

Strategic Use and Implementation of EPA OAR Voluntary, Partnership and Community-Based Programs

*Report to the CAAAC from the Partnership
and Community-Based Program Workgroup
October 5-6, 2010*



Background



- EPA requested advice from the CAAAC in May 2010
- Requested advice and recommendations on the strategic use and implementation of voluntary, partnership, and community-based programs
- Charter included draft principles for guiding OAR partnership programs and requested input on them
- Workgroup held 5 conference calls and a 1-day in person meeting
- Draft report has unanimous support from the workgroup

Workgroup Members



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Draft OAR Principles Provided to the CAAAC



OAR investments in partnerships and community programs must:

- a. Address a priority environmental problem*
- b. Set measurable goals, collect performance information and report on environmental and public health results*
- c. Complement (and not undermine) core regulatory and enforcement responsibilities, including filling regulatory and compliance gaps*
- d. Enhance EPA's reputation with the public*
- e. Justify the unique need for an EPA lead role, rather than other levels of government or other organizations*
- f. Plan for the appropriate duration of EPA involvement – from helping convene partners, to launch and piloting of new programs, to long-term operation of a program*
- g. Effectively leverage other resources in OAR, EPA and other organizations*
- h. Be designed and operated with transparency and accountability*
- i. Help build internal environmental management capacity in communities, companies and other organizations*
- j. Comply with the EPA voluntary program guidelines and process requirements*

Questions from EPA



1. What general **principles** should guide OAR investments in partnership and community-based programs? (Do you have suggestions for improving the proposed principles above?)
2. What types of **best practices** should be considered when designing, implementing, and operating partnership programs? What best practices are relevant for community-based programs?
3. What **improvements would create synergies and improve coordination** across OAR's and other EPA partnership and community-based programs, including grant programs?
4. How can OAR better **leverage opportunities to partner** with others (e.g., other federal, state, local and tribal organizations, NGOs, industry associations, and others) to implement, operate, and evolve its partnership and community-based programs? What partnership models could enable OAR to significantly expand progress towards its goals in light of limited resources?
5. How can OAR best understand if its partnership and community-based programs are **achieving results** commensurate with the scale of the investment?

Key Observations and Recommendations



1. Partnership programs are an **essential component** of EPA and OAR's work to protect human health and the environment.
2. Proposed and existing partnership programs should have clear, **consistent, written plans**, followed by a **regular strategic review** to continually improve the program.
3. Partnership programs should maximize opportunities to **leverage resources**.
4. OAR should identify and **share best practices** within EPA and with outside partners.

Observation and Recommendation Areas



- The CAAAC created a framework to provide summary observations and recommendations based on the charter and questions posed by OAR.

- I. Principles and Leverage
- II. Program Design
- III. Program Implementation and Operations
- IV. Measuring Results and Evaluating Performance
- V. Learning and Continuous Improvement

I. Principles and Leverage



- 1.1 OAR's principles provide an effective tool for guiding design, implementation, and management of partnership programs, although improvements can be made to enhance the principles and ensure their effective use.
- 1.2 Encourage opportunities for collaboration and leveraging of resources with traditional and non-traditional partners.
- 1.3 OAR should look for more opportunities to leverage partnership programs to accomplish regulatory objectives.

Revised Draft Principles



“What to Do” Principles

1. Address a priority environmental issue
2. Complement (and not undermine) core regulatory and enforcement responsibilities, including filling regulatory and compliance gaps and building capacity to increase compliance
3. Enhance EPA’s relationship with key stakeholders
4. Ascertain the appropriate EPA role along with those of other stakeholders (EPA could be considered for a lead role if that role cannot easily be filled by other levels of government or other organizations, at least at this time)
5. Effectively leverage other resources in OAR, EPA, and other organizations
6. Help build environmental management capacity within EPA and in **communities, companies, and other organizations**

Revised Draft Principles Cont'd



“How to Do It” Principles

7. Set measurable goals, collect performance information, and report on environmental and public health results in a manner that supports accountability
8. Identify the appropriate duration of EPA involvement – from helping convene partners, to launching and piloting new programs, to long-term operation of a program
9. Be designed and operated with transparency to ensure clear communication with stakeholders and the public
10. Comply with the EPA partnership program guidelines and process requirements

II. Program Design



- 2.1 Limited EPA resources require proposed partnership programs to have clear, written plans at the outset, followed by a regular strategic review to continually improve the program.
- 2.2 Explicitly consider alternative program models and different EPA roles during program design to maximize results and ensure program sustainability.
- 2.3 Engage key stakeholder representatives earlier in the program design phase.

Partnership Program Plan



OAR should ensure that all partnership programs have a clear plan which includes the following elements:

1. Goals, objectives, and milestones (including quantifiable goals and qualitative benefits);
2. Description of how the program will achieve results (i.e., logic model or theory of change);
3. Plan for measuring and communicating performance and results;
4. Assessment of other EPA or third party programs that address the same issue to justify the scope of OAR's program and role and identify possible leveraging opportunities;
5. Funding plan that describes how the proposed program will consider opportunities to leverage external resources; and
6. Projected program lifespan and/or evolution.

III. Program Implementation and Operations



- 3.1 Explore opportunities (in collaboration with EPA Regional Offices) to reach and support small, disadvantaged, and/or resource-constrained communities.
- 3.2 Create opportunities to increase sharing of information and best practices among EPA staff.
- 3.3 Continue efforts to expand and improve use of social media to engage partners and to communicate.
- 3.4 Create broad-based support for partnership programs by involving a balanced set of key stakeholders—including industry, trade associations, and environmental groups.

IV. Measuring Results and Evaluating Performance



- 4.1 All OAR partnership programs should have a clear plan for measuring results and performance.
- 4.2 Partnership programs have important benefits that are not easily measured quantitatively; these should be qualitatively assessed and considered during program reviews.

V. Learning and Continuous Improvement



- 5.1 Catalyze information sharing and collaboration within and among programs by supporting peer-to-peer networks.
- 5.2 Create mechanisms for identifying and sharing lessons learned, best practices, and tools.

Concluding Thoughts



- Partnership programs are a vital component of OAR's work and complement regulatory programs in achieving EPA's mission and the vision of the National Air Program
- OAR must confront several challenges related to its support for partnership programs:
 - OAR must select where to invest its resources, **prioritizing** areas that promise and demonstrate significant returns in achieving OAR's goals and EPA's mission.
 - OAR must intensify efforts to **leverage resources** and scale impact in its partnership programs, engaging non-traditional partners and creative approaches.
 - OAR must **seek efficiencies** in implementing its partnership programs. Rapid learning and adaptation will help EPA and its partners get better results faster.



Questions?