



Frequently Asked Questions

AGENCY AND PROGRAM

What is the Missile Defense Agency (MDA)?

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) is an agency under the Department of Defense. Its mission is to develop, test and prepare for deployment a missile defense system. Using complementary interceptors, land-, sea- air-, and space-based sensors, and battle management command and control systems, the planned missile defense system will be able to engage all classes and ranges of ballistic missile threats. The MDA's programmatic strategy is to develop, rigorously test and continuously evaluate production, deployment, and operational alternatives for the ballistic missile defense system to provide emerging warfighting capability.

What is the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS)?

The MDA is developing and testing elements, components, and programs comprising a Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) capable of defending the U.S. homeland, deployed forces, friends, and allies against all classes and ranges of threat ballistic missiles. The BMDS will provide a layered defense capable of engaging threat missiles in the boost, midcourse, and terminal flight phases. The BMDS will integrate sensors, Command and Control, Battle Management and Communications (C2BMC), and interceptors to detect, track and engage (or intercept) missiles. Interceptors use "hit-to-kill" concepts to intercept incoming missiles in a high-speed collision. Hit-to-kill does not use explosives or nuclear materials. BMDS testing also includes consideration of targets and countermeasures and advanced concepts development such as directed energy technology.

Why did the MDA prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the BMDS?

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) all Federal agencies are required to consider environmental impacts in their policy and decision-making processes. NEPA requires that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be developed for proposed actions that would have a potentially significant impact on the environment. NEPA analysis can be used as a basis for decision-making and can provide information needed to comply with other national environmental requirements.

The preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) is the appropriate approach for projects that are large in scope, diverse geographically, and implemented in phases over many years. This programmatic or system-wide approach creates a comprehensive, global analytical framework that supports subsequent analysis of specific actions at specific locations within the overall system, i.e., tiering.

The MDA has prepared a Draft PEIS to evaluate the impacts to the environment of the development, testing, deployment, and planning for decommissioning activities for an integrated BMDS. The BMDS PEIS evaluates the current technology components, assets, and programs that make up the proposed BMDS as well as the development and application of new technologies, and considers cumulative impacts of implementing the BMDS.

Why is there a need for a PEIS for the BMDS?

The MDA is the successor agency to the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, which prepared a PEIS in 1994. That PEIS did not address proposed air- or sea-based systems or new applications of directed energy technology as the concepts have evolved. The BMDS PEIS evaluates the range of complex elements, programs, and components that comprise the proposed BMDS and provides the framework for future environmental analyses as current activities evolve and mature. Also, the BMDS PEIS supports the proposed integrated test schedule,

addresses the development and application of new technologies, and addresses future deployment and decommissioning activities.

What is the decision that the MDA considers in this PEIS?

The MDA is considering how to implement an integrated BMDS. In the Draft PEIS the MDA considered two alternatives to implement the BMDS along with the No Action Alternative.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEPA PROCESS

What is NEPA?

NEPA establishes a broad national framework for protecting the environment. NEPA requires Federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions. The NEPA process is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on understanding environmental consequences and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. (40 CFR 1500.1)

What is MDA's role in following the NEPA process?

The MDA, as the lead Federal agency, is responsible for preparation of the PEIS for the BMDS in accordance with NEPA, the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA Implementing Regulations, and other Federal, state and local requirements. The MDA consulted with all appropriate Federal agencies in preparing the Draft PEIS. Due to the programmatic nature of the environmental analysis, consultation with state and local officials was not performed for this PEIS. Subsequent site-specific environmental analyses would include consultation with relevant state and local officials, as appropriate.

What is a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)?

A PEIS analyzes actions that are broad in scope, occur in phases, and may be widely dispersed geographically. The programmatic or system-wide approach creates a comprehensive, global analytical framework that supports subsequent analysis of specific actions at specific locations within the overall system, i.e., tiering. Programmatic analysis can save resources by providing NEPA coverage for the entire program, allowing subsequent NEPA analyses to be more narrowly focused on specific activities at specific locations.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

How can one learn more about the BMDS PEIS?

Public involvement materials for the BMDS PEIS are available on the BMDS PEIS web site, including fact sheets, briefings, contact information, and comment submittal information. The BMDS PEIS web site address is <http://www.acq.osd.mil/mda/peis/html/home.html>.

Why should one become involved in the NEPA process?

The NEPA process provides the public an opportunity to contribute input on the scope of issues to be evaluated in the BMDS PEIS and to provide comments on the Draft BMDS PEIS. The MDA will consider all relevant public comments submitted during the NEPA process in the preparation of the Final BMDS PEIS.

SCOPING

What is scoping and why do we need it?

During scoping, the lead agency invites the participation of Federal, state, and local agencies, Native American tribes, environmental groups, organizations, citizens, and other interested parties to assist in determining the scope and significant issues to be evaluated in the EIS. The scope consists of the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts to be considered in the EIS. (40 CFR 1508.25) Scoping is required for the preparation of an EIS, and is a useful tool for discovering alternatives to a proposal, identifying significant impacts, eliminating insignificant issues, communicating information, consulting with agencies and organizations, and soliciting public comments.

Scoping begins with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register. The NOI describes the intent of the agency's EIS, the agency's scoping process, including when and where scoping meetings will be held, and contact information for submitting comments to the agency on the scope of the proposed project. The agency invites the general public, other Federal agencies, Native American tribes, state and local governments, and other interested parties to comment on the scope of the EIS.

