



**FY 2016-2017**

*OCFO's Technical  
Guidance: FY 2016-  
2017 National  
Program Manager  
Guidance and  
Annual Commitment  
Process*



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**OCFO'S TECHNICAL GUIDANCE:  
FY 2016-2017 NATIONAL PROGRAM MANAGER GUIDANCE & ANNUAL COMMITMENT PROCESS**  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

The National Program Manager (NPM) Guidances set forth the strategies and actions the EPA and its state and tribal partners will undertake to protect human health and the environment. The NPM Guidances and grant guidances provide the linkage from the *FY 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan* and annual budget by providing implementation direction to EPA regions, states and tribes. Taken together, the NPM Guidances serve as a national framework for regions to use as they tailor their approaches and strategies for engaging with states and tribes through the National Environmental Performance Partnership System (NEPPS) and grant work plan negotiations.

Beginning with FY 2016-2017, the EPA will implement a new two-year cycle for the NPM Guidance process, which was developed collaboratively with our state partners. The EPA initiated this effort to advance *Launching a New Era of State, Local, Tribal, and International Partnerships*, a cross-agency strategy in the *FY 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan*. The Deputy Administrator's December 9, 2013 memorandum, called upon the EPA, states and tribes to rethink and change some of our practices and processes; reinvigorate our relationship with states by making NEPPS more effective in defining mutually supportive roles and responsibilities and strengthen support for flexibility, innovation, and efficiency in carrying out our shared responsibilities; and develop clearly defined processes to reach agreement, and how to achieve them, on national priorities for protecting the environment and human health.

To advance the Agency's call for greater collaboration, in March 2014, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) and the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations (OCIR) established a steering committee that included the EPA's Director of the American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) and the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) Planning Committee Chair. The steering committee convened the *NPM Guidance/NEPPS Workgroup*; comprised of state, tribal, regional, and headquarters representatives; to develop a new two-year process and clarify the relationship to state and tribal grants, including Performance Partnership Agreements (PPAs) and Performance Partnership Grants (PPGs). Specifically, the workgroup's focus was to: 1) strengthen early, more meaningful state and tribal engagement; and 2) increase flexibilities for EPA regions, states, and tribes while streamlining the workload associated with joint planning activities.

The workgroup effort resulted in the following key changes:

- *Earlier and more meaningful state and tribal engagement in joint priority-setting* - Established principles and a schedule for EPA engagement with states and tribes to jointly identify the most important areas of work for protecting the environment and human health; written summaries will capture areas as a basis to inform development of the NPM Guidances.
- *Clear and transparent support for flexibility within the NPM Guidances* - Clearly articulated support of EPA, states, and tribes to pursue flexibilities that advance the most important environmental and human health work, as appropriate, and to the extent possible; and guidelines for seeking approval where flexibility is requested.
- *Better alignment of NPM and Grant Guidances* - Support for aligning NPM and grant guidances to minimize workload for regions, states, and tribes; including agreement for issuing selected grant guidances on the same two-year cycle as the NPM Guidances, to the extent possible.
- *Earlier and more meaningful state and tribal engagement in commitment-setting* - Proactive dialogue with states and tribes to develop draft regional commitments, aligned to the extent possible with grant work planning.

This technical guidance provides the NPMs with the specific details, deliverables, and milestones to guide development of their individual NPM Guidances. It also incorporates Lean recommendations implemented for FY 2014 to streamline the NPM Guidances, including a common format to increase transparency and facilitate review and use of the documents.

## II. GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING FY 2016-2017 NPM GUIDANCES

This section includes the guidelines to NPMs for developing their individual Guidances. The guidelines cover two areas: 1) earlier engagement with states and tribes on identifying priorities, including cross-program coordination, and incorporating flexibilities; and 2) internal and external reviews and increased use of collaboration tools. The format requirements are found in [Section X](#).

### 1. Early Engagement with States and Tribes to Frame Guidance Development

A key change stemming from the *NPM Guidance/NEPPS Workgroup* is early engagement with states and tribes on joint priority-setting, which occurs during a consistent timeframe and results in written summaries to inform development of NPM Guidances.

#### a. Process for Early Engagement:

##### ➤ *NPM-Specific Input:*

From **June – October 2014**, NPMs and regions engaged collaboratively with states and tribes early in the NPM Guidance development process to identify the most important areas of focus for protecting the environment and human health. NPMs and regions have flexibility in how engagement on priorities is initiated (e.g., states/tribes propose priorities; NPMs provide straw list; priorities are jointly developed; etc.). By **June 30, 2014**, NPMs developed one-page timelines/planned approaches based on the options listed below, and these were posted on the [NPM Guidance website](#).

