



## FY 2011-2015 EPA Strategic Plan

### Cross-Cutting Fundamental Strategy: Strengthening State, Tribal, and International Partnerships

*Deliver on our commitment to a clean and healthy environment through consultation and shared accountability with states, tribes, and the global community for addressing the highest priority problems.*

EPA will strengthen its state, tribal, and international partnerships to achieve our mutual environmental and human health goals. As we work together, our relationships must continue to be based on integrity, trust, and shared accountability to make the most effective use of our respective bodies of knowledge, our existing authorities, our resources, and our talents.

Successful partnerships will be based on four working principles: consultation, collaboration, cooperation, and accountability. By *consulting*, we will engage our partners in a timely fashion as we consider approaches to our environmental work so that each partner can make an early and meaningful contribution toward the final result. By *collaborating*, we will not only share information, but we will actively work together with our partners to use all available resources to reach our environmental and human health goals. As our work progresses, we will *cooperate*, viewing each other with respect as allies who must work successfully together if our goals are to be achieved. Through *shared accountability*, we will ensure that environmental benefits are consistently delivered nationwide. In carrying out these responsibilities, EPA will ensure through oversight that state and tribal implementation of federal laws achieves a consistent level of protection for the environment and human health.

#### With States

Under our federal environmental laws, EPA and the states share responsibility for protecting human health and the environment. With this relationship as the cornerstone of the nation's environmental protection system, EPA will:

1. Improve implementation and consistent delivery of national environmental programs through closer consultation and transparency.
2. Work with states to seek efficient use of resources through work-sharing, joint planning using data analysis and targeting to address priorities, and other approaches.
3. Play a stronger management role to facilitate the exchange of data with states to improve program effectiveness and efficiency.
4. Consult with state and local governments on a routine basis to ensure that the development and implementation of rules is consistent with *EPA's Action Development Process: Guidance on Executive Order 13132 (Federalism)*, which recognizes the division of governmental responsibilities between the federal government and the states.
5. Strengthen state-EPA shared accountability by focusing oversight on the most significant and pressing state program performance challenges, using data and analysis to speed program improvements.
6. Ensure a level playing field across states to improve compliance and address the most serious violations.

### **With Tribes**

The relationship between the United States Government and federally-recognized tribes is unique and has developed throughout the course of the nation's history. In strengthening this relationship, EPA will:

1. Focus on increasing tribal capacity to establish and implement environmental programs while ensuring that our national programs are as effective in Indian country as they are throughout the rest of the nation.
2. Enhance our effort as we work with tribes on a government-to-government basis, based upon the Constitution, treaties, laws, executive orders, and a long history of Supreme Court rulings.
3. Strengthen our cross-cultural sensitivity with tribes, recognizing that tribes have cultural, jurisdictional, and legal features that must be considered when coordinating and implementing environmental programs in Indian country.

### **With Other Countries**

To achieve our domestic environmental and human health goals, international partnerships are essential. Pollution is often carried by winds and water across national boundaries, posing risks many hundreds and thousands of miles away. Many concerns, like climate change, are universal. In the international arena, EPA will:

1. Expand our partnership efforts in multilateral forums and in key bilateral relationships.
2. Enhance existing and nurture new international partnerships to promote a new era of global environmental stewardship based on common interests, shared values, and mutual respect.

## **FY 2012 Action Plan: Strengthening State, Tribal, and International Partnerships**

*This FY 2012 Partnership Action Plan lists the specific priorities and implementation strategies that the EPA will carry out in partnership with states, tribes, and international organizations to achieve the goals of the Cross-Cutting Partnerships Strategy in the Strategic Plan. Annual Action Plans will be developed for each year of the Plan.*

### **With States**

1. Continue Agency consultations with state (and local) elected officials on EPA rulemakings and policies (*Supports Principles 1 and 4*).
  - Conduct rule-specific consultations with the ten major state and local government associations for regulatory actions that have federalism implications (i.e., impose substantial compliance costs on government entities or preempt state or local law), as defined in "EPA's Action Development Process: Guidance on Executive Order (E.O.) 13132 (Federalism)."
  - Implement and report on EPA's progress related to commitments made in "U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Implementing the Presidential Memorandum on Administrative Flexibility" and the Agency's E.O. 13563 Implementation Plan for retrospective review of existing rules.  
(Note: The President's Administrative Flexibility memo requires Agencies to work with state, tribal, and local governments to identify opportunities to improve efficiency and streamline administrative requirements. E.O. 13563 directs Agencies to conduct a retrospective review of existing rules to harmonize and align redundant and overlapping requirements).
2. Use the National Environmental Performance Partnership System (NEPPS) as a platform to improve EPA's working relationship with the states (*Supports Principles 1, 2, and 3*).
  - Work with states through the EPA-State Worksharing Task Force to identify, develop, and make available to EPA Regions and states a list of worksharing best practices. Investigate ways to make EPA's expertise available to assist states through personnel and information/data exchange and training, and provide recommendations to the EPA Executive Management Council by September 2012.
  - Establish an Agency-wide workgroup (National Program Managers, Regions, and HQ support offices) to plan and implement an Agency-wide effort to collect available information to define,

describe, and assess EPA's processes, practices, and tools for overseeing state delegations and authorizations. The workgroup will report its findings to the Deputy Administrator and propose options for next steps as needed to ensure the Agency is carrying out its oversight responsibilities in a coordinated, transparent, and accountable manner.

3. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of state-federal interactions and facilitate the exchange of data with states (*Supports Principles 1, 2, and 3*).
  - Building on the Business Process Improvement (BPI) tools and training identified with Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) and other state partners, the EPA will identify a list of candidate processes for EPA-State BPI events and continue to share learning for BPIs nationally through development of a Lean Government training options guide and a BPI methods guide. (September 2012)
  - Expanding on collaborations with states to provide more transparent information on the performance of state enforcement programs, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) will expand its interactive web application to include National Comparative Maps and State Dashboards from both the Clean Air Act and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and develop prototypes for the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). (September 2012)
  - Increase the number of most critical EPA program information systems considered to be "Exchange Network Ready" from 5 at end of FY 2011 to 9 (out of a total of 10).  
(Note: Network Readiness, as defined in the Exchange Network Action Plan, is measured for each information system and indicates that the EPA has removed all technology barriers from state partners being able to implement that data flow.)

#### **With Tribes**

1. Coordinate with Regions and tribal partners to implement specific programmatic steps outlined in the new General Assistance Program (GAP) Guidebook to help build capacity for environmental programs (*Supports Principles 1 and 2*). (September 2012) [Placeholder language for more specific outcome pending finalization of GAP guidebook effort]
  - By implementing the steps laid out in the Guidebook, tribes can expand their environmental, monitoring, and assessment programs. As a result, and as part of the Tribal Data Management Strategy, increase the number of tribes reporting data to the EPA through the Exchange Network from 88 to 100. (September 2012)
2. The American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) and Agency Tribal Consultation Advisors (TCAs) develop specific implementation guidelines for carrying out the EPA "Policy on Consultation and Coordination Guidance with Indian Tribes" (*Supports Principle 2 and 3*). (January 2012)
  - All EPA employees complete the "Working Effectively with Tribal Governments" training, ensuring that all employees understand their connection to our tribal stakeholders. Progress will be tracked through an in-house database. (September 2012)

#### **With Other Countries**

1. By September 2012, complete and sign the successor U.S.-Mexico Border Environment Program 2020 strategic design that will address the most severe environmental and human health issues in the border region (*Supports Principles 1 and 2*).
2. To improve effectiveness of the Submission on Enforcement Matters (SEM) process of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), complete SEM modernization recommendations and submit for Council vote at July 2012 session, and (assuming adoption) commence implementation by September 2012.