U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Open Government Plan 1.1

EPA@40: Healthier Families, Cleaner Communities, A Stronger America

June 25, 2010

Nothing in this plan shall be construed to supersede existing requirements for review and clearance of pre-decisional information by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, relating to legislative, budgetary, administrative, and regulatory materials. Moreover, nothing in this plan shall be construed to suggest that the presumption of openness precludes the legitimate protection of information whose release would threaten national security, invade personal privacy, breach confidentiality, or damage other genuinely compelling interests.

"The success of our environmental efforts depends on earning and maintaining the trust of the public we serve. The American people will not trust us to protect their health or their environment if they do not trust us to be transparent and inclusive in our decision-making. To earn this trust, we must conduct business with the public openly and fairly. ... In short, we will let more sunlight into our Agency."

Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, April 2009

A Message from the EPA Open Government Team

The Environmental Protection Agency is pleased to present the EPA Open Government Plan 1.1. With 40 years of experience in protecting the health of humans and the environment, EPA is more committed than ever to expanding the conversation on environmentalism, engaging communities, improving regulatory involvement, and continuing a "OneEPA" approach to accomplishing our environmental protection mission. Our Open Government Plan provides the details of these efforts and seeks continued engagement to evolve the EPA cultural legacy of transparency, collaboration and participation. Our definition of success for the EPA Open Government Plan is simple – we want to ensure that you are informed about information we have on environmental protection as well as ensuring that your voice is heard as we move forward in implementing our mission "to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment - air, water, and land-upon which life depends."

The very nature of this mission requires us to work effectively with our partners (state, local, and tribal governments) and a diverse group of stakeholders including the public, interest groups, industry, and Congress. EPA is unique - we simply cannot fully achieve our mission without the participation of all of you - our partners and stakeholders.

Consequently, this plan represents a response to a synthesis of issues and advice the Agency has heard from its stakeholders in the past and recently through our open government dialogue (www.epa.gov/open).This plan reflects our OpenEPA vision - to continue improving the health of humans and the environment though a significant broadening of dialogue with an ever-expanding community. We intend to actively pursue this dialogue with you; embracing the principle that it will lead to improvements in our nation's environmental decision-making through enhanced transparency, participation, and collaboration.

We are particularly proud to present in our plan EPA's Community Engagement Flagship Initiative. Although we introduce and continue numerous innovative actions in this plan to promote transparency, participation and collaboration, our Community Engagement Flagship

Initiative highlights activities that directly respond to our mission priorities and your comments. This includes efforts such as:

- Expanding the Environmental Conversation with Communities: Urban Waters Information Sharing, Simplifying Scientific Language, Improving Communication with Disadvantaged and At-Risk Communities, Sponsoring a Faces of the Grassroots Video Contest
- Expanding Public Awareness and Involvement in the Development of Rules and Regulations: Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Webinar Series, NPDES pre-proposal involvement, Rulemaking Gateway
- Developing EPA Mobile Applications to Empower Citizen's Environmental Decisions: Human Health Advisories Mobile Application, Easy-to-Find Consumer Product Information

Each project is focused on actively working with communities in a new way, with the goal of sharing best practices and lessons learned for future efforts. The details of the Flagship Initiative and our other innovations are more fully described in our plan.

We continue to welcome your thoughts on our Open Government Plan and projects at www.epa.gov/open, on the EPA Greenversations Blog, or via email at opengov@epa.gov. We want to specifically hear from you on how our plan can be improved, and on what data and information you want to see from EPA. We also encourage you to think of innovative ways to use the data we have provided in this document, on EPA.gov, and on Data.gov, and to provide us feedback on these innovations.

The EPA Open Government Team, represented by offices listed below, thanks everyone who participated in the effort to produce the EPA Open Government Plan 1.1, and we look forward to providing quarterly updates on our progress in implementing your ideas. EPA will also review our Open Government Plan every 180 days to assess our progress. Monitor our progress at www.epa.gov/open.

Open Government Executive: Linda Travers, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator

Office of Air and Radiation	Office of the Chief Financial Officer	Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation (Office of the Administrator)	Office of Water	Office of General Counsel
Office of Environmental Information	Office of Research and Development	Region 2 (Coordinating for all Regions)
Office of Public Affairs (Office of the Administrator)	Office of Administration and Resource Management	Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances
	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	

Sincerely,

Linda A. Travers
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Environmental Information
on behalf of EPA's Open Government Team

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I. Introduction

Since our creation 40 years ago, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has embraced the basic tenets of open government – transparency, participation and collaboration. EPA was established and charged with the mission "to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment—air, water and land—upon which life depends." And the nature of the Agency's mission and statutory responsibilities require collaboration and effective working relationships with our stakeholders (the public, non-governmental organizations and industry), our partners (federal agencies, states and tribes) and others such as local governments and Congress. EPA has a solid foundation of effective working relationships to build upon, and we are now focusing on:

- Broadening our effort to include more stakeholders.
- Encouraging more two-way communication.
- Improving the EPA decision-making process.
- Providing citizens with better information.
- Expanding ways to collaborate with our partners and stakeholders.

How to get involved:

Learn more about Open Government at EPA and provide comments at www.epa.gov/open

We are committed to being open, fair and inclusive in conducting our daily business, leading to better decisions and greater collaboration to address today's environmental challenges.

A. Purpose of the Plan

We created this plan to respond to the Administration's Open Government Directive (OGD) (http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/documents/open-government-directive). While developing our plan, we incorporated public input, examined recent efforts that embody Open Government and identified new opportunities and innovations to further meet this challenge. We will measure and evaluate how our open government activities foster our mission and meet our strategic goals. This plan is a step in the process as the Agency continues to institutionalize a culture of transparency, participation and collaboration.

We will use this Open Government Plan to emphasize and expand on EPA's culture of openness within a mission-focused framework for engaging our stakeholders, especially the public. In many cases, EPA is leveraging technology to help us meet the principles of open government, but we recognize the existence of a digital divide that hinders communication with some stakeholder groups, particularly those who lack access to new and emerging technologies. We are committed to implementing multiple methods of engagement to bridge the digital divide. In this plan, we describe specific projects, both seasoned and new, that add to

EPA's experience in engaging with the public to accomplish our tasks. We expect to share this knowledge throughout the Agency, and we plan to make it available to other government entities for their use and application in joint efforts. Our plan also focuses on expanding the conversation on environmentalism to a broader audience.

Because we are evolving and plan to adapt to feedback, technology innovations and other influences, EPA's Open Government Plan will be a living document, published in an open format on our Web site, which we intend to update regularly to keep it current and relevant.

B. Administrator's Commitment to Open Government Principles

In her first communication to EPA employees, Administrator Lisa P. Jackson encouraged staff to adopt openness in all aspects of EPA's strategy and operations. In her January 2009 memorandum, she stated:

> *"Public trust in the Agency demands that we reach out to all stakeholders fairly and impartially, … consider the views and data presented carefully and objectively, and … fully disclose the information that forms the basis for our decisions. I pledge that we will carry out the work of the Agency in public view so that the door is open to all interested parties and that there is no doubt why we are acting and how we arrived at our decisions."*

Under this Administration, EPA is an active collaborator in advancing the Administration's open government direction.

- EPA is the federal co-lead for the Data.gov initiative. Data.gov (www.data.gov) provides the public one place to access, download and reuse federal government data. To date, we have posted over 500 data sets. Most importantly, outside organizations such as Forbes.com are using and leveraging these data for analyses.
- Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), federal agencies launched an effort in early 2009 to strengthen the American economy. We assisted the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board by adapting an existing EPA solution to implement FederalReporting.gov, a tool for funding recipients to report on the status of their contracts, grants and loans (e.g., award amount, number of jobs created or retained). Ultimately, this information makes the ARRA process transparent and accessible to the public (www.federalreporting.gov).
- EPA is the managing partner for the eRulemaking program, a federal government-wide effort that developed and operates Regulations.gov. This site (www.regulations.gov) provides the public with one-stop access to find, view and comment on all federal rulemakings and notices seeking public input. Currently, the public can access more than 2.2 million documents, including rules and proposed rules, Agency scientific studies and reports, and public comments.

Our legacy, recent accomplishments and the new actions included in this plan demonstrate that EPA is positioned to strengthen a culture where open government is part of our daily business.

C. Integration of Agency's Current Mission, Goals and Priorities

Today it is increasingly important that we collect and share reliable, quality data to help us carry out the Agency's mission. Our strategic plan (www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm) guides us and defines our five mission goals and three cross-goal strategies:

- Goal 1: Clean Air and Global Climate Change
- Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water
- Goal 3: Land Preservation and Restoration
- Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Ecosystems
- Goal 5: Compliance and Environmental Stewardship
- Cross-Goal Strategy 1: Results and Accountability
- Cross-Goal Strategy 2: Innovation and Collaboration
- Cross-Goal Strategy 3: Best Available Science

The cross-goal strategy of Innovation and Collaboration has contributed to a culture of openness as evidenced in our strategic plan update process. In the past year, Administrator Jackson worked with the senior policy team and listened to staff and stakeholder feedback to strengthen how we carry out our mission and incorporate relevant feedback into the formal revision of the Agency's strategic plan (to be issued by September 30, 2010). The Open Government Plan will be used to inform our strategic plan, and will be updated to help ensure open government principles continue to support our ongoing mission and goals.

The Administrator set seven priorities as part of this overall process, and these priorities have been factored into the new strategic plan and our Open Government Plan. Additional information on the priorities and a video message from Administrator Jackson can be found at (blog.epa.gov/administrator/2010/01/12/seven-priorities-for-epas-future/).

D. Leadership, Governance, and Measurement

Open government is about transformation and cultural change, which takes leadership above all else. EPA's leadership commitment to open government is unquestioned, as evidenced by Administrator Jackson's actions in April 2009 – when she issued a Transparency Memorandum to all Employees - and by integrating open government's most fundamental concept in our core values, which are science, transparency, and the rule of law. In response to the OGD, EPA swiftly took action to establish a governance structure to:

- Guide and conduct immediate activities.
- Capitalize on and enhance existing Agency policies and management controls.
- Look for ways to institutionalize open government within EPA's organizational structure.

We are also focused on evaluating the Agency's progress in meeting OGD mandates, as well as establishing measures of our progress and performance for EPA-specific initiatives and projects. We will evaluate how to best incorporate open government tenets into Agency processes, including Capital Planning and Investment Control, Budget Formulation, and Strategic Planning and our Enterprise Architecture. For example, we will work to tie our Strategic Data Action Plan to these processes.

We will review our Open Government Plan every 180 days and assess our progress.

1. Accountable Officials

Administrator Jackson charged Linda Travers, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Office of Environmental Information (OEI), with leading the Open Government Executive Steering Committee. Ms. Travers also serves as the Agency's Deputy Chief Information Officer, and her office manages the lifecycle of information that supports mission objectives. OEI's responsibilities cut across the Agency, and OEI also supports many of the functions necessary to execute, monitor and report progress in meeting open government principles. More information on OEI, what it does, and how the office is organized is located at (www.epa.gov/oei/).

Administrator Jackson charged Barbara Bennett, the Agency's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), as the Senior Accountable Official responsible for assuring the quality and objectivity of, and internal controls over, publicly disseminated federal spending information. Ms. Bennett directs the work of the Open Government Spending Information Quality Work Group. OCFO's responsibilities are integral to ensure accountability and integrity - key tenets to EPA's approach to open government. For more information on OCFO, visit (www.epa.gov/ocfo).

2. Open Government Governance Structure

EPA established a governance structure with work groups and teams representing offices across the Agency to get the right experts in the room to figure out how to instill open government throughout the Agency. A diagram of our governance structure is shown in Figure I-1, and the work groups and teams are further described in the remainder of this section.

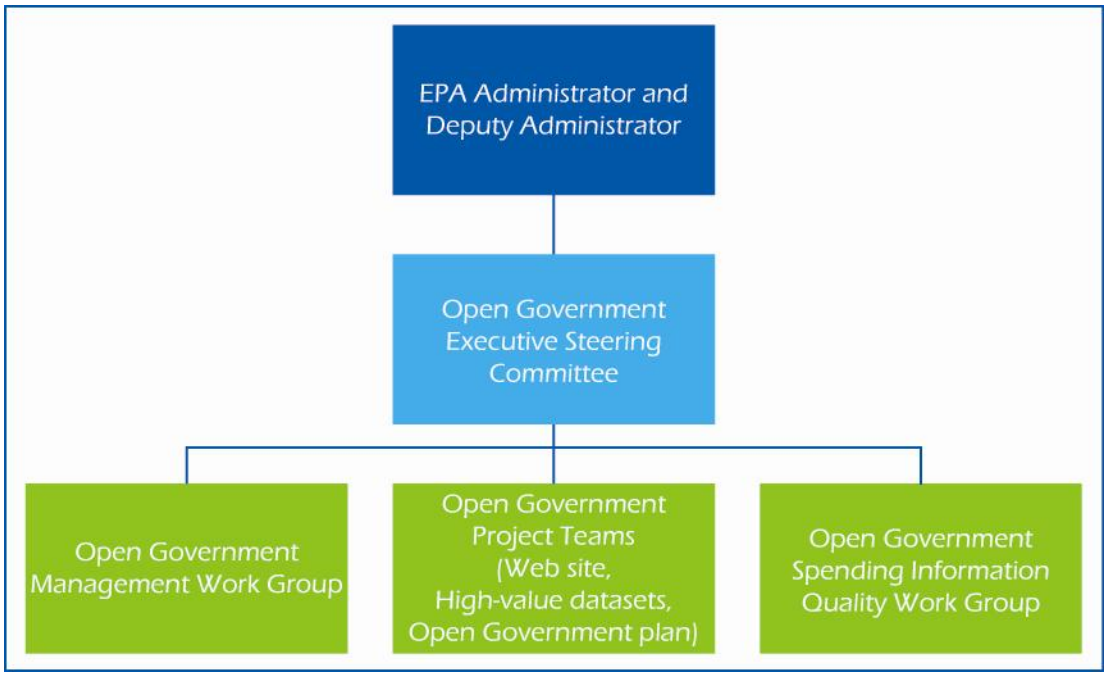


Figure I-1: EPA's Open Government Governance

a) Open Government Executive Steering Committee

The Open Government Executive Steering Committee is made up of Senior Executive Service employees from key responsible offices within the Agency. This group is charged with setting policy and direction while meeting legal requirements. The group also works to secure

resources in support of the Agency's plan and associated projects. The following offices are represented on the committee:

- Office of the Administrator (OA)
  - Office of Public Affairs (OPA)
  - Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation (OPEI)
- Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM)
- Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)
- Office of General Counsel (OGC)
- Office of Environmental Information (OEI)
- Office of Air and Radiation (OAR)
- Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA)
- Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances (OPPTS)
- Office of Research and Development (ORD)
- Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER)
- Office of Water (OW)
- Regional Offices

The Open Government Executive Steering Committee regularly reports to the Deputy Administrator, the Deputy Assistant Administrators and the Regional Administrators of most offices within the Agency.

