

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Commercial Services Program



Standards, Evaluations, and Rate Approval (SERA) Update

Concessions Management Advisory Board
October 2009

SERA Project Scope



■ Objective:

- Update standards, rate administration processes, and evaluation procedures
- Consider ways to align with industry standards and practices while addressing unique NPS needs

■ Strategy:

- Phased effort spanning several years
- Address largest concession services by gross revenues first
- Phase I – lodging, food and beverage, and selected retail
- Future Phases – marinas, transportation, horse & mule, and all other concession services

■ Tactics:

- Review existing policies and procedures to improve current SERA program
- Obtain NPS, concession, and industry input through research, surveys, and workgroups
- Conduct pilots to gather field data, test implementation, and estimate costs



SERA Project Plan

1. Classifications and Standards

- Develop classifications

- Use North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)
- Provide industry alignment for improving the consistency in planning and management

- Update service standards

- Conduct industry research
- Convene workgroups
- Conduct pilots to test both classifications and standards
- Analyze cost impacts (operations and facilities)

- Review and update program standards

- Include risk management, environmental management, and public health
- Build on existing program requirements
- Use NPS technical workgroups to confirm standards and processes
- Update program, general, and service-specific standards



SERA Project Plan

2. Rate Approval Program

- Survey NPS staff and concessioners
 - Identify current methods used, issues, and gaps
 - Consider park, concessioner, and visitor perspective
- Conduct benchmark and field studies
 - Participate in NPS rate approval/comparability studies
 - Compare NPS methods against industry standards
- Convene park and concessioner workgroups
 - Assess findings of surveys and benchmarking
 - Develop preliminary findings and recommendations
- Participate in standards testing pilots
 - Test potential method changes and collect additional data
- Document findings and recommendations
 - Conduct internal and external reviews
 - Develop service-specific updated rate processes for further testing (Phase II)

SERA Project Plan



3. Operational Performance Program

- Begin to study alternative evaluation rating methods
 - Conduct industry practices and incentives benchmarking
- Establish updated procedures for “Program” evaluations
 - Environmental, Risk Management, and Public Health
- Investigate limited review procedures for Category II Concessioners
 - Simplified procedures and forms

Classifications, Standards and Evaluation Timeline



Summer 2009

- NAICS Classifications
 - NPS, industry, and other research
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Fall 2009

- Research and analysis
 - Operation standards workgroups
 - Program standards workgroups
 - Preliminary standards
 - Operations and program standards -Pilot 1
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Winter 2010

- Results analysis and corrections - Pilot 1
 - Operations and program standards -Pilot 2
 - Results analysis and corrections - Pilot 2
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Spring 2010

- Operations and program standards -Pilot 3
 - Results analysis and corrections - Pilot 3
 - Additional workgroup reviews
 - Final draft of program standards recommendations
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Summer 2010

- Final draft of operation standards recommendations
- Internal review
- External review
- Updated standards for Phase I
- Benchmarking for concessioner performance program

Rate Approval Program Timeline



Summer 2009

- Background and industry research
 - Park survey
 - Rate approval field research
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Fall 2009

- Rate approval field research
 - Concessioner survey
 - Private industry benchmarking
 - Standards and evaluation – Pilot 1
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Winter 2010

- Park and concessioner workgroups
 - Rate approval field research
 - Private industry benchmarking
 - Standards and evaluation – Pilot 1
 - Program review, analysis, and recommendations
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Spring 2010

- Standards and evaluation - Pilot 3
 - Program review, analysis, and recommendations
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Summer 2010

- Program review, analysis, and recommendations
- Internal review
- External review
- Update to Rate Administration Program – Phase I (lodging, food & beverage, selected retail)

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Yosemite National Park