- Use existing and newly identified NPM and regional opportunities for soliciting state/tribal input and proposed priorities (e.g., states/tribes propose priorities to regions, who provide priorities to NPMs; use the Lead Region system<sup>1</sup> to coordinate flow of state/tribal input).
- Implement a combination of NPM- and regional-driven requests for input.
- NPMs will engage with national associations (e.g., National Tribal Caucus, Environmental Council of the States, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, American Association of Pesticide Control Officials), media-specific state associations, the National Tribal Operations Committee, the Regional Tribal Operations Committee, and Tribal/NPM and Tribal/Regional workgroups to get both “big picture” and more detailed media-specific perspectives (e.g., setting specific expectations, goals, commitments).
- NPMs will encourage use of a template for capturing state and tribal input, as appropriate.

##### ➤ *Cross-Program Coordination:*

Through the early engagement mechanisms for NPM-specific input, states and tribes may identify topics/priorities of interest that involve more than one NPM. States and tribes may raise these cross-program issues to the designated NPM leads for air, water, waste, pesticides/toxics, enforcement, and/or tribal programs.

- Within EPA, there are designated NPM leads for air, water, waste, pesticides/toxics, enforcement, and tribal programs. “Cross-program coordination” refers to coordination on topics/priorities of interest to EPA, states, and/or tribes that involve more than one NPM.
- States and tribes can raise cross-program topics through the engagement mechanisms for NPM-specific input identified above.
- If an NPM receives state or tribal input on a topic that involves another EPA office, the NPM will share that input in a timely manner with the other respective EPA office for

<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the “Lead Region” system is to ensure the quality of agency decisions by providing an organized, consistent and effective regional role in all the major phases of Agency decision-making. EPA Regional offices assigned as Lead Regions are responsible for working with their respective NPMs to identify and synthesize the concerns of all ten regions into a “regional view” that can be effectively factored into Agency decision-making. NPMs are responsible for soliciting and incorporating input from their Lead Regions on major policy, regulatory and resource decisions. For more information, visit: <http://www2.epa.gov/aboutepa/lead-region-process>.

discussion and with states/tribes, as appropriate. The designated agency lead for the program will take the lead for the follow up.

- OCFO will continue to lead the agency-wide process for soliciting input on the cross-cutting themes discussed in the *FY 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan* (i.e. Environmental Justice, Children's Health, etc.).

- By **October 31, 2014**, each NPM will prepare a written summary that describes both the early engagement process that was followed to obtain input from states and tribes and the results, including both NPM-specific and cross-program topics. This summary will inform development of the national areas of focus and program-specific guidance sections of the draft NPM Guidances.

- *Consultation and Coordination Process with Federally Recognized Tribes:*

In **July 2014**, OCFO sent consultation notification letters to all federally recognized tribes to provide both an overarching opportunity for early input from tribes on draft FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidance development and consultation on the draft NPM Guidances. This consultation opportunity complements efforts by NPMs seeking early input from their tribal partners. OCFO also provided outreach materials to clarify the relationship of the NPM Guidance process with other agency planning and budget processes. These materials are available on the agency's Tribal Consultation Opportunities website:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/oita/TConsultation.nsf/TC?OpenView>.

**b. Developing National Areas of Focus and Program-Specific Guidance:**

Based upon their earlier engagement with states and tribes, NPMs will identify FY 2016-2017 national areas of focus and develop program-specific guidance, including measures. NPMs should:

- Consider state and tribal input on the most important areas of environmental and human health work (referring to October 31 written summaries).
- Review the *FY 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan* and long-term vision, including its five strategic goals (along with objectives, measures, and strategies) and four cross-agency strategies (CAS).
- Translate decisions made in EPA's *FY 2016 Annual Plan and Budget* into operational strategies and measures to guide regional implementation with states and tribes.
- Consider applicable tasks and action items from the FY 2015 CAS Action Plans (available at <http://workplace.epa.gov/realizingoneepa/>); and the six FY 2014-2015 Agency Priority Goals (APGs) and Action Plans, as appropriate (APG information is available on [Performance.gov](http://Performance.gov)). These serve as a foundation for the FY 2016 CAS Action Plans and next round of FY 2016-2017 APGs.
- Work with Lead Regions, as appropriate, to facilitate the dissemination of information and engagement efforts.
- Describe how input received from states and tribes during the early engagement process informed priority-setting and NPM Guidance development.

**c. Incorporating Flexibility:**

Complementing the early engagement and input from states and tribes, the FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances will clearly articulate support for EPA, states, and tribes to pursue flexibilities that advance the most important environmental and human health work, as appropriate, and to the extent possible. In this era of flat or declining resources, it is important for the EPA to work with states and tribes to streamline the workload and leverage resources to more efficiently meet our collective mission to protect human health and the environment. To highlight the importance of flexibility, NPM Guidances will include the following:

- Language in the *Introduction* that affirms and articulates the intent to address flexibility issues within identified parameters and using available agency processes.

