

NMDOT Planning Division
Multimodal Planning and Programs Bureau – Government to Government Unit
Annual Quality Assurance Review of RTPOs
Checklist and Report

Initial QAR Meeting:

Entity (RTPO): EPCOG (Eastern Plains Council of Governments)	Reviewer: Joseph Moriarty Review date: 4/15/2021
Personnel interviewed (list names and positions): Vincent Soule, Deputy Director, EPCOG Raul Rodriguez, Regional Planner, EOCOG	

QAR Follow-Up Meeting (if applicable):

Entity (RTPO):	Reviewer:
	Review date:
Personnel interviewed (list names and positions):	

1. Summarize results of agency audit, including any findings for the year ending June 30, 2020.

Provide context for any quotes, indicating the audit section in which the finding is located.

Additionally, review the Single Audit Section and highlight any findings related to the SPR grant:

[Pull quote(s) of importance from the annual audit, which can be found on the Office of the State Auditor’s website: http://www.saonm.org if it hasn’t been sent directly to you already; note that the PPM currently states that audits are due to GTG liaisons “30 days following approval by fiscal entity,” but it may be better to go off of the date that the audit is “released” to the public via saonm.org]

Additionally, the audit is: Current On file Linked via the website

General summary: N/A
Concerns/Issues: EPCOG audit not available at time of QAR site review.
Best Practices: N/A
Follow-Up Needed On: EPCOG staff to provide to Planning Liaison for review once audit is available.
Notes from Follow-Up QAR:

2. Planning Products – are the following current, on file and posted to the website (PDF)?

Current	On file ¹	Posted to the website	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional Work Program (RWP)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional TIP Recommendations (RTIPR)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public Participation Plan (PPP) (update every 5 yrs)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Title VI Plan with contact person identified (update every 3 yrs) ²
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER)

¹ ‘On file’ assumes an electronic copy; hard copies are optional.

² Title VI Contact may be a specific person that works at the entity; it may also be a position that is routinely filled (e.g. HR Director); ideally the contact information should be stable (e.g. ADA.TitleVI@xxcog.org or a general phone number) so that even if the person leaves, the contact information stays active.

N/A N/A N/A Other plans *(list below)*

<p>General summary: All planning products on the RTPONM.ORG “NORTHEAST” webpage are current and on file. NERTPO-EPCOG adopted their current Title VI Plan on 4/19/2019. Per the PPM Title VI Plans are required to be updated every three years. Accordingly, NERTPO-EPCOG needs to update their Title VI Plan by 4/19/2022. The current 2015 NERTPO RTP is on file and posted to the webpage. EPCOG and NCNMEDD staffs are currently working with their respective NERTPO communities to develop a new updated RTP. The current 2018 RTIPR is also on file and posted to the web page. A new RTIPR is also currently under development. Staff anticipates that the NERTPO Board in Quarter 3 or Quarter 4 will approve an updated RTIPR. The current NERTPO-EPCOG Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER) posted on the webpage.</p>
<p>Concerns/Issues: Since EPCOG and NCNMEDD co-manage, NERTPO documents posted to the web page need monitoring and updating as appropriate.</p>
<p>Best Practices: The RTPONM.ORG “NORTHEAST” webpage continues to serve as an effective means to communicate with NERTPO member communities, especially during the COVID19 health emergency. RTPO staff has increased the web page’s functionality and serves as a “one-stop” shop for member communities and the public at large. The webpage also serves to enhance accountability and transparency. EPCOG staff has been working with their respective member communities in developing a new updated RTP document. Most notably, NERTPO established a sub-committee among the member agencies to assist in the development of the RTP. RTPO staff is also coordinating with the NERTPO Board and is developing a process to develop a new RTIPR. EPCOG staff have been assisting in the development of a new comprehensive RTIPR rating and ranking methodology. The PPM recommends an every other year update cycle for an RTIPR.</p>
<p>Follow-Up Needed On: N/A</p>
<p>Notes from Follow-Up QAR:</p>

