



**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 2013 Action Plan: Strengthening State, Tribal, and International Partnerships**

*This FY 2013 Partnership Action Plan lists the specific priorities and implementation strategies that EPA will carry out in partnership with states, tribes, and international organizations to achieve the goals of the Cross-Cutting Fundamental Strategy on Partnerships 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 all 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)." The Agency may also conduct outreach with partner organizations on regulations that do not have federalism implications and other guidance and policy documents of interest.
  - Establish and implement a joint charter with the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) to ensure strong EPA-state collaborations for Civil Rights Act Title VI grant management programs by September 30, 2013.
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*).
  - By September 2013, each Region will develop worksharing implementation targets for FY 2014 and beyond consistent with the final EPA-State Worksharing Task Force recommendations accepted by the Executive Management Council regarding best practices, EPA-provided training, and other ways to share EPA's technical expertise.

- Through an Agency-wide workgroup (National Program Managers, Regions, and headquarters support offices), 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. By September 2013, 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.
  - In partnership with the states, EPA will improve and enhance the National Environmental Performance Partnership System (NEPPS) to further our shared governance framework, promote greater EPA-state consensus on priorities, and achieve effective, complementary environmental management and program accountability.
3. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of state-federal interactions and facilitate the exchange of data with states (*Supports Principles 1, 2, and 3*).
- Continuing to build on the Business Process Improvement (BPI) tools and training identified with ECOS and other state partners, EPA will develop a *BPI Tools and Methods Guide* by September 30, 2013.
  - The Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance will continue to expand its interactive web application (i.e., National Comparative Maps and State Dashboards) by developing prototypes for the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act by September 30, 2013.

### **With Tribes**

1. Coordinate with tribal partners to finalize and implement the revised General Assistance Program (GAP) Guidance (which includes new GAP Guidebook) to help build capacity for environmental programs (*Supports Principles 1 and 2*).
  - By February 2013, complete the second round of tribal consultation on the Guidebook.
  - By May 2013, issue final GAP Guidance and GAP Guidebook.
2. Improve the coordination and implementation of the Agency's consultation activities under the "Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes" through enhanced communication tools, training, and outreach (*Supports Principles 2 and 3*).
  - By December 2012, develop and implement quarterly office- and Region-specific status reports from the Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System to Indian Program Policy Council Members.
  - By September 2013, Tribal Consultation Advisors will host a minimum of two internal trainings for EPA staff in their office or Region about how to implement the Policy.
3. Enhance collaboration and expand access to tribal information (*Supports Principle 1*).
  - Develop and implement a tribal boundary layer web service through EPA geoplatform to support tribal and EPA environmental decision making by September 2013.
  - Develop and implement a tribal query in Envirofacts to allow tribes, EPA programs and Regions, states, and other partners to access environmental data by tribe, similar to existing queries that allow access by city, state, and zip code, by September 2013.

## **With Other Countries**

1. Develop an EPA-wide plan for engaging the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Mercury Partnership and other programs to provide technical assistance ("enabling activities") to countries as they improve their capacities to ratify the new mercury convention, the "Minamata Convention." The EPA package would become part of a U.S. government package to be announced (assuming successful negotiation) at the convention's diplomatic conference in October 2013 (*Supports Principles 1 and 2*).
  - *Hold an EPA-wide meeting to discuss enabling activities plan by March 2013 and finalize EPA-wide enabling activities plan by September 2013.*