



FY 2018-2019

*OCFO's Technical
Guidance: FY 2018-
2019 National
Program Manager
Guidance and
Annual Commitment
Process*

July 19, 2016



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**OCFO'S TECHNICAL GUIDANCE:
FY 2018-2019 NATIONAL PROGRAM MANAGER GUIDANCE & ANNUAL COMMITMENT
PROCESS July 19, 2016**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The *Office of the Chief Financial Officer's (OCFO) Technical Guidance: FY 2018-2019 National Program Manager Guidance and Annual Commitment Process* provides National Program Managers (NPMs) with specific details, deliverables, and milestones to guide development of the FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances and the annual commitment process. The NPM Guidances set forth the operational priorities and strategies the EPA and its state and tribal partners will undertake to protect human health and the environment, consistent with priorities in EPA's Annual Performance Plan and Budget and *EPA Strategic Plan*.

The NPM Guidances and grant guidances serve as a national framework for the 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. The NPM Guidances help advance EPA's five strategic goals and four cross-agency strategies (CAS) in the current *FY 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan*. Note: Development of strategic goals and objectives will be underway for the FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan prior to issuance of the final FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances. We will work to integrate the two efforts.

Importantly, the NPM Guidances reflect the national priorities and strategies of the administration and align with the President's Budget; consequently, the draft and final NPM Guidances are issued after the release of the President's Budget. The transition to a new administration will delay the release of the FY 2018 President's Budget Request (from early February to March or later); therefore, we are extending the timeframe for early engagement to December 1, 2016, and providing placeholder milestones for issuing draft and final NPM Guidances in 2017. Early engagement prior to the transition to a new administration will provide the agency valuable input to help inform the new agency leaderships' priorities and strategies; however, it also will be important for NPMs and regions to continue engaging with states and tribes throughout the transition, and keep them informed about the new administration's direction.

Beginning in FY 2016, EPA implemented a two-year cycle for the NPM Guidances, which includes exceptions-based addendums in the second year to address high level changes not captured in the two-year guidances. The two-year cycle and process was informed by recommendations from the EPA-State NPM Guidance/NEPPS workgroup. OCFO conducted an assessment of the FY 2016-2017 process (available on the [NPM Guidance website](#)) to gather input from the NPM Guidance/NEPPS workgroup and members of EPA's planning and budgeting community. Based on the results of the assessment, the workgroup recommended:

- *Promoting additional dialogue among EPA headquarter offices, regions, states, and tribes during early engagement and involving a broad community of stakeholders.*
- *Continuing to strengthen early engagement with co-regulators, partners, and stakeholders on the most important areas of focus to inform commitment-setting for EPA operational measures.*

For the FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances, EPA will continue to strengthen meaningful engagement and promote flexibility for states and tribes. EPA also will seek to incorporate cross-agency strategies and other cross-cutting efforts (e.g., [children's health](#), [E-Enterprise](#); and the [Environmental Justice \(EJ\) 2020 Action Agenda](#)).

II. 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 posted separately on OCFO's [NPM Guidance website](#) and must be linked within each NPM Guidance. The EPA's Overview to the FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances will:

- Communicate the documents' purpose and scope;
- Provide linkages to the *FY 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan* and *FY 2018-2022 EPA Strategic Plan (under development)*;
- Include a brief description and reference to streamlining grants management and Title VI;

- Include the following information related to flexibility:
 - Language affirming flexibilities available to states and tribes within identified parameters and using available agency processes (e.g., grant guidances; NEPPS - including Performance Partnership Agreements (PPAs)/Performance Partnership Grants (PPGs).
 - General language that refers to program-specific flexibilities found in the NPM Guidances.
 - 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.

III. DEVELOPING FY 2018-2019 NPM GUIDANCES

This section provides guidelines to NPMs for developing their individual Guidances, and includes the following areas: 1) early engagement with states and tribes; 2) development of the NPM Guidances; and 3) internal and public reviews.

1. **Early Engagement with States and Tribes to Frame Guidance Development:** NPMs and regions will engage collaboratively with states and tribes to identify the most important areas of focus for protecting the environment and human health.