What is the difference between consulting and cooperating agencies?

During scoping, the lead agency contacts both consulting and cooperating agencies to communicate key information regarding the proposed action and to determine whether the agencies have jurisdiction by law or special expertise on any environmental issue that should be addressed in the EIS being prepared. Consulting agencies may submit comments and provide data to support the environmental analysis. They do not, however, enter into a binding agreement with the lead agency or participate in the internal review of documents, issues, and analyses. A consulting agency does not participate directly in the development of technical analyses and conclusions.

The lead agency may invite those Federal or other agencies with special expertise or jurisdiction by law to participate as cooperating agencies. In contrast to consulting agencies, cooperating agencies have increased responsibilities. Cooperating agencies are expected to participate in scoping and meetings, contribute special expertise, assemble information and prepare environmental analyses to support the development of the EIS, identify significant environmental issues and eliminate minor issues from further study, and provide direct support through resources and funding.

What is the purpose of public scoping meetings?

Public scoping meetings are held following publication of the NOI to encourage public participation in the NEPA process for a project. The main purpose of scoping meetings is to solicit input from the public on the issues and concerns of interest to them regarding the proposed activities. Public scoping meetings provide the public with an opportunity to learn more about a project and also provide an opportunity for the public to share information and local knowledge of issues that may be relevant to analyzing the environmental impacts of a project.

When and where were public scoping meetings held for the BMDS PEIS?

The MDA conducted public scoping meetings for the BMDS PEIS in Arlington, Virginia on April 30, 2003; Sacramento, California on May 6, 2003; Anchorage, Alaska on May 8, 2003; and Honolulu, Hawaii on May 13, 2003.

What was the format of the BMDS PEIS public scoping meetings?

The MDA held public scoping meetings in accordance with CEQ regulations. The public scoping meetings allowed interested individuals and organizations to express their opinions about issues they thought needed to be addressed in the Draft BMDS PEIS. The MDA personnel were available at the scoping meetings to explain the objectives of the BMDS PEIS process, clearly articulate the intent of the BMDS PEIS, and share information.

How did the MDA use public comments submitted during scoping?

The MDA has categorized the scoping comments received according to content and analyzed the comments to determine

- Issues of priority to the interested parties,
- Level of detail to be included in the BMDS PEIS,
- Sources of information to be used, and
- Issues to be addressed and evaluated in the BMDS PEIS.

Relevant comments were addressed in the development of the Draft BMDS PEIS.

PUBLIC COMMENT REVIEW PERIOD

What is the purpose of public hearings?

Public hearings are held following publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft BMDS PEIS. Public hearings are held to encourage public review, and to solicit feedback, and to obtain and record comments on the

Draft BMDS PEIS. Comments received at the public hearings and throughout the public comment period are addressed in the Final BMDS PEIS.

When and where will public hearings for the Draft BMDS PEIS be held?

Four public hearings will be held in October 2004 for the BMDS PEIS. Details of the public hearings are identified below.

City	Arlington, VA	Sacramento, CA	Anchorage, AK	Honolulu, HI
Date	October 14, 2004	October 19, 2004	October 21, 2004	October 26, 2004
Time	6:30 – 9:30 PM	6:00 – 9:00 PM	6:30 – 9:30 PM	6:00 – 9:00 PM
Location	Marriot Crystal City 1999 Jeff Davis Hwy Arlington, VA (703) 413-5500	Sheraton Grand Hotel 1230 J Street Sacramento, CA (916) 447-1700	Sheraton Hotel 401 E. 6 th Avenue Anchorage, AK (907) 276-8700	Best Western 3253 N. Nimitz Hwy Honolulu, HI (808) 836-3636

What will be the format of the public hearings?

The public hearings will be held in accordance with CEQ regulations to allow interested individuals and organizations to provide comments on the Draft BMDS PEIS. The MDA will present information on the Draft BMDS PEIS and provide the public with the opportunity to offer oral and/or written comments at each specified hearing location. A court reporter will be present to transcribe the public hearings and record all public comments.

How can one submit comments during the public comment review period?

Comments on the Draft BMDS may be submitted to the MDA

- By mail
MDA BMDS PEIS
c/o ICF Consulting
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031
- By fax (toll-free)
1-877-851-5451
Attn: MDA BMDS PEIS
- By electronic mail
mda.bmds.peis@icfconsulting.com
- By telephone (toll-free)
1-877-MDA-PEIS (1-877-632-7347)
- At public hearings
Arlington, VA – October 14, 2004
Sacramento, CA – October 19, 2004
Anchorage, AK – October 21, 2004
Honolulu, HI – October 26, 2004

To ensure that comments are adequately addressed in the Final PEIS, comments must be received no later than November 17, 2004.

What is the remaining schedule for the BMDS PEIS?

Notice of Intent	April 2003
Scoping	April 2003 – September 2004
Release Draft PEIS	September 2004
Public Comment Period	September – November 2004
Public Hearings	October 2004
Release Final PEIS	December 2004/January 2005
Record of Decision	January/February 2005

*For a complete list of Frequently Asked Questions, please visit the
BMDS PEIS web site at
<http://www.acq.osd.mil/mda/peis/html/home.html>*