The work groups and teams described below support the Open Government Executive Steering Committee in meeting its charge.

b) Open Government Management Work Group

This work group consists of senior managers and staff from across the Agency, including regional representation. This group meets on a weekly basis to develop actions, provide input and track progress.

c) Open Government Project Teams

Three project teams currently operate as a subset of the management work group. Each team has a specific task that supports open government.

- **Web site Team:** Charged with maintaining EPA's Open Government Web site.
- **High Value Datasets Team:** Charged with identifying and prioritizing high-value datasets for future addition to Data.gov, incorporating public feedback.
- **Open Government Plan Team:** Charged with coordinating Open Government Plan development, managing public input to the plan, monitoring plan progress, and coordinating updates to the plan.

d) Open Government Spending Information Quality Work Group

The Open Government Spending Information Quality Work Group is charged with developing a plan to assure the quality and integrity of our high-value Federal spending information. This work group will also work towards integrating the quality plan into a long-term Agency strategy that ensures the integrity of all federal spending information.

3. How We Will Measure the Success of Open Government at EPA

EPA is evaluating our progress with open government in two ways: government-wide measures and EPA-specific measures. For government-wide measures, the OGD established deadlines for action for each federal agency. Information about how EPA is progressing to meet those deadlines is available at the following link: (www.epa.gov/open/evaluate.html).

For EPA-specific measures, we are setting milestones and performance measures for both the overall open government initiative and for targeted projects. The public will be able to track the progress of our projects from EPA's Open Government Web site (www.epa.gov/open). We are currently evaluating methods for individual project leads to update and maintain their information and will begin posting updates once we have determined the best update method for project use.

We anticipate a progression over time in how we measure the success of open government at EPA.

Initially, that measurement will be qualitative – i.e., how well we execute on this plan. We will report progress with respect to execution of the plan to the public on our Open Government Web site (www.epa.gov/open) on a quarterly basis, in the "Evaluating Our Progress" area.

One of our key actions is to develop the right quantitative metrics for the success of open government at EPA. Our initial metrics, which will be refined through our governance process, are relatively basic:

Transparency:

- Number of high value data and geospatial sets and tools published
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) backlog, time to respond, and total requests processed

Participation and Collaboration:

- Number of opportunities for the public to provide input into EPA's work
- Number of EPA electronic town hall meetings

Flagship Initiative(s)

- Detailed milestone plan developed
- Actions met in accordance with Plan

These metrics will need to be refined and others added via the governance process as our work progresses. We will also look to the public to help us define relevant measures. We will be developing standard metrics for measuring the success of efforts to engage the public. These metrics will go beyond volume of participation (e.g., number of comments received) to the impact of participation (e.g., number of ideas from the public that are adopted and what impact they have on results delivered by EPA).

This points to the ultimate measure of success of open government at EPA: We want to ensure that our stakeholders are informed about information we have on environmental protection, and we want to ensure that their voice is heard as we move forward in implementing our mission "to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment - air, water, and land-upon which life depends." In our quarterly reports on our open government execution, we will describe the qualitative and quantitative impact that open government is having on EPA performance, as part of an ongoing evaluation of our open government programs and policies.

E. Leadership and Cultural Change - History and Path Forward

Again, EPA leadership is committed to encouraging the adoption of open government principles in all aspects of our operations and employee performance. EPA has and will continue to reward employees who make significant contributions to enhancing the Agency's transparency, participation, and collaboration. We will encourage designated employees to incorporate at least one new media and Web training into their individual development plans.

At EPA, we have an established policy (www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/pdf/policy2003.pdf) with a variety of tools to help our staff reach out to and involve the public (www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/index.htm). We strive to:

- Involve the public early and often throughout a decision-making process.
- Identify, inform and listen to the affected public (providing extra encouragement and technical or financial resources, where possible, to support public participation).
- Involve the public in developing options and alternatives when possible and, before making decisions, seek the public's opinion on options or alternatives.
- Use public input to develop options that resolve differing points of view.
- Tailor public involvement efforts based upon many factors.
- Work in partnership with state, local and tribal governments, community groups, associations, and other organizations to enhance and promote public involvement.

Our current policy calls for Agency staff to strive for the most meaningful public involvement opportunities appropriate to each situation. In addition, we have established an interim policy on the use of social media platforms that offer us the chance to engage with guidance to employees on the use of these tools. EPA has identified a range of possible levels of public involvement, shown in Figure I-2.

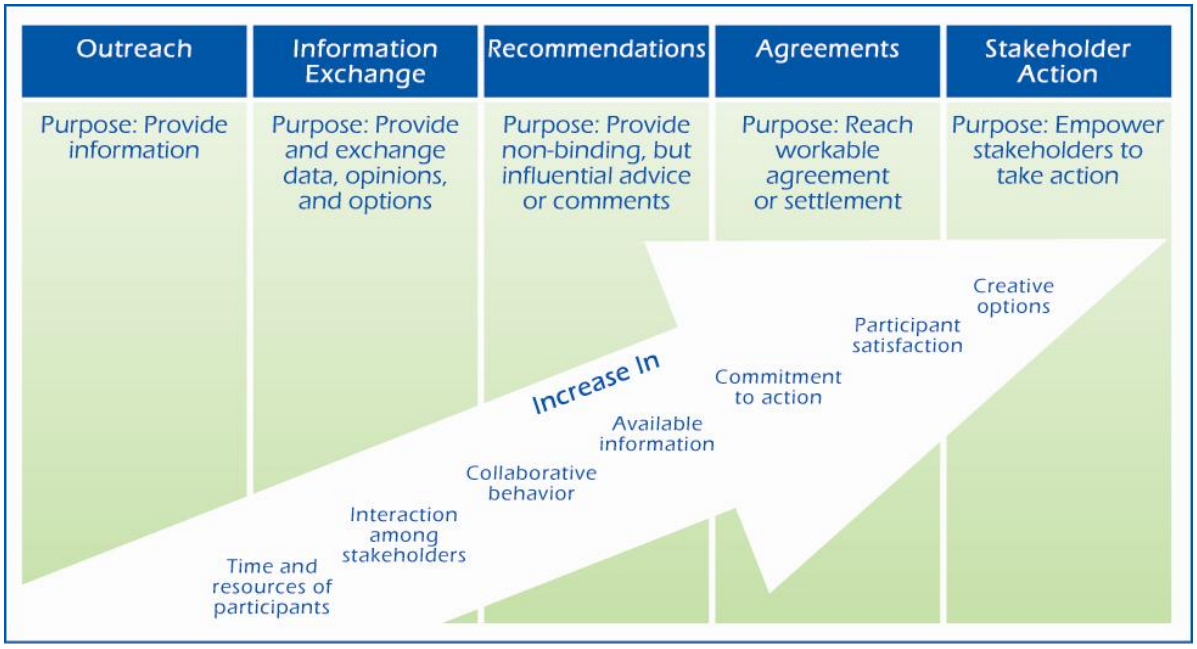


Figure I-2: EPA Public Involvement Spectrum

Every day individuals in all offices, regions, and laboratories seek to effectively engage people in the work of EPA at all five levels of the public involvement spectrum. For example, EPA has staff dedicated to support effective and meaningful public involvement in the Superfund Program, the Office of Policy Economics and Innovation, and the Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center.

1. Changes to Internal Management and Administrative Policies

The Agency is taking longer-term action intended to create lasting benefits through culture and process changes. In essence, EPA is breaking down internal and external barriers to be more open, fair and inclusive. We have policies in place promoting use of social media, as previously described, and are reviewing ways to share successes and challenges. We are looking to collect and share best practices and lessons learned on open government efforts across the Agency.

In an example of a policy shift, we recently identified a creative solution to involve the public earlier in the process of revising a rule. Legally mandated, public involvement begins when a draft rule or rule revision is published for public comment. We have a proposed change that will require regulated entities to electronically report their data in support of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Moving from a paper reporting method to electronic created a great deal of interest within and outside the Agency, so we established a cross-Agency rulemaking work group for the NPDES Electronic Reporting Rule to keep the public informed and involved. The work group recommended a dedicated Web page, and we decided to use Regulations.gov as an existing application and technology to meet the need. We are now poised to launch the NPDES Electronic Reporting Rule Web page, which will host a discussion forum as well as provide public meeting information and rulemaking progress – all well in advance of the legal requirement for public comment.

In addition, we will identify other management and administrative policies such as data prioritization.

2. Challenges and How the Public Can Help

EPA Headquarters offices, regions, and laboratories have each advanced innovative approaches to engage our stakeholders. Our challenge is to create a more cohesive and agile set of approaches, in close coordination with our state government partners, without disrupting existing processes that work. The initiatives outlined in our Flagship Initiative, along with continued feedback from the public, will help us to overcome this challenge.

We have received over 200 ideas, 360 comments, and 3,700 votes on OpenEPA (EPA's Public Engagement site based on IdeaScale), www.openepa.ideascale.com. As of the publication of this plan, we have implemented some of the most critical suggestions including keeping our OpenEPA Forum open indefinitely and posting our Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA) inventory. However, many of the suggestions require additional analysis and collaboration across our communities of interest. We ask that all contributors continue to provide us feedback, and we will respond and keep you up to date as we move forward.

EPA has provided a significant amount of data to Data.gov. However, we recognize that we need to continue to provide high-value data, and that we need to provide context to describe the value of these data in the future. We ask for your help in giving us ideas on what additional data we can provide, and to share with us innovative uses of EPA data at (www.openepa.ideascale.com).

Many of the activities EPA is pursuing have resulted from prior experience or from public suggestion. To realize the full potential of our new efforts, we need insights and reactions from the public. This is certainly true in cases where we are testing new strategies, and for processes that are repeated frequently or have lasting consequences (e.g., regulatory development or standards for citizen-collected data).

F. Open Approach to Expand the Conversation on Environmentalism

Over the last year, EPA's leaders have embraced openness in a variety of ways. The Administrator began holding Internet video press conferences and town hall meetings and recording other important events, both with staff and external groups, on key environmental issues (see various videos from the Administrator and other EPA leaders at: www.epa.gov/multimedia/mm-video.htm. Other senior managers also began holding Internet video meetings on critical environmental issues involving water, waste and pesticides. The public can watch these live webcasts at http://www.epa.gov/live and join video town halls at http://www.epa.gov/oswer/videotownhall.htm. We also publish general-interest videos on YouTube at http://youtube.com/usepagov. In addition to our use of Internet video, we dramatically expanded our use of podcasts, Twitter, blogs and Facebook over the last year to engage the American people. To promote the Administration's OGD internally and externally, EPA launched our Open Government Web site (www.epa.gov/open) on February 4, 2010, providing several tools for the public and EPA staff to submit ideas. This unprecedented outreach provided the Agency with hundreds of ideas from EPA staff and the public on how to expand our openness.

Administrator Jackson has also taken other actions toward an open environment such as tweeting regularly on her Twitter account http://twitter.com/lisapjackson. She also opened her calendar, posting public appearances and meetings with external parties on EPA's public Web site (http://www.epa.gov/lisa). In fact, appointed senior staff members who head major headquarters and regional offices have also opened their calendars (http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/Calendars?OpenView). The Administrator, other EPA staff and guest bloggers keep EPA's Greenversations blog active (http://blog.epa.gov).

Reaching out in Many Languages:

Because EPA's mission depends on an informed public, and America is a diverse country, we translate many materials and our main web pages into languages other than English. We want people to recognize that we all need to do our part, no matter what language we use to communicate (http://epa.gov/earthday/video/).

These actions not only open EPA to the public, they give EPA staff at all levels of the organization insight into their senior leadership. This helps all EPA staff stay connected to the mission. We connect to the public through Twitter (http://twitter.com/epagov) and Facebook (http://facebook.com/epa), and several offices maintain more subject-specific accounts (http://www.epa.gov/epahome/socialmedia.html).

EPA's open government groups are actively investigating other means to continue expanding the conversation at EPA, including incentives/recognition, financial awards, training and the development of a communication plan.

G. Stakeholder Engagement in Plan Development

EPA stakeholders are a broad and diverse cross-section of organizations and individuals, including our partners (federal agencies, states and tribes), local government, the general public, regulated businesses, scientists and Congress. To reach out to this large and varied group, we used a number of methods to solicit and receive public input on suggestions for our Open Government Plan.

1. Electronic Outreach

To collect input from the public electronically, we relied on OpenEPA - available from EPA's Open Government Web site (www.epa.gov/open); blog entries from Greenversations (blog.epa.gov/blog/); and input received from Twitter, Facebook and e-mail. EPA sent notifications to over 135,000 individuals and organizational stakeholders to request their participation. To identify and reach these stakeholders, we used EPA listservs, Twitter feeds, Facebook fans and other similar electronic methods. Our broad outreach most likely contributed to the number of entries we received. EPA had the third highest level of activity for those agencies using the IdeaScale tool—the primary mechanism used by most agencies to solicit public input. Public feedback provided via OpenEPA focused on the Agency's mission, operational activities, and areas where we should consider in developing this plan.

As another method to encourage the public, we will conduct a virtual town hall meeting announcing the publication of the Agency's Open Government Plan. This meeting is tentatively set for Q3/2010, providing the public time to review the plan. We will answer questions and solicit suggestions that will be considered for future versions of the plan.

