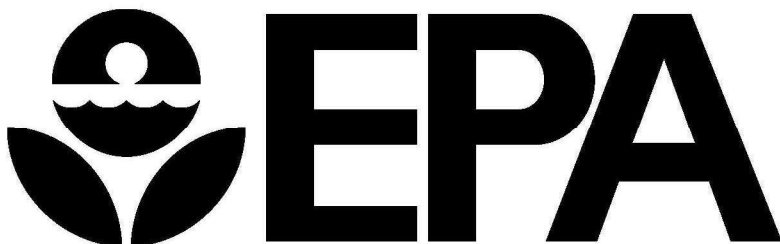


**EVIDENCE ACT
LEARNING AGENDA**

GRANT COMMITMENTS MET

**YEAR 3/YEAR 4 FINAL REPORT
OCTOBER 2024**



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INTRODUCTION, PRIORITY QUESTIONS, AND APPROACH

In September 2020, EPA developed an Agency [Learning Agenda](#) that identified three learning priorities. EPA later added a fourth learning priority in September 2021. The Agency Learning Agenda stems from the [Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act](#) of 2018 (Evidence Act), which provides a framework to promote a culture of evaluation, continuous learning, and decision making using the best available evidence. As part of the Agency Learning Agenda, EPA has initiated efforts to:

- (1) Develop priority questions.
- (2) Develop capacity to undertake new evidence-building activities.
- (3) Develop an Agency Learning Agenda to inform the FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan.

Grant Commitments Met is one of the learning priorities in the Agency Learning Agenda. Every year, EPA awards over \$4 billion in grants and other assistance agreements to grant programs and organizations nationwide. Supplemental Agency funding provided by the [American Rescue Plan](#),¹ [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#),² and [Inflation Reduction Act](#)³ to fund grants and other assistance agreements underscores the importance of this Learning Priority.⁴ EPA helps to protect human health and the environment through these grants and the work of its grantees. The management of the individual grant awards are dispersed amongst staff throughout headquarters (HQ) and EPA's ten regional offices, which creates challenges in tracking results at the national level.

EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations (OCIR), with support from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), established the Grant Commitments Met Workgroup to address the priority questions in the Agency Learning Agenda. Subsequently, the Workgroup engaged Industrial Economics, Inc. (IEc) to provide support, including workplan development, data collection, and report and presentation production.

The initial phase (Year 1) of work addressed the question: **How do EPA's existing grant award and reporting systems identify and track grant commitments?** The Workgroup organized an extensive survey that gathered 462 responses from various grant programs across the Agency. The Workgroup analyzed survey responses to identify what data (e.g., outputs and outcomes) these programs collect, as well as how to report on grant activities across EPA. Year 1 also included a request for National Program Managers (NPMs) to provide background information on EPA's grant programs. The analysis of the

¹ H.R.1319 - American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

² <https://www.epa.gov/infrastructure>, accessed August 5, 2024.

³ <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act>, accessed August 5, 2024.

⁴ The American Rescue Plan, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and Inflation Reduction Act provides around \$100 million, \$60.89 billion, and \$350 million in additional EPA funding, respectively, for a total of around \$61.34 billion in additional funding. See <https://www.epa.gov/arp/about-epas-american-rescue-plan-arp-funding>, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-11/BIL_Anniversary_Report_11142022.pdf, and <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/inflation-reduction-act-programs-fight-climate-change-reducing-embodied>, accessed June 27, 2024.

survey data and documents provided by the NPMs was compiled and made available to the Agency via a Year 1 report. The report was made public in September 2022 and can be viewed [here](#).

Year 2 of the project addressed the following question: **What EPA practices and tools (1) effectively track grantee progress towards meeting workplan grant commitments including outputs and outcomes, and/or (2) support communication of national program level outputs and outcomes?** Year 2 data efforts included 31 in-depth interviews and additional analysis of data previously collected in the Year 1 survey. The Workgroup selected grant programs with pre-defined considerations for individual or small group interviews with grant Project Officers (POs) or NPMs. Overall, the interview responses provided comprehensive and detailed answers to the priority questions, building on what was learned from the Year 1 survey and NPM information request. The Year 2 report was made available to the public in April 2023 and can be viewed [here](#).

Priority Question for Years 3/4

The Workgroup's activities for *Years 3 and 4* (as activities were not able to be completed in Year 3 and thus extended through Year 4) were guided by the overarching EPA Learning Agenda question: **How can EPA assess the extent to which commitments achieve the intended environmental and/or human health results and identify possible next steps in establishing a comprehensive grant reporting system?** For Years 3 and 4, the Workgroup developed a priority question that, once answered, will better prepare EPA to address the overarching Learning Agenda question. The Years 3 and 4 priority question is: **What could EPA do to prepare grant programs to report on consistently defined outputs and outcomes?** The Workgroup chose the priority question to support EPA's ability to collectively tell the story of what EPA's grant funding is achieving and to help inform Enterprise-wide grant reporting. The Years 3 and 4 priority question focused on consistently defined outputs and outcomes as a way to facilitate: a general understanding across EPA grant programs and grantees; improved reporting consistency; and, the ability to aggregate results across grant programs.

This report addresses the priority question and related sub-questions:

1. **What could EPA do to prepare grant programs to report on consistently defined outputs and outcomes?**
 - a. What are potential common definitions and standard approaches for collecting output data?
 - b. What are potential behavioral change outcomes and standard approaches for collecting these outcomes that EPA should aim to collectively measure?
 - c. What are potential environmental and human health outcomes and standard approaches for collecting these outcomes that EPA should aim to collectively measure?
 - d. What potential changes could be made to grant programs' data collection efforts to help EPA determine impacts related to equity and climate?

Please note that, in order to cohesively answer the Years 3 and 4 priority question and related sub-questions, the work completed for 'Year 3' took place across calendar years 2023 and 2024. This is why this report refers to 'Year 3' work as 'Years 3 and 4.'

Approach for Years 3/4: Common Definitions and Pilot Study

The Workgroup's efforts to address the priority question for Years 3 and 4 included two major activities:

- First, the Workgroup identified categories of frequently reported outputs and outcomes and developed common definitions of specific outputs and outcomes that EPA could adopt to support consistent reporting at the Enterprise level. The Workgroup then conducted extensive engagement with an agency-wide Advisory Group and with EPA subject matter experts with representatives from each EPA region and NPM and worked to refine the common definitions based on their feedback.⁵ This resulted in a final set of common definitions (September 2023) to be piloted with individual EPA grant programs. Please note that, for the purposes of products issued based on this report, the common definitions include information about output and outcome categories that are regularly utilized at EPA.
- Second, the Workgroup piloted the common outputs/outcomes and definitions with four EPA grant programs: [Chesapeake Bay Program \(CBP\)](#), [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund \(GGRF\)](#), [Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program \(EJCPS\)](#), and the [Promoting Readiness and Enhancing Proficiency to Advance Reporting and Data \(PREPARED\) Program](#). Starting in October 2023, the Workgroup socialized the common definitions, identified those deemed relevant to each program, aided these programs throughout the pilot, and conducted close-out interviews with each program in April and May 2024. The interviewers asked each program's EPA pilot contact(s) about the following: their reactions to and experiences with the common definitions; any changes the program made to its data collection approaches; and, any reactions received from EPA Project Officers and/or grantees about the definitions.⁶

Each of these activities are explained in further detail below.

⁵ These activities addressed the first part of sub-questions a, b, and c, specifically: a) potential common definitions for collecting output data, b) potential list of behavioral change outcomes, and c) potential list of environmental and human health outcomes. The Workgroup's primary focus was the potential common definitions for collecting output data. A shorter list of outcomes, including behavioral outcomes and environmental/human health outcomes, was also developed and shared with the Advisory Group under this project.

⁶ These activities addressed the second part of sub-questions a, b, and c, specifically, approaches for collecting output and outcome data that could potentially be standardized. The common definitions for each measure would also help to standardize the collection and reporting of output and outcome data. The pilot study with the four programs also addressed sub-question d) potential changes that could be made to grant programs' data collection efforts. These reporting efforts include (but are not limited to) efforts to help EPA determine impacts related to equity and climate.

Developing the Common Definitions

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-11⁷ defines an “output” as a quantity of products or services delivered by a program.⁸ An output is the result of an activity or effort that grant recipients will produce throughout the grant period. Outputs must be measurable during the grant period. An “outcome” is the level of performance or achievement that occurred because of the activity or services provided by the grantee.⁹ Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, and outcomes may or may not be achievable or measurable during the period of the grant.

The Workgroup developed the common definitions in phases. First, the Workgroup conducted a deep dive into information previously collected through the Year 1 survey and the Year 2 interviews, as well as guidance documents previously provided by NPMs in Years 1 and 2. The Workgroup also reviewed the definitions in the [FY 2022 - 2026 EPA Strategic Plan](#) and subsequently developed a draft list of common definitions.

Second, the Workgroup convened an EPA Advisory Group – comprised of representatives from each EPA region and NPM – to provide feedback on the proposed outputs, outcomes, and definitions. The Workgroup made a series of presentations in the summer of 2023 to socialize the draft common definitions and to solicit feedback from across the Agency via Advisory Group representatives. In many cases, Advisory Group members shared the draft outputs/outcomes and definitions with subject matter experts in their respective offices and regions. In total, 14 organizations provided 258 comments, consisting of 182 comments on the common output definitions, 30 comments on the common outcome definitions, and 46 general comments. The Workgroup reviewed and addressed each comment before finalizing the list of measures for use in the pilot.

Collective feedback areas included:

- **Applicability of the common definitions:** Initially, several Advisory Group members raised concerns about the scope of the common definitions, noting that 1) some “common” definitions do not apply to all grant programs versus all non-grant programs, and 2) individual non-grant programs/grant programs have existing definitions that are critical to their programs but are not reflected in the common definitions. Based on this feedback, the Workgroup clarified that the common definitions focus on those that are relevant across multiple programs. At the same time, not every definition is relevant to every grant program. A major focus of the pilot was identifying

⁷ Circular A-11 can be found [here](#). Please note that the latest guidance (currently labeled as Circular A-11) changes annually with updates, though the link address remains unchanged over time.

⁸ An *output* is “a type of measure, specifically the tabulation, calculation, or recording of activity or effort, usually expressed quantitatively. Outputs describe the level of product or activity that will be provided over a period of time.” Office of Management and Budget, Circular No. A-11, July 2024.

⁹ An *outcome* is “a type of measure that indicates progress against achieving the intended result of a program.” Ibid.

which were relevant to each of the four programs, as well as noting any alternative definitions that programs in the pilot may need to track as well.

- **Equity/environmental justice (EJ):** Advisory Group members suggested looking at the output definitions through an equity/EJ lens. While only a subset of the common output definitions specifically addresses communities facing equity/EJ concerns, many of the other common output definitions could be relevant to communities handling these concerns, depending on the location where services are provided. For example, ‘outreach and engagement’ efforts could be consciously directed toward communities that are facing these concerns, even if the topic of the outreach and engagement is not explicitly focused on “equity/EJ.” Tracking the location where services are provided would allow EPA to cross-reference this geographic information with a list (or geospatial data file) of communities responding to these concerns. Similarly, EPA could use tools such as the Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJScreen) and/or the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) to identify underserved locations. Significant efforts are currently underway within EPA and beyond to better define communities facing such concerns and to count the benefits occurring within these communities. As the efforts and guidance evolve, relevant place-based definitions can be updated as needed.
- **Climate change:** Feedback on common definitions included measures such as the number of EPA community grants that support science to address climate change concerns, and the incorporation of climate considerations into other common definitions (e.g., ‘outreach and engagement’ to understand climate change impacts). The Workgroup incorporated some elements of both approaches into the revised list of output definitions. As with EJ/equity, a subset of the common definitions specifically addresses climate change, while others may be relevant to climate change but are dependent on an activity’s (e.g., training on climate change topics) main focus.
- **Double counting:** Several commenters expressed concerns about the potential for double counting in grant reporting. In response, the Workgroup refined the definitions for specific categories – for example, it is noted that “training” refers to hosting classes; “technical assistance” refers to direct one-on-one support; and “outreach and engagement” refers to activities or materials with the purpose of informing or educating the public, encouraging members of the public to take specific actions, or receiving public input. Historically, the terms “training,” “technical assistance,” and “outreach and engagement” have been used interchangeably across the Agency. Well-defined common definitions should help EPA avoid double counting when communicating across grant programs by ensuring that each output is only counted in its appropriate category, which is based on the common definitions. For example, a hosted class is counted once under “training,” rather than being counted multiple times as “training,” “technical assistance,” and “outreach and engagement.”
- **Reporting burden:** Many commenters raised concerns about reporting burden on grantees and EPA Project Officers. The Workgroup recognizes the need to minimize reporting burden and was attentive to this issue throughout the pilot. Regarding grantees, the pilot confirmed that using EPA’s existing databases and algorithms can reduce reporting burden. For example, grantees can be asked to report on the location where services are provided, and then EPA can cross-reference the geographic information with a list, geospatial data file, or screening tool (e.g., EJScreen or

CEJST), thereby limiting the effort required of grantees to define EJ communities themselves. Grantees can also be asked to provide basic input data on their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, so EPA can calculate GHG emission reductions using the Agency's GHG calculator tools. Financial and administrative data on EPA grants may already be available in EPA's existing data systems, making it unnecessary to request this information from grantees. The Workgroup also considered the potential burden on EPA staff. EPA recognizes potential setup costs (e.g., time) associated with adopting the common definitions. However, EPA expects common definitions to lead to streamlined consolidation and interpretation of data, as well as simplified reporting for grantees.

The final iteration of pilot definitions incorporated the feedback collected from both Advisory Group members and from subject in matter experts (SMEs) NPMs and grant programs. SMEs hailed from OCFO, Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights (OEJECR), the Brownfields Technical Assistance program, the Office of Water's Environmental Finance Center (OW-EFC), the Office of Policy (OP), and the National Center for Environmental Economics (NCEE). **Appendix A** Sections A-1 and A-2 present the full list of common definitions for outputs and outcomes, respectively.

After incorporating the Advisory Group's feedback, the Workgroup piloted the common definitions with the four grant programs that volunteered for the pilot: CBP, GGRF, EJCPs, and PREPARED.

Piloting the Common Definitions

The pilot study aimed to test the application of the common definitions with the four participating grant programs listed above.

As a first step in the pilot study, the Workgroup conducted background research on each program to better understand each program's goals, activities, and measurement priorities. The Workgroup met with managers and staff from each program to learn more from those most directly involved in implementation, to establish the primary points of contact for the pilot, and to build rapport with program staff. Background research included review of any existing program logic models, guidance documents, and reports, with an emphasis on gathering input on the definitions that the program was currently tracking and/or intended to track.

The Workgroup developed a tailored pilot plan including proposed common definitions for each program to pilot. This included a crosswalk between the existing program definitions and the common definitions. For established programs (CBP and EJCPs), the Workgroup reviewed data that grantees reported in previous funding cycles to understand the types of information collected and the extent to which the reported data fit, or could feasibility fit, the common definitions. Importantly, the Workgroup did not expect that all "common definitions" would be relevant to every program and anticipated that each program would track additional definitions as well. This was expected given the diversity of grant programs and activities across the Agency.

The pilot focused on areas where a program's definitions overlapped (or could potentially overlap) with common ones. The Workgroup started by identifying those deemed relevant to each program and emphasizing the use of the common definitions. The use of common definitions is important to ensure consistency in reporting within and across grant programs. The ability to report consistently on common

definitions ensures data quality while allowing data to be aggregated at both the individual grant program level as well as across multiple grant programs.

The Workgroup met with each program to provide recommendations on how and where each program could apply measures using the common definitions. This stage of the process typically involved considerable discussion with programs to understand how the common definitions relate to existing definitions and the extent to which grantees would be able to report on them. In general (as explained in further detail below), the programs adopted the recommended common definitions and subsequent measures. In cases where the programs were unwilling or unable to adopt the common definitions, the Workgroup explored the reasons – e.g., perceived lack of relevance to the program, high reporting burden, etc. In many cases, concerns about lack of relevance were addressed through discussions with program staff about connections between their grantees’ activities and the measures associated with common definitions. Concerns about reporting burden did not usually stop programs from adopting common definitions, but it is possible that concerns might still emerge as grantees begin to report to EPA using them. One program, CBP, did not include the common definitions in their updated program guidance this year, but did begin to adopt the related measures. The CBP grant program staff indicated they preferred a more gradual rollout of the common definitions and/or related measures because this would be a significant change for their grantees.

Another element of the pilot was the provision of valuable support to the participating grant programs; assistance was tailored to each program’s specific needs. The Workgroup provided GHG advice to the GGRF; assistance to map the common definitions to OEJECCR’s new Salesforce database for EJCPs; and materials to support the CBP’s updated guidance document. The Workgroup coordinated with PREPARED – a new EPA grant program – to adopt the common definitions into their Information Collections Request (ICR) and associated materials.

The pilot ran from October 2023 through March 2024, with the goal of aligning the pilot activities with each program’s grant cycle as much as possible, including milestones such as updates to program grant guidance documents, ICRs, and award selection. The Workgroup met with each program throughout the pilot to consult on reporting templates and approaches, as well as any questions or issues that arose. Please note that, for the purposes of products issued based on this report, the common definitions include information about output and outcome categories that are frequently utilized at EPA.

In April and May 2024, the Workgroup conducted close-out interviews with the pilot contacts for each program. During the interviews, the Workgroup asked EPA staff about their reactions to and experiences with the common definitions, as well as any changes the program made (or plans to make) to its data collection approaches. The interviews were semi-structured and followed a standard interview guide (**Appendix B**), tailored as appropriate for each program.

RESULTS OF THE PILOT

This section presents the results of the pilot study.

Adoption of the Common Definitions

Outputs

This section summarizes the extent to which each program in the pilot adopted the common definitions and related output measures that the Workgroup recommended, and why or why not.

The tables in this section are rolled up at the category level (e.g., ‘agreements and partnerships,’ ‘funding and income,’ etc.). Each category contains multiple measures. The tables reflect an assessment across the relevant measures within each category. (Appendix A provides further detail, at the individual measure level, about which measures were completely accepted, partly accepted, not accepted, or not relevant to each program.)

An “x” in a white cell indicates that the program adopted all recommended measures in that category. A “~” in a yellow cell indicates the partial acceptance of measures within the category. Measures that were accepted but are not necessary to collect from grantees because EPA already has (or could have) the information are indicated by a “+” in a green cell.

The column for CBP is marked with asterisks in the table because they accepted the output categories but did not disseminate the common definitions and/or related measures to grantees. The update to CBP’s annual guidance includes output categories without specific definitions or their associated measures. The output categories are included in a supplemental guidance document that the Workgroup developed, but CBP has not disseminated the supplemental guidance to its grantees. As a result, even if grantees report on an output category, they may not report outputs in a way that allows for consistent data aggregation across grantees.

Output Categories	CBP	GGRF		PREPARED	EJCPS
Agreements and Partnerships	x*	~			
Funding and Income		~ ¹	+ ²		
Inspections					x
Non-enforcement Scientific Testing	x*				x
Leveraged External Resources	~*	~			
Outreach and Engagement	x*			x	~ ³
Strategies, Plans, and Policies	x*				
Technical Assistance	x*	~		x	x
Training				x	x
Climate	x*				
Equitable Grant Implementation		~ ⁴		x	+
Implemented Projects		~ ⁵		x	

¹ GGRF hesitated to fully accept two output categories.

² GGRF can track three of the output categories without asking grantees.

³ EJCPS accepted some output categories and rejected some.

⁴ GGRF accepted one category and edited another.

⁵ GGRF raised questions about this category and said they could track it internally.

Several categories of outputs were adopted across the four programs. All four programs partially or fully adopted the common definitions and/or related measures for ‘technical assistance,’ ‘equitable grant implementation,’ and ‘outreach and engagement.’ As expected, none of the four programs in the pilot adopted all categories developed by the Workgroup. In some cases, certain categories were not applicable to a particular program and were therefore not recommended for adoption. In other cases, programs determined that the proposed categories were either not relevant to them or would be too challenging to implement. Only two programs declined to accept any recommended categories in their entirety. EJCPs declined three output categories – ‘agreements and partnerships,’ ‘climate,’ and ‘implemented projects’ – and some output categories within the ‘funding and income’ and the ‘outreach and engagement’ categories. PREPARED declined ‘agreements and partnerships.’

The programs in the pilot partly accepted the common definitions and/or associated measures in seven of the 12 output categories, as designated in yellow cells with the “~” symbol in the table. Partial acceptance for a category includes questioning some of the recommended measures, editing measures to better reflect program activities, or accepting only some measures within a given category. For example, EJCPs plans to capture four of the seven measures associated with the ‘outreach and engagement’ category. In other cases, programs edited the categories to align with specific grant activities. For example, when measuring the number of agreements by partner type (a measure for the ‘agreements and partnerships’ category), GGRF plans to interpret ‘partner type’ as “coalition members,” which is more aligned with the program’s activities (Appendix A).

When programs edited the common definitions and/or related measures, they did so to reflect program-specific nuances, but their edits did not alter the meaning of the measures. For example, GGRF is using its own, program-specific definition of Low-Income Disadvantaged Communities (LIDACs), which is defined using specific CEJST and EJScreen criteria.¹⁰ As another example, PREPARED expanded the category for measures that relate to climate change community grants, to also include SRF grants, because SRF is providing significant funding for these grants. While these types of changes would require an asterisk or caveat for reporting, they do not seem so significant as to preclude the aggregation of results across programs.

Outcomes

The Workgroup followed the same process for outcomes as for outputs; the Workgroup compared existing program outcomes with the common definitions and/or related measures, reviewed suggested overlap with program staff, and collated outcomes that were accepted. The following table indicates the relevant outcomes adopted by each program. An “x” in a white cell indicates full adoption of the

¹⁰ During their close-out interview for the pilot, GGRF identified other metrics that would require tailoring of common definitions: **total funding amount unspent at end of project period** (financial audit data would likely track this; closest field in GGRF’s grantee database is unpaid principal on a loan); **total amount of program income returned by grantee or sub-grantees (e.g., repayment of loans/interest from revolving funds)** (not currently asking for the amount, but asking in a yes/no field); and **number of new research projects, support groups, EJ collaborative partnerships, or enforcement committees established in underserved communities by grantees/ grant partners.**

recommended category. Yellow cells with a “~” symbol indicate the category was partially accepted. The reasons for partial acceptance are noted below the table. Appendix A provides the complete list of outcome categories and those adopted by each program.

Strategic Plan Goal(s)/Strategy(ies)	CBP	GGRF	PREPARED	EJCPS
Goal 5 Objective 5.2: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities: Restored Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems	x			
Goal 1, Obj. 1.1: Tackle the Climate Crisis, Emissions that Cause Climate Change Goal 6: Safeguard and Revitalize Communities Goal 7: Ensure Safety of Chemicals for People and the Environment		x		
Goal 1, Obj. 1.2: Tackle the Climate Crisis, Climate Resiliency and Adaptation	~ ¹	x		~ ²
Goal 2: Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights		x		

¹ CBP accepted this outcome as “secondary” but did not incorporate it into the program’s updated grant guidance document or the supplemental guidance document.

² EJCPS accepted some but not all potential or existing common definitions and/or related measures associated with this outcome.

Ultimately, the programs in the pilot adopted fewer outcomes compared to outputs. There were fewer outcomes to start with, and many of them were not relevant to the four programs in the pilot. Many outcomes seemed thematically relevant at first glance, but some program activities did not align with the outcomes. Additionally, the programs focused on outputs rather than outcomes in interviews as they conceptualized data aggregation efforts. The programs chose to focus on outputs rather than outcomes because outputs are more relevant to the current stage of each pilot program’s work; the outcomes could be considered more relevant to the closeout of these programs, whereas the outputs are associated with the onset of programmatic activity. The most adopted outcome in the pilot was Goal 1, Objective 1.2: Tackle the Climate Crisis, Climate Resiliency and Adaptation, which includes a broad list of “actions taken to tackle the climate crisis and the results of those actions.” Three of the four programs in the pilot partially or fully accepted the proposed measures in this outcome category.

Summary of Common Definitions Adoption, by Program

Overall, the programs demonstrated that the common definitions and/or related measures can be applied across many different types of grant programs. Three programs (GGRF, EJCPS, and PREPARED) incorporated all or most of the common definitions and/or related measures that the Workgroup recommended for them. The fourth (CBP) incorporated the associated measures without the common definitions:

- **GGRF** incorporated most common definitions and/or associated measures suggested by the Workgroup, plus several additional measures based on GGRF’s own review of the complete list (Appendix A), into GGRF’s new transaction-level database. Due to turnover on the GGRF measurement team, the individuals who reviewed the initial crosswalk were not the same individuals who ultimately decided which features to adopt. By the time the latter group joined the project, the program was farther along and had greater clarity on what they needed to track.

Also, the latter group included long-term EPA staff with a strong background in program design, measurement, and evaluation.

- **EJCPS** also adopted most common definitions and/or related measures that the Workgroup recommended for the program into their new Salesforce database. EJCPS's lead for the pilot developed and administered a survey to 88 Project Officers to fill out on behalf of their grantees. The survey asked Project Officers to indicate which to each of their grantees (based on the workplans, anticipated project activities, and conversations that the Project Officers have been having with their grantees since October 2023). Every common definition and/or measure that EJCPS intended to use applied to at least one grant. However, some common definitions and/or related measures came up infrequently in the survey, reflecting the focus of EJCPS grantees.¹¹
- **PREPARED** incorporated most of the recommended common definitions and/or associated measures into the program's quarterly progress reporting templates, which are part of PREPARED's ICR package. The first grantee progress reports with the common definitions and/or related measures were due at the end of August 2024. PREPARED will later evaluate how well this progress report works.
- **CBP** adopted all the output categories suggested by the Workgroup as "example outputs" in their annual update to the CBP guidance document. These were suggestions, not requirements, and they did not include the common definitions or the related measures. CBP's new cohort of grantees starting in FY 2025 will be onboarded with the new guidance document. The program intends to review the forthcoming grantee reporting data as it considers next steps for the common definitions and/or associated measures. This year CBP is socializing the measures, and next year they might implement them more formally. CBP also noted that the May 2024 guidance update is the last under the current ten-year Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (2014-2024); the guidance may be "overhauled" in FY 2025-26. The program further noted that the supplemental guidance document that the Workgroup prepared during the pilot (which includes the common definitions and/or related measures) could potentially be included in this FY 2025-2026 overhaul.

Feedback from Program Stakeholders

During the close-out interviews for the pilot, the Workgroup asked pilot contacts whether they had shared the common definitions and/or related measures with their stakeholders, and, if so, how their stakeholders reacted. At the time of the close-out interviews, the programs had received limited feedback, but they anticipated further questions or feedback might arise closer to the reporting deadline.

¹¹ Measures that came up infrequently in the Project Officer survey included **coastline protection** (does not apply to inner city grantees; not many EJCPS grantees have activities near coastlines, but the EJ G2G grant program may have more); **inspections and compliance** (the program is more focused on education and outreach); and **adaptation and resiliency in buildings**.

A summary of the feedback received by program follows:

- For **GGRF**, the common definition and/or related measure for GHG reductions is key. GGRF originally planned to ask grantees to calculate their GHG emissions themselves, based on the grantees' own methodologies, but selectees provided feedback that they would prefer EPA give them a methodology to use. As explained below, GGRF is considering ways to automate GHG calculations in their electronic reporting system, which would perform the calculations automatically based on input data provided by grantees. Additionally, GGRF held ICR consultations regarding the collection of measurement data from subrecipients. GGRF plans to change the frequency of reporting and simplify the narrative reporting based on feedback received from the selectees regarding the anticipated reporting burden. Regarding location measures, GGRF negotiated its own definition for Low Income Disadvantaged Communities (LIDACs) and has been advised by the J40 program that they will be allowed to use their own program-specific definition.
- **CBP** shared the output categories with states (via the updated grant guidance, which included the "example outputs"). They did not receive any feedback from the states. The program also shared information with its Project Officers during a recent training and did not receive any feedback.
- **EJCPS** shared the common definitions and/or related measures with its Project Officers. The Project Officers did not express any concerns, but EJCPS's main contact for the pilot suspects more concerns will surface when the common definitions and/or related measures are shared between the Project Officers and grantees.
- **PREPARED** had only shared the output categories internally within OCFO at the time of the close-out interview. However, an Evidence & Evaluation team member in OCFO drew from the common definitions and/or associated measures when drafting the rationale for the EJ Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (TCTACs) progress report questions. The Community Change grant reports will also leverage the common definitions and/or related measures. At the time of the close-out interviews, a PREPARED contact in OCFO planned to present the generic progress report and workplan to 200 Project Officers and planned to solicit feedback on the concept of common definitions and/or the related measures.

In general, the programs in the pilot responded favorably when asked if the common definitions and/or associated measures would be relevant to other EPA grant programs. EJCPS's lead for the pilot said that in general, she sees opportunities to use the common definitions and/or associated measures in other programs within OEJEER but is unsure whether other OEJEER grant programs are also working with their Project Officers to define which are relevant to each grantee. A staff member in OCFO who works with OEJEER's grant programs said the potential exists to incorporate the common definitions and/or related measures into EPA's equity and evidence-building work.

Takeaways from the Socialization/Adoption Process

The programs' acceptance of the benefits to utilizing this information increased as the pilot progressed, as programs increasingly saw the relevance of the common definitions and/or associated measures to their grantees and to their measurement needs. At the beginning of the pilot, programs struggled to conceptualize the relevance of the common definitions and/or related measures for their grantees. A

significant focus of the Workgroup's efforts early in the pilot was to socialize the purpose of the common definitions and/or associated measures and to work closely with programs to align their existing outputs/outcomes to the common definitions and/or related measures. The socialization process was gradual; it began with a high-level discussion between senior program managers; it was followed by a series of working meetings with each pilot program's technical points of contact.

A concern early on was that each grant program was too unique to apply such language. The Workgroup addressed this concern by developing a crosswalk table for each program and by mapping each program's specific outputs and outcomes to the common definitions and/or related measures. The programs reviewed their crosswalk tables and provided written feedback in addition to discussing feedback during biweekly meetings with the Workgroup. As the Workgroup worked with the pilot programs to refine each program's list of common definitions and/or measures, programs began to "see" their grant activities listed amongst selected measures.

Over time, the newer programs (PREPARED, GGRF), or the program(s) undergoing significant changes/expansion (EJCPS), were under pressure to develop or augment their approach. As the programs moved through the grant cycle from the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to selecting grantees and designing progress reports, incorporating the common definitions and/or related measures became timelier and more concrete. These programs came to appreciate how the project can assist them by providing vetted, standard definitions and related measures for use in their progress reporting templates and reporting systems. By the time the Workgroup conducted the close-out interviews six months into the pilot, PREPARED, GGRF, and EJCPS accepted many of the common definitions and/or associated measures that the Workgroup proposed for their respective programs, sometimes with light edits to the definitions, as noted above.

In summary, the programs in the pilot adopted many of the output categories and are them into their reporting process. The socialization and technical assistance provided under the pilot were important for obtaining buy-in from the programs and for helping programs incorporate the associated measures.

Data Collection and Reporting

Data Collection Approaches and Systems

All four programs, to varying degrees, are incorporating the work done through this project into the measurement processes they already have (CBP) or that the programs are currently developing (GGRF, EJCPS, PREPARED). GGRF and EJCPS are developing electronic databases to facilitate the reporting process, including the collection of common definitions data. When asked, GGRF and EJCPS saw an opportunity to aggregate key results across their program areas. PREPARED adopted the common definitions and/or related measures in its ICR materials, including its quarterly progress report, and is considering the use of a Salesforce database in the future. CBP incorporated the output measure categories in its updated guidance document, but program staff observed possible challenges with the overhaul of reporting practices; CBP's hesitation was regarding long-term grantees who are used to reporting without common definitions.

- **GGRF** is developing a transaction-level database (TAPS). This was initiated independently from the pilot, but the database will track many of the common definitions and/or related measures that GGRF adopted. TAPS will include closed-ended fields such as drop-down menus, numerical

fields (where respondents will enter a number, such as the number of solar panels installed), and narrative (open text) fields. Some measures could be aggregated across the three GGRF program areas, which are the National Clean Investment Fund, the Clean Communities Investment Accelerator, and the Solar for All program. Specifically, the volume of GHG emissions avoided or reduced, some community benefits, and some economic metrics could be aggregated given that grantees will be reporting across the same fields. In addition, GGRF is developing ways to collect GHG emission reduction estimates consistently; this will also allow GGRF's estimates to be added to the emissions reductions reported by other grant programs with similar objectives, such as the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program. GGRF aims to automate GHG calculations in TAPS based on input data provided by grantees, rather than asking grantees to perform their own calculations. This responds to requests from the grantees and should help to reduce grantees' reporting burden while ensuring consistency in GHG reporting across grantees. Beyond the measurement data in TAPS, grantees will also submit biannual narrative reports; GGRF plans to collect these reports in a machine-readable format.

- **EJCPS** is developing a Salesforce database. This was initiated outside of the pilot, but the program will use the database to collect data relating to the common definitions and/or related measures. Using questions about measures, the program will solicit numerical or dropdown responses. Based on the survey responses provided by the EJCPS Project Officers about their grantees' commitments, each grantee will see questions about the measures that are relevant to them. EJCPS has created a crosswalk between the survey results on grant commitments and Salesforce questions. Response types, dropdown values, and a narrative option are also being programmed in Salesforce. Grantees will have direct access to Salesforce via a grantee portal, which will be ready to use for the first reporting cycle. The Salesforce portal will guide grantees to enter their data, and it will allow the Project Officers to review reports and add comments for discussion with their grantees. During the close-out interview, EJCPS said that it should be an easy task to aggregate responses across grantees.
- **PREPARED:** Pending approval of PREPARED's ICR, the quarterly progress reports will ask about the common definitions and/or associated measures. PREPARED is also developing survey instruments and a focus group protocol to collect open-ended information from the PREPARED grantees and their beneficiaries. Additionally, awardees will develop training for their beneficiaries, and PREPARED is open to working with its grantees to incorporate common definitions and associated measures into this training. At the time of the close-out interview, PREPARED was still deciding how to collect grantee data, including whether to use Salesforce. In the future, if PREPARED pursues the use of Salesforce, the database may include fields for the common definitions in progress reports and might ask grantees to utilize a drop-down menu. PREPARED is interested in the extent to which the data can be aggregated across programs. During the close-out interview, a PREPARED contact said they are looking at OEJECR's Salesforce experience as a small-scale test of aggregation.
- **CBP** anticipates that the reporting process will remain similar to previous years, but CBP might issue updated reporting guidance going forward. Third- or fourth-year grantees would not be expected to revise their current measurement approach, but newer grantees would be able to integrate new measures/reporting guidance more easily. CBP has not decided yet whether an updated template with common definitions and/or related measures would apply only to new

grants (to be awarded in October 2024) or would also apply to ongoing grants. CBP is evaluating revising the templates after 2025. CBP presented Project Officers with the updated guidance, including the “example outputs,” at an annual Project Officer training in April 2024. There was a section in the training on grantee competition that referred to the common definitions (grantees are asked to provide outputs for projects when they apply). Therefore, common definitions were tangentially relevant to NOFO preparation and what the grant officers should be prepared to assess.

Reporting Timelines

Programs expect to receive the first set of reporting data from grantees using the common definitions and/or related measures within the next six months to one year. At the time of the close-out interviews:

- **GGRF** expected to receive data by January 31, 2025.
- **CBP** expected to issue its updated grant guidance in May 2024 and to receive the first set of grant reporting data under the new guidance in six months at the earliest, or by the next grant cycle in April 2025.
- **EJCPS** expected to begin receiving the first progress reports at the end of the summer or early fall 2024; most grantees will have one report by early 2025. Many grants will not be awarded until spring of 2025.
- **PREPARED** expected to receive reporting data from its first grantee in August 2024.

The pilot contacts indicated that the first round of grantee data that uses the common definitions will help inform what the programs do next. At the close-out interviews, most programs did not yet have specific plans for how they would review or analyze the data.

Benefits and Challenges

During the close-out interviews, program contacts described the benefits and challenges of adopting the common definitions. This section summarizes their feedback.

Benefits

The programs in the pilot have realized or anticipate realizing several benefits, including the following: a shared understanding across grantees, greater consistency in reporting, and the ability to aggregate results. As new programs, PREPARED and GGRF, in particular, found the common definitions and/or related measures useful. As a well-established program, CBP appreciated the intention of the common definitions and/or related measures and the reporting consistency they can provide, even though they did not integrate the definitions to the same extent as newer programs without existing definitions.

- **PREPARED** pilot contacts said, “It quickly became apparent how useful this project can be.” The common definitions saved the program the time and effort of developing their own. Also, the common definitions made it much easier helping to differentiate similar concepts (e.g., training vs. outreach vs. technical assistance). PREPARED appreciated the systematic approach to defining outputs and outcomes with granularity. The program hopes to use the common definitions and/or associated measures to “level the playing field” in terms of understanding

across grantees. All PREPARED grantees will provide common definitions data that will make it easier for EPA to interpret and aggregate grant activities. PREPARED is also interested in the extent to which data can be aggregated across programs.

- **GGRF** contacts commented on the high degree of alignment between the common definitions and GGRF's metrics. They observed that the common definitions are missing Davis-Bacon (labor) and Build America Buy America metrics, which GGRF might integrate into their system, but otherwise there is a lot of overlap between the common definitions and GGRF metrics. GGRF also suggested including metrics specific to IRA and BIL reporting and to make sure to align with J40 and equity reporting. The program expressed appreciation for the project taxonomy/metrics for calculating GHG emissions, which the Workgroup developed for GGRF as part of the pilot, noting this was very helpful to the program.
- **EJCPS** said that the common definitions will help show EJCPS how grantees operate, will help clarify future year requests for applications (RFA) focus areas, and will encourage proactivity in the EJ space. EJCPS wants to understand what EJ issues are urgent and consistently problematic, and the common definitions can help with that. The associated measures can help EJCPS to identify continuously problematic areas (e.g., water quality, air quality, heat index, lead service lines). This knowledge will keep EJCPS grants relevant to what is happening on the ground in grantee counties and regions. EJCPS also expects benefits from the consolidated reporting platform in Salesforce, an improvement over the manual reporting process.
- **CBP** indicated that one expected benefit from the common definitions is an improved understanding of outputs versus outcomes. Another expected benefit is greater consistency in reporting across states and grantees, which can help to reveal impacts. CBP indicated the common definitions were well-organized, aided in simplification, and will make reporting more unified.

Challenges

Only two of the four programs (CBP and EJCPS) commented on challenges during the close-out interview. Although neither program has encountered challenges yet, CBP anticipates potential challenges if they incorporate the common definitions and/or related measures in a more "formal" way in the future. EJCPS anticipates potential challenges with reporting burden for Project Officers and grantees.

- **CBP** noted that rolling out the common definitions and/or related measures more broadly could take more work to implement and there will likely be a need to assist long-term grant recipients as they work through the language, especially if said measures later become required as opposed to optional. They also noted potential challenges with incorporating the common definitions and/or related measures in a more formal way, depending on what goals or outcomes are created under the Chesapeake Bay's [Watershed Agreement Beyond 2025](#). Another potential challenge pertains to feedback-- CBP wondered who they could pass feedback to within EPA after the pilot.
- **EJCPS** has not encountered challenges with incorporating the common definitions and/or related measures. When the EJCPS lead sent the survey to the Project Officers, she expected to get a lot of questions, but did not. However, EJCPS anticipates questions will come up when grantees start reporting. The additional information requested for the common definitions and/or related

measures could confuse grantees and Project Officers and increase their collective reporting burden by making the progress report longer. This may be when the Project Officers and grantees ask for additional clarity. The EJCPS pilot lead planned to meet with Project Officers in August 2024, before the first reporting period in September, to remind the Project Officers about discussing grant commitments in monthly conversations with grantees. EJCPS wants to provide reporting guidance, but every project is different and not everyone can respond in the same manner. EJCPS wants to review what grantees report this year and gather examples from the reported data to guide future years of reporting.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the pilot study, this section provides the Workgroup's conclusions and recommendations in response to the Years 3 and 4 priority question: **What could EPA do to prepare grant programs to report on consistently defined outputs and outcomes?**

Conclusions

- **The common definitions and/or associated measures can prepare grant programs to report on consistently defined outputs and outcomes.** Common definitions and/or the associated measures, which the Workgroup developed and refined with extensive input from both the agency-wide Advisory Group and from subject matter experts, were adopted by the programs in the pilot. While the Workgroup did not expect every program to adopt every measure, many related measures were relevant to, and therefore adopted by, multiple programs. Notably, three of the four programs (EJCPS, GGRF, and PREPARED) adopted the associated measures along with the common definitions, which is necessary for consistent reporting. Program-specific changes to the common definitions and/or measures were generally minor and reflected program-level nuances. The changes would not prevent consistent reporting by grantees within the same grant program and should not preclude data aggregation across programs if appropriate context and caveats are provided. All four programs in the pilot identified improvements in consistency, the ability to aggregate results across grantees, and a shared understanding of the benefits to grantee's utilizing the common definitions and/or related measures.
- **Grant programs that are new or undergoing significant changes/expansion may find the common definitions and/or related measures particularly helpful and easy to adopt.** Newer programs participating in the pilot found the common definitions to be helpful in identifying and defining their metrics. For example, PREPARED adopted most of the common definitions and associated measures with very few refinements and observed how easy this made the process of selecting measures for the new grant program. GGRF, as a new program, alongside the significantly expanding EJCPS also adopted many of the common definitions and/or related measures; furthermore, there is a very high degree of overlap between each program's metrics and the common definitions and/or associated measures, even though programs are completely free to use program-specific measures if they wish to. The high degree of overlap supports the relevance and perceived feasibility of the common definitions and/or related measures. As a well-established grant program in the pilot, CBP sees value in the common definitions and/or associated measures but is taking a more gradual approach to adoption, in part to prevent an abrupt change for long-term grantees.
- **Standard data collection templates and electronic reporting systems can also support consistent reporting of grant outputs and outcomes.** Grant programs can incorporate the common definitions and/or measures at several stages of the grant process, including the negotiation of grant terms, grant agreements, workplans, training, and progress report templates. The use of standard reporting templates and national data collection systems (e.g., databases) is a good practice that the Workgroup previously identified in Year 2 of the Grant Commitments Met effort. National program-level reporting systems that collect common definitions and/or related

measures can enhance program-level reporting. In addition to providing program-level benefits, it would also be possible to compile and roll up data from multiple program-specific systems to support aggregate agency-wide reporting. Electronic reporting by grantees may also help ensure consistency while reducing their reporting burden. For example, EJCPS surveyed the Project Officers to identify the common definitions and/or related measures that are relevant to each grantee; when grantees go into Salesforce to report, they will only be asked questions that are relevant to them. GGRF's database incorporates many of the common definitions and/or associated measures; it can improve consistency and reduce burden by automating GHG emission calculations using a standard methodology, based on input data that the grantees will provide. GGRF sees the potential to use the database to aggregate key results (GHG emission reductions, economic benefits, and community benefits) across GGRF program areas, and also to aggregate GHG emission reductions with certain other EPA grant programs that also focus on reducing GHG emissions.

- **Reducing the reporting burden on grantees and EPA Project Officers will help ensure the use of the common definitions and/or associated measures.** Advisory Group members raised concerns about reporting burden, which could discourage use of the common definitions and/or related measures. Feedback from the pilot did not identify concerns expressed so far about reporting burden, including EJCPS Project Officers who completed a survey about their grantees, or states who reviewed the common output categories in the updated CBP grant guidance document. However, EJCPS expects Project Officers and grantees to raise questions/concerns about reporting closer to the first reporting deadline. CBP expressed concern about difficulties for long-term grantees if the common definitions and/or associated measures are later required. The grant programs in the pilot have already taken steps to reduce the burden on grantees, including electronic reporting (EJCPS and GGRF) and gradual rollout (CBP). Programs in the pilot also commented that certain common definitions and/or associated measures are tracked within EPA and would not need to be collected from grantees. This varies by grant program, but may include measures relating to funding and income, project status, and measures that apply to every grantee given the program's focus and eligibility requirements.
- **Ongoing collaboration and technical assistance were important for obtaining program buy-in and adoption during the pilot; however, other approaches for scaling up the common definitions and/or related measures can be effective and feasible.** The framing of the common definitions and/or related measures project, and the measures crosswalk that the Workgroup developed for each program – mapping the program's existing outputs and outcomes to the common definitions and/or related measures– played a key role in helping programs “see” their grantees in the common definitions and/or related measures. The discussions about the common definitions and/or related measures (and how to incorporate them for each program via in quarterly reports, electronic reporting databases, or grant guidance documents) was also important for implementation. This was an effective but high-touch approach over a six-month timeframe. An important forward-looking consideration is whether it is feasible, or necessary, to replicate this high-touch approach with other programs – or whether the Agency has reached a tipping point where other programs will now be willing and able to adopt such language with less hands-on assistance. The programs in the pilot were the early adopters who volunteered to go first. During the course of the pilot, other programs were introduced to the common definitions

and/or associated measures, and many have incorporated the language into their ICR materials with support from OCFO. The Agency's proposed General Performance Reporting ICR for grant programs offers a promising vehicle for expanding common definition usage, and/or usage of the measures associated with the common definitions.

Recommendations

- **Review the first round of grant data reported with the common definitions and/or related measures for consistency and the ability to aggregate results.** The first round of data utilizing the common definitions and/or related measures is expected in the next six months to one year, depending on the program. EPA should review the data for completeness, consistency, and overall data quality. EPA should also attempt to aggregate this data across grantees, and possibly even across different grant programs. The data quality review should help to identify whether any of the common definitions and/or related measures need to be reworked or would require additional training for programs; however, successful results can be used as examples to encourage additional programs to adopt the common definitions and/or related measures. Aggregating the data across grantees and programs will show how such language can help the Agency tell the story about its grant results.
- **Monitor the reporting burden and continue taking steps to simplify reporting.** EPA should monitor who the reporting burden falls on (e.g., Project Officers or grantees), whether burden increases or decreases, and whether this is different in the short term and long term. For example, there may be startup costs associated with adopting the common definitions and/or associated measures, but a reduction in burden over time. Once the first round of reporting is complete, check in with the Project Officers to understand their experience, any concerns or difficulties expressed by their grantees, and their ideas for how to simplify the reporting process moving forward. As additional programs adopt the common definitions and/or related measures, encourage them to implement good practices that the Workgroup identified during the pilot and in previous years of the Grant Commitments Met effort, as is appropriate and feasible for each program. Some examples of these good practices include: using electronic reporting with drop-down menus and automated calculations, relying upon data that EPA already has instead of asking grantees to report it, and/or using standard reporting templates to simplify grantee reporting and program review.
- **Consider scaling up the common definitions and/or measures with newer grant programs first.** Without existing measures or reporting experience, newer grant programs may be in the best position to adopt the common definitions and/or related measures, especially when the alternative would be developing new definitions and/or related measures from scratch. Longstanding grant programs with existing measures and reporting practices may have more difficulty incorporating the common definitions and/or related measures-- they may also have more difficulty utilizing new reporting systems. Well-established grant programs may also have less of a pressing need to adopt the common definitions and/or related measures if their current steps are working.
- **Continue to observe electronic reporting systems used by GGRF and EJCPs and consider how they might inform Enterprise-wide reporting efforts.** GGRF's experience rolling out its

TAPS database and EJCPS's experience with its Salesforce platform can provide lessons for other parts of the Agency, including how electronic reporting systems can support consistent reporting and aggregation of results. Consider how their experience might inform EPA's broader efforts; for example, if EPA pursues cross-program data collection, should this be done with an electronic database or through a data call? What electronic systems might work as an Enterprise solution?

- **Contextualize the data relating to the common definitions and/or related measures with program evaluation and case studies.** The common definitions and/or affiliated measures and standard reporting systems can play an important role in supporting consistent reporting of grant outputs and outcomes, across grantees and the Agency as a whole. However, performance measures are one piece of performance management. Programs should continue to conduct evaluations and case studies to provide context and nuance for their results and identify opportunities to further strengthen results.

APPENDIX A: COMMON DEFINITIONS AND STATUS OF ADOPTION BY EACH PROGRAM

A1 - Outputs

Completely accepted	✓
CBP accepted some of the common definitions and/or related measures, however, the annual guidance update only includes output categories. Specific outputs are only included in supplemental guidance, which has not been shared with grantees.	✓
Partially accepted (accepted with caveats)	~
Rejected	X
Not relevant and not presented to program by GCM	

Category	Definition	Output Measure	GGRF	EJCPS	PREPARED	CBP*	Comments
Agreements and Partnerships	Agreements enacted by grantees with non-EPA governmental entities or non-governmental partners. Agreements should be signed, written agreements and may contain information on planned activities, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.	Number of agreements by partner type	~	X	X		GGRF will interpret "partner type" as "coalition members" for their program.
		Number of agreements by topic type	✓	X	X	✓*	
Funding and Income	EPA funding provided including total funding to grantee and sub-awards or other funding disseminated. This category also includes program income.	Total amount of funding by primary grantee type	✓	X			GGRF can track this internally without asking grantees.
		Total amount of funding (by type) that grantee disseminates to each subgrantee	✓				
		Total amount of funding disseminated to subgrantees by place of performance [1]	~				GGRF had conflicting comments about this measure in their crosswalk: "Yes; intention to map where technical/financial assistance is planned/deployed by first transaction borrower" and then "Not sure this will make it through de-duplication process". GGRF can track this internally without asking grantees.
		Total funding amount unspent at end of project period	~	X			GGRF commented "unsure" on this measure but could track this internally without asking grantees.

Category	Definition	Output Measure	GGRF	EJCPS	PREPARED	CBP*	Comments
		Total amount of program income returned by grantee or sub-grantees (e.g., repayment of loans/interest from revolving funds)	✓				
Inspections	Inspections, compliance monitoring, enforcement activities. This would include field or laboratory actions, or desktop reviews that assess conditions compared to established standards.	Number of inspections, compliance monitoring, enforcement activities completed by type (including baseline or follow-up test), physical location, location type, and category of inspection [2]		✓			
		Number of sites not meeting standards (not in compliance) by number of violation(s) and type(s) and physical location					
		Number of sites meeting standards (in compliance) by physical location and previous violation status					
Non-enforcement Scientific Testing	Field or laboratory testing, monitoring, sampling, or surveillance not related to enforcement.	Number of field or laboratory testing, monitoring, sampling, or surveillance activities completed by activity type, tested media, and location type		✓		✓*	
Leveraged External Resources [3]	Leveraged resources from all non-EPA sources (i.e., monetary, grantee staff,[4] and volunteers). The goal in measuring leveraged resources is to show how effectively EPA used its initial resources to maximize total additional resources.	Total dollar (\$) amounts inclusive of all non-EPA funding (including contributions from the grantees [5] and any or all cost-share or match requirements) by funding type, funding source, and cost-share status	~			~	GGRF revised the dollar amounts definition: "Revised. Collecting on total private/public amounts on project cost rather than leveraged at loan origination."
		Total number of people [6] (grantee staff or volunteers) contributing to activities covered by the grant by person type				~	CBP commented on the leveraged external resources definition as a whole: "All of the State grants match dollar for dollar. 50-50 cost share. Other grants are case by case. IIJA - most if not all that requested waivers got waivers. Other (non-state) competitive RFAs have cost-share requirements. Not always shown in progress reports. Shown in budget detail and 424a and award documents."

Category	Definition	Output Measure	GGRF	EJCPS	PREPARED	CBP*	Comments
Outreach and Engagement	<p>Outreach and engagement activities or materials (e.g., open houses, conferences, roundtables; publications, social media posts) with the purpose of informing or educating the public, encouraging members of the public to take specific actions, or receiving public input.</p> <p>Outreach may also include activities that aim to build the pipeline of training participants or technical assistance recipients.</p> <p>Note: The delivery of Technical Assistance and Training should not be counted under Outreach. They should be captured under their respective categories. Please refer to the definitions for each category.</p>	Number of meetings with interested parties by meeting type and attendee type		✓	✓	✓*	
		Number of people reached by outreach efforts (e.g., TV, radio, newspaper audience, website visits)		✓	✓		
		Number of earned media events			✓		
		Number of posts on social media by outlet		✓	✓		
		Number of engagements with social media posts by type of engagement		X	✓		
		Number of project partners by partner type		X	✓		
		Number of public engagement materials developed by type (e.g., websites, publications - this would <u>not</u> include social media which is counted separately)		✓	✓		
Strategies, Plans, and Policies	<p>Plans, strategies, procedures, protocols, and policies (e.g., program plan, implementation strategy, assessment procedures, identification protocols, community plan, equity plan, policy).</p> <p>Number of strategies / plans / policies developed</p> <p>This would include, for example, strategies/policies developed by a community-based organization for consideration by a government agency. It would also include situations where a grantee develops a strategy/policy for its own organization.</p> <p>Workplans required for EPA-funded grant should not be counted. This category is meant to address strategies, plans, and policies beyond what is needed to implement the grant.</p>					✓*	

Category	Definition	Output Measure	GGRF	EJCPS	PREPARED	CBP*	Comments
Technical Assistance	Refers to the delivery of direct ongoing advice and support to a person(s) or organization(s) with the goal of guiding them through a particular process or helping them understand complex program-related subject matter.	Number of entities (by type) receiving technical support by underserved [7] status, provider, and type of technical assistance	~	✓	✓	✓*	GGRF Revised this measure and its definition: "TA is captured as a transaction; not sure beneficiary or entity receiving TA is sufficiently captured as borrower type (IND, BUS, GOV, CDFI, CDE, HH)."
Training	<p>Training materials and sessions (e.g., curricula development for training courses, delivery of training).</p> <p>Note: Training means hosting classes (in-person and/or online). Direct one-on-one assistance should be captured under Technical Assistance.</p>	Number of training sessions by type and topic		✓			
		Number of training materials developed by type and topic		✓			
		Number of times training materials are downloaded, viewed (e.g., as online recordings), or distributed (if not web-based) outside of training sessions		✓			
		Number of languages into which the training materials are translated		✓	✓		
		Number of people receiving training by target audience by language spoken		✓	✓		
		Number of certification programs offered by topic		✓			
		Number of trainees who receive certifications by topic		✓			
		Number of train-the-trainer sessions conducted by topic		✓			
		Number of trainers trained by topic		✓			
Climate	Climate action embedded within EPA grant programs and grant activities (e.g., grant programs with climate measures, grant programs collecting climate data, grant activities related to climate).	Number of EPA community grants that support science to address climate change concerns, including Tribal community science projects		X		✓*	
		Number of projects that include commitments to address climate change risks by type of grantee		X			

Category	Definition	Output Measure	GGRF	EJCPS	PREPARED	CBP*	Comments
		Number of grantees that are, or are working with, CBOs to address climate justice issues in the community		X			
		Number of projects using federal climate risk screening tools, data, and informational resources (e.g., National Climate Assessment, Climate Resilience Toolkit, CMRA)		X			
Equitable Grant Implementation [9]	EJ and Civil Rights embedded within EPA grant programs and program activities (e.g., grant programs with equity measures, grant programs collecting equity data, grant activities related to equity).	Number of EPA community grants that support science to address environmental justice and equity concerns, including Tribal community science projects		✓			GGRF can track the number of projects conducted in underserved and overburdened communities internally. Additionally, EJCPS doesn't need to ask about certain EJ related measures since all their projects address EJ.
		Number of grantees that are, or are working with, CBOs in underserved communities		✓			
		Number of projects conducted in underserved and overburdened communities	✓	✓			
		Number of small or underserved communities receiving assistance		✓	✓		
		Number of projects using justice and equity screening tools in accordance with EPA program guidance	~	✓	✓		GGRF commented: "LIDAC is defined using specific CJST and EJ Screen criteria--see definition of LIDAC. We have certainty if project is in LIDAC, one of standard tools have been used."
		Total dollar amount of assistance to small or underserved communities		✓			
Implemented Projects	Projects implemented by grantees.	Number of projects in each stage: planning, implementing, or completed Projects are highly dependent on the specific grant program, but basic information on project status can be tracked across programs. Measures for projects implemented should capture number of projects, status of projects implemented, amount of grant funding, project location, and project scale.	~	X	✓		GGRF commented: "Hard to define project status when rolling up individual projects into a census tract--some difficulties in defining "project" status". GGRF can track this internally without asking grantees.

[1] EPA is looking at ways to track place of performance at both the grantee and subgrantee level. The Workgroup will continue to stay apprised of these efforts and will coordinate as needed to ensure alignment.

[2] EPA may use location data of inspections to map to current definitions of historically underserved communities to determine J40 overlap. Based on this mapping EPA could calculate percent of inspections at facilities affecting communities with potential environmental justice concern or other measures. As feasible, EPA could also look at the number of inspections that explicitly consider future climate conditions.

[3] Leveraged External Resources does NOT include other EPA funding sources (this avoids double counting at the Enterprise level). Leveraged External Resources also excludes program income (e.g., repayment of loans/interest from revolving funds). Program income should be captured under Funding and Income: Total amount of program income returned by grantees or sub-grantees.

[4] The term “grantees” includes both the primary grantee and sub-grantees.

[5] The term “grantees” includes both the primary grantee and sub-grantees.

[6] Based on feedback from Advisory Group members, counting the number of people based on headcount (e.g., number of volunteers who sign the sign-in sheet at a volunteer event) is likely the most feasible way to track this measure. Over time, EPA could consider ways to refine the approach, e.g., number of people on an FTE basis.

[7] The Workgroup recognizes the moving definitions of historically underserved currently ongoing across the Agency; this is beyond the purview of the grants group to define and address how this is counted; however, as these conversations align this definition should be updated accordingly.

[8] Non-technical (administrative) implementation support should be captured under (1) Grant application and administration.

[9] In addition to these specific types of outputs, other related ‘equitable grant implementation’ outputs are embedded in other categories.

A2 - Outcomes

Completely accepted	✓
Partially accepted (accepted with caveats)	~
Rejected	X
Not relevant and/or not presented to program	

Strategic Plan Goal(s) / Strategy(ies)	Outcome Definition	Potential or Existing Measure	Notes	GGRF	EJCPS	PREPARED	CBP	Comments
Goal 1, Obj. 1.1: Tackle the Climate Crisis, Emissions that Cause Climate Change Goal 6: Safe Goal 7: Ensure Safety of Chemicals for People and the Environment and Revitalize Communities	Reduction in total annual amounts of MMTCO ₂ e emissions. This would be the measured or modeled reduction in emissions from baseline levels.	Tons of MMTCO ₂ e emissions reduced annually by source (e.g., vehicle, grid, on-site energy production, etc.) and location	The Workgroup will assist the programs in the pilot with unit conversions to CO ₂ e (if needed/as relevant)	✓				GGRF tracks this outcome internally by building in CO ₂ reductions calculations into their relational database, TAPS.
		Economic benefits from revitalizing communities The Workgroup suggests converting economic benefits to dollars, if relevant/feasible.	From OCFO: We know of at least two programs that conduct this type of analysis (Brownfields, Pollution Prevention/P2).					

Strategic Plan Goal(s) / Strategy(ies)	Outcome Definition	Potential or Existing Measure	Notes	GGRF	EJCPS	PREPARED	CBP	Comments
Goal 1, Obj. 1.2: Tackle the Climate Crisis, Climate Resiliency and Adaptation	Actions taken to tackle the climate crisis and the results of those actions.	Number of actions taken by partners to adapt to climate change						
		Actions may include but are not limited to: developing a climate adaptation plan; identifying potential impacts; assessing vulnerability; planning efforts; applying for additional funding (e.g., applying for funding from others such as FEMA); adoption of adaptation measures such as green infrastructure; improved coordination with other key organizations (e.g., a state or federal partner); estimation of financial impacts; or more effective remedy selection in a hazardous waste cleanup program.[1]	Partner Type. Federal, State, Territory, Tribal, Local, NGO, etc.					
			Location.				~	CBP accepted this outcome as "secondary" but did not include it in the program's updated grant guidance document or the supplemental guidance document.
		Number of actions taken by partners to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions						
		Actions may include but are not limited to: activities to increase energy efficiency; plans to decarbonize electricity generation (e.g., by promoting renewable energy); activities to scale-up zero-emission transportation; supporting nature-based solutions with mitigation potential; and supporting agriculture/land use changes to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.	Partner Type. Federal, State, Territory, Tribal, Local, NGO, etc.	✓	✓			
			Location.					
		Miles of coastline protected with climate resiliency measures			✓			
		Number of people protected from a climate risk by major risk category (flooding, sea-level rise, extreme heat, wildfire, etc.)	Includes but is not limited to people protected in coastal areas.					

Strategic Plan Goal(s) / Strategy(ies)	Outcome Definition	Potential or Existing Measure	Notes	GGRF	EJCPS	PREPARED	CBP	Comments
		Number of buildings with completed adaptation and/or resiliency measures in vulnerable communities	Specify building type: house, community center, drinking water plant, wastewater treatment plant, etc.		✓			
		Number of entities that have adopted codes and standards for energy efficiency, water efficiency, and climate resilience	Specify entity type: state, tribal, territory, local community		X			
		Reduction in costs associated with natural disasters related to climate change	The cost reduction outcome could be the projected cost reduction (based on historical averages and future climate conditions) from actions taken.					
Goal 2: Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights	Results of embedding environmental justice and civil rights into grant program and grant activities to empower and build capacity among underserved and overburdened communities.	Number of new research projects, support groups, EJ collaborative partnerships, or enforcement committees established in underserved communities by grantees/ grant partners		✓				
		Number of entities (specify individuals or organizations) in underserved communities with enhanced capacity to advance environmental justice goals	The grantees themselves may be the entities with enhanced capacity. Need to define how to measure enhanced capacity.					
		Number of members from underserved communities participating in state and federal public processes (e.g., by participating in public meetings, submitting public comments, etc.)						

Strategic Plan Goal(s) / Strategy(ies)	Outcome Definition	Potential or Existing Measure	Notes	GGRF	EJCPS	PREPARED	CBP	Comments
		Number of proposals to governmental entities by entities in underserved communities that incorporate environmental justice considerations	This measure is a precursor to governmental response. It is also a proxy for empowerment (individuals/organizations who are empowered put forth proposals to address their needs).					
		Number of governmental responses (by entity) that incorporate environmental justice considerations, by type (plan, strategy, policy decision, agreement, etc.) and status (announced, in progress, or completed)						
Goal 4: Ensure Clean and Healthy Air for All Communities	Results of grant programs on air quality at the macro and micro-scale.	Reduction in asthma incidence rate by demographic category (e.g., adults, children, seniors) by community type (e.g., underserved communities)	Consider asthma emergency department visits as an alternate metric.		X			
Goal 5, Obj. 5.2: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities: Restored Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems Goal 6: Safeguard and Revitalize Communities	Results of efforts to restore and protect watersheds and ecosystems and land previously harmed or facing threats.	Acres of habitat protected or restored (distinguish protected or restored) by type of ecosystem (e.g., wetland type, watershed habitat type, etc.) and location	Count "Acres of habitat protected" and "Acres of habitat restored" separately.		X		✓	
Goal 5: Ensure Clean and Safe Water for All Communities Goal 6: Safeguard and Revitalize Communities	Results of funding that supports job development, including short-term and permanent positions.	Number of FTE (2,080 hours) annual jobs by job type (e.g., construction, maintenance, etc.) and location of job The Workgroup would also recommend capturing data on location of residence for job holders by census tract.			X			

Strategic Plan Goal(s) / Strategy(ies)	Outcome Definition	Potential or Existing Measure	Notes	GGRF	EJCPS	PREPARED	CBP	Comments
Training (supports all Goals/Strategies)	Results of training that support improved knowledge of training participants.	Change in average knowledge score from pre-test to post-test	Average pre-test score.					
			Average post-test score.					
			Change between pre-test and post-test.					

[1] Source: Data Quality Record for Long-Term Performance Goals, Number of Actions taken by partners to adapt to climate change. Provided by the Office of Policy.

APPENDIX B: CLOSE-OUT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Overview

- In April 2024, the Grant Commitments Met Workgroup will conduct close-out interviews with each of the four programs participating in the Common Definitions Pilot: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving (EJCPS), Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP), and Promoting Readiness and Enhancing Proficiency to Advance Reporting and Data (PREPARED).
- During the interviews, the Workgroup will ask EPA contacts for each program about your reactions to and experiences with the common definitions and/or related measures, as well as any changes the program made (or plans to make) to its data collection approaches. If the common definitions and/or related measures and data collection approaches have been disseminated to your program's grantees, the Workgroup will also ask about any reactions you observed or heard from the grantees.
- The Workgroup is sharing the draft questions with the four pilot programs in advance to set expectations and help you prepare for interviews.
- The interviews will be semi-structured and will occur over MS Teams. The Workgroup will lead the interviews, take notes, and record the interviews (if all participants agree) to ensure an accurate account of the conversations. Interviews will not be anonymous; anonymity cannot be guaranteed with this small of a pilot and would hinder information sharing on lessons learned from the pilot. The Workgroup will provide a full set of cleaned interview notes to the Workgroup after all the group interviews are complete.

Interview Questions

1. Earlier this year, your program selected a set of common measures and definitions to pilot, based on the measures crosswalk that the Workgroup developed for your program. Have you incorporated all the selected common definitions and/or related measures into your program guidance (*CBP*), reporting systems (*GGRF and EJCPS*), Information Collection Requests (*PREPARED*) and/or training (*PREPARED*), as intended?
 - a. *If yes:* Can you confirm which common definitions and/or related measures you incorporated?
 - b. *If no:* Which common definitions and/or related measures have you not incorporated, and why? (Examples: concerns about reporting burden, limited EPA administrative capacity, limited grantee capacity, ICRs not approved, implementation delays, etc.)
2. Have you changed (or do you intend to change) your program's approaches for collecting measurement data from grantees? If yes, please elaborate. (*if not already covered above*)
3. Have you encountered any challenges incorporating the common definitions and/or related measures?
 - a. *If yes:*
 - i. What challenges have you encountered?
 - ii. What steps have you taken to address the challenges?
 - iii. Where do things stand now?
 - b. *If no:* What made it a smooth process?

4. Have you realized (or do you expect to realize) any benefits from using the common definitions and/or related measures?
 - a. If yes, please explain.
 - b. If no, why not?
5. Have you shared the common definitions and/or related measures that you selected with other stakeholders, including EPA grant Project Officers, external grant partners, and/or grantees? *If yes:*
 - a. How did they react to the common definitions and/or related measures?
 - b. Did they raise any concerns? If yes, please elaborate.
 - c. Have you received feedback on locational measures? If yes, please elaborate.
 - d. Have you received feedback on collecting measurement data from sub-awardees/sub-grantees? If yes, please elaborate.
 - e. Have you made – or do you plan to make – any changes based on the feedback you have received? If yes, please describe. (Examples: technical changes to the measures/definitions themselves; changes to the process for socializing the measures with your grantees or other stakeholders; changes to the process for reporting the common definitions and/or related measures; etc.)
6. *(For EJCPs and GGRF)* What has your experience been with Salesforce (*EJCPs*) or your transaction-level database (*GGRF*)?
 - a. What is the status of these efforts?
 - b. We understand that your database rolls up grantee data from across the three GGRF program areas (*GGRF*) or across OEJECECR programs (*OEJECECR*). Is the data consistent enough across different grantees and program areas that you feel comfortable aggregating it for high-level reporting purposes?
7. Do you see opportunities to use the common definitions and/or related measures for other grant programs within your office and/or other EPA grant programs? If yes, please explain.
8. When do you expect to receive the first set of grant reporting data that uses the common definitions and/or related measures? How do you intend to review/analyze/use the data when you receive it?
9. Do you have any additional observations that you would like to share about the project?