3. Boards/Committees - are the following current, on file and posted to the website?

Current	On File	Posted to the website	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bylaws
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Members, including Chair and Vice Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Schedule of meetings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agendas (posted to website 72 hours prior to meeting)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Meeting minutes (for the past 2 years)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approved documents (i.e. signed resolutions)

<p>General summary: Board related documents on the RTPONM.ORG “NORTHEAST” webpage are current bylaws, membership, (including Chair and Vice Chair), schedule of meetings, agendas, meeting minutes, and approved actions (signed resolutions) are current, posted on the webpage and on file. Approved actions and minutes posted to the webpage by NERTPO staff. Minutes archive up-to-date as of the 3/24/2021 meeting. NERTPO minutes online archive goes back to 2017. There is also a portal to access NERTPO Board resolutions, see the RTPONM.ORG “NORTHEAST” webpage, Governing Documents section.</p>
<p>Concerns/Issues: N/A</p>

Best Practices: EPCOG does a good job following the NM Open Meeting Act regarding the posting of agendas, meeting minutes and NERTPO Board approved items on the NORTHEAST link on the RTPONM.ORG webpage. Over the reporting period past year, NERTPO agendas, meeting minutes, and resolutions posted on the webpage in a timely manner. Bylaws, membership (including Chair and Vice Chair) and the schedule of meeting are also easily accessible via the web page.
Follow-Up Needed On: N/A
Notes from Follow-Up QAR:

4. Financials - Reporting and Documentation

- Reimbursement Packets consistently submitted in a timely, complete, and accurate fashion?
- Reimbursement Packets include cover letters, Quarterly Reports, Budget Reports, Expenditure Summary, Invoices and supporting documentation? Are these provided with the Reimbursement Packets and maintained on file? Does the RTPO charge allocated costs consistently with what is included in the RWP Budget?
 - Budget Report: track expenditures by line item as defined by task in the RWP budget
 - Expenditure Summary: provide a summary of federal funds expended plus local match paid, by quarter
- Is the documentation on file, well-organized, and accessible?
 - Security: what measures does the RTPO take to ensure their IT systems are secure? (explain below)

General summary: During the reporting year, EPCOG staff generally provided complete and accurate reimbursement packets, consistently meeting the quarterly deadlines set forth in the PPM. Cover letters, Quarterly Reports, Budget Reports, Expenditure Summary, Invoices and supporting documentation are consistently included in the Quarterly reimbursement packets. EPCOG maintains the reimbursement packets in digital forms on their internal network and archived in physical form at their offices.
Concerns/Issues: The personnel costs and fringe costs originally submitted by EPCOG in the FFY2021 Q1 Reimbursement Packet did not align with the cost sharing methodology documented in their FFY21-22 Regional Work Program. This issue was ultimately resolved through an Administrative Amendment to their RWP and a resubmitted revised FFY2021 Q1 Reimbursement Packet. However, this caused more than a month delay in submitting a correct and accurate Q1 reimbursement packet. Consequently, the NMDOT Planning Liaison placed EPCOG on Level 1 Non-Conformance. It is imperative that the cost-sharing methodologies of the EPCOG quarterly reimbursement packets align with the cost sharing documentation in the RWP. It is equally important that EPCOG staff understand and explain the specific methods regarding the allocation of shared costs among EPCOG programs. The RTPO budget is comprised of direct and allocated costs.
Best Practices: N/A
Follow-Up Needed On: N/A
Notes from Follow-Up QAR:

- A. Timesheets and Timesheet Summary** - All RTPO staff who charge time to a federally funded task are required to maintain internal, accurate, and current time records using database and spreadsheets comparable to the RTPO Time Tracking workbook provided in the

Planning Procedures Manual. GTG Liaison must randomly test a week to ensure the timesheets are on file and that they match what was included in that reimbursement packet.

- Is the RTPO able to provide access to timesheets?
- Is the amount of time spent on RTPO duties and billed to FHWA funds clearly indicated?