- Language on parameters for flexibilities in sections on *National Areas of Focus* and *Program-Specific Guidance*, as appropriate.
- Guidelines for seeking approval for flexibilities and elevating issues, as needed.

## 2. Reviews and Tools

### a. Internal Agency Review:

An internal agency review period in **January 2015** will allow agency-wide review of the draft NPM Guidances prior to the external comment period. This provides an additional opportunity to examine cross-program areas and ensure consistent expectations. NPMs should consider and incorporate agency comments, as appropriate. The draft NPM Guidances will be posted on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site \(https://usepa.sharepoint.com/sites/OCFO\\_Work/npmguidance\)](https://usepa.sharepoint.com/sites/OCFO_Work/npmguidance), along with the [Internal Comments Template](#).

### b. External Review:

As in past years, OCFO will post the draft FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances to OCFO's [NPM Guidance website](#) to facilitate comments from external partners and stakeholders. States, tribes, and other partners and stakeholders may submit comments from **February – March 2015** to the EPA using the [External Comments and Response to Comments Summary template](#). During this external comment period, the EPA will engage with states, tribes, and other external stakeholders to discuss key changes from the FY 2014 NPM Guidances and FY 2015 Addendums, as compared to the FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances. A national teleconference for tribes will be held during the external comment period to provide an overview of the process for commenting on the draft FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances and discuss key changes that may affect tribes. NPMs will respond to comments and incorporate changes, as warranted, into the final FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances, which will be posted on the [NPM Guidance website](#).

### c. Increased Use of Collaboration Tools:

The new [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site \(https://usepa.sharepoint.com/sites/OCFO\\_Work/npmguidance\)](https://usepa.sharepoint.com/sites/OCFO_Work/npmguidance) will include the templates and other associated information in this technical guidance. EPA users will have access to these documents and can log in using Internet Explorer and entering their EPA email address (a password is not required). In addition, NPMs and regions should consider using existing collaboration tools (e.g., SharePoint, Adobe Connect, and [MAX.gov](#)) and any available My Workplace collaboration tools for NPM Guidance development, as appropriate. For more information on using SharePoint, visit: <http://workplace.epa.gov/collaborationtrainingsharepoint.html>.

## III. GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING FY 2016 OPERATIONAL MEASURES AND REGIONAL COMMITMENTS

NPM Guidances govern the establishment of operational measures, many of which correspond with annual budget measures. NPMs, along with regions, states, and tribes, should review the FY 2015 operational measures carefully and consider any changes in order to identify the smallest, most meaningful set of measures to assess and communicate performance results. Regions should solicit input from states and tribes in developing draft and negotiating final commitments that reflect the jointly identified most important areas of focus for protecting the environment and human health, where appropriate. NPMs and regions should adhere to the following guidelines when developing FY 2016 operational measures and commitments:

### 1. Establishing FY 2016 Operational Measures:

Most NPMs will use the FY 2015 operational measures as the starting point for FY 2016 operational measures. Prior to issuance of the draft FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances or during the external review, NPMs should seek input from states and tribes as well as consider programmatic or budget changes in making adjustments to FY 2016 operational measures.

If measures are revised or new measures are added, NPMs should adhere to the [performance measures guidelines](#) and OCFO's [Phase I](#) and [II](#) supplemental guidance documents, which are designed to improve the quality and consistency of measures, data, and supporting information in the EPA's Annual Commitment System (ACS). In addition, any measure changes should align with FY 2016 budget measures and strategic measures in the *FY 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan* and be reflected in the [Measures Appendix](#).

Additionally, FY 2016 planning targets for operational measures generally should not be less ambitious than FY 2014 actual results or final FY 2015 regional commitments, unless there is a compelling reason (e.g., resource constraints). For cumulative measures, FY 2016 targets and commitments should be more ambitious than the FY 2015 end-of-year results.

2. **Earlier and More Meaningful Engagement with States and Tribes on Commitment-Setting:** Beginning in **March 2015**, regions should engage proactively with states and tribes to get their input to inform development of draft regional commitments. To the extent possible, regions should align the early engagement on commitment-setting with the early engagement with states and tribes on grant work plan negotiations.

Draft regional commitments should reflect input from states and tribes, as appropriate, and be the basis for beginning negotiations with NPMs. During the NPM/regional negotiations, regions should continue to engage with states and tribes and encourage comments on draft commitments before reaching agreement with NPMs on final performance commitments. Regions should ensure DRAs remain informed throughout the negotiation process and that negotiations on final bids have fully considered cross-program impacts and input from states and tribes.

#### IV. REPORTING AND DEVELOPING ANNUAL COMMITMENTS

Once the FY 2016 operational measures are established and any necessary adjustments to FY 2015 operational measures are made to reflect NPM, regional, state and tribal input; the EPA will use the Annual Commitment System (ACS) to track annual headquarters and regional performance information and results. While the EPA has the responsibility for ACS data entry and reporting, NPMs and regions should consider input from states and tribes to inform development of draft and final FY 2016 regional commitments. A user manual and instructions for entering information in ACS can be found here: <http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/acs>. OCFO encourages the Agency to use [EPA's Performance Dashboard](#) to analyze and evaluate performance information tracked in ACS.