2. Non-Electronic Outreach

EPA also reached out in more traditional ways. We invited stakeholders to attend a face-to-face meeting to solicit ideas for our plan. A summary of the meeting can be found at www.epa.gov/open or by sending a letter to the address listed below.

US EPA / MC: 2822T

Attention: Open Government

1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW

Washington, DC 20460

Printed copies of the Plan are available upon request. We welcome your comments on the plan, and you can provide them by visiting OpenEPA at www.epa.gov/open or by sending a letter to the address provided above.

3. Ongoing Open Government Efforts and Plan Updates

EPA expects to gain experience while executing this plan and to apply resulting best practices and lessons learned to existing and future activities. We also plan to share our experiences with other agencies and to solicit feedback on their successes and challenges. EPA will provide project-specific updates on components of the plan, and we expect to update our Open Government Plan more often than the recommended two-year cycle. We will review the plan every 180 days, and it will be a living document. Notifications of any planned revisions and revised documents will be available on our Open Government Web site.

EPA continues to operate the OpenEPA tool in response to requests by the public. The OneEPA tool is primarily suited for initiating a discussion, capturing suggestions and collecting reactions either in support or opposition. Since the publication of EPA's Open Government Plan 1.0 on April 7, 2010, few plan related comments have been received through this tool. In order to optimize the features of the OneEPA tool, EPA will reconfigured it to support more focused efforts that can benefit from solicitation of proposed ideas. For purposes of gathering comments and reaction to EPA's Open Government Plan 1.1 and other efforts, EPA will rely on the blog located at: http://www.openepa.ideascale.com/. For non-open government comments or suggestions, the public is encouraged to use http://www.epa.gov/epahome/comments3.htm.

4. EPA Communications Regarding the Open Government Directive

In developing our Open Government Plan, we actively sought public and EPA employee input. We established an Open Government Web site (www.epa.gov/open) and used many Web 2.0 applications to communicate and engage with the public and EPA employees.

As we implement and refine the Open Government Plan and activities, we will communicate changes and updates via our Open Government Web site. We will also rely on this Web site to advertise the release of upcoming data sets.

We also plan to develop an Agencywide strategy that includes how and when to use outreach events such as public meetings, electronic town hall meetings and/or webcasts.

H. Flagship Initiative – Community Engagement

"Flagship" is a term that commonly means the most important or leading member of a group. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requested that each federal department or

agency describe at least one specific new transparency, participation or collaboration initiative (a flagship) currently being implemented or planned. At EPA, we asked experts across the Agency to share new or proposed projects that promote EPA's environmental protection mission, embrace the Administration's principle of openness, have real impact and benefit, are feasible and likely to succeed, and have transformative value.

We received and reviewed many individual projects and organized them into three themes:

- Community Engagement
- Regulatory Involvement
- OneEPA

EPA selected Community Engagement as our Flagship because of its wide applicability—promoting a greater understanding of, participation in, and contribution by individuals regarding the environmental issues that affect or interest them most. This flagship initiative offers EPA many opportunities to learn from individual projects and apply these lessons as we consider actions to ensure continued improvement. The anticipated benefits from this initiative are described in greater detail in Section V of this plan.

The other two initiatives, Regulatory Involvement and OneEPA, represent additional areas where the Agency is committed to making improvements. A number of projects within these themes are planned or currently underway and also support the open government principles of transparency, participation and collaboration.

Additional information on our Flagship initiative can be found in Section V of this document, and further detail is provided at http://www.epa.gov/open/flagship/index.html.

I. Protecting the Privacy of Those Who Participate

EPA is encouraging our partners, the public and other stakeholders to actively participate in our mission by posting to blogs, the OpenEPA Web site, Twitter and Facebook. Our Open Government Plan includes multiple channels for us to gain feedback, and we will analyze each feedback method to identify and mitigate any potential security, privacy or confidentiality risks in accordance with federal and Agency security and privacy guidelines.

II. Transparency

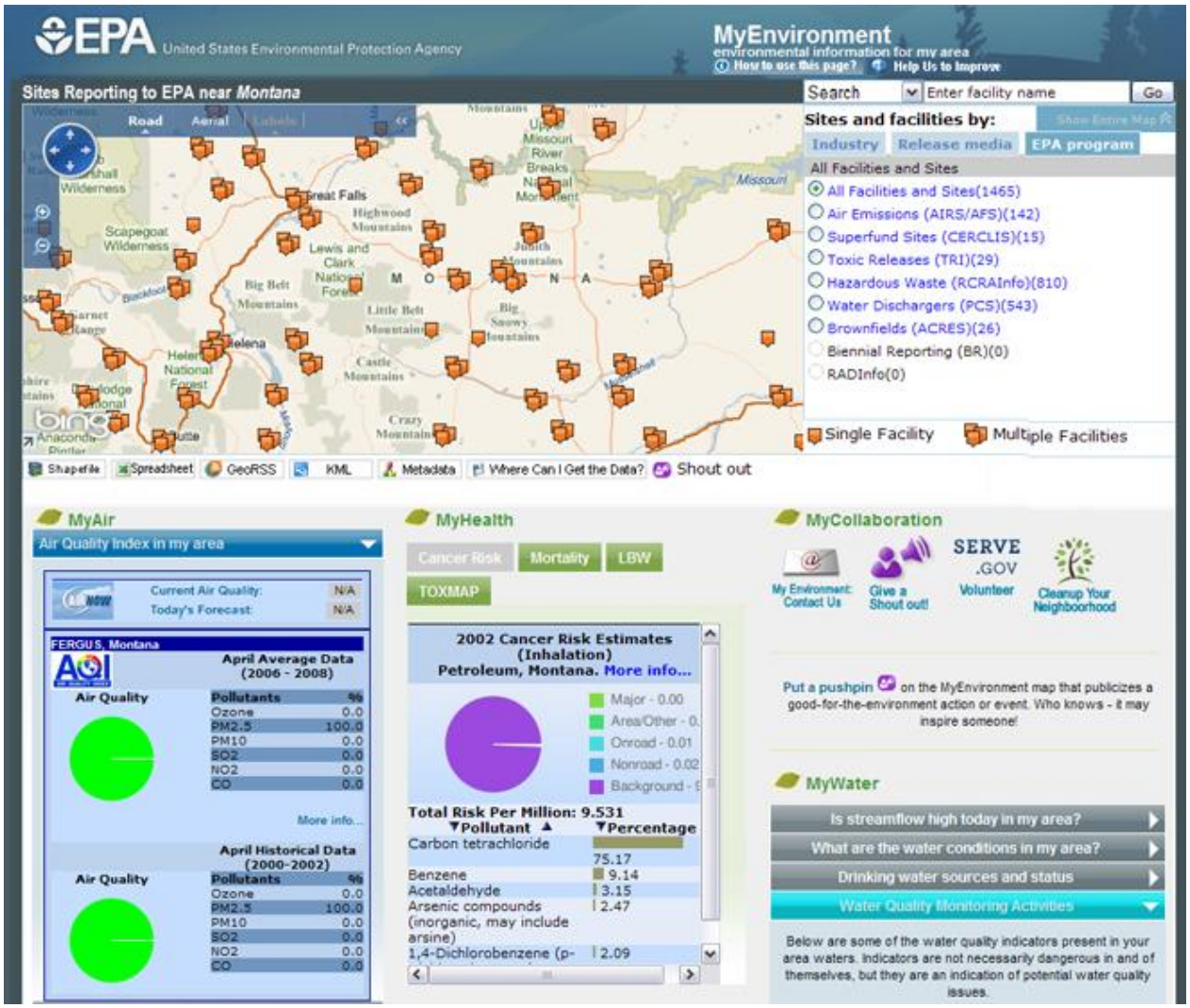
Transparency is the foundation of open government. Transparency allows the public and all stakeholders to know what you are doing, and more importantly, how and why you are doing it. EPA's commitment to transparency is not new. In 1983, Administrator Ruckelshaus promised that EPA would operate "in a fishbowl" and "attempt to communicate with everyone from environmentalists to those we regulate…as openly as possible." Upon being sworn in last year, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson pledged in her first memorandum to EPA employees to "uphold the values of scientific integrity, rule of law and transparency every day." What is new is our commitment to reach out to more stakeholders, especially those historically underrepresented in EPA decision making.

Since the Open Government Directive was issued in December of 2009, we have taken a number of actions to promote transparency, as detailed in this section. Of particular note, we are developing a plan to streamline and simplify how the public asks for, tracks and receives information subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and we have posted more than 500 data sets on Data.gov.

Empowering our stakeholders with more information is not helpful if the data are not current or of high quality. We address this challenge in two ways. First, EPA established a governance structure, described in Section I.D.2 above, to ensure progress in open government initiatives and find ways to further open EPA's culture. Second, we are developing a clear process for data posted on Data.gov and EPA.gov to balance the need for relevant and current information with our commitment to meet or exceed EPA's established standards for high quality data.

The availability of high quality data has led to innovative EPA mechanisms to give individuals the ability to discover important information about the state of their local environment. For example, did you know that you can discover what is happening in your community related to your air and water quality, and cancer and mortality rates by visiting EPA's My Environment Web site (www.epa.gov/myenvironment)?

The image below shows an example of what you can find out about your community by taking advantage of this innovative use of high quality data available to the public.



II-1 EPA's My Environment Web site

The remainder of this section provides information about:

- Transparency history and baseline.
- Increasing and improving EPA information on Data.gov.
- Governmentwide initiatives and requirements.
- Transparency Innovations.

A. Transparency History and Baseline

Each year EPA takes concrete steps to function more transparently to support our effort to be fair, open and inclusive. We leverage emerging and proven technologies and were early adopters of the Internet, creating the first EPA home page (www.epa.gov) in 1994.

Protection through Disclosure: Since 1986, more than 20,000 manufacturing facilities annually report releases of chemicals into the air, water and ground; the information is made public in the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI). Researchers credit the TRI with a 65% reduction of chemical releases from all sources since 1989.

One of the cornerstone laws compelling EPA's early campaign of openness was the 1986 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), the primary purpose of which was to make environmental data available to the public and local communities. One program established by EPCRA is the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), which requires EPA to provide the public with information about releases and waste management of over 600 toxic chemicals. EPCRA also requires that industrial plants provide important information to local firefighters and emergency responders so they are better prepared if an emergency arises at their plants. Our experience with the success of EPCRA prompted us to work internationally to promote transparency. The result is that countries around the world began to promote public access and adopt systems like TRI. The success of EPCRA underscores how transparency and public access empowers communities to take action to protect their local environment.

As part of EPA's overall effort to make our data more accessible to the public, we created a variety of online search tools. For example, we have worked to make data available online, including Surf Your Watershed (http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm), which allows the public to find their community's watershed profiles. The EPA's National Library Network also provides public access to environmental information for decision making and environmental awareness (www.epa.gov/libraries/). We have developed an online search tool that allows citizens to search for reported releases by ZIP code, year, state, etc. (www.epa.gov/triexplorer).

Clean Air Markets Data and Maps is a searchable collection of reports, data sets and maps of emissions and allowance data collected as part of EPA's emissions trading programs (http://camddataandmaps.epa.gov/gdm/index.cfm?useaction=iss.isshome).

EPA has also taken the next step in transparency by creating search tools that bring together data from multiple data sources. The intent of these integrated search tools is to make sure citizens have a more comprehensive picture of the environmental issues in their community. The Envirofacts website search tools (http://www.epa.gov/enviro/), and the underlying database warehouse, provide the public with a single point of access to a diverse set of EPA information about environmental activities that may affect air, water, and land anywhere in the United States. MyEnvironment (www.epa.gov/myenvironment/) is an application that pulls data stored in Envirofacts as well as other sources. Cleanups in My Community (http://iaspub.epa.gov/Cleanups/) allows users to map or list cleanups for EPA's cleanup programs, with a link to additional data.

B. Increasing and Improving EPA Information on Data.gov

The OGD sharpens the focus on public access to data, making data sets from across the federal government available to the public. To improve the public's ability to discover, access and use data sets, the White House launched Data.gov, which provides links to data sets and data tools from multiple departments and agencies. The evolution of the Internet and its ability

to reach a wider audience means that federal agencies have an opportunity to reach many more people. In conjunction with the Data.gov launch, EPA began making high-value data sets available to the public via www.Geodata.gov and through EPA's DataFinder tool (www.epa.gov/datafinder).

EPA has strategically provided data sets to non-governmental groups since the 1980s. An example is the Clean Air Status and Trends Network (CASTNET), a regional long-term environmental monitoring program that assesses trends in acidic deposition due to emission reduction regulations, such as the Acid Rain Program and the NOx Budget Trading Program. Data from CASTNET can be downloaded from (www.epa.gov/CASTNET/data.html).

In addition to making more data available to more people, we are increasing the speed at which we make data available. In response to stakeholder needs for earlier availability of environmental data, the TRI program processed and posted 88,000 toxic chemical reports within 49 days of collection in an easy-to-use downloadable file format on our Web site, publishing data before we completed our analysis in an effort to increase transparency. This encouraged outside stakeholders to conduct their own analyses within weeks of data collection. We set a record with the 2009 data by publishing it in the same year it was collected for the first time ever.

To inventory all data sets for future inclusion on Data.gov, we have identified the following principles to prioritize data. Our highest priority will be data which:

- Advances one or more of the Agency's strategic goals/priorities
- Responds to the feedback received on www.epa.gov/open and www.data.gov, and inspires new forms of community engagement.
- Enables third party innovation by conforming to established best practices for data:
  - Primary—exposes the underlying source data not aggregate statistics.
  - Structured—available in a machine-processable format such as XML, CSV or other.
  - Timely—includes the most recent data available and is updated on a regular basis.
  - Usable—provides an understandable description of the dataset, its context and makes available the data schema and other relevant metadata.
  - Complete—includes all collected data of this type as described, except where constrained by privacy or legal barriers.
  - Quality—of appropriate and well-described quality for informed use by other parties

Sections IV.B.3 and IV.B.4 provide details on how EPA data is already being used in innovative ways by the public, and how we have responded to recent data requests.

1. Identification and Publication of High-Value Information

EPA has taken full advantage of Data.gov, linking to more than 500 data sets and data tools to date that can be accessed on EPA's Web site.