A. Early Engagement – Process

- a. ***Time-Frame for Early Engagement:*** July 19 – December 1, 2016
- b. ***Early Engagement Plans:*** By July 26, 2016, NPMs will submit to OCFO short (1-2 page) timelines/planned approaches for early engagement. OCFO will post the “Early Engagement Plans” on the [NPM Guidance website](#). In developing their Early Engagement Plans, NPMs should:
 - Utilize new and existing opportunities for soliciting state/tribal input and proposed priorities.
 - Employ a combination of NPM and regional-driven requests for input from states and tribes.
 - Engage with national associations, state and other media-specific associations, the National Tribal Operations Committee, the Regional Tribal Operations Committee, and Tribal/NPM and Tribal/Regional workgroups to obtain both broad and media-specific perspectives.
 - *Ensure Early Engagement Plans submitted to OCFO are Section 508 compliant.*¹
- c. ***Consultation and Coordination Process with Federally Recognized Tribes:*** During the summer/fall 2016 early engagement period, OCFO will send consultation notification letters to all federally-recognized tribes to provide both an overarching opportunity for early input from tribes on draft FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidance development and consultation on the draft NPM Guidances. This consultation opportunity complements efforts by NPMs seeking early input from their tribal partners. Information about consultation and coordination with tribes can be found on the agency’s [Tribal Consultation Opportunities Website](#).
- d. ***Early Engagement Summaries:*** By December 1, 2016, each NPM will submit to OCFO a 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 areas of

¹ OCFO will consolidate the Early Engagement Plans into a single document with one EPA publication number.

focus/priorities of multiple programs. This summary will inform development of the draft NPM Guidances. OCFO will post these summaries on the [NPM Guidance website](#).

- *Early Engagement Summaries submitted to OCFO must be Section 508 compliant and have a NSCEP number.*

B. Early Engagement – Key Considerations

- a. ***Principles for Early Engagement:*** While NPMs and regions have flexibility in how to implement engagement, NPMs should consider the following principles during the early engagement period:
 - Cross-Program Coordination – Importance of early identification of joint areas of focus of multiple programs to ensure effective cross-program coordination.
 - Flexibility – Each NPM and Region should tailor an approach for engagement that meets the mutual needs of EPA, states, and tribes.
 - Minimal Burden – Ensure the greatest “payoff” for EPA, states, and tribes through efficient collaborative processes.
 - Transparency and Communications – Document and communicate engagement efforts (i.e., approach, participants, and results).
 - Provide regions, states and tribes with adequate notice of early engagement opportunities and clearly communicate roles and responsibilities.
 - Provide feedback to regions, states, and tribes on how the results of early engagement are being considered in the NPM Guidance development process.
 - Work with Lead Regions, as appropriate, to facilitate information sharing and engagement efforts.
 - Use templates to capture state and tribal input.
- b. ***Cross-Agency Strategies:*** The four cross-agency strategies outlined in the current *FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan* (Working Toward a Sustainable Future; Working to Make a Visible Difference in Communities; Launching a New Era of State, Tribal, Local, and International Partnerships; Embracing EPA as a High-Performing Organization) are delivering changes to how the EPA achieves its results by leveraging programs, resources, tools, and expertise across NPMs and Regions. Cross-agency strategy facilitation teams should engage with NPMs early on in the NPM Guidance development process, especially during early engagement with a focus on NPM-specific implementation activities. Over the next year as EPA develops the FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, NPMs should consider any updates to cross-agency strategy work.
- c. ***Joint Program Priorities and Collaboration:*** EPA programs and regions should identify environmental or health issues requiring active participation of multiple programs and, as appropriate, address those issues in the NPM Guidances (e.g., implementation strategies; measures).
- d. ***Environmental Justice (EJ) 2020 Action Agenda Implementation:*** Consistent with the Agency’s commitment in the EJ 2020 Action Agenda, NPMs and regions will work with states and tribes to disseminate best practices and develop shared expectations to address adverse impacts to and disparities in vulnerable, environmentally burdened, and economically disadvantaged communities. NPMs will reflect these shared expectations in NPM Guidances and annual commitments.
- e. ***E-Enterprise:*** During early engagement, NPMs, regions, states, and tribes will discuss the NPM’s updated list of E-Enterprise national and aligned projects for which the respective NPM is a project lead, to explore potential benefits to regions, states, and tribes from participating in or coordinating with the work of those E-Enterprise projects, and how the

projects may currently include or be expanded to include complementary priorities, processes, or objectives of the regions, states, and tribes.

In addition, the FY 2016 Partnerships Action Plan directs that conversations be held among these participants, in the regular program discussions of the applicable Regional Division Directors and NPMs, about further work to advance the projects posted by the EPA Regions pursuant to that Action Plan. Deputy Chief Financial Officer (DCFO) David Bloom's memoranda of April 16 and June 9, 2016 (available under "Related Documents" on EPA's [E-Enterprise for the Environment Partnerships Action Plan SharePoint site](#)) give further details about next steps needed to hold and report on the results of those conversations and follow-up work.

- f. **Children's Health:*** EPA continues to prioritize children's health to ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address disproportionate risks to children that result from environmental health risks or safety risks. As such, NPMs and regions will engage with each other and with states and tribes to inform development of the NPM Guidances and annual commitments and ensure that they reflect EPA's commