

# EPA State and Tribal ELMS Deployment Program

## Standard Work

### March 2021

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#### Background

The EPA Lean Management System (ELMS) uses Lean principles and tools paired with routine monitoring, measurement, and engagement to identify process issues, solve problems, and sustain improvements. In the spirit of continuous improvement, EPA would like to share its experience implementing ELMS with select state and Tribal partners. This document provides guidance and a standard approach for EPA's Office of Continuous Improvement (OCI) and EPA Regional interactions with states and Tribes interested in ELMS deployment.

#### Focus and Potential Universe

EPA's interest is in assisting states and Tribes in areas which address: causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution. Although there may be keen interest from states and Tribes in applying ELMS to a variety of programmatic and administrative/operational areas, EPA recommends identifying permitting process, given that it is a strategic priority for EPA. Recommended permit processes including, but not limited to: water, air quality and hazardous waste permits. The potential universe includes all 50 states and all recognized Tribes.

#### Identify Potential States and Tribes

EPA seeks to partner with states and Tribes that are open to continuous improvement and have senior leadership buy-in. In the initial phase of the roll out of the State and Tribal ELMS Deployment Program, EPA anticipates potential candidates will emerge primarily through self-identification; specifically, an expression of interest to OCI directly (email can be sent to [EPALMS@epa.gov](mailto:EPALMS@epa.gov)), through an EPA Region or through Environmental Council of States (ECOS). States and Tribes may also contact EPA through other mechanisms, including but not limited to various regional planning organizations.

As state and Tribal interest grows, OCI may explore additional mechanisms for communication opportunities for participation in the State and Tribal ELMS Deployment Program.

#### Schedule Informational ELMS Presentation

In response to inquiries from interested states and Tribes, OCI will contact the state and Tribal organization to gauge interest and commitment of senior leadership, will notify the EPA Regional Continuous Improvement Coordinator (CIPM) in which the state or Tribe is located, and will schedule an initial informational presentation to introduce ELMS to state or Tribal leadership.

The EPA team **may** include:

- OCI Office Director (OD)
- OCI Improvement Specialist
- EPA Permit Specialist (an individual who has experience issuing permits at both state and federal levels)
- Regional CIPM

For the initial meeting, representatives from the state or Tribal organization **should** include:

- Lean/Lean Six Sigma/Process Improvement (or equivalent) contact (if one exists)
- State or Tribal ELMS deployment coordinator/lead



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- Senior leadership team from the state or Tribe
- Division and/or office-level management from state or Tribe permit program(s)
- First-line supervisor(s) of the team(s) that may go through ELMS deployment training
- Director of the Environmental Department/Agency to ensure buy-in and leadership support at the highest level of the organization

#### Pre-deployment Requirements

Prior to moving forward with a state or Tribal ELMS deployment, the state or Tribe must ensure the following three conditions are met:

- Deployed teams must have a process which address: causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution,
- The team(s) must have historical process data and establish a baseline from which to measure improvements prior to deployment; **and**
- The team/process must have senior leadership support/approval.

#### Key Areas for ELMS Deployment

The information below provides an overview of what to expect before, during, and after ELMS deployment.

#### Readiness Assessment

States and Tribes interested in moving forward with ELMS deployment will complete an ELMS deployment Readiness Assessment. This document will provide EPA with the information needed to prioritize scheduling of the deployments. Readiness for ELMS deployment includes four basic elements:

1. Understanding the process to which the ELMS system is being applied.
2. A commitment from the organization's senior leaders (e.g., Department/Agency Director, permit office director, first-line supervisors) regarding their commitment to attend the training session, set up the visual management and leader standard work tools, and use them consistently; share their successes and challenges with EPA.
3. Identification of primary state representative/contact to serve as the ELMS deployment coordinator to assist in prepping the team for deployment.
4. A signed cover letter from the senior leader in the organization (e.g., State Commissioner, Agency Director, senior-most leader of Department of Environmental Quality) indicating support for the ELMS deployment.

ELMS Readiness Assessment submissions must be emailed to OCI's OD Stefan Martiyan at [martiyan.stefan@epa.gov](mailto:martiyan.stefan@epa.gov) and the OCI improvement specialist for state and Tribal deployments, Lauren Achstatter at [achstatter.lauren@epa.gov](mailto:achstatter.lauren@epa.gov).

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#### **Scheduling Deployment**

Upon completion of the Readiness Assessment, OCI will partner with the EPA Regional CIPM and other appropriate parties to schedule a deployment date. Typically, states and Tribes must provide EPA at least six to eight weeks of lead time prior to deployment. The state or Tribe may identify one or multiple teams to participate in ELMS deployment. The recommended maximum number of teams scheduled to deploy is six. Multiple teams can be deployed at the same time and during the same deployment week.

#### **Microsoft Teams Orientation**

In the event of a virtual ELMS deployment, Microsoft (MS) Teams is the preferred information technology (IT) platform for deployment. If state or Tribe deployment representatives are not familiar with MS Teams, an orientation can be facilitated by EPA. If states or Tribes do not have access to MS Teams, then the state or Tribe should inform EPA what virtual meeting/training IT platforms are available for use in ELMS deployment.

#### **Champion Orientations**

Champion orientations are two one-hour presentations to provide state or Tribal ELMS champions an overview of the Lean management system and to explain the pre-work.

#### **Pre-Work**

State or Tribal ELMS champions will be expected to work with teams to complete pre-work prior to deployment week. EPA will conduct routine progress check-ins leading up to deployment to help make sure deployment stays on schedule. Pre-work consists of several assignments and may take several hours for champions and teams to complete.

#### **Coordination and Logistics**

EPA OCI and/or the Regional CIPM will coordinate with the designated state or Tribal contacts regarding logistical arrangements, to share the deployment schedule and agenda, handouts and templates with the team(s) as well as discuss room setup for training and supplies needed for the training. Virtual room setup and logistics will be discussed too if necessary.

#### **Content**

The state and Tribal ELMS deployment pre-work and training decks will be the primary source of materials used for deployment. In addition, the materials and resources referenced below will be used in support.

#### **Deployment Week**

OCI Improvement Specialists and/or the Regional CIPM will facilitate or co-facilitate the ELMS deployment with identified teams and state or Tribe ELMS champions.

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#### Post-Deployment/Follow-up

Approximately one month after the initial state or Tribe ELMS deployment, OCI will provide a follow-up visit to the state or Tribe which may be followed by up to an additional two post-deployment visits if requested by the state or Tribe. To help ensure the success of ELMS deployment, OCI suggests scheduling the following engagements during the post-deployment visit by OCI:

- Senior leadership meeting – 30 minutes
- State/Tribe deployment coordinator meeting – 30 minutes
- Post-deployment training for deployed managers and staff – 60 minutes
- Board coaching with deployed teams – 15-20 minutes with each team
- State/Tribe champion meeting – 45 minutes