U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Open Government Plan 1.0

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

April 7, 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 1.0. 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 ~~O~~neEPA" 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 1.0, 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 400 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.

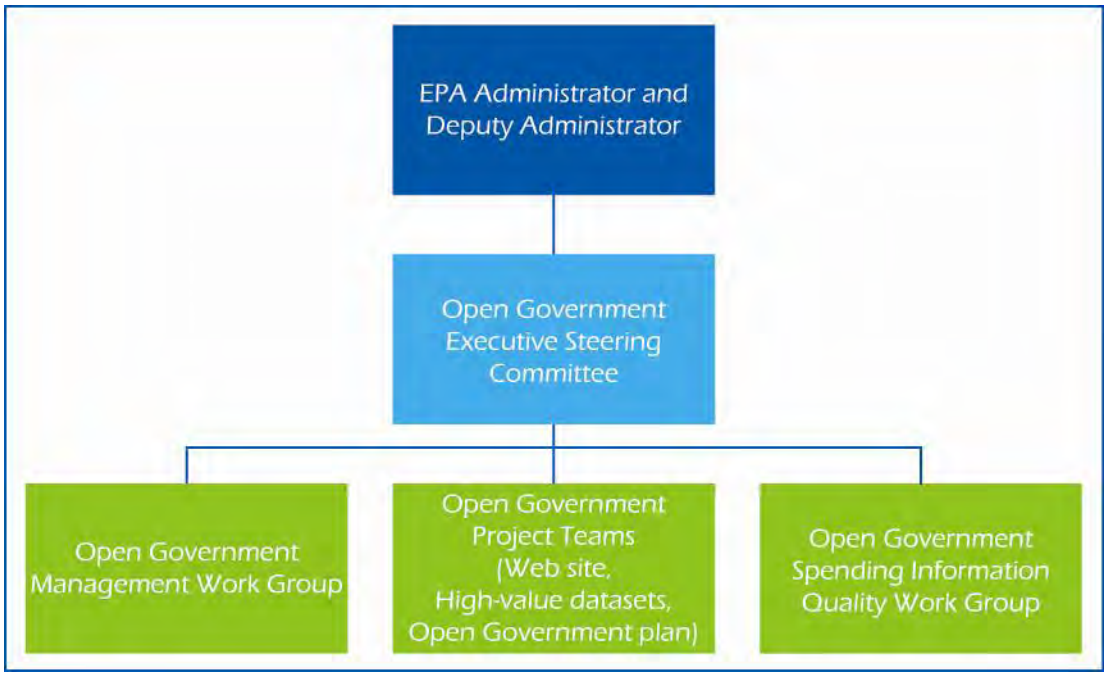


Figure I-1: EPA's Open Government Governance

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.

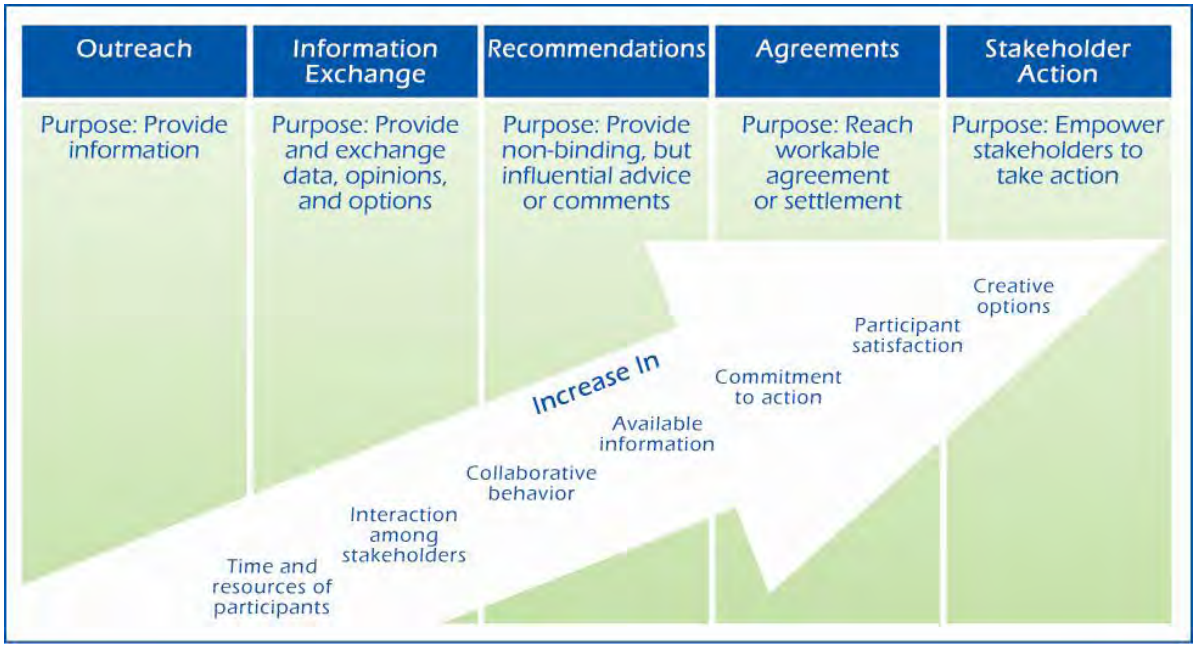


Figure I-2: EPA Public Involvement Spectrum

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.

In response to suggestions the Agency received, EPA will continue to operate the OpenEPA tool as a principal point for the public to offer suggestions and continue the dialogue on this plan. The public is welcome to submit ideas and feedback on ongoing efforts described in the plan, and we will explain how the Agency will consider input. We will also share how the public can follow our progress and identify opportunities for participation.

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 ~~at~~tempt 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 ~~u~~phold 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 400 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.

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.

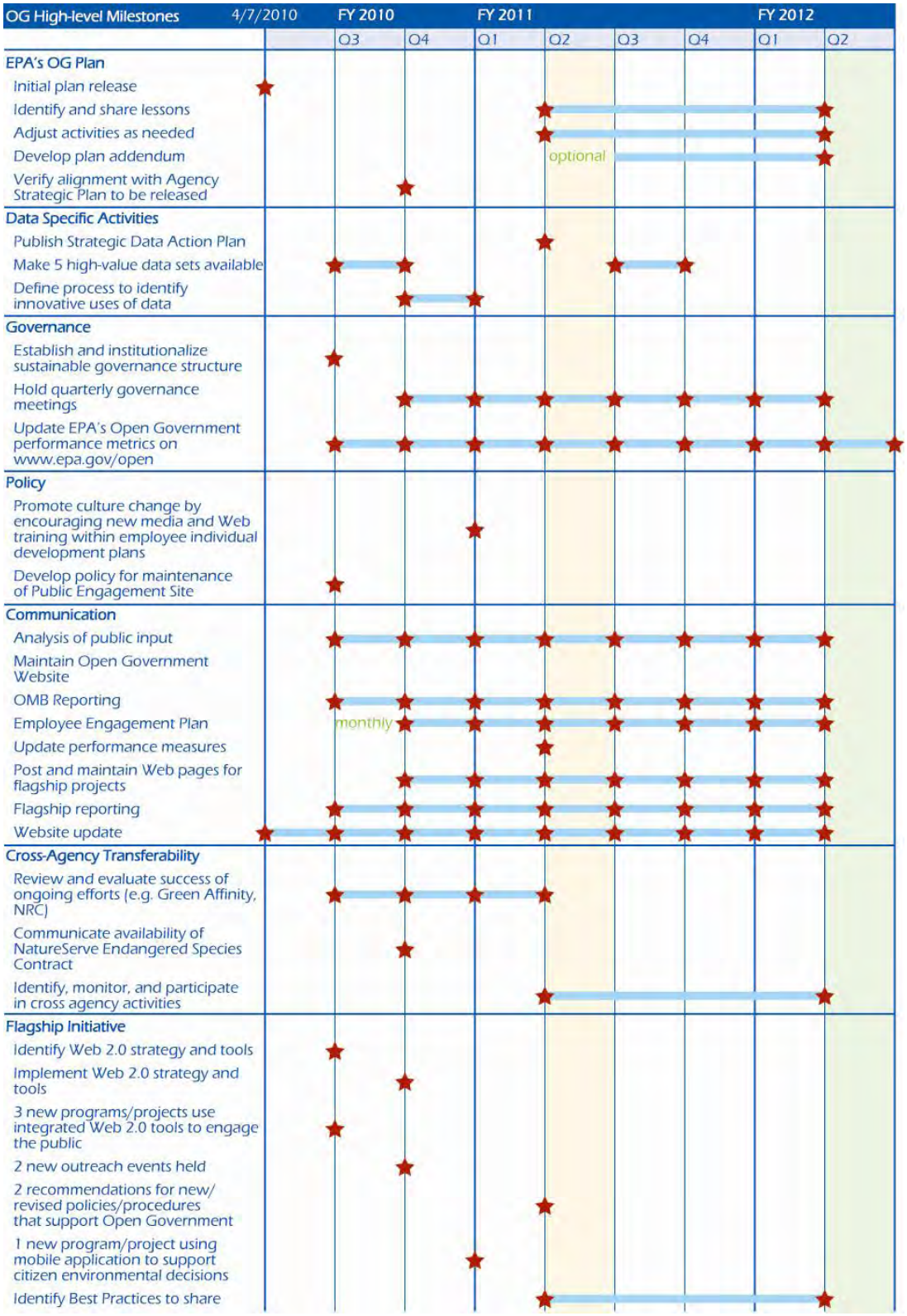
EPA will continue to operate the OpenEPA Web site to receive public input. We have taken a ~~-lite~~" moderation role in operating this site during development of this plan. Upon publication of this plan, we will determine how our moderation role will evolve to make better use of this tool as a source 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.