the RAB or TRC may outline additional criteria for the Department of Defense to consider in the selection of a provider (such as knowledge of local environmental conditions or specific technical issues, a prior work history within the study area which has relevant specific circumstances or unique challenges, or other relevant expertise or capabilities), keeping in mind that providers must meet the minimum technical qualifications outlined in Sec. 203.12 of this part. The formal request should be submitted to the installation commander or designated decision authority, either directly, or through the DoD RAB Co-chair. The installation commander, or other designated decision authority, will review the proposed project to determine whether the proposed project conforms to the eligibility requirements. If the installation commander, or other designated authority, fails to approve the project request, the rationale for that decision will be provided to the RAB/TRC in writing.

(d) Purchase orders. Upon receipt of a completed TAPP request, the installation will begin the procurement process necessary to obtain the desired services by means of a purchase order or will forward the request to the contracting authority designated by the DoD Component to act for that installation. The government is required to follow the rules and regulations for purchase orders as outlined in the FAR (48 CFR part 13). As a result, the government cannot direct awards to a specified supplier unless the procurement is under \$2,500, and then only if the cost is comparable to other suppliers. For procurements over \$2,500 but under \$100,000, the acquisition is reserved for small businesses, unless there is a reasonable expectation that small

businesses could not provide the best scientific and technological sources consistent with the demands of the proposed acquisition for the best mix of cost, performance, and schedules. Furthermore, the award must be on a competitive basis. In addition to proposing potential providers, the application for technical assistance may indicate specific criteria or qualifications that are deemed necessary by the RAB/TRC for the completion of the project to their satisfaction. This information will be used to assist the Department of Defense in preparing a bidders list. The Department of Defense will solicit bids from those providers meeting the criteria and will select a provider offering the best value to the government. Should the procurement process identify a qualified respondent other than the proposed provider(s) identified by the RAB/TRC or fail to identify any qualified respondents, the RAB/TRC will be consulted prior to the award of a purchase order. If the Department of Defense determines that the TAPP request represents an eligible project for which no funds are available, it will ask the RAB or TRC to specify whether the project should be reconsidered upon the availability of additional funds.

(e) Reporting requirements. The applicant must assure that copies of delivered reports are made available to the Department of Defense and must comply with the reporting requirements established in Sec. 203.14 of this part.

Sec. 203.6 Cost principles.

(a) Non-profit contractors must comply with the cost principles in OMB Circular A-122. Copies of the circular may be obtained from EOP Publications, 725 17th NW, NEOB, Washington, DC 20503.

(b) For-profit contractors and subcontractors must comply with the cost principles in the FAR (48 CFR part 31).

Sec. 203.7 Eligible applicants.

Eligible applicants are community members of RABs or TRCs. Furthermore, the RABs or TRCs must be

[[Page 5264]]

comprised of at least three community members to ensure community interests are broadly represented. The applicant must certify that the request represents the wishes of a simple majority of the community members of the RAB or TRC. Certification includes, but is not limited to, the results of a roll call vote of community members of the RAB or TRC documented in the meeting minutes. Other requirements of the application are detailed in Sec. 203.9 of this part.

Sec. 203.8 Evaluation criteria.

The Department of Defense will begin the TAPP procurement process only after it has determined that all eligibility and responsibility requirements listed in Secs. 203.6, 203.7, and 203.9 of this part are met, and after review of the specific provider qualifications as submitted in the narrative section of the application. In addition, the proposed TAPP project must meet the eligibility criteria as specified

in Secs. 203.10 and 203.11 of this part. Projects that fail to meet those requirements relating to the relevance of the proposed project to the restoration activities at the installation will not be approved.

Sec. 203.9 Submission of application.

The applicant must submit a TAPP application to begin the TAPP procurement process. The application form is included as appendix A of this part and can be obtained from the DoD installation, the DoD Component headquarters, or directly from the Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Environmental Security, 3400 Defense Pentagon, Washington, D.C. 20301-3400. The applications will not be considered complete until the following data elements have been entered into the form:

- (a) Installation.
- (b) Source of TAPP request (names of RAB or TRC).
- (c) Certification of majority request.
- (d) RAB/TRC contact point for TAPP project.
- (e) Project title.
- (f) Project type (e.g. data interpretation, training, etc.).
- (g) Project purpose and description (descriptions, time and locations of products or services desired).
- (h) Statement of eligibility of project.
- (i) Proposed provider, if known.
- (j) Specific qualifications or criteria for provider.

