

DEC 2019 BTI Annual Report

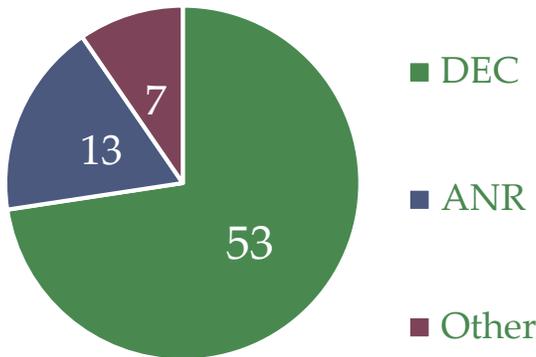
Business Transformation Initiative

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Business Transformation Initiative (BTI), housed within the Administration and Innovation Division, is an effort to build a system of continuous improvement with the goal of better servicing the Vermont public through more efficient, timely and transparent processes. This initiative includes the deployment of a "Lean" process improvement methodology along with modern information technology tools.

Lessons Learned

+ Successes	Δ Challenges
Effective KPIs tracking DEC Lean Progress Right sized Lean events efficiently addressing problems	Understanding what Lean can do for programs with underserved areas Supporting ongoing implementation efforts

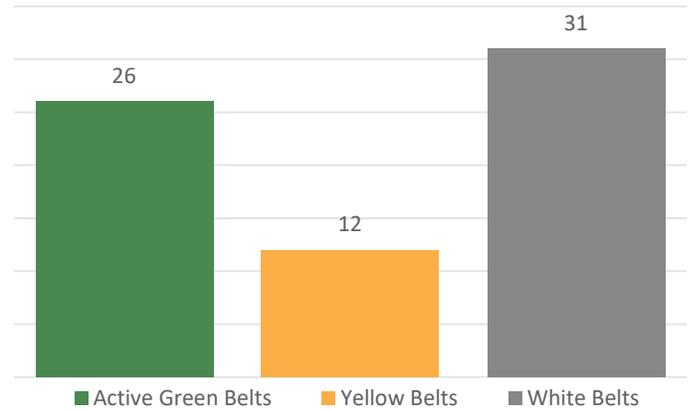
Total Lean Events Held since 2014



Fiscal Year 2019 Projects



DEC Trained Belts



2019 Employee Engagement Survey



I am encouraged to share ideas on improving either service delivery or business process efficiency

Staff Participation in Lean Events since 2014

of Unique DEC Staff Who Have Participated in Lean Events*



*DEC has approximately 300 staff

Fiscal Year 2019 Project KPIs

Staff Hours Saved per Year	117
Process Hours Saved per year	1312
Process Loopbacks Eliminated	19
Standardized Work or Process Made Electronic	11
Unnecessary Forms or Documents Eliminated	3
# of Process Steps Eliminated	68
Errors Sources Eliminated	9

Background

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), following other state agencies in the region, adopted Lean as a process improvement methodology and management philosophy in July 2013. With support from the Vermont General Assembly, DEC took a structured approach to its Lean implementation, dedicating both staff and resources to the effort. This decision was crucial in not only getting Lean quickly off the ground, but also in sustaining it for the long-term. This State Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report provides an accounting of DEC efforts over the past year aimed at delivering on the [DEC's 3-year Lean Implementation Plan covering FY2017-FY2019](#).

The Projects

6 Projects Closed in FY2019 – Accomplishments

Aquatic Nuisance Control (ANC) Grants-in-Aid – Result: Consolidated 25% individual grant projects into overarching grant agreement. Resulted in moving several individual ANC projects that previously would have been managed by individual grant agreements into one grant agreement. This increases the efficiency around delivery of these project funds, as well as decreases the administrative burden associated with the number of individual grant agreements that were being issued and managed.

Ecosystem Restoration Program Grants – Result: Increased transparency and consistent communication to grant applicants by developing a Granting Policy Plan resulting in a 15% increase in administratively complete projects. With efforts aimed at improving staff workload balance and increasing transparency for the public and respective applicants, a Granting Policy Plan was developed. The Plan outlines the granting process, how it will be administered, eligibility requirements, types of funding programs, etc. and is updated each fiscal year with the proposed budget and related funding opportunities. Other accomplishments included providing trainings to external applicants and internal staff at the release of each grant round, standardizing several processes around the electronic grant application form, project review, notification of award letters, etc.