We are developing a Strategic Data Action Plan to establish and implement EPA's processes to increase transparency by more systematically managing and disseminating information. The plan will establish governance mechanisms, processes and technologies to institutionalize the requirements of the OGD and this plan as they pertain to our data sets and tools.

Since the publication of EPA's Open Government Plan 1.0, we have created an inventory of data sets currently available in Data.gov. The inventory has a separate section/tab with the data sets that will be available in the future and are under review and/or staged for submission. For each current data set, we include the target audiences and mission-related priorities the data set supports. The data set inventory can be found at http://www.epa.gov/open/Data_Set_Inventory0625.pdf.

Components of the action plan will include:

- Identifying high-value information not available for download that should be considered for dissemination.
- Prioritizing and scheduling new high-value information to post for download.
- Soliciting ongoing public suggestions and feedback.
- Improving the presentation of data in open formats to improve the public's ability to use the data.
- Improving the use of additional approaches such as web services, Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), linked open data/semantics and descriptive metadata to improve service to the public.
- Identifying key information gaps where useable information is not available.
- In addition, we want your input to drive our next set of releases – please go to www.epa.gov/open and provide us with your feedback. We will review these requests and will publish additional data sets on a quarterly basis. We want you to drive our priorities.

EPA is Already a Leader in High Value Data Release

- You asked for our Toxic Substance Release Inventory – we posted it on Data.gov in March 2010
- Citizens want to know what is happening in their community – we provide that data in an easy-to-use tool – www.epa.gov/myenvironment
- The Clean Air Status and Trends Network and Toxic Release Inventory Data released by EPA is Five Star – check it out http://www.data.gov/catalog/raw/category/0/agency/0/filter//type//sort/rating_desc/page/1/count/25

We will examine how to use or adapt existing mechanisms such as the EPA Science Inventory and the EPA Data Finder to identify and manage high-value information. Where appropriate, the Strategic Data Action Plan will be integrated with EPA's Strategic Plan, capital investment planning process and budget formulation process.

2. Timely Publication of Open Formatted Data

Since publication of the EPA's Open Government Plan 1.0, we have published several new data sets to Data.gov. Nearly all of the data sets identified in the previous plan for publication by Q42010 have been posted, submitted for posting, or are being staged for submittal. Data sets considered for future posting are being evaluated based on their support of key EPA priorities and/or usefulness to our stakeholders. The data set inventory can be found at http://www.epa.gov/open/Data_Set_Inventory0625.pdf.

And to continue expanding what is available on Data.gov, our Strategic Data Action Plan will address how we will evaluate and select the underlying (supporting) data that will be made publicly available in downloadable, open formats and catalogued in Data.gov. The plan will explain the process we will develop for making those data sets available. For example, we will improve our data management through a publicly accessible data set catalogue that will support Data.gov as well as any other sources for accessing the data sets, such as Data Finder. We will make other information available to increase the usability of our data sets, including definitions

for the fields in the data sets and information about services, such as APIs, that can be used on the data sets. This plan will be available in FY2011. Specific milestones include the following:

- Make 5 additional high value data sets available (Q3/Q4, FY 2010)
- Publish the Strategic Data Action Plan (Q2, FY2011)
- Make 5 additional high value data sets available (Q3/Q4, FY 2011)
- Define processes to identify innovative uses of data (Q4, FY2010 & Q1 FY2011)

C. Governmentwide Initiatives and Requirements

The OGD requested that we provide an update on governmentwide initiatives and requirements; this section provides the requested information as it relates to EPA's activities and actions.

1. Governmentwide Transparency Initiatives

a) Data.gov

As described earlier in this document, we have posted over 500 data sets on Data.gov in compliance with the OGD. EPA analyzes metrics from Data.gov and EPA's Open Government Web site and uses these metrics to identify the EPA data sets most requested from that site. EPA's future process for opening data through the Data.gov Web site will factor in items that most interest our stakeholders and the public. We will focus on keeping EPA's holdings current and populated with the most accurate and desirable data available.

Many of the data sets published to date are national TRI data, with individual sets for a year and by state and territory. We also published three new data sets after the OGD:

- Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA) data set, which has never before been made publicly accessible, is the list of chemical substances subject to TSCA reporting requirements.
- Chesapeake Bay Program Water Quality Database, which includes monitoring data about environmental conditions in the Chesapeake Bay.
- ToxCast Phase I data set, which provides information about chemical toxicity testing for over 300 chemicals.

Visit our open government web site (www.epa.gov/open) to monitor our progress and make suggestions on future data sets to add.

b) Regulations.gov

As a user of www.regulations.gov, EPA provides access to more than 12,000 proposed rulemakings, including those that are still open for public comment. EPA has received and posted approximately 280,000 public comments and 200,000 Agency scientific, legal and technical analyses related to rulemakings and notices on the Web site.

As managing partner of the eRulemaking Program and Regulations.gov, EPA continues to improve the usefulness and experience of the rulemaking tools we offer to the public. In May 2009, EPA and our partner agencies launched the Regulations.gov/Exchange, an online forum for the public to explore proposed new changes to Regulations.gov and to post their own suggestions and ideas. The Regulations.gov Exchange uses new social media tools to obtain feedback and create a dialogue among visitors. The site enables visitors to:

- Register and track discussion topics
- Rate features using a five-star system
- Join the discussion by posting opinions and ideas
- Export data and content
- Share discussion topics with others using social bookmarking tools

In January 2010, new social media tools were incorporated into Regulations.gov. These tools are specifically tailored to provide EPA and all other partner agencies a platform to more directly engage the public to expand their participation in regulatory and non-regulatory actions underway and to continue public collaboration on setting the direction of the eRulemaking Program. Please visit www.regulations.gov/exchange to provide us feedback on regulations.gov.

Rulemaking Matters! Video Contest:

Let your voice be heard! EPA and the eRulemaking Program have partnered to sponsor the Rulemaking Matters! Video Contest to highlight the significance of federal regulations and change the public's perception about the rulemaking process.

With a short 60-90 second video, citizens can capture public imagination and use creativity, artistic expression and innovation to explain why regulations are important to everyone and motivate others to participate in the rulemaking process.

Individuals and groups of all ages may participate, and entries must be received between April 14-May17, 2010. EPA and the eRulemaking program will award $2,500 to the winner and post their video on Regulations.gov, as well as the EPA web site http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/.

c) IT Dashboard

On June 30, 2009, OMB launched the Information Technology (IT) Dashboard (it.usaspending.gov/), which gives agencies and the public the opportunity to view details of federal IT Investments online and track their progress over time. This initiative was launched in the spirit of the Administration's shift toward transparency in all aspects of government, including IT capital assets. To comply with this initiative, we provide monthly updates to the IT Dashboard for cost, schedule and Chief Information Officer (CIO) investment evaluations. EPA currently has 21 projects on the IT Dashboard, representing the majority of our IT portfolio.

d) Recovery.gov

Recovery.gov is the vehicle used by the Recovery, Accountability and Transparency Board (RATB) to share ARRA progress information with the public. There are two significant compliance requirements. One is met by agencies and departments, and the second is met by recipients of ARRA resources.

EPA meets our direct Recovery.gov transparency compliance requirement by providing authoritative financial information from our Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) through a weekly financial activity report. EPA compiles this information, has it endorsed by the ARRA Senior Accountable Official, and then transmits the information to Recovery.gov. This process ensures EPA's obligations and outlays are accurately and regularly provided to the public through Recovery.gov.

Recipients of ARRA resources report quarterly on progress associated with their funded projects and activities. Section 1512 of ARRA specifies required information from recipients. The reported information helps define each project and progress made. Reported information includes who is receiving ARRA dollars and in what amount, what projects are being funded, the completion status of projects, and the impact the projects have on job creation and retention. Federal agencies and departments do not directly receive this information, nor are they responsible for posting the quarterly reported information to Recovery.gov.

While recipients are responsible for the quality of the data they submit, federal agencies and departments review recipients' reports. (Generally, federal reviews begin on day 11 of each reporting cycle and are completed by day 29, prior to public posting of recipient information on day 30.) Federal agency reviews are an important accountability component of the process.

e) USASpending.gov

EPA provides the public information on each contract, grant and award the Agency has awarded through the Web site USASpending.gov, a re-launch of (www.usaspending.gov). The data are largely from the Federal Procurement Data System, which contains information about federal contracts, and the Federal Assistance Award Data System, which contains information about federal financial assistance such as grants, loans, insurance and direct subsidies such as Social Security. EPA is proceeding as planned with all USASpending.gov requirements. The Data Quality Plan, due to OMB on May 14, 2010, will document our steps to comply with all requirements of USASpending.gov.

f) Data Quality Plan

The OGD also requires the completion of a Data Quality Plan to ensure that all the data made available to the public is of the highest integrity.

EPA's commitment to Data Quality is not new. In 1979, Administrator Costle initiated the first Agencywide quality management system for data and information. Furthermore, EPA's leadership, in implementing the Information Quality Act of 2001, issued the Agency's Quality Policy (CIO Policy 2106) to expand the quality management of data, information, products, and services to meet the challenges of openness and transparency in agency operations.

Under the direction of the agency Senior Accountable Official, EPA is using and enhancing our current processes in accordance with OMB Circular A-123 to satisfy the provisions of OMB's February 8, 2010 framework guidance that requires the Agency to separately address the types of risks associated with federal spending information.

EPA established an Open Government Spending Information Quality Work Group consisting of representatives from the Office of Grants and Debarment within OARM, Office of Financial Management (OFM) within OCFO, Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) within OARM, and the Quality Staff within OEI. The work group is being led by OFM and has met on a bi-weekly basis since February 4, 2010 to draft the Data Quality Plan. The plan will build upon the Agency's management integrity experience to provide a framework for ensuring the quality of EPA spending information. It will specifically assess the risks to, and control environment over, Agency data submitted to USASpending.gov, and recommend improvements as necessary.

2. Compliance with Records Management and Information Requests

All federal agencies have legal requirements on records retention, responding to requests for information from the public and Congress, and on declassifying information to respond to such

requests. Brief descriptions and links to the appropriate EPA Web pages for Agency procedures to meet these requirements are provided below.

a) Web Links to EPA's Records Management Program

Information about EPA's records management program, which includes approved record schedules and a description of how we meet record responsibilities, can be accessed at (www.epa.gov/records/).

b) EPA's FOIA Program

EPA reduced its overdue backlog from 23,514 in 2001 to 332 in 2009. In fiscal year 2009, 96% of all new requests were responded to within the 20-day statutory deadlines. We centralized FOIA processes to improve application of statutory criteria and response rates.

EPA is committed to the letter and spirit of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The Agency's CIO is the Chief FOIA Officer responsible for EPAwide FOIA policy and administration. EPA's FOIA Public Liaison assists with resolving disputes between requesters and the Agency. The Public Liaison facilitates timely FOIA responses, provides information on the status of requests, and fosters greater openness and transparency in the Agency's FOIA administration activities. The national FOIA staff, under the leadership of the Agency FOIA Officer, provide national oversight and manage FOIA processing activities, including training, developing policies and procedures, overseeing Agencywide FOIA responses, operating an electronic tracking system and managing the Agency's FOIA Web site. The national FOIA staff report to the FOIA Public Liaison.

The Agency continues to proactively ensure that the presumption of openness is applied to its FOIA decisions and administrative appeal processes. To ensure Agency awareness of the President's FOIA Memorandum and the Attorney General's FOIA Guidelines, Administrator Jackson issued a memorandum, "Transparency in EPA's Operations," to all employees on April 23, 2009, that communicates the Agency's full commitment to these policies (www.epa.gov/Administrator/operationsmemo.html).

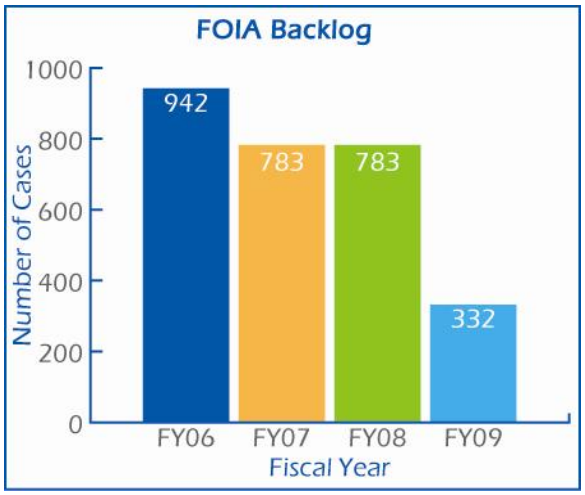


Figure II-2: FOIA Backlog

EPA's program and regional offices analyze and respond to more than 10,000 FOIA requests each year. Over the past several years, EPA aggressively tackled its backlog of overdue requests while responding to new requests in a timely manner. In 2001, there were 23,514 overdue FOIA requests. The Agency revised its FOIA procedures and processes, deployed new information technology tools, and collaboratively worked with subject matter experts across the Agency to reduce overdue requests to less than 10% of the number of new requests received. By fiscal year 2007, we met our goal and continued to reduce our backlog so that by the end of fiscal year 2009, the Agency's backlog totaled only 332. To ensure consistency in the application of statutory criteria, we moved all fee waivers and expedited processing decisions from the regions to our national office in 2009.

EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs completely redesigned its electronic FOIA reading room to make thousands of highly sought after pesticide science data and regulatory records available without filing a FOIA request (www.epa.gov/pesticides/foia/reading_room.htm). The reading room provides access to a database of 13,000 scientific reviews and 300 pesticide active ingredients. In addition, the public can find 800 pesticide product registrations containing 150,000 pages at the Regulations.gov Web site (www.regulations.gov). Since making the database and documents available online, FOIA requests to this office have decreased by 17%.