1. **Reporting FY 2015 Results:** NPMs and regions should report mid- and end-of-year progress and raise performance issues and/or explain differences between the commitment and actual performance result using the "Explanation" field on the "Results" screen in ACS.
  - a. **Mid-Year FY 2015 Reporting:** In **March 2015**, OCFO will include more detailed instructions on mid-year reporting in its *FY 2015 Mid-Year Performance Reporting and Analysis Guidance*. From **April - May 2015**, NPMs and regions will enter FY 2015 mid-year results data in ACS.
  - b. **Mid-Year FY 2015 Commitment Adjustments:** OCFO emphasizes that mid-year commitment adjustments are not a re-opening of the FY 2015 bidding process. Adjustments are warranted on an exception-only basis. There are many valid reasons for missing a commitment (which can be explained at end-of-year), but mid-year adjustments should not be made to ensure a commitment is achieved.

OCFO will open ACS for a two-week period in **late May 2015**. At that time, NPMs and regions can make mid-year adjustments, *in those limited cases where both the NPM and region believe it is*



***significant and critical to make the adjustment. Commitment adjustments for FY 2015 operational measures associated with the budget (i.e., budget measure targets) are not allowed.*** The exception would be if the adjustment aligns the commitment with the budget target following OMB approval of FY 2015 target changes after the commitment was finalized.

NPMs will work with regions on the proposed commitment adjustments. Changes will be kept to a minimum and will require NPMs to submit a description of the change and a rationale to OCFO ([vincent.marc@epa.gov](mailto:vincent.marc@epa.gov) and [mahanta.benita@epa.gov](mailto:mahanta.benita@epa.gov)). NPMs will also be responsible for entering the mid-year target adjustments in ACS and document using the [Mid-Year Adjustments for FY 2015 Commitments Template](#).

- c. **End-of-Year FY 2015 Reporting:** In **September 2015**, OCFO will include more detailed instructions on end-of-year reporting in the *FY 2015 End-of-Year Performance Reporting and Analysis Guidance*. Starting in **October 2015**, NPMs and regions will enter FY 2015 end-of-year results in ACS. Similar to the bidding process (discussed below), regions are required to enter end-of-year performance information for states and tribes in ACS for applicable measures.
2. **Establishing FY 2016 Commitments:**  
Once OCFO posts the final FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances to the [NPM Guidance website](#) in **April 2015**, NPMs will finalize operational measure language in ACS, which should reflect consideration of state and tribal input, as appropriate. Through **October 2015**, NPMs and regions will engage with state and tribes and negotiate regional commitments, as supported by the “Bidding” function in ACS.
  - a. **Entering FY 2016 Annual Commitment Measures:** In **December 2014**, OCFO will copy FY 2015 annual commitment measure codes and assignments, text, and additional information in ACS to use as draft FY 2016 measures.

NPMs should adjust the draft FY 2016 measures (e.g., edit, delete or add measures) to reflect any changes from FY 2015, consideration of state and tribal input and be consistent with EPA’s *FY 2016 Annual Plan and Budget*. NPMs and regions should follow [OCFO’s Guidances on Measures Governance](#) to ensure accurate and high-quality data for each measure. NPMs have until **April 2015** (or one week after the release of the final NPM Guidances if there is an unanticipated delay in issuance) to finalize measures in ACS.

- b. **Draft FY 2016 Regional Commitments:** NPMs and regions must enter draft commitment information in ACS. NPMs must initiate the commitment process in ACS by entering a value (including “0,” if applicable) in the “Proposed Bid” field for each commitment. From **March - July 2015**, regions should engage proactively with states and tribes to get their input. NPMs and regions also should carefully consider past performance, program areas of focus, and budget realities as they set FY 2016 targets and enter initial bids.

To ensure additional transparency in the commitment process, regions are required to identify contributions from states and tribes in achieving FY 2016 draft and final commitments and national targets, to the extent possible, and enter this information in ACS. Regions should enter state and tribal contributions using the “Comments” field on the “Bidding” screen in ACS or by assigning states and tribes as “Shareholders” in the “Edit” screen in ACS. Draft FY 2016 regional commitments are due in ACS in **June 2015**, and regions must email OCFO ([vincent.marc@epa.gov](mailto:vincent.marc@epa.gov) and [mahanta.benita@epa.gov](mailto:mahanta.benita@epa.gov)) confirming they have been entered in ACS. For more detailed instructions on data entry, see the [NPM User Manual](#) and/or the [Regional User Manual](#).

- c. **Draft FY 2016 Commitments on EPA’s SharePoint Website:** Draft bids also reduce burden and uncertainty by providing states and tribes with performance targets they can incorporate into their grant work plans, particularly when regions enter contributions from states and tribes



in ACS. Accordingly, OCFO will post reports of draft FY 2016 regional performance commitments to the [Regional Commitments SharePoint website](https://usepa.sharepoint.com/sites/OCFO%20Work/npmguidance/regionalcommitments) ([https://usepa.sharepoint.com/sites/OCFO Work/npmguidance/regionalcommitments](https://usepa.sharepoint.com/sites/OCFO%20Work/npmguidance/regionalcommitments)). External users should submit a request to [vincent.marc@epa.gov](mailto:vincent.marc@epa.gov) and [mahanta.benita@epa.gov](mailto:mahanta.benita@epa.gov) if they would like to join the site. The user will be required to create a Microsoft account and use Internet Explorer to view the reports.

The report should display only draft commitments for operational measures relevant to states and tribes (e.g., commitments associated with grant work plans). NPMs can identify these measures by clicking the “Public Access” box in the “Edit” screen in ACS. Prior to posting, OCFO will send the draft FY 2016 regional performance commitment reports to NPM and regional planning contacts to review for accuracy. In **July 2015**, OCFO will post the draft regional commitments to the [Regional Commitments SharePoint website](https://usepa.sharepoint.com/sites/OCFO%20Work/npmguidance/regionalcommitments) for review across NPM Guidances by states and tribes. The reports can serve as a useful tool to facilitate engagement.

- d. **Reaching Agreement on Final FY 2016 Commitments:** Reaching agreement in ACS is the final step of the FY 2016 commitment-setting process. Performance results will be reported against these mutually agreed-upon commitments during FY 2016. Regions should engage with states and tribes to obtain their comments on regional performance commitments from **April - September 2015**. NPMs and regions should begin finalizing bids in **September 2015** and ensure finalization of all bids by **October 2015**.

After final regional performance commitments are approved by the DRA and entered in ACS, NPMs and regions should indicate agreement in the system. NPMs should consider and respond to all regional commitments within two weeks from when regional bids are entered in ACS. NPMs and regions should reach agreement on final FY 2016 commitments in ACS by late **October 2015**. Once they reach agreement, NPMs must close bidding by checking the “Parties in Agreement (bidding closed)” box in ACS.

NPMs and regions must then email OCFO ([vincent.marc@epa.gov](mailto:vincent.marc@epa.gov) and [mahanta.benita@epa.gov](mailto:mahanta.benita@epa.gov)) confirming final performance commitments have been approved by their DAA/DRA and outstanding commitments have been brought to their attention. Additionally, NPMs and regions must notify OCFO of outstanding commitments using the [Summary of Unresolved FY 2016 Commitments Template](#). OCFO will elevate any remaining unresolved issues to the CFO and, if necessary, to the DA for dispute resolution.

## V. STREAMLINING GRANTS MANAGEMENT

The *NPM Guidance/NEPPS Workgroup* made considerable progress in aligning grant guidances, including agreement that selected grant guidances can be issued on a two-year cycle to coincide with the FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances. Most of the other grant guidances are issued infrequently or contain highly technical information. Better alignment of NPM and grant guidances reduces the workload burden for regions, states, and tribes and helps streamline the grant work planning process. Thus far, the following grant guidances have been identified for alignment:

NPM	Grant Guidance
OAR	Effective Use and Distribution of STAG Funds
OW	Water Pollution Control (CWA Sec. 106)
OW	Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) (SDWA Sec. 1443(a))
OW	Underground Injection Control (SDWA 1443(b))
OW	Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)
OCSPP	TSCA Section 404(g) Lead-Based Paint Programs State, Territory, District of Columbia, Tribal and Federal Grant

NPM	Grant Guidance
	Guidance
OECA	Toxic Substances Compliance Monitoring Cooperative Agreement Program Grant Guidance (TSCA Sec. 28 & 404)
OCSPP/OECA	Joint OPP/OECA FIFRA Cooperative Agreement Guidance (FIFRA Sec. 23(a)(1) and (2) [ <i>Note: The guidance is updated every three years, which will not change. The current FY 2015-2017 guidance will align with the FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidance.</i> ])

In addition, NPMs are expected to modify sections of their grant guidance so they comply with the Office of Grants and Debarment's (OGD) Grants Policy Issuances (GPI) 12-06 and 13-02 to implement the grant process streamlining principles for State Continuing Environmental Programs and programs under 40 CFR Part 35 Subpart B. To view the GPIs, please go to: <http://intranet.epa.gov/ogd/policy/7.0-GPI-Topics.htm>.