Drinking Water (DW) Permit to Construct – The goal of this project was aimed at developing an approach to reduce the backlog of DW construction permits; improve the quality of the technical submittals from consultants, reduce the overall permit review time, and increase the number of administratively complete applications received.

The major changes implemented include:

- Development of SOPs for administrative procedures related to processing the construction permit submittals;
- Creation of a new DW construction permit application with embedded checklists and associated instructions, which have been posted to the DW Division website;

- Auto generation of permits to include standard conditions. Special conditions will have to be added manually;
- Development and posting of technical guidance documents;
- Although not part of the DW Construction Permit Lean effort, creation and use of a Permit Platform within the Division has led to a huge improvement for processing and tracking the DW permits internally.

Employee Travel Request – Result: This project looked to revise the internal DEC employee travel request process which reduced the applications returned from 30% to 10%. Changes were made to the approval process so that all travel requests are now considered approved once they are signed by the Division Director and they are then grouped and reviewed/approved by the Commissioner once per month for compliance with Bulletin 3.4. The workflow was also changed so that once the Division Director approves the request, it is sent to the Financial Operation section in order to provide the connection between the approval of the travel, which contained the coding to be used for the expenses and the actual expense reports, as well as the receivables related to Third Party Reimbursements. The upgrade of Vision to 9.2 also allowed for a more detailed level of coding to be applied to an employee's default coding, as a result, a reset of everyone's default was completed to reduce the number of coding errors in expense report requests. This change streamlined the approval process and improved internal controls around expense reimbursement requests and reduced the number of expense reports being rejected due to incorrect coding.

ANR Press Release - Result: The average days for a press release to be released was reduced from 26 days to seven. Agency's Enforcement and Litigation Section of the Office of General Counsel revised the process for press releases.

Vermont Municipal Bond Bank MOU – Result: Processing of Loan agreements 3 Months quicker. The Water Investment Division's Financial Management team has restructured a Memorandum of Understanding with the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank to undersign loans with municipalities. The payment request process is streamlined, resulting in money going to municipalities sooner.

13 Active Projects during FY2019

- Indirect Discharge Reporting – The Indirect Discharge Program is evaluating the annual inspection reporting process and the ongoing compliance process for Wastewater indirect discharges.
- Find and Fund II – Identifying, developing and prioritizing, as well as transparently displaying Clean Water project information for implementation of water quality improvement projects statewide.
- State Revolving Fund Program Construction Procurement – Effort scoped to look at the construction procurement process for the State Revolving Loan Programs. Covers myriad of

steps from putting contracts going out to bid, award, execution, billing/payments, change orders, site visits, etc. to when loan repayments begin. Goals aimed at better managing limited staff resources while ensuring federal and state compliance for construction projects.

- Petroleum Cleanup Fund Reimbursement – Improve lead time to issue reimbursement checks to our customers (tank owners and their consultants); address redundancy in the review and appeal process causing duplication of effort and longer lead times for payment.
- Federal Grants-In - The overarching goals include promoting greater consistency and transparency in the process of federal grants coming into the DEC, develop a process to ensure adequate time for proper budget and proposal development internally before submittal to federal agency.
- AID Purchasing Procedure - Establish procedure for purchase requests under \$3500 which minimizes waste and balances risk.
- AID Onboarding - Create onboarding process that is both sustainable for supervisors and ensures new staff into AID are provided the necessary information and tools for success.
- LaRosa Program Revitalization Project– Goals include developing more strategic monitoring/sampling designs, less programmatic oversight, enhanced coordination with partners that does not exceed programmatic capacity
- PFAS Collaboration and displaying data - Overlapping responsibilities and unclear expectations working with water systems and municipalities create several issues preventing efficient, effective solutions from being implemented. Create tool to display data.
- Act 250/Section 248 – Improving accuracy and timing of Act 250 agenda items to staff to ensure completeness.
- Permit Performance Standards – Create consistency across DEC divisions and programs by creating a standard database with dashboards to track permit performance standards.
- Groundwater Reclassification - DEC’s draft rule amendment was approved by the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules.
- Act 250 NRB – This project seeks to standardize the Act 250 application process and identify efficiencies for the applicant and staff.

Where are we going? The [DEC 3-Year Lean Operating Plan has been updated](#) and with it comes updated tracking metrics which will be reflected in future annual reports. Be on the lookout for a variety of outreach efforts and opportunities for improvement. *We Lean Together!*