Sec. 203.10 Eligible activities.

(a) TAPP procurements should be pursued by the RAB or TRC only to the extent that Federal, State, or local agencies responsible for overseeing environmental restoration at the facility do not have the necessary technical expertise for the proposed project, or the proposed technical assistance will contribute to the efficiency, effectiveness, or timeliness of environmental restoration activities at the installation and is likely to contribute to community acceptance of those activities.

(b) TAPP procurements may be used to fund activities that will contribute to the public's ability to provide advice to decision-makers by improving the public's understanding of overall conditions and activities. Categories of eligible activities include the following:

(1) Interpret technical documents. The installation restoration program documents each stage of investigation and decision-making with technical reports that summarize data and support cleanup decisions. Technical assistance may be provided to review plans and interpret technical reports for community members of RABs and TRCs. These reports include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Installation restoration program site studies, engineering documents, such as site inspections, remedial investigations, feasibility studies, engineering evaluation and cost analyses, and decision documents (including records of decision);
- (ii) Risk assessments, including baseline and ecological risk assessments conducted by the installation; and
- (iii) Health assessments, such as those conducted by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

(2) Assess technologies. Technical assistance may be provided to

help RAB/TRC community members understand the function and implications of those technologies selected to investigate or clean up sites at the installation.

(3) Participate in relative risk site evaluations. Technical assistance may be provided to help RAB/TRC community members contribute to the relative risk evaluation process for specific sites.

(4) Understand health implications. Technical assistance may be provided to help RAB/TRC community members interpret the potential health implications of cleanup levels or remedial technologies, or to explain the health implications of site contaminants and exposure scenarios.

(5) Training, where appropriate. Technical trainers on specific restoration issues may be appropriate in circumstances where RAB/TRC members need supplemental information on installation restoration projects.

Sec. 203.11 Ineligible activities.

The following activities are ineligible for assistance under the TAPP program:

(a) Litigation or underwriting legal actions, such as paying for attorney fees or paying for a technical assistance provider to assist an attorney in preparing legal action or preparing for and serving as an expert witness at any legal proceeding regarding or affecting the site.

(b) Political activity and lobbying as defined by OMB Circular A-122.

(c) Other activities inconsistent with the cost principles stated in OMB Circular A-122, ``Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations.''

(d) Generation of new primary data, such as well drilling and testing, including split sampling.

(e) Reopening final DoD decisions, such as the Records of Decision (see limitations on judicial review of remedial actions under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) Section 113(h)) or conducting disputes with the Department of Defense).

(f) Epidemiological or health studies, such as blood or urine testing.

(g) Community outreach efforts, such as renting a facility and conducting public meetings, or producing and distributing newsletters.

Sec. 203.12 Technical assistance for public participation provider qualifications.

(a) A technical assistance provider must possess the following credentials:

(1) Demonstrated knowledge of hazardous or toxic waste issues and/or laws.

(2) Academic training in a relevant discipline (e.g., biochemistry, toxicology, environmental sciences, engineering).

(3) Ability to translate technical information into terms understandable to lay persons.

(b) A technical assistance provider should possess the following credentials:

- (1) Experience working on hazardous or toxic waste problems.
 - (2) Experience in making technical presentations.
 - (3) Demonstrated writing skills.
 - (4) Previous experience working with affected individuals or community groups or other groups of individuals.
- (c) The technical assistance provider's qualifications will vary according to the type of assistance to be provided. Community members of the RAB/TRC may suggest additional provider

[[Page 5265]]

qualifications as part of the application for technical assistance. These additional qualifications may be used by the Department of Defense to target the most appropriate providers during the procurement process. Examples of such criteria could include prior work in the area, knowledge of local environmental conditions or laws, specific technical capabilities, or other relevant expertise.

Sec. 203.13 Procurement.