## VI. COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AND 40 CFR PARTS 5 AND 7

NPMs should coordinate with the Office of Administration and Resources Management, the Office of Civil Rights, and the Office of General Counsel to include, as appropriate, tasks that regions should undertake to ensure that applicants for and recipients of EPA financial assistance are in compliance with Title VI. These specific tasks may include: a more detailed review of EPA's Form 4700-4 (Non-Discrimination Form); requests for additional information from applicants or recipients to support assurances made on Form 4700; demonstration of compliance with the provisions of 40 CFR Parts 5 and 7; and/or demonstration of the extent of their limited English proficiency compliance efforts.

## VII. EPA'S OVERVIEW TO NPM GUIDANCES

To complement the individual NPM Guidances, OCFO will develop an "Overview to the NPM Guidances". This brief stand-alone document will be linked to each of the NPM Guidances as well as posted separately on OCFO's [NPM Guidance website \(http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/national-program-manager-guidances\)](http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/national-program-manager-guidances). The EPA's Overview to the FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances will:

- Communicate the documents' purpose, scope and new process;
- Provide linkages to the *FY 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan*;
- Include a brief description and reference to streamlining grants management and Title VI;
- Include the following information related to flexibility:
  - Language affirming and articulating the intent to address flexibility issues within identified parameters and using available agency processes (e.g., grant guidances; NEPPS; including PPAs/PPGs; etc.).
  - General language that refers to program-specific flexibilities found in the NPM Guidances (e.g., *Introduction*, sections on *National Areas of Focus* and *Program-Specific Guidance*).
  - General guidelines on approach for seeking approval for flexibilities (including how to address situations where NPM-specific policies/strategies impact grant negotiations) and elevating issues, as needed, as well as references to more specific information in each of the NPM Guidances on approaches to seek approval for flexibilities and elevate issues, as needed.
  - Examples of NPM-specific flexibilities, as appropriate.

**VIII. KEY MILESTONES** (*FY 2015 Milestones shaded*)

Target Date	Milestones
<b>June 30, 2014</b>	Each NPM provided to OCFO a one-page timeline on their planned approach to early engagement with states and tribes on FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidance development that was posted on the <a href="#">NPM Guidance website</a> .
<b>June – Oct 2014</b>	NPMs solicit input from states and tribes in joint priority-setting to inform development of the NPM Guidances.
<b>July 25, 2014</b>	OCFO initiated the consultation and coordination process with tribes on the FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances.
<b>Oct 27, 2014</b>	Acting CFO's <i>Development of the FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances</i> memo and OCFO's <i>Technical Guidance</i> released.
<b>Oct 31, 2014</b>	Each NPM will summarize in writing (1) the early engagement process used and (2) the early input received from states and tribes, including feedback on the most important areas of work. The summary will be shared with states/tribes to inform NPM Guidance development and updated, as appropriate, and posted on the <a href="#">NPM Guidance website</a> .
<b>Dec 1, 2014</b>	OCFO copies FY 2015 measures as draft FY 2016 measures in ACS.
<b>Jan 16, 2015</b>	Draft FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances due to OCFO.
<b>Jan 20 – 30, 2015</b>	Internal EPA review period on draft FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances. Internal partners provide <a href="#">comments</a> to appropriate NPM and OCFO contacts by <b>Jan 30</b> .
<b>Feb 18, 2015</b>	Revised draft FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances due to OCFO.
<b>Feb 23, 2015</b>	OCFO posts draft FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances to its <a href="#">NPM Guidance website</a> .
<b>March 2015</b>	OCFO issues <i>FY 2015 Mid-Year Performance Reporting and Analysis Guidance</i> . NPMs and regions enter FY 2015 mid-year performance results in ACS.
<b>Feb 23 – March 23, 2015</b>	External comment period on the draft FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances begins <b>February 23</b> .  States/ECOS/NPM conference calls.  National teleconference with tribes on <b>March 4</b> .  External partners provide <a href="#">comments</a> to appropriate NPM and OCFO contacts by <b>March 23</b> .
<b>March – June 2015</b>	Regions proactively engage with states and tribes to get their input, as appropriate, to inform development of FY 2016 draft regional performance commitments.
<b>April 23, 2015</b>	Final FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances and <a href="#">Response to Comments</a> due to OCFO.
<b>April 28, 2015</b>	OCFO posts final FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances to its <a href="#">NPM Guidance website</a> . NPMs finalize text for FY 2016 commitments in ACS.
<b>April 30, 2015</b>	NPMs must initiate FY 2016 commitment process in the system by entering a value (including "0," if applicable) in the "Proposed Bid" field for each commitment.
<b>May 25 – June 5, 2015</b>	ACS is reopened to allow <b>limited</b> mid-year adjustments to FY 2015 commitments.
<b>June 12, 2015</b>	NPMs notify OCFO of any <a href="#">Mid-Year Adjustments to FY 2015 commitments</a>
<b>June 30, 2015</b>	FY 2016 draft regional performance commitments due in ACS. Regions email OCFO ( <a href="mailto:vincent.marc@epa.gov">vincent.marc@epa.gov</a> and <a href="mailto:mahanta.benita@epa.gov">mahanta.benita@epa.gov</a> ) indicating they have entered draft FY 2016 regional performance commitments that reflect state and tribal input, as appropriate.
<b>July – Oct 2015</b>	NPMs continue to engage regions, states and tribes in negotiating final FY 2016 regional performance commitments; they should reach agreement throughout July-October timeframe.
<b>July 10, 2015</b>	OCFO posts FY 2016 draft regional commitments to the <a href="#">Regional Commitments SharePoint website</a> to facilitate state and tribal review and comment.

