Tracking and Reporting Program Results with EPA’s New Local Climate Action Framework

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November 18, 2014
Coming in 2015: EPA’s Local Climate Action Framework

- **NEW** step-by-step guidance and resources for local governments for planning, implementing, and evaluating climate, energy, and sustainability projects and programs

- Built on extensive experience, longstanding relationships, and direct input from local practitioners
Coming in 2015: EPA’s Local Climate Action Framework

- Six parts, each with key steps, checklists, cases studies, informational resources, data sources, tools, and templates
  - **Develop GHG Inventory:** Quantify greenhouse gas emissions from local government operations or your community as a whole, including establishing a baseline inventory
  - **Set Goals & Select Actions:** Articulate goals for your project or program and identify, analyze, and select actions that promote those goals
  - **Obtain Resources:** Identify and pursue the resources needed to support your project or program, including funding, staff time, technical expertise, and buy-in
  - **Take Action:** Design and implement actions
    - Promote green government operations
    - Adopt a policy
    - Engage the community
  - **Track & Report:** Track, analyze, and report on performance indicators to assess and share project progress and success
  - **Reach Out & Communicate:** Communicate with and engage partners and the community before, during, and after project implementation
Tracking and Reporting Program Results

- **Tracking** is a continual process of data collection and measurement that helps:
  - Assess program performance and success
  - Identify specific areas for improvement or expansion
  - Monitor local trends
  - Make informed decisions about future policies, goals, and actions

- **Reporting** is the evaluation and communication of program results that can:
  - Generate interest in a project
  - Promote accountability
  - Improve project management
  - Demonstrate progress
  - Attract political and financial support
Wait, why are we talking about results first? We are just getting started!

The early bird gets the worm
- All too often programs are not assessed until implementation is complete. Data may not be available! There is no time for course corrections!

Develop a plan for tracking and reporting from the beginning
- Early planning enables a more complete understanding of your program’s intended impact and ensures systems are in place to collect data throughout the implementation process.
- If established early, tracking and reporting can be incorporated into the budget, schedule, and resource needs.
Key Steps

- Identify Performance Indicators
- Set Baseline Year
- Define Targets
- Develop Plan
- Collect Data
- Analyze Data & Evaluate Impacts
- Report and Adjust

**Tracking and Reporting is a Continual Process of Measuring, Learning, and Improving**
Step 1. Identify Performance Indicators

- Indicator: measurable characteristic of a project that can be objectively evaluated over time

- Logic Model:

For detailed guidance on how to develop a logic model, visit EPA’s Online Logic Model Course at: epa.gov/evaluate/lm-training
Step 1. Identify Performance Indicators

Brainstorm

Assess

Select

Develop a thorough, succinct list of indicators that will provide enough information to assess progress toward goals and that can be tracked with available resources.
### Example Indicator Selection Process

- **Program:** increase public transportation use as a way to decrease trips in single-occupancy vehicles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Accessible</th>
<th>Include</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public awareness of transportation options</td>
<td>Yes – one of the project goals is to increase the accessibility of alternate modes of transportation</td>
<td>Yes – qualitative measurement that can be surveyed</td>
<td>Yes – the project could develop a survey to ask residents about their awareness of transportation options</td>
<td>Maybe – the metric is relevant, measurable, and accessible. Consider inclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridership number of bus rides per day originating in a specific neighborhood</td>
<td>Yes – the change in the number of bus rides is one of the project goals</td>
<td>Yes – riders pay a fare when they board the bus, it is possible to count the number of rides</td>
<td>Maybe – the department of transportation currently only collects data on the number of rides per bus per day, but they are in the process of exploring bus-stop data collection opportunities</td>
<td>Maybe – if there is an easy method for accessing the data – contact the bus operating agency to see if it is possible to access or deduce this information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in private vehicles</td>
<td>Yes – one of the project goals is to decrease car trips</td>
<td>Maybe – this is a frequently used metric, but it is difficult to measure on the neighborhood level</td>
<td>No – collecting this data within the specific neighborhood would be overly burdensome for this project</td>
<td>No – without an easy way to access the data, this is not a feasible metric for this project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 2. Set Baseline Year  
Step 3. Define Targets

- Is there a significant year that would be logical for the baseline year, such as the start of a program?
- Are data available for that year?
- Is the year “typical” for your community?

- 2005: Baseline year: data used as point of comparison
- 2020: Interim target: checkpoint to assess progress
- 2035: Long-term target: ultimate goal
Example Outcome Indicators and Targets

- **City of Seattle Climate Action Plan:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTOR</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPORTATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger</td>
<td>Passenger Vehicle Emissions (Million Tonnes CO₂e)</td>
<td>82% Reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMTs)</td>
<td>20% Reduction by 2030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GHG Emissions Intensity of Travel (GHG Emissions per mile of Seattle Vehicles)</td>
<td>75% Reduction by 2030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode Share</td>
<td>Center City Commute Trip</td>
<td>Trend away from single occupant vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Trips in Seattle</td>
<td>Trend away from single occupant vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>Ridership</td>
<td>Increase in transit mode share and ridership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Increase in transit service hours and service levels on Seattle’s Frequent Transit Service network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling</td>
<td>Ridership</td>
<td>Triple the amount of bicycling from 2007 levels by 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Crash Data</td>
<td>Eliminate serious injuries and fatalities on Seattle streets by 2030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 4. Develop Plan
Step 5. Collect Data

- Develop a consistent, efficient, and reliable process for data collection and management
  - Who will be responsible for collecting data for each indicator? Managing the dataset? Creating and submitting reports?
  - What protocols, templates, sources, units etc. should be used to collect data?
  - Where (i.e., in what database or program) will data be stored and maintained?
  - When will data will be collected, analyzed, and reported?
  - How will data integrity and security be ensured?

- Allocate sufficient resources (e.g., time, staff) for each activity associated with tracking and reporting
  - Minimize the burden of data requests by integrating with existing processes and procedures

- Implement and repeat!
  - Start by collecting data for the baseline year
  - Commence regular data collection based on the tracking plan
Step 6. Analyze Data & Evaluate Impacts

- **Evaluation** is the process of analyzing changes in your indicators to determine which elements of your program are effective and which have room for improvement
  - Process evaluation: assess if the program is being implemented as planned
  - Impact evaluation: assess whether or not the program is having the desired effect

- **Key Questions:**
  - How much progress has been made between the baseline data and the post-implementation data?
  - Are the results on track for achieving interim and long-term targets?
  - What other factors or programs could have influenced the change between the baseline and post-implementation year?
  - Do the data support your narrative?

- Document evaluation process and assumptions
- Based on findings, revisit earlier steps
Step 7. Report & Adjust

- Use the findings from your evaluation to inform stakeholders and improve program performance
  - Know your audiences, their informational needs, and the best ways and times to reach them
  - Identify program strengths, weaknesses and opportunities
  - Adjust program activities and continue to track results to see the impact of the adjustments
  - Consider how program results can be used to inform budget and strategic planning processes

- Continue the process of collecting and evaluating data, reporting progress, and making program refinements for (at least) the duration of your program
Putting It All Together

- Develop GHG Inventory
- Set Goals & Select Actions
- Obtain Resources
- Take Action
- Reach Out & Communicate
- Track & Report
Appendices

- Appendix A: Data Sources & Protocols
- Appendix B: Tools & Templates
- Appendix C: Selected Case Studies
Questions?

Sign up for our State and Local Climate and Energy Newsletter to receive updates on this and other resources: epa.gov/statelocalclimate/newsletters
Contact Information

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Tracking and Reporting

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