Procurements will be conducted as purchase orders in accordance with the FAR (48 CFR part 13). Under these procedures, procurements not exceeding \$100,000 are reserved exclusively for small businesses, and will be conducted as competitive procurements. Procurements below a value of \$2,500 are considered ``micro-purchases.'' These procurements do not require the solicitation of bids and may be conducted at the discretion of the contracting officer.

Sec. 203.14 RAB/TRC reporting requirements.

The community point of contact of the RAB or TRC must submit a report, to be provided to the installation and to DUSD(ES), to enable the Department of Defense to meet DoD reporting requirements to Congress. This report should include a description of the TAPP project, a summary of services and products obtained, and a statement regarding the overall satisfaction of the community member of the RAB or TRC with the quality of service and/or products received.

Sec. 203.15 Method of payment.

The SAP set forth in FAR (48 CFR part 13) require purchase orders to be conducted on a firm-fixed-price basis, unless otherwise authorized by agency procedures. The Department of Defense anticipates all TAPP awards to be firm-fixed-price procurements.

Sec. 203.16 Record retention and audits.

The recipient technical assistance providers shall keep and preserve detailed records in connection with the contract reflecting acquisitions, work progress, reports, expenditures and commitments, and indicate the relationship to established costs and schedules.

Sec. 203.17 Technical assistance provider reporting requirements.

Each technical assistance provider shall submit progress reports, financial status reports, materials prepared for the RAB/TRC, and a final report to the DoD installation for the TAPP project as specified by the specific purchase order agreement. The final report shall document TAPP project activities over the entire period of support and shall describe the achievements with respect to stated TAPP project purposes and objectives.

Sec. 203.18 Conflict of interest and disclosure requirements.

The Department of Defense shall require each prospective assistance provider on any contract to provide, with its bid or proposal:

(a) Information on its financial and business relationship with the installation, RAB/TRC members, or any/all potentially responsible parties (PRPs) at the site, and with their parent companies, subsidiaries, affiliates, subcontractors, contractors, and current clients or attorneys and agents. This disclosure requirement encompasses past and anticipated financial and business relationships, including services related to any proposed or pending litigation, with such parties.

(b) Certification that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, it has disclosed such information or no such information exists.

(c) A statement that it shall disclose immediately any such information discovered after submission of its bid or after award. The contracting officer shall evaluate such information and shall exclude any prospective contractor if the contracting officer determines the prospective contractor has a potential conflict of interest that is both significant and cannot be avoided or otherwise resolved. If, after award, the contracting officer determines that a conflict of interest exists that is both significant and cannot be avoided or resolved, the contract will be terminated for cause.

(d) Contractors and subcontractors may not be technical assistance providers to community members of RABs/TRCs at an installation where they are performing cleanup activities for the Federal or State government or any other entity.

Sec. 203.19 Appeals process.

DoD Components will establish an appeals process to settle potential disputes between the Department of Defense and the public regarding certain decisions arising out of the TAPP process. The Department of Defense recognizes that the RAB/TRC may disagree with the findings of the installation commander that a proposed TAPP project is ineligible, either because of the availability of alternate sources of assistance or because the project does not meet the eligibility criteria established in this part. It is in the best interests of the Department of Defense and the community members of RABs and TRCs to anticipate and avoid disputes and to work cooperatively to resolve potential differences of opinion. However, in certain circumstances, the RAB/TRC community members may feel that their needs were not adequately served by the decisions of the Department of Defense. In this instance, the hierarchical structure and chain-of-command within

each DoD Component will serve as the avenue for appeal. Appeals will be considered within the chain-of-command, and, in general, will be resolved at the lowest level possible. The highest level of appeal will be at the DoD Component Deputy Assistant Secretary level with authority over the DERP and BRAC environmental programs. Inherently governmental functions, such as the procurement process governed by the FAR, are not subject to appeal.

BILLING CODE 5000-04-M

[[Page 5266]]

[GRAPHIC] [TIFF OMITTED] TR02FE98.006

[[Page 5267]]

[GRAPHIC] [TIFF OMITTED] TR02FE98.007

BILLING CODE 5000-04-C

[[Page 5268]]

Dated: January 27, 1998.

Patricia L. Toppings,
Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense.
[FR Doc. 98-2394 Filed 1-30-98; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 5000-04-M