Target Date	Milestones
<b>Sept 2015</b>	OCFO issues <i>FY 2015 End-of-Year Performance Reporting and Analysis Guidance</i> .
<b>Sept 10, 2015</b>	Last day for states and tribes to comment on FY 2016 draft regional commitments.
<b>Sept 15, 2015</b>	NPMs and Regions begin finalizing FY 2016 commitments, particularly those that inform grant work plans.
<b>Oct 16, 2015</b>	FY 2016 regional final commitment information reflecting DRA approval due in ACS.
<b>Oct 30, 2015</b>	NPMs and regions reach agreement in ACS on FY 2016 performance commitments.
<b>Nov 13, 2015</b>	NPMs and regions email OCFO ( <a href="mailto:vincent.marc@epa.gov">vincent.marc@epa.gov</a> and <a href="mailto:mahanta.benita@epa.gov">mahanta.benita@epa.gov</a> ) indicating DRA/DAA approval of final FY 2016 performance commitments in ACS, and that they are aware of <a href="#">unresolved FY 16 commitments</a> for CFO dispute resolution.
<b>Nov 20, 2015</b>	FY 2016 final commitments posted to <a href="#">Regional Commitments SharePoint website</a> .
<b>Nov 27, 2015</b>	ACS locked to prevent any adjustments to FY 2016 commitments.

## IX. KEY CONTACTS

Office/Project Area	Contact	Phone
<b>OCFO</b>		
NPM Guidance	Joe Greenblott ( <i>Management Advisor</i> ) Marc Vincent ( <i>Project Lead</i> ) Benita Mahanta	202-564-4250 202-564-0876 202-564-1881
ACS	Dominic Nelson Billy Faggart	202-564-0106 202-564-3576
FY 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan	Sharon Vazquez	202-564-1622
<b>NPM Planners</b>		
OAR	Margaret Walters	202-564-4107
OW	Vinh Nguyen	202-564-4631
OSWER	Howard Rubin	202-566-1899
OCSPP	Jennifer Vernon	202-564-6573
OECA	Maureen Lydon	202-564-4046
OEI	Jill Smink	202-540-9196
State Grant Work Plans	Jennifer Hublar	202-564-5294
OCIR/NEPPS	Reynold Meni	202-564-3669
OITA	Mike Weckesser	202-564-0324
<b>Regional Planners</b>		
1	Sarah Levinson	617-918-1390
2	Jennifer Thatcher	212-637-3593
3	Angela Ithier	215-814-5248
4	Rick Durbrow	404-562-8286
5	Morgan Jencius Mayra Maldonado	312-886-2407 312-353-6261
6	Dannell Brown	214-665-7279
7	Richard Sumpter	913-551-7661
8	Stephanie Vuong	303-312-7824
9	Kathy Meltzer	415-972-3714
10	Brooks Stanfield Andrea Westenberger	206-553-4423 206-553-6111

## X. FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

The following format requirements build on the instructions detailed in [Section II](#). NPMs should ensure early engagement with states and tribes, as well as flexibilities, are incorporated throughout the NPM Guidances.

When developing the draft and final NPM Guidances, NPMs should consult and follow the EPA's [Grammar, Style and Usage Guide](#). NPMs must submit draft and final FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances to OCFO in both a Word and a PDF format compliant with §508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act (for detailed instructions, see: EPA Web Work Group, Accessibility/508 Standards at <http://intranet.epa.gov/webgroup/accessibility.html>).