In addition, EPA streamlined the process by which the public electronically files FOIA requests by providing an online form for request submission (www.epa.gov/foia/requestform.html). In March 2009, we launched a Web page that allows the public to track the status of their FOIA requests (www.epa.gov/foia/foia_request_status.html). Finally, EPA increased transparency and access to information by posting frequently requested information online. For example, an individual who would like to export a vehicle has to produce a certificate issued by EPA. In the past, the individual would make a FOIA request for the certificate which might take days or weeks to receive. Now, anyone can go online to EPA's FOIA site and print the certificate from the database. In recognition that not all stakeholders have access to new and emerging technologies, EPA continues to support FOIA requests in non-electronic form at the following address:

National Freedom of Information Officer,
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code 2822T
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

The National FOIA Office, in partnership with the Office of General Counsel, conducts a variety of FOIA training sessions at EPA headquarters and in the Agency's 10 regional offices. EPA sponsors national training for employees and contractors. The Agency holds bi-weekly conference calls with regional FOIA Officers; monthly meetings with FOIA contacts in the headquarters program offices; and semi-annual meetings with regional FOIA Officers. All of these meetings involve - and some are entirely focused on - educating, informing and training employees who support FOIA activities in diverse ways on new developments in the FOIA program, including Administration policies.

EPA continues to look for ways to increase transparency and provide more information online for public access. EPA is collaborating with other agencies (e.g., the Department of Justice, National Archives and Records Administration) to explore how to provide the public with one-stop access to submit and track FOIA requests. More information on EPA's FOIA program is available at our FOIA Web page (www.epa.gov/foia).

c) EPA's Congressional Requests Process

Information about EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations (OCIR) operations including organizational structure, staffing, and workflow process that the Agency relies on to respond to Congressional and Gubernatorial requests can be found at (http://www.epa.gov/ocir/).

d) EPA's Declassification Process

EPA's declassification process follows Executive Order 12958, as amended, Part 3 Declassification and Downgrading. Any individual or organization may request a review of classified information for declassification, and the Agency will ensure that requests for

declassification are processed in accordance with the provisions of law. See www.epa.gov/open for EPA's declassification procedures.

D. Transparency Innovations

EPA is always in search of ways to be more open to our partners and the public. In particular, we look for technology as a vehicle to help us broaden our reach and share more information.

We are also investing in changes to increase transparency on EPA's Web site. To get feedback on our Web site, we employ the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) to measure online transparency regarding how thoroughly a particular Web page discloses information about what EPA is doing; how quickly Agency information is made available on the Web site; and how easily the public can access information about EPA's actions. We also created an EPA Search Strategy to identify areas for enhancement, and we are researching new tools to help the public more easily find information via the search function on the EPA home page—the most commonly suggested improvement raised during the 2008 National Dialogue on Access to Environmental Information (www.epa.gov/nationaldialogue), described in more detail in Section III. We are tagging and categorizing our Web pages with keywords so that any time a public user searches on a particular term, such as "global warming," he or she will find Web pages that use that word in addition to documents.

Web site Restructuring: The public and our partners suggested we change our Web site to make it easier to find information. We are actively working to revamp our Web site, presenting information based on a topic or audience.

As a first step, we reworked our home page. We provided the public a "sneak peek" of the EPA home page (http://www.epa.gov/epahome/sneak.html), invited their input by posting a blog, and addressed initial feedback. The new EPA home page was unveiled April 6, 2010.

Other examples of innovation include:

- Opening up EPA's research work: A recent addition to the transparency toolbox is a new searchable database - Health and Environmental Research Online (HERO) (www.epa.gov/hero) - that allows the public to find key studies used by the Agency to develop environmental risk assessment documents. We also operate the Science Inventory (www.epa.gov/si), a searchable database of EPA research activities and scientific and technical products produced or funded by EPA.
- Not all of our data are in formats that lend to searchable databases. We are, therefore, pushing to present useful information in reports that the public can access. In 2009, EPA issued the first Vehicle and Engine Compliance Activity Report (www.epa.gov/otaq/about/420r08011.pdf), which summarizes a large volume of environmental data on mobile sources of pollution, including automobiles, engines and other motorized equipment that produce exhaust.
- EPA frequently uses Real Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds to provide information and data to our stakeholders, and our Central Data Exchange (CDX) (www.epa.gov/cdx) can accommodate live streams of data. Through CDX RSS feeds, the public can subscribe to news updates or data for a particular system or program at EPA (https://nodewebrss.epa.gov/user/RSSChannels.aspx). This capability provides a foundation for the Agency and our partners on the Exchange Network to create new feeds as well as automated feeds for submitting data to EPA from other points on the Exchange Network. The feeds can be secure if necessary and can also be configured in minutes with built-in

workflow tools that permit content approval. The CDX program is working across EPA's program offices to incorporate this powerful new service into Agency business processes.

- EPA began using Web 2.0 tools in 2007. We engage the public through blogs, discussion forums, and podcasts. We also go where the public is, using sites such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Flickr. We make it easy for people to share our information through widgets, RSS feeds, and social bookmarks. See http://www.epa.gov/epahome/socialmedia.html for more details and links.
- One example of a unified Web 2.0 strategy is our AIRNow program, which uses Facebook and Twitter. In addition, AIRNow's EnviroFlash is a free e-mail alert system that delivers air quality information to subscribers.

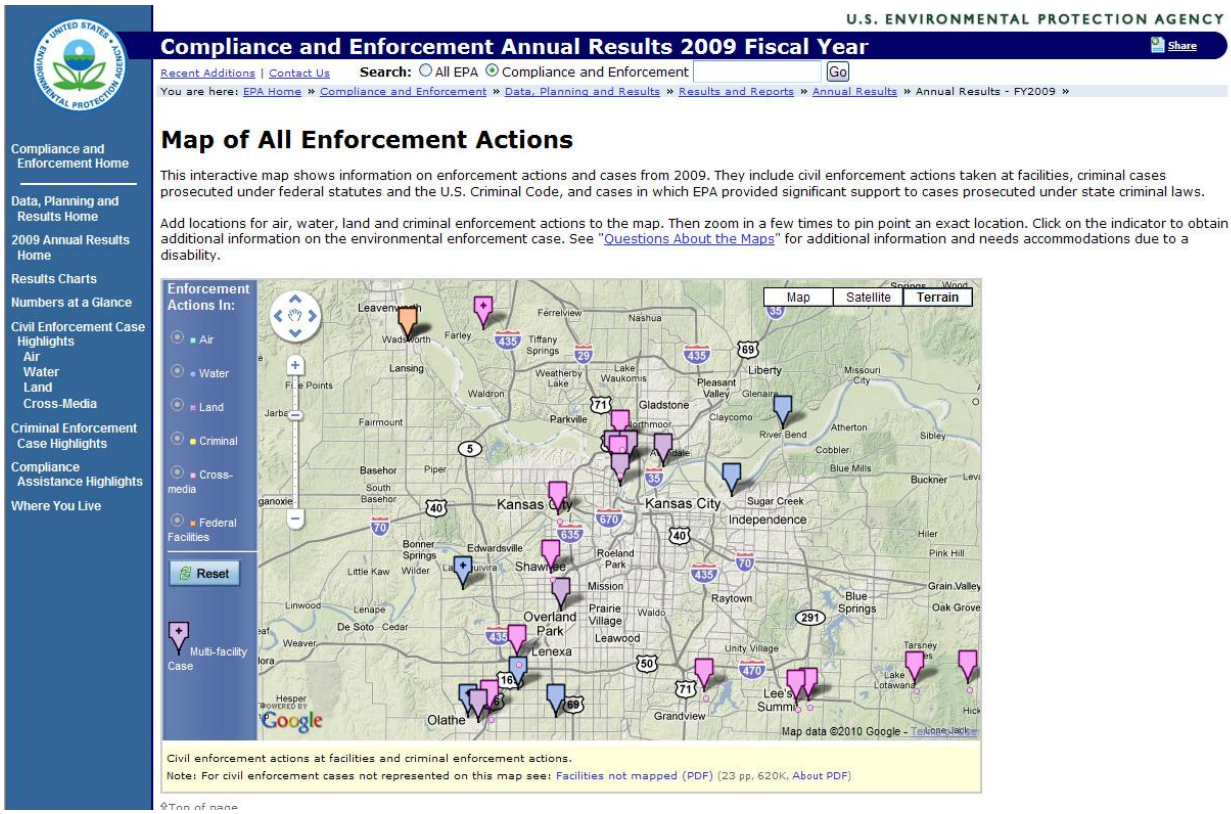


Figure II-3: Enforcement Actions by Map

Using an interactive map, the public can find facilities with environmental violations (open enforcement actions) geographically. http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/endofyear/eoy2009/2009-map-allactions.html

- EPA will publically release our GeoData Gateway (GDG), a central access point for EPA's geospatial resources in Q3/Q4 of 2010. The GDG, which will also feed data to Data.gov, is described in Appendix C.

III. Participation

Transparency informs the public, and participation informs the government.

EPA has historically engaged our federal, state, tribal and local partners, the public and other stakeholders. We are striving to reach a broader range of groups (especially those historically underrepresented) and understand their views. In order to hear from more diverse groups, EPA is using more diverse methods to receive input.

For example, EPA reached out to stakeholders using a variety of tools to develop this Open Government Plan. We provided a means to accept comments via our Open Government Web site, conducted a stakeholder meeting, and used the Greenversations blog, Twitter and Facebook (links provided in Section III.B.2).

Because EPA is a regulatory agency, enabling participation in the rulemaking process has a large impact on the public and is one of our top priorities. We have a number of active and successful public participation efforts in rulemaking and other areas, described below.

Superfund Community Involvement: Since the 1980s, EPA has actively promoted early and meaningful community participation during Superfund cleanups. Members of the public affected by a Superfund site have a right to know what the Agency is doing in their community and a say in the decision-making process. Our Community Involvement Coordinators go to communities to meet and talk directly to citizens.

The remainder of this section provides information about the Agency's:

- Participation history and baseline.
- Participation Innovations.

A. Participation History and Baseline

At EPA, we leverage technology as one tool to help us identify what information our partners and stakeholders would like to receive. In 2008 EPA held a National Dialogue on Access to Environmental Information (www.epa.gov/nationaldialogue) to determine the information needs of our stakeholders. The dialogue used blogs and wikis, as well as face-to-face meetings, to gather public input. This effort advanced the use of blogs and wikis at EPA as we found that they are secure and easy to set up. What we heard from most of our stakeholders is they cannot always find EPA information, even information they know exists, which is why we initiated the web site restructuring.

A compilation of all the recommendations from each group we met with during the National Dialogue can be found at http://www.epa.gov/open/NationalDialogue.pdf. We captured comments and suggestions during the dialog sessions and are currently reviewing any suggestions not already addressed to determine if we can feasibly and legally address them.

EPA has many active efforts to encourage and enable public participation. Several of these efforts are operational and have been previously noted, including our Open Government Web site (www.epa.gov/open), Regulations.gov Exchange (www.regulations.gov/) and a variety of social media technologies. These tools enable our partners and the public to provide input to EPA.

We also use Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) committees to obtain input on decisions; these committees include representation from academia, industry, the public and health professionals (www.epa.gov/ocem/faca). EPA also has the ability to charter new committees, as we did for a negotiated rulemaking on Airline Drinking Water (http://www.epa.gov/safewater/airlinewater/index.html).

Rulemaking provides a good example of EPA's continued innovation in enabling public participation. As a regulatory agency, we developed an automated tool to manage the public comment process mandated in the rulemaking process. That automated tool became the foundation of Regulations.gov, now used across the federal government to allow the public to track, review and comment on proposed regulations.

Many of our efforts and tools that provide transparency also have mechanisms for feedback and participation. Since we described these efforts and tools in Section II, we focus on improvements and new activities in the remainder of this section.

B. Participation Innovations

Although you can still send a letter to EPA or call us, EPA has launched several efforts to further public participation. We described several of these efforts in Section II, since many of our projects that foster participation also promote transparency.

National Lakes Assessment Report: We are working with partners to survey the nation's waters, report on conditions, improve monitoring and assessment, and apply technology to educate the public on the state of their waterways.

Some of the new ways we are enabling partners and stakeholders to participate in carrying out our mission include:

- Video contests, leveraging YouTube and the public to educate others on environmental issues and successes: We have launched a series of contests and envision continuing them indefinitely. As this report is being published, we currently have one video contest and one participatory video project running.
- Town hall meetings
- Greenversations blog at (http://blog.epa.gov)
- The MyEnvironment Web page (www.epa.gov/myenvironment/) features environmental shout outs, which give the public the opportunity to publicize good-for-the-environment activities that are happening within their communities, such as river cleanups and volunteer monitoring or e-cycling efforts, using MyEnvironment's mapping interface.

Faces of the Grassroots Video Contest: We are sponsoring a video contest asking the public to highlight an environmental justice activity, issue or topic. Submissions via YouTube of public service announcements or short documentaries may be used in future outreach and education. (http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/events/video-contest.html)

Within the Agency, we are identifying ways to coordinate and organize a formal network of EPA staff experts to connect and respond to public inquiries, encourage public participation and provide consistent service.

1. Examples of How Targeted Groups Get Informed

In addition to providing information geared to the public, we offer many ways for groups and communities with specific interests or concerns (target groups) to become informed and share ideas.

- EPA and the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) developed a forum (www.ChemicalRight2Know.net) to provide access for communities, industry and interested stakeholders to the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) and other environmental data.
- EPA is holding a conference, the 2010 National Training Conference on the TRI and Environmental Conditions in Communities, to support environmentally-informed decision making in communities.
- In the area of waste management and cleanup, EPA has held two video town halls targeted to citizens. These videos are described and viewable at: (www.epa.gov/oswer/videotownhall.htm). The first town hall was on the Superfund program, and the second focused on environmental justice as well as how citizens can reduce their carbon footprints through reducing, reusing and recycling.
- One EPA office posts a question for discussion at least once a month on their blog (http://blog.epa.gov/oswerforum/). A recent question was: How would you grade EPA's role in addressing environmental justice issues in disadvantaged communities?

Pet Spot-On Products Webinar: An increase in the number of reporting incidents for pesticides in pet spot-on products led EPA to evaluate the incidents and products. This free public webinar is a way to educate consumers and answer their questions. (http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/health/spot_on_webinar.html)

2. Links and Websites for Public Participation and Engagement

EPA will rely on several sites to announce opportunities for our partners and the public to participate in accomplishing our mission. For simplicity, the primary site for learning about these opportunities is (www.epa.gov/open). EPA is committed to keeping this site as current as possible and will strive to provide ample advance notice for upcoming activities. This site is also available from EPA's home page (www.epa.gov) by clicking on the OpenGov icon.

The advent of Web 2.0 offers new ways for the public to participate. For that reason, EPA is pursuing a variety of Web 2.0 tools, such as blogs and wikis. Currently, EPA is hosting more than 140 applications on the Internet and EPA's internal Web site. Some examples include:

- Metal Mining (https://blog.epa.gov/metalminingblog): A blog to obtain public and industry comments on pre-regulatory rulemaking related to the Metal Mining Industry.
- Thorium and Uranium Milling Facilities (http://blog.epa.gov/milltailingblog) (coming soon on the Internet): A blog to obtain public and industry comments on regulatory rulemaking action to 40 CFR192, Thorium and Uranium Milling Facilities.

Additional links and ways to speak out and participate include[1]:

- Greenversations blog: http://blog.epa.gov.
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/EPA.
- Twitter: http://twitter.com/epagov.
- Many more social media opportunities: http://www.epa.gov/epahome/socialmedia.html.

Another site where opportunities may be announced includes:

- http://yosemite.epa.gov/opei/RuleGate.nsf.

3. Partner and Stakeholder Feedback Methods

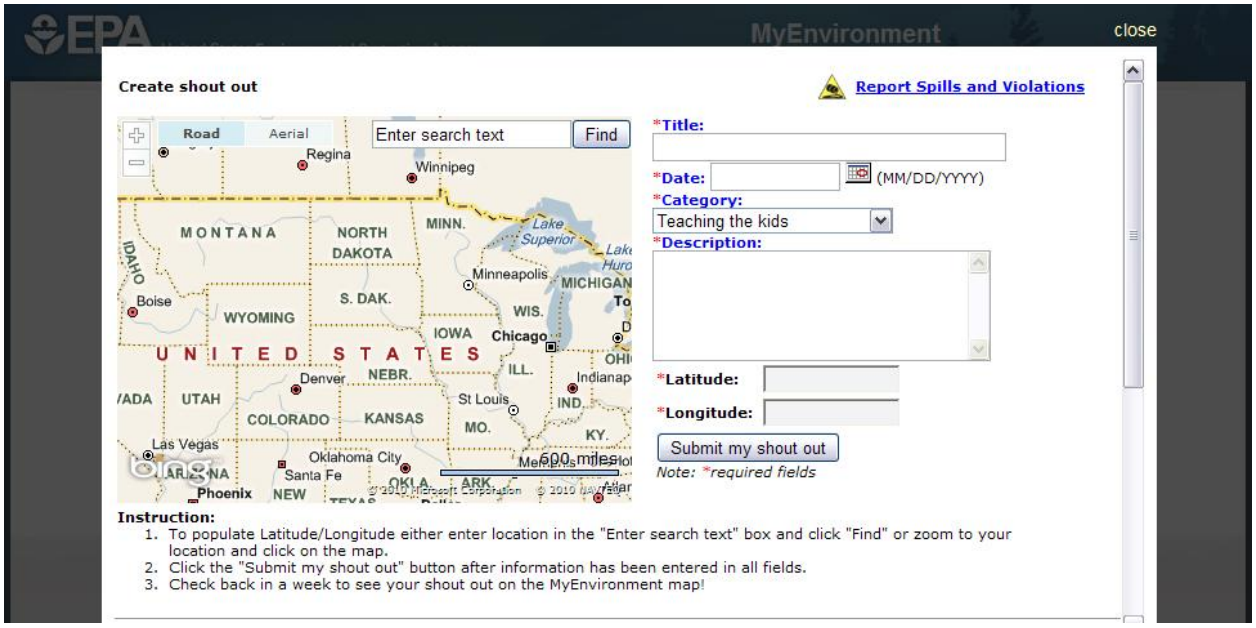
From EPA's open government Web site (www.epa.gov/open), the public can follow progress on flagship projects, select opportunities to participate, find data sets recently made available on Data.gov, and access the OpenEPA Web site to provide feedback. The OpenEPA Web site also allows us to solicit comments and provides partners and stakeholders a way to comment or vote on ideas submitted by others. In response to requests on the OpenEPA Web site, EPA plans to keep the site active after our Open Government Plan is published, which allows the public to continue providing feedback and learn about our progress. We will also evaluate and establish standards for the how often EPA will engage in dialogue with submitters.

We realize the tools and methods in our current toolkit are efficient means of communication for technology-savvy stakeholders, and we are committed to broadening our reach to involve those who are not technology-driven or who may not have easy access to technology. Our commitment to reach the public contributed to our selection of Community Engagement as our Flagship initiative. We will test other participation methods through the Flagship projects and continue adjusting the number and variety of tools we use.

In addition, we provide feedback to public comments related to open government on our OpenEPA forum. Please visit us at www.openepa.ideascale.com to view the current status of ideas.

Finally, we are always looking for great ideas in your community. We have established an interactive, web-based "Shout out Feature" that allows you to provide recognition for community efforts. The purpose of this shout out feature is to applaud the environmental efforts of local communities, but also to make neighbors aware of all the good that is being done right in their own backyard. We encourage you to show us where something was done to help your local environment and provide a short description. Your local activities are a key part of keeping our nation's water, land and air clean, and we believe in the motivational value of these actions in spurring similar action across the nation. You can find this feature at www.epa.gov/myenvironment by entering your zip code or location information, and then clicking on "Give A Shout Out" icon.

[1] No citation or illustration of any specific product, service or enterprise in this report should be construed as a Government endorsement.



III-1 EPA's My Environment Shout Out Feature

IV. Collaboration

Collaboration is ingrained in our operations and an important part of being open, fair and inclusive. We collaborate by working with our federal, state, tribal and local partners, with non-governmental organizations, academia and industry and with the public. EPA's partners implement many of the Agency's most critical environmental programs, including protecting water quality, reducing air pollution, safeguarding drinking water and mitigating hazardous waste. Almost all of the environmental data EPA collects comes from our partners and the regulated community. We collaborate on issues as wide ranging as data collection and sharing, enforcing regulations, setting standards of protection, voluntary programs (e.g. EnergyStar (www.energystar.gov), a joint EPA and Department of Energy effort), and how best to empower local communities to tackle local issues.

Producing widespread environmental and economic benefits:

Redeveloped brownfields sites reduce stormwater runoff between 44 to 88%, result in lower vehicle miles traveled between 33 to 58% reducing air pollutants, and return formerly contaminated property to re-use. Since inception, more than 61,000 jobs have been leveraged nationwide. Residential property values increased between 2 to 3% once a nearby brownfield was assessed or cleaned. Brownfield projects leveraged $18.68 per EPA dollar expended.

One of the most significant examples of collaboration with a broad spectrum of partners is the Brownfields program. This program is designed to empower states, communities and other stakeholders to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up and sustainably reuse Brownfields (sites with the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant). The idea for the program was presented by a state at an Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials (ASTSWMO) meeting in the early 1990s. Shortly thereafter, EPA funded Brownfields as a pilot voluntary program, and the program evolved based on feedback and lessons learned from early projects. Congress recognized the success and potential of the program and passed the 2001 Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act. Our Brownfields program empowers citizens to reclaim and revitalize properties in their communities.

EPA has well-established tools and procedures for collaborating with the public, and we are exploring new ways to collaborate with our partners and other stakeholders. The remainder of this section provides information about the Agency's:

- Collaboration history and baseline.
- Collaboration innovations.

A. Collaboration History and Baseline

Working in partnership with states and tribes is critical to protecting human health and the environment. Starting in 2001, we worked with states and tribes to establish the National Environmental Information Exchange Network (NEIEN) (www.exchangenetwork.net) to share over 240 regulatory reports. Sharing such information improves its quality, timeliness, accessibility and transparency while lowering costs and burden. All 50 states, 9 tribes and 1 territory currently exchange data over the Network, and the volume of data, types of data being shared, and unique ways of sharing it through cutting edge technology all grow annually. EPA also established a grants program to help the states and tribes exchange their data across the network. Through these grants, states and tribes are able to build the infrastructure and take other steps to move from submitting information on paper to sharing information electronically.

The collaboration on the Network extends to the governance structure as well. Our governance features shared ownership and responsibility among the partners and comprises EPA, state and tribal members who collectively make decisions about Network resources, strategy and technology. The Network's technology and approach have been so successful that we are extending them to support other important programs nationwide. Network technology is a backbone of the new International Trade Data System's efforts to improve the sharing of import security information among federal agencies; the Recovery, Accountability and Transparency Board used EPA's Network technology and approaches to develop FederalReporting.gov, which helps the Board monitor spending progress under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Total Coliform Rule (TCR):
To involve the public and experts earlier in the regulatory process, EPA established an advisory committee representing states, environmental groups, utilities and public health and public interest groups to recommend revisions before EPA started updating this rule.

Academia is another important group with whom we collaborate in meeting our mission. Scientists are an important source of information, and scientific data and studies are important as we make decisions affecting the environment. EPA recognized the need for our scientists to collaborate more freely with scientists in other agencies and in academia. To meet this need, we developed the Environmental Science Connector (ESC), a password-protected research and collaboration center that provides the capability to customize, coordinate and monitor the progress of science projects from a desktop. EPA scientists can centrally manage projects; search for and download data sets, publications and other documents; set up web conferences; track the history of their work; and share information with other researchers within EPA and external scientists, partners and stakeholders who are collaborating with the Agency. (https://ssoprod.epa.gov/sso/jsp/obloginESCNew.jsp)

EPA often collects and makes available information that is important to other federal agencies. For example, we hold multiple radiological emergency response exercises each year with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Energy (DOE), as well as state and local governments. The CDC and EPA also work together to help local health officials prepare in case of a radiological emergency. We developed tools to assist federal, state and local agencies with the review of Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements through a web-based geospatial application. The NEPAssist tool automates the collection and coordination of information needed in the environmental review process, as mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPAssist provides immediate screening of environmental assessment indicators in accordance with regional decision rules for a user-

defined area of interest. These features contribute to a streamlined review process that potentially raises important environmental issues at the earliest stages of project development.

As another collaboration example, the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program is a grant vehicle that empowers local communities to reduce risks from toxic pollution. Local groups create partnerships to address issues of local concern, from reducing chemical exposure of workers at automotive shops to addressing the presence of heavy metals in drinking water for people living near certain mining activities. Through one CARE project, a community discovered that a large source of mercury releases into the Great Lakes was from dental offices, a finding that prompted the American Dental Association to call on its members to install a low cost device that captures mercury, keeping it from going down the drain and into our river systems.

We also foster collaboration through training. We have EPA training programs that focus on building collaboration skills as well as programs that provide information on available tools and resources. Our skills building training programs cover areas such as negotiation, situation assessment and collaboration. Training is sometimes made available to EPA partners as part of a program. And the Superfund Program has a Community Involvement University that provides public involvement and collaboration training, including methods to help our staff manage difficult topics and situations.

To continue and expand our collaboration with the community, EPA will analyze public feedback from the publication of our Open Government Plan and commit to providing updates on a periodic basis.

B. Collaboration Innovations

While technology platforms and standards adoption are key enablers for collaboration and being more open, fair and inclusive, not all of our stakeholders have access to technology to use the new tools. So we will continue to collaborate in more traditional ways while we leverage technology to reach a more diverse cross-section of the public.

With technology versus traditional methods in mind, the Agency is actively pursuing initiatives that build on our infrastructure to help us publish high value data sets, encourage innovative collaboration with stakeholders, and encourage increased partner and stakeholder involvement.

1. Collaboration Actions and Mechanisms

a) Address Technology Platforms to Improve Collaboration

EPA's infrastructure will continue to evolve to meet the growing demands of transparency, participation and collaboration. The Agency has a backbone of services that support our ability to share meaningful data sets with various stakeholders. EPA's Central Data Exchange (CDX) (www.epa.gov/cdx/) enables fast, efficient and more accurate environmental data collaboration with state and local governments, citizens and research groups, industry and tribes and EPA participating program offices. This infrastructure is built on shared services, open data standards and web services that improve data quality. Our infrastructure also provides the Agency with the ability to publish high-value data sets such as TRI data in an increasingly efficient manner. We are committed to pairing this infrastructure with existing reporting toolsets (e.g., Envirofacts, MyEnvironment) as shared investments in the critical infrastructure and service oriented architecture standards. Ongoing investments in data publishing and collaborative toolsets will be evaluated against Agency standards to ensure potential

investments in new solutions leverage the existing architecture, are built in open formats that have collaboration/publishing in mind, and abide by established best practices.

b) Propose Innovative Methods to Encourage and Promote Collaboration

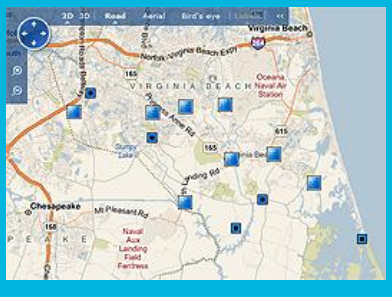
EPA is evaluating various methods to encourage more inclusive and effective collaboration such as creating a way to recognize and reward collaborative projects.

WaterSense: Like EnergyStar, WaterSense helps consumers evaluate products for efficiency – in this case water efficiency. This is another way EPA is using modern social networking technologies and mobile applications to reach a broad audience.

We know that increased adoption of Web 2.0 and social media technologies place a burden on the existing infrastructure from activities such as downloading large data sets or video streaming open meetings. As EPA continues to incorporate more tools to facilitate open government, we will focus on improving infrastructure and ensuring proper security. We have begun to improve our infrastructure performance by using virtualization and through our Wide Area Network (WAN) 2010 Initiative. We are also evaluating recent innovations in cloud computing.

We will continue to expand our focus on making data sets meaningful to various stakeholders, capitalizing on technical frameworks that have been created and can now be expanded for new purposes. Initiatives that highlight this focus include making data sets geographically relevant and accessible via MyEnvironment. This solution allows the public to search by neighborhood to learn about local air quality, cancer risk levels, water quality, Brownfields and other factors that determine the overall environmental quality and livability of a community.

EPA's Facility Registry System (FRS) (found at www.data.gov and www.epa.gov/frs) provides a complete universe of facilities and places that are or might be of environmental concern. EPA is working with OSHA and SEC to link facilities of environmental interest with facilities under worker safety regulations and financial reporting mandates. FRS is the linking database for Agency mapping and GIS applications.



In an effort to improve access to services, we will create a one-stop resource for application programming interfaces (APIs) and other web services that could be used with data sets. This catalog will allow users to access the web services for possible reuse of existing code when developing new services. The catalog will identify associated XML schema and data sets that could be used with the services. Where appropriate, EPA will determine how to establish a standardized format for some of these services to facilitate public usability.

The Agency also has an ongoing initiative to centralize information about various cross-Agency resources, from facilities to substances to environmental terms. These catalogs act as doorways to information across EPA. Different EPA programs may have data about a particular facility; however, that facility may be reported to each program office using a variation of the name. The Facility Registry System (FRS) (www.epa.gov/frs) makes it possible to link the different data about a facility together, enabling the public to find that information. Similarly, substances can be known by a multitude of synonyms. Toluene, phenyl methane and methyl benzene are all valid names for the same chemical. The Substance Registry Services (SRS) (www.epa.gov/srs) has a record for each substance tracked or regulated at EPA, which EPA program is interested in the substance, and the name used by each program for the substance. Through these two registries, and others which can all be found at (www.epa.gov/sor), the public can discover where to find information throughout EPA and, in the future, in the states and tribes. EPA offices

are taking steps to integrate these registries into their systems as a way to improve public transparency and data quality. We are also working with our state and tribal partners to ensure the registries support their business needs.

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) is working collaboratively with a broad spectrum of partners to increase access and use of information. Presently, there is a wealth of information related to the Chesapeake Bay stored by state agencies in New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Washington, D.C., in non-governmental organizations, and within EPA. To ensure better access to this information, the CBP is developing a registry, called ChesapeakeStat, to catalog this voluminous, but dispersed information.

2. Sample Projects

In the area of collaboration, EPA is undertaking some new projects. Sample projects include:

- EPA's Watershed Central Web site (www.epa.gov/watershed) offers a wiki environment for local watershed managers to collaborate with others, share management plans and compare notes on tools of the trade. EPA uses this site to make managers aware of funding and other resources. The wiki adds value to the Agency's general web presence on these topics by enabling a dialogue and discussion among the watershed groups and by allowing them to upload documents.
- EPA recently joined a cooperative effort called EcoCar, a consortium of government, industry and academic leaders dedicated to advancing clean, efficient automotive technology. The consortium hosts EcoCar, The Next Challenge, a three-year competition among 17 universities in the United States and Canada to redesign and reengineer a 2009 Saturn VUE to minimize fuel consumption and emissions.
- Clean Energy – Clean Climate (CECC): EPA's Region 6 (located in Dallas, Texas) plans to create an online, interactive tool to help states, local governments and tribes keep the CECC strategy current as technological and scientific information emerges. Successes will be shared with other regions.
- EPA will be highlighting creative uses of our data, and will establish a process to collaborate with the community, by building a community of interest, to identify opportunities for new innovative "mash-ups" for our data.

- EPA works in collaboration with our state and tribal partners on the National Environmental Information Exchange Network (NEIEN) (http://exchangenetwork.net/index.htm), discussed above. One of the recent innovations established through this network is the Homeland Emergency Response Exchange (HERE) (http://www.herenetwork.org/). This capability provides a rapid and easy way to pinpoint and assess potential threats such as hazardous substances and vulnerable resources. Wherever possible, explanatory information has been included to provide some context to the variety of data presented. HERE supports a broad assessment of the immediate, and potential reciprocal threats that need consideration in many emergency scenarios for emergency responders and emergency operations centers. Now, a "slimmed down" mobile version of theHERE Client has been released to allow first responders an additional way to easily access information while in the field from their mobile telephones. The mobile version requires no installation, and allows a responder to access information about nearby potential threats (such as sites with hazardous chemicals) and provides contact information so they can click to call site representatives to help evaluate and contain a situation. To access the mobile version from your phone: m.herenetwork.org/. The HERE application is based on Exchange Network security and exchange privileges between the current state partners (Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio) and is available to other regional areas. Visit the HERE site to learn more about this capability.

Homeland Emergency Response Exchange (HERE) Mobile Application

- Another example of EPA-state partnership is illustrated by the creation of MassAir by the State of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. MassAir was created based on the principal that the public has a right to know about the environmental conditions in their community. To reduce costs and increase efficiency, Massachusetts integrated its air quality data internally and used the NEIEN to automate data quality assurance processes and provide real-time air quality data to the public. This innovative solution can be seen at: http://public.dep.state.ma.us/MassAir/.
- EPA has established an effort with NatureServe to access threatened and endangered species and location information. NatureServe is a non-profit organization that collects information on species, plants, and ecosystems from 50 states, Canada, and Mexico and the Caribbean. The agency has integrated this information into a major EPA application to support the National Environmental Policy Act and NEPAssist, an innovative tool which facilitates place-based environmental review. We established an interagency agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior, to provide access to this critical data source. Other Federal agencies can also access NatureServe data and services through our vehicle.

Of course, we could not really collaborate without a working relationship with our partners, the public and other stakeholders. EPA regularly identifies new ways to reach out to and include the public in our education and decision making processes. The SunWise Program, which aims to teach children and their caregivers how to protect themselves from overexposure to the sun,

has teamed up with the SHADE Foundation on a poster contest that asks kids to suggest ways to prevent skin cancer and to raise sun safety awareness.

3. How the Public Uses EPA Data

EPA provides the public with a number of data sets, publications and general information through a variety of electronic and non-electronic means. We have a web site (http://www.epa.gov/nscep/) that provides free access EPA publications with more than 7,000 print publications in stock and over 35,000 digital titles. The public can search and retrieve, download, print and/or order EPA publications from this site. Publications on these sites are government material and not copyrighted; therefore, these materials can be reused for educational or other purposes. Any materials in EPA libraries that are copyrighted are marked accordingly.

In addition, educational materials geared to students and teachers can be found at http://www.epa.gov/epahome/students.htm, accessible from EPA's home page and OpenGov page; the site also provides links to training opportunities and materials for environmental professionals. Finally, the EPA Web Site Restructuring project will address any copyright issues, using a policy statement as necessary.

The public and other stakeholders often take EPA data to use for reports or combine with other data for mashups to tell a story. One way to facilitate these mashups is to standardize data elements in the data sets that EPA is making available on Data.gov and other locations. There is a federalwide effort to standardize data elements used in information exchanges. EPA will crosswalk the data elements in our data sets to the federalwide standards to identify commonalities. Making the crosswalk information available to the public will facilitate easier mashups of EPA data with data from other agencies.

Public uses of EPA data span a broad range of users and information, including[2]:

- Sites that provide the public with EPA data to aid understanding of the environmental conditions in their communities include:
  - This We Know (www.thisweknow.org).
  - Data Masher (www.datamasher.org).
- Forbes magazine combined EPA data with outside data to compile an independent analysis of toxics in urban areas for Forbes.com.
- SciScope, developed by the research office at Microsoft, is a research project to integrate data from different sources and to provide the information on a map. SciScope brings together water data, including EPA's STOrage and RETrieval (STORET), which collects water quality monitoring data (www.epa.gov/storet/), water data from the U.S. Geological Service's (USGS) National Water Information System (NWIS) (http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis) and data from several states. The integration of the data is further supported by EPA's Substance Registry Services (SRS), which enables cross-walking between different substance synonyms (www.epa.gov/srs).
- Oreck Corporation has created a mobile device application that provides users with the status of their local air quality. The data in the application comes from EPA's Air Quality

[2] No citation or illustration of any specific product, service or enterprise in this report should be construed as a Government endorsement.

Index (AQI), which provides a yardstick for determining the degree to which a geographic area is clean or polluted for five major pollutants: ground-level ozone, particle pollution, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide.

- Since 1989, the Right-to-Know Network (www.rtknet.org) has provided free access to numerous environmental databases and resources from EPA data sources. The information available on RTK NET enables users to identify specific facilities and their environmental effects, find permits issued under environmental statutes, and identify civil cases filed – all from a single Web site.

We are maintaining our Open Government Web site (www.epa.gov/open), and by April 30, 2010, we will include a section that asks the public to share innovative ways EPA data are being used. We intend to recognize the most innovative uses of EPA data, as determined by public vote. EPA will work through groups such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and our partners to reach those who do not have electronic access.

4. Input from the Public on Ways EPA Can Increase Openness and Transparency

EPA's OpenEPA public engagement Web site was one of the most active and heavily visited of all federal agencies' sites during the development of the initial Open Government Plan 1.0. We addressed five of the most popular suggestions within our plan 1.0. We've kept our OneEPA site up since the plan 1.0 was published and included a blog feature to accept comments directly on portions of the plan. All of the comments received are in the process of being categorized and will be summarized and made available on EPA's Open web site. As suggestions are evaluated and a response is prepared, the status of the suggestion will be updated on the Open Web site. As follow up to the suggestions on the plan 1.0, responses to five additional top voting ideas are provided below:

- **Idea:** Create a policy allowing EPA employees to speak openly about their data.
    - **Response:** We received a recommendation to consider including a communication policy in our plan that "clearly describes the rules governing interactions between the public and agency staff." EPA will evaluate this recommendation within our established Open Government Governance process beginning in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2011, and we will provide updates on the status in future updates.
- **Idea:** Live webcast of all meetings focusing on proposed regulations.
    - **Response:** Web casts are increasingly being use for significant meetings and notice of these are often posted through EPA news releases available from the Agency's web site. Some projects included in EPA's Community Engagement Flagship Initiative relate to expanding public engagement in the regulatory process. Our Flagship teams are considering the use of various tools, including web casts, to assist in communicating more effectively with the public.. Best practices and lessons learned from the Flagship Initiative will be shared across the Agency so that other efforts can more easily use proven, effective communication tools.
- **Idea:** Regulate the growing use of antibiotics in farming animals.
    - **Response:** The commenter is correct in stating that this is a complex issue which requires coordination among multiple federal agencies and other organizations. This comment has been shared with the EPA program office

responsible for developing suitable regulations to ensure the proper management of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. The most current compilation of related documents can be found at http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/afo/info.cfm.

- **Idea:** Post examples of successful grant applications online.
  - **Response:** The State Innovation Program is one among many grant programs in the Agency. All State Innovation grant proposals - not just the successful ones - were made available on our web site (http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants/competitionhistory.htm) in order to make the concepts more widely known. Potential submitters were advised of the publication plan in the solicitation.
- **Idea:** Create a Bill of Rights for the environment.
  - **Response:** EPA operates under the authorities provided by the various laws passed by Congress. Each of these laws has come about due to the identification of a particular need or condition that was recognized by the legislative branch sufficient to warrant support and ultimate approval. Laws and the corresponding regulations developed by EPA are intended to protect the environment. Protection of the environment is central to EPA's mission, that is, to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment – air, water and land – upon which life depends.

All of the comments received through our OneEPA site on IdeaScale are viewable at http://www.openepa.ideascale.com/. Comments received on our Open Government Plan blog through Greenversations have been categorized and are available at http://www.epa.gov/open/BlogComments.pdf. In addition to these sources, EPA has received approximately 60 public comments through the Open Government EPA email account. Unique comments with actionable requests have been captured and summarized in the document http://www.epa.gov/open/public_email.pdf. Please note, email names and original comment content has been removed to protect the identity of the sender. We will continue to provide summary and status of actions related to suggestions we've heard in our quarterly updates available from the Open site http://www.epa.gov/open/.

V. Flagship Initiative - Community Engagement

Each agency was asked to select at least one Flagship initiative – a new, specific project to promote transparency, participation or collaboration. Rather than selecting one concrete project, EPA determined we would have more impact by defining and launching a broad Community Engagement initiative, with many concrete projects across the Agency.

Community Engagement refers to a broad spectrum of activities intended to promote a greater understanding of, participation in, and contribution by individuals regarding the environmental issues that affect or interest them most. EPA considered several areas of its core mission where improvements could be achieved by implementing open government principles. The selection of the Community Engagement theme presents many challenges, and the Agency believes it also offers the greatest source of growth potential by encompassing many of the elements associated with the other themes. The broad scope of this theme also allows us to select a range of projects, many with ties to suggestions posed during the public participation/input process.

We selected Community Engagement by applying the following evaluation criteria developed by the Agency's Open Government Work Group:

- Supports the Agency's strategic goals and the Administrator's priorities
- Degree to which the initiative supports openness principles
- Anticipated degree of impact and benefits
- Feasibility and likelihood of success
- Transformative value

To successfully accomplish our mission, EPA needs active participation from the public. Effectively engaging communities means we will need to make information easy to understand; find diverse ways to reach the public (both electronically and via traditional means); find creative ways to hear their needs and suggestions; and work with partners, stakeholders and other federal agencies to make informed decisions and find the best solutions.

Each Flagship candidate area (Community Engagement, Regulatory Involvement and OneEPA) met these criteria; however, the Agency selected Community Engagement because of its wide applicability—potentially influencing nearly every part of the Agency. We crafted this initiative with opportunities to apply what is learned throughout the Agency, providing a higher return on our invested effort.

To implement the Flagship initiative, EPA selected a number of projects - each designed to involve the public and/or a particular segment of the population in greater depth than activities typically conducted. Individually, each project varies in how it will engage the public. The Agency expects to learn what is most effective and make use of this information as it evaluates policies and standard practices that will be of benefit to future Agency efforts. The sections that

follow briefly describe the selected projects, organized around various components of the community that EPA intends to target as part of our community engagement initiative.