<p>General summary: The Planning Liaison asked and received corresponding time records for from the EPCOG Program Manager (at the time) for the second week of April of Q3 of FFY2020. However, the Eastern Plains Council Of Governments Employee Time & Attendance Record for this time-period did not match week 2 of Q3 EPCOG Reimbursement Packet. During this same time-period, the reimbursement request indicated that the Program Manager worked a total of 40 hours (NERTPO 20 hours and SERTPO 20 hours). However, the EPCOG Employee Time & Attendance Record supplied indicated 32 hours, a discrepancy of 8 hours.</p>
<p>Concerns/Issues: It is a concern that the requested sample EPCOG time records did not match the Q3 reimbursement request. At this time, EPCOG staff is not required to submit Timesheets (or Personnel Activity Reports) with each reimbursement packet. However, all RTPO and COG/EDD staff who charge time to a federally funded task are required to maintain internal accurate and current time records using database and spreadsheets that meet the requirements outlined in 2 CFR § 200.430(i) – Standards for Documentation of Personnel Expenses. EPCOG staff must monitor and verify internal time records are complete and accurate, and that hours charged exactly match the EPCOG quarterly reimbursement packets.</p>
<p>Best Practices: N/A</p>
<p>Follow-Up Needed On: To verify that EPCOG is submitting complete and accurate time reporting the Planning Liaison recommends that EPCOG include copies of their Employee Time & Attendance Records in all subsequent reimbursement packets, starting with the FFY2021 Q3 reimbursement packet.</p>
<p>Notes from Follow-Up QAR:</p>

B. Contract Awards

- No Contract Awards during the time period covered by this QAR
- OR:
- Published Notice in Newspaper for Invitation for Bid or Request for Proposals (RFP) (advertisement), copy of ad
 - Bidder’s list at bid opening-Company(s) and quotation sheet(s); or copies of proposals received
 - Award Letter, “NOTICE OF AWARD”/”NOTICE TO PROCEED” Forms
 - All subsequent notices: starts, suspends, resumes, and completions
 - Copy of fully executed Contract on file
 - All invoicing (copies) for contractors, vendors, suppliers

General summary: N/A
Concerns/Issues: N/A
Best Practices: N/A
Follow-Up Needed On: N/A

Notes from Follow-Up QAR:

C. Inventory of capital assets acquired with Federal Aid Highway Program funds valued at \$5,000 and greater

Not applicable

OR:

Are there property records that include a description of the property, serial or other identification number, source of property, who holds title, acquisition date, cost of property, percentage of Federal participation, location, use and condition of property and ultimate disposition data including date of disposal and sale price?

Is there a physical inventory of the property with results reconciled with property records (at least once every 2 years)?

Is there a control system developed to ensure adequate safeguards to prevent loss, damage or theft of property? If there was an occurrence did NMDOT investigate and what were the results of that investigation?

Are there adequate maintenance procedures developed to keep property in good condition?

Note: Disposition of items of equipment at current, per-unit, fair market value in excess of \$5,000 may be retained or sold and the awarding agency (FHWA) has the right to an amount calculated by multiplying the current market value or proceeds from sale by awarding agency's share of the equipment.

General summary: Asset inventory and property records verified by Planning Liaison. New vehicle (Chevy Trax) purchased with FWHA funds by EPCOG in 2018 included in EPCOG asset inventory. Asset inventory documents the following categories: Asset type, Serial Number (Vehicle Identification Number, if applicable), Location, Condition, Cost, Date Purchased, and Program.
Concerns/Issues: N/A
Best Practices: EPCOG Policy and Procedures Manuals address use of property and capital assets.
Follow-Up Needed On: N/A
Notes from Follow-Up QAR:

5. Structure/Intergovernmental & Other Agreements

Current On file

Is the Cooperative Agreement with NMDOT current and on file?