Both the draft and final FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances must include a National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) number. NPMs can request a NSCEP number via the following website: [http://cincinnati.epa.gov/services/nscep/nscep\\_form.asp](http://cincinnati.epa.gov/services/nscep/nscep_form.asp). NPMs should display the NSCEP number on the cover of their respective NPM Guidance. NPMs also should adhere to the following specified requirements:

- a. **Paginated Table of Contents:** NPM Guidances must contain a paginated table of contents.
- b. **NPM Introduction:** Each NPM will prepare an introduction to:
  - Provide NPM-specific context;
  - An opportunity for the Assistant Administrator to highlight messages of national importance for the two upcoming fiscal years;
  - Describe how input received from states and tribes during the early engagement process informed priority-setting and NPM Guidance development; and
  - Affirm and articulate the program's intent to address flexibility issues within identified parameters and using available agency processes.
  - It should also include a sentence linking to the Overview which will be posted on the [NPM Guidance website](#) (<http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/national-program-manager-guidances>). The guideline for the *Introduction* is three pages.
- c. **FY 2016-2017 National Areas of Focus Guidance:** Building on the early engagement with states and tribes to help identify the most important environmental and human health protection areas of work, NPMs should identify national areas of focus for two years that take into account state/tribal input on NPM-specific topics and those requiring cross-program coordination. The guideline is up to eight national areas of focus. However, Assistant Administrators can include additional national areas of focus if they determine doing so is essential for advancing the EPA's mission. This section should also include language on parameters for flexibilities and guidelines for seeking approval for flexibilities and elevating issues, as appropriate. The guideline is no more than one and a half pages for each national area of focus using the following format:

<b>Short Title of the National Area of Focus</b>
<b>Description:</b> <i>Briefly describe the national area of focus for the two upcoming fiscal years.</i>
<b>Activities:</b> <i>List the tasks or action items supporting the national area of focus for the two upcoming fiscal years. Use bulleted format. Specify when states and/or tribes are responsible for the activities.</i>
<b>Measures:</b> <i>As appropriate, the NPM should describe the key measure(s) associated with the national area of focus and any clarification necessary. At a minimum, NPMs should cite where in the Measures Appendix the supporting measures are described [i.e., "See ACS measures with code numbers (insert #) in Appendix # on pages #."]</i>

- d. **FY 2016-2017 Program-Specific Guidance (Optional):** This is an optional section for NPMs to discuss program areas not addressed in the previous section and provide program-specific guidance where NPM direction is critical for two years. This should build on the early engagement effort with states and tribes and take into account input on NPM-specific topics and



those requiring cross-program coordination. This section should also include language on parameters for flexibilities and guidelines for seeking approval for flexibilities and elevating issues, as appropriate. The guideline is up to one page per program area using the following format:

<b>Short Title of the Program</b>
<b>Description:</b> <i>Briefly describe the specific program for the two upcoming fiscal years.</i>
<b>Activities:</b> <i>List the tasks or action items supporting the specific program for the two upcoming fiscal years. Use bulleted format. Specify when states and/or tribes are responsible for the activities.</i>
<b>Measures:</b> <i>As appropriate, the NPM should describe the key measure(s) associated with the specific program and any clarification necessary. At a minimum, NPMs should cite where in the Measures Appendix the supporting measures are described [i.e., "See ACS measures with code numbers (insert #) in Appendix # on pages #."]</i>

- e. **Appendices:** Required appendices to the draft and final FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances are identified below. NPMs can include additional attachments to provide supplemental information, as needed.
- i. **[FY 2016 Measures Appendix](#):** This appendix provides easy reference to and clearly identifies annual operational commitment measures and non-commitment indicators requiring reporting by the regions, states and/or tribes. NPMs should include national planning targets to guide the negotiation process for commitments developed from the aggregate contributions of headquarters, regions, states, and tribes. NPMs should also include the national targets from the *FY 2016 Annual Plan and Budget* for comparison, where applicable. NPMs may supplement information in OCFO's [Measures Appendix](#) as needed.
  - ii. **[Explanation of Changes between FY 2014-2015 and FY 2016-2017](#):** NPMs should provide the rationale, context and scope of changes, from the FY 2014 NPM Guidance and FY 2015 Addendum to national areas of focus, program-specific guidance, activities, and measures.
  - iii. **[Key Contacts](#):** NPMs should identify the key contacts for each national area of focus and program area.
- f. **[External Comments and Response to Comments Summary Template](#):** NPMs must use this template to respond to all comments from states, tribes, and other partners by providing a brief, but specific, explanation of how comments were addressed in the final FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances. This will be submitted separately from the NPM Guidance.
- g. **Summary for Key Changes for States and Tribes:** NPMs must summarize the key changes for [states](#) and [tribes](#) using their respective templates. NPMs should address significant additions, changes, deletions, and work-sharing/streamlining opportunities. These will be submitted separately from the NPM Guidance.
- h. **Templates** (Available via SharePoint using Internet Explorer and EPA Email Address)
- i. [Mid-Year Adjustments for FY 2015 Commitments](#)
  - ii. [FY 2016 Measures Appendix](#)
  - iii. [Explanation of Changes between FY 2014-2015 and FY 2016-2017](#)
  - iv. [Key Contacts](#)
  - v. [Summary of Key Changes for States](#)
  - vi. [Summary of Key Changes for Tribes](#)
  - vii. [External Comments and Response to Comments Summary](#)
  - viii. [Summary of Issues for Unresolved FY 2016 Commitments](#)
  - ix. [Internal Comments Template](#)