A. Expanding the Environmental Conversation with Communities

- **Urban Waters:** We are leading a federal interagency working group focused on helping communities get educated and involved in local decision making that impacts urban waters. EPA will develop new Web 2.0 tools for community-to-community information sharing, reach out to non-digital audiences, and provide technical assistance to communities.
- **Improve Communication of Sampling and Testing Results:** EPA is developing a new communication methodology to use with the public when contamination is found in their communities. The new methodology will simplify scientific language, provide communities with visual illustrations and clear explanations of contamination levels and associated risks, and recommend actions that community members should take to protect themselves.
- **Improve Delivery of Information to At-Risk and Remote Communities:** We are connecting with communities historically underrepresented in EPA decision making, to enhance their abilities to be informed and meaningfully participate in EPA decisions about land cleanup, emergency preparedness and response, and the management of hazardous substances and waste. A national EPA work group will evaluate how information is provided and make recommendations to improve our processes. The group will focus on electronic access and the digital divide, and ways to provide technical information so that it is clear, accessible and timely for use by affected communities.
- **Faces of the Grassroots Video Contest:** We are sponsoring a video contest asking the public to highlight an environmental justice activity, issue or topic. Submissions via YouTube of public service announcements or short documentaries may be used in future outreach and education.

B. Expanding Public Awareness and Involvement in the Development of Rules and Regulations

- **Chesapeake Bay TMDL Webinar Series:** EPA will conduct a series of monthly webinars to help the public learn about the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) initiative (setting a "pollution diet" for the bay) and share feedback with the officials designing it. We are working with state partners to set restrictions on nutrient and sediment pollution through the TMDL.
- **NPDES Pre-proposal Involvement:** A future rule will require entities that have National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits to report information to EPA electronically. This change in reporting created great interest within and outside the Agency, so we are launching the NPDES Electronic Reporting Rule Web page to post public meeting information and rulemaking progress as well as to host a discussion forum.
- **Rulemaking Gateway:** EPA's Rulemaking Gateway provides continual updates to the public about the progress of priority regulations that are being developed. An important part of the Gateway is a set of filters that help specific stakeholders understand which rules are most likely to be of interest to them. There are filters for impacts on children's health, environmental justice, state and local governments, tribal governments, unfunded mandates, energy and more (http://yosemite.epa.gov/opei/rulegate.nsf/content/about.html?opendocument).

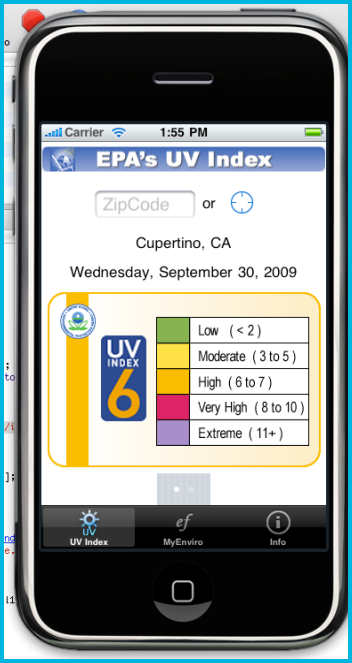
C. EPA Mobile Applications (apps) to Empower Citizen's Environmental Decisions

- **Human Health Advisories:** EPA is leveraging technology to push human health advisories via mobile phone apps, providing the public with location-based information to help them take action. The project is cross-Agency. One example being developed is the EPA Saves Your Skin mobile phone app, providing ZIP code-based UV index information to help the public take action to protect their skin. Another example of a mobile app is the Air Quality Index (AQI) which feeds air quality information based on zip code.
- **Green Product Information:** This is an Agencywide strategy to provide a one-stop source of information to consumers to help them consider the impacts of products when making purchases (e.g., energy efficiency, water conservation, chemical exposure, sustainable design). In response to public input during the development of this plan, EPA is developing an Internet portal that consolidates the various Agency product information Web sites into one Web site. Future efforts may include ways to deliver such information through mobile channels, either by EPA providing data that others can incorporate into mobile applications, or direct EPA effort such as text messages or Smartphone applications.

These projects help us meet our strategic goals through the use of openness principles as shown in Figure V-1.

Mobile Apps
EPA saves your skin

- The UV Index, developed by the National Weather Service and EPA, indicates the strength of solar UV radiation on a scale from 1 (low) to 11+ (extremely high).
- EPA's UV Index Mobile App allows you to take appropriate sun-protective behaviors and avoid overexposure to UV radiation.
- Simply enter your ZIP Code or city name and state to get the UV Index forecast for your community or for a place you are visiting.



Community Engagement Flagship Project Characteristics

Flagship Project Name	OG Principles			Strategic Plan Goals					Cross Goal Strategies		
	Transparency	Participation	Collaboration	1. Clean Air and Global Climate Change	2. Clean and Safe Water	3. Land Preservation and Restoration	4. Healthy Communities and Ecosystems	5. Compliance and Environmental Stewardship	1. Results and Accountability	2. Innovation and Collaboration	3. Best Available Science
Urban Waters	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X
Improve Communication of Sampling and Testing Results	X	X	X			X			X	X	
Improve Delivery of Information to At-Risk and Remote Communities	X	X	X			X			X	X	
Chesapeake Bay TMDL Webinar Series	X	X	X		X					X	
Faces of Grassroots		X					X			X	
NPDES Pre-proposed Involvement	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	
Rulemaking Gateway	X								X	X	
Health Advisories	X		X				X			X	X
Product Information	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	

Figure V-1: Community Engagement Flagship Project Characteristics

There are similarities among the projects which offer opportunities for knowledge transfer and lessons learned we can apply to future efforts. Additional information on the Community Engagement Flagship and individual projects will be available at our "Evaluating Our Progress" section of OpenEPA (http://www.epa.gov/open/evaluate.html). The public can follow our progress and find additional details about projects and how they support EPA's Community Engagement efforts. Information for each project includes:

- How the project supports one or more of the three open government principles.
- How agency operations will be improved/benefits across the Agency.
- How we will identify affected and interested parties, engage them and maintain a dialogue.
- Identification of any external partners.
- How we will measure improvements to openness principles.
- Steps we will take to sustain the initiative and build in improvements.

Answers to the above questions for each project and activity within our initiative can be found at http://www.epa.gov/open/flagship/index.html

VI. Evolution – The Open Road Ahead

EPA will learn from the activities identified in this plan and our focus on being more fair, open and inclusive. We will capture the benefits and lessons learned for new innovations and Flagship projects, and we will describe how lessons from those projects are being considered to make lasting improvements in how the Agency operates. Those changes will be incorporated into subsequent revisions of this plan.

EPA will leverage our governance structure, described in Section I, to continue to monitor activities as they progress and to continue transforming our culture.

OEI will maintain the lead role in coordinating routine reporting activities, including updates to Data.gov and Community Engagement flagship projects. The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) will continue to maintain EPA's open government Web site (epa.gov/open) as the primary resource for the public to stay informed on EPA's open government activities.

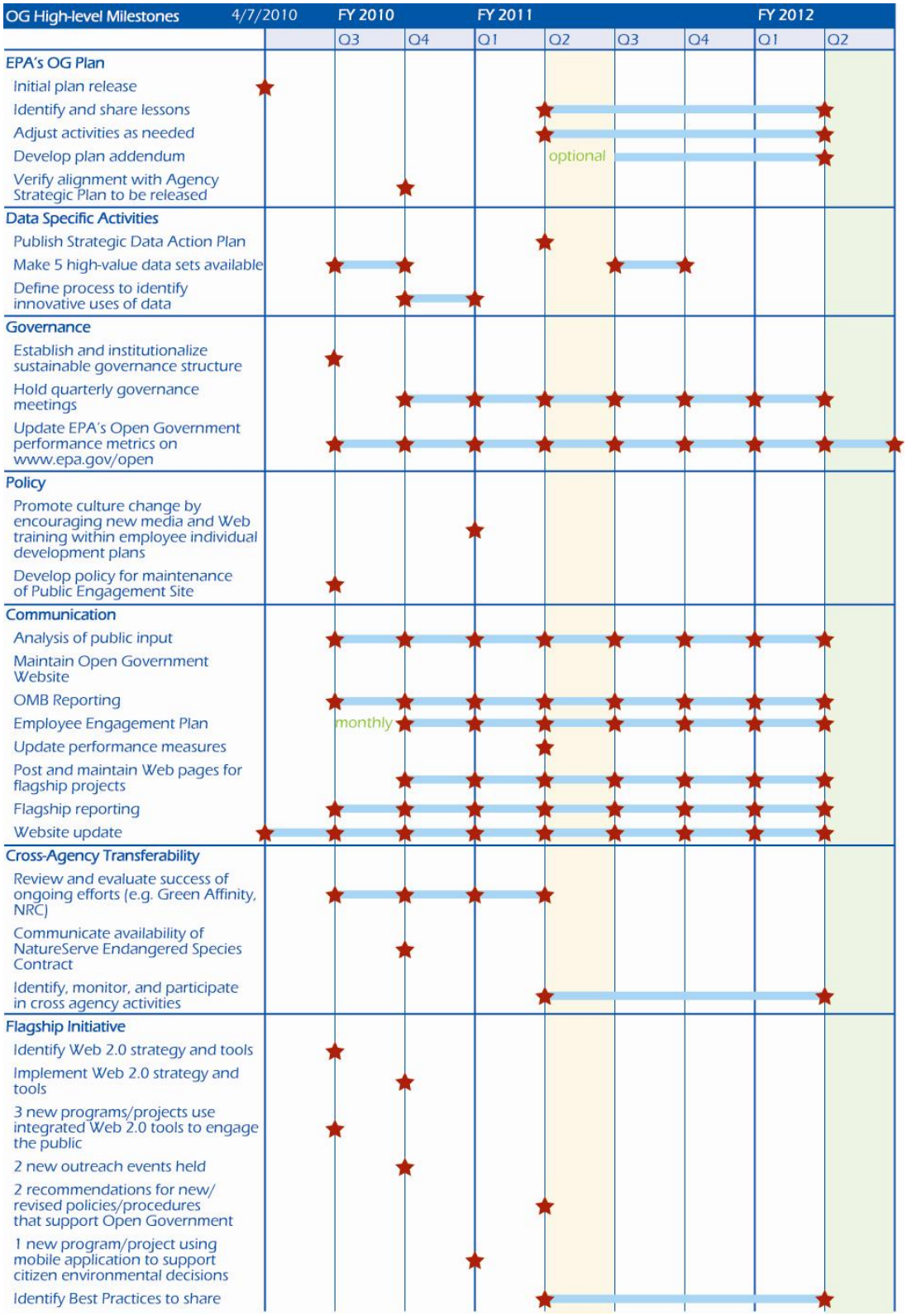
EPA will continue to operate the OpenEPA Web site to receive public input. We have taken a "lite" moderation role in operating this site during development of this plan. Upon publication of this plan, we will determine how our moderation role will evolve to make better use of this tool as a source of input--potentially increasing its use for dialogue. We will track suggestions from the site and will prepare an analysis of suggestions and make that analysis available when the plan is revised.

In summary, we ask you to provide us feedback, and we would appreciate specific engagement in the following areas:

- How can the EPA Open Government Plan 1.0 be improved?
- What additional data and information do you want to see from EPA?
- What are some innovative uses of EPA data that you have seen or implemented?

The success of this Open Government Plan, and of the environmental protection mission, depends on community engagement and a continued two-way dialogue – EPA looks forward to your participation.

Appendix A – Milestones



Appendix B - Open Government Plan Development Outreach Timeline and Plan

Key communications and the dates they were posted include:

- February 4, 2010 – Launch Open Gov Web site with link to the OpenEPA Web site
- February 8, 2010 – White House blog post
- February 10, 2010– E-mail from Linda Travers, Open Government Working Group leader, to 135,602 people - everyone who has subscribed to any EPA list managed by GovDelivery. (This message reached a much broader list than a news release, and recipients included reporters.)
- February 10, 2010 – posted to Facebook: (http://facebook.com/epa) and Twitter: (http://twitter.com/epagov)
- February 16, 2010 – Greenversations blog by Jeffrey Levy – Help Us Serve You Better By Being More Open
- February 18-19, 2010 – E-mails sent to non-governmental organizations (NGO) and industry stakeholder groups inviting input
- February 25, 2010 – EPA programs given sample note to share with specific stakeholder groups
- March 3, 2010 – Meeting with OMB Watch on Rulemaking and open government
- March 4, 2010 – Greenversations blog by Lisa Schlosser – What Does Open Government Mean to You?
- March 5, 2010 – Mass mailer from Linda Travers to all EPA employees inviting input
- March 11, 2010 – Stakeholder meeting
- March 24-26, 2010 – Draft EPA Open Government Plan made available to all EPA employees for comment

The following additional communications policies and plans were initiated February 8, 2010 and continued throughout March:

- Additional Twitter and Facebook posts
- Additional Greenversations blog postings
- Open Government banner on our EPA home page with a link to our Open Government Web site
- Banner on our Intranet with a link to our Open Government Web site
- Link to our Open Government Web site at the bottom of all e-mailed press announcements

Appendix C – Preview of Transparency Innovation: GeoData Gateway

GeoData Gateway Overview

The Geodata Gateway (GDG) is a geospatial portal that provides a single point of access to EPA's geospatial resources. The GDG contains metadata (information that describes data) from EPA's regions, programs, and labs and it links to those resources. By providing this single point of access, the GDG supports the work of environmental researchers, enforcement officers, emergency responders, policy analysts and the general public who want access to information about geographic sites of interest in their local community.

GDG Support to Open Government Directive

Direct Support for Data.gov Contributions:

- Data.gov and Geospatial One-Stop automatically pull data from the GDG.

Identification and Publication of High-Value Information

- The GDG enables EPA to assess and prioritize special data sets of high national interest or data sets that are national in scale such as combined sewer overflows.
- This data can be geographically represented and integrated into reports, such as shown below.

Enables viewers to access and use data that conforms to Open Standards

- Making data available in open standard formats supports information sharing and integration across databases, platforms, agencies and the public.
- Data in open standards enables users to view the data in commonly available tools such as Google Earth.

Innovations: The GDG provides access to content using some of the newest web 2.0 technologies

- RSS feeds available can inform users immediately about data updates and new data sets.
- The GDG offers other tools as well – such as a search widget that users can install within a web page or application that will automatically search the GDG for data without having to visit the GDG itself.

Using the GDG to Support the Agency's Mission

Using the GDG to Support the Agency's Mission

- The GDG connects people with the resources that support EPA's key priorities – below is an example of the data GDG embeds to show water data directly on web pages.

Next Steps for the GDG

The GDG web application will be released to the public this spring. The GDG will align its technologies and approaches to ensure full integration with Data.gov.