N/A N/A

Other (list below)

General summary: Planning Liaison confirmed that FFY2019 – 2022 NMDOT/EPCOG Cooperative Agreement, Contract Number D16014, Vendor Number 54561, approved on 7/6/2018 and is current and on file at EPCOG Offices.
Concerns/Issues: N/A
Best Practices: N/A
Follow-Up Needed On: N/A
Notes from Follow-Up QAR:

6. Staff & Board/Committee Member Training and Professional Development

- Staff familiarity with the Planning Procedures Manual (PPM):
 - Established staff?
 - Recently hired staff?
- Is there a training/professional development plan for RTPO staff and how is it being implemented?
- Has the RTPO Program Manager attended a NM Open Meetings Act training?
- Is the RTPO following the RWP training plan for Board/Committee Members? Are additional resources needed to implement the training plan?
 - What is the outreach to non-participating members? (*Detail below*)

<p>General summary: The recently hired EPCOG Regional Planner is participating in the NM EDGE program, through the New Mexico State University's Cooperative Extension Service. EDGE is a public management program of study for administrators, managers, elected officials, and staff in local, state, tribal government. Staff also participates in remote trainings and webinars as time permits. The Executive Director, Deputy Director, and Executive Assistant have attended NM Open Meetings trainings in the past. It is the intent for the EPCOG Regional Planner to attend a NM Open Meeting Act training session when the Office of the Attorney General begins to offer in-person trainings again. NERTPO staff is following the RWP training plan for Board members. NERTPO committee members receive training in the form of presentations approximately every other month during NERTPO regular monthly meetings. Over the reporting period, trainings included the following topics: Funding opportunities from the New Mexico Finance Authority, NMDOT Environmental Level of Effort form and requirements, TAP/RTP and CMAQ funding, and Project Feasibility Forms (PFFs) and the Transportation Project Fund. EPCOG staff also uses US mail, follow-up phone calls, and face-to-face meetings as outreach methods for non-participating members. Member attendance tracked via meeting sign-up sheets and RSVP's. Information converted to a digital tracking sheeting. Tracking sheet sent to all members. EPCOG staff confirmed that attendance has improved since regularly sharing tracking sheet with membership.</p>
<p>Concerns/Issues: N/A</p>
<p>Best Practices: Recently hired EPCOG staff is participating in the NM EDGE program through the NMSU Cooperative Extension Service.</p>
<p>Follow-Up Needed On: N/A</p>
<p>Notes from Follow-Up QAR:</p>

7. Public Involvement & Outreach/Environmental Justice/Title VI

- Is public attendance at meetings encouraged and tracked?
- Is public input received, addressed, and documented?
- Is there outreach to Environmental Justice/minority communities?
- Do meetings comply with the NM Open Meetings Act?
- Are Environmental Justice and Title VI complaints documented, addressed and tracked?
- Is NMDOT GTG Liaison informed of all complaints and resolution in a timely manner?

<p>General summary: Public attendance is encouraged at NERTPO meetings. Public attendance tracked through the meeting minutes and via email. Public comment part of standing agenda items and recorded in the NERTPO meeting minutes. EPCOG staff coordinates with NCNMEDD-NERTPO staff and tracks and documents correspondence from the public. The webpage is the primary vehicle for public outreach. NERTPO Agenda published on the RTPONM.ORG "NORTHEAST" webpage in both English and Spanish versions. EPCOG staff building capacity to enhance outreach to Environmental Justice/minority communities. Recently hired a bilingual (English/Spanish) Regional Planner. Staff understands the importance of making meetings as accessible to Environmental Justice /minority communities. Survey sent out to all NERTPO member communities as part of Regional Transportation Plan Update outreach effort. NERTPO meetings comply with NM Open Meetings Act. EPCOG staff indicated that their Title VI plan contains a built in process to document and address Title VI complaints. No Title VI complaints received during the reporting period.</p>
Concerns/Issues: N/A
Best Practices: Publishing the Agenda in both English and Spanish very helpful.
Follow-Up Needed On: N/A
Notes from Follow-Up QAR:

8. Tracking local-lead projects – how is the RTPO Program Manager doing this?

<p>General summary: EPCOG staff uses the eSTIP to track federally funded local projects within their portion of the NERTPO region (Union, Harding, Quay, and Guadalupe counties, and their respective incorporated municipalities). Member agencies as well as NMDOT District Engineering staff attend NERTPO meetings providing project status updates. NERTPO staff uses these status updates to monitor the progress of local projects. For Transportation Project Funds (TPF) and Local Government Road Fund (LGRF) projects, the Program Manager coordinates with the respective NMDOT District Engineers and staff at D-4. EPCOG staff, in coordination with NCNMEDD-NERTPO staff, utilizes the Regional Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations (RTIPR) process to develop and track projects. NERTPO proposed project prioritization process includes the RTIPR (Federal eligible projects) and a State eligible list of projects (Transportation Project Fund eligible projects). EPCOG staff also use the Project Feasibility Form (PFF) to monitor potential incoming local-lead projects.</p>
Concerns/Issues: N/A
Best Practices: EPCOG staff effectively coordinates with NERTPO-NCNMEDD- staff, NMDOT District 4 staff, and member agencies to develop, monitor, and track local lead projects. The proposed NERTPO two tiered federal and state project prioritization process is a best practice. EPCOG staff provides the necessary information and resources for member local agencies to apply for both federal and state funding opportunities.
Follow-Up Needed On: N/A
Notes from Follow-Up QAR:

9. Nonconformance issues during the time period since the last QAR:

- Have there been nonconformance issues (per PPM) since the last QAR?
- If so, is there a Corrective Action Plan underway?

EPCOG placed at the Level 1 nonconformance category related to incorrect application of cost sharing in the FFY2021 Q1 Reimbursement Packet. This issue resolved with administrative amendment and resubmitted corrected reimbursement packet.

10. Overall organization:

- Are files organized, easy to find and backed up?
- Does COG/EDD have a shared drive everyone uses or are files stored on separate PCs?
 - How are files/documents archived? (*Detail below*)

General summary: EPCOG files logically organized. EPCOG operates in a networked PC environment. Files automatically backed-up to a server. Data organized by relevant folders. For added precaution, EPCOG data back-ups occur on a weekly basis (every Thursday) and are stored off-site in a secure location. Laptops also have a terabyte external drive for backing-up data when in the field. Staff indicated that they use a two-tier system for internet security, a security software application (firewall) that protects the network and a router that also stops unauthorized access. EPCOG also recently created a new updated IT Policy that includes a Disaster Recovery /Continuity of Operations Plan.
Concerns/Issues: N/A
Best Practices: Continue to follow state of the practice IT security protocols to safeguard NERTPO data.
Follow-Up Needed On: N/A
Notes from Follow-Up QAR:

11. Additional notes and comments (concerns or commendations):

EPCOG staff organized and responsive during QAR review. Additional data requests submitted in a timely manner. The NERTPO webpage continues to be an effective way to engage the NERTPO membership, store, and disseminate information about NERTPO transportation planning activities. EPCOG staff provides much needed transportation planning guidance and direction to their NERTPO membership.

12. GTG Liaison: Please provide a summary of the review, including issues/findings and follow up needed, along with a timeline for RTPO to address any findings.

NERTPO planning documents and Board related documents are current, on file, and posted to the webpage. The NERTPO Board and related activities comply with the NM Open Meetings Act. The sampled internal EPCOG time records did not match the correspond Quarterly Reimbursement Packet (FFY2020 Q3 Week 3) To verify accurate time reporting the Planning Liaison recommends that EPCOG include copies of their Employee Time & Attendance Records in their quarterly reimbursement packets starting with the FFY2021 Q3 submittal. Reoccurring Board trainings were (and continue to be) scheduled for NERTPO meeting. Staff to reinstate “in-person” training and professional development. EPCOG building capacity to enhance public involvement and outreach. Publishing the NERTPO Agenda in English and Spanish a good strategy to improve outreach to Environmental Justice/minority communities. RTP survey also a good outreach strategy. EPCOG staff, in

partnership with NCNMEDD staff, has a well-developed process to track local-lead projects. Proposed NERTPO project prioritization process includes a two-tiered process. One tier for the RTIPR (Federal eligible projects) and another tier for State eligible list of projects (Transportation Project Fund) eligible projects. Review found that EPCOG files are well organized. EPCOG following state of the practice IT data security and back-up protocols.

[Follow-up Recommendations for next QAR:](#)

Review and Sign-off

Final Submitted to GTG Supervisor on (DATE) Joseph Moriarty, 5/27/2021
Reviewed and Approved by (NAME) on (DATE) Rosa Kozub, 5/27/2021
Final Report (pdf) emailed to RTPO on (DATE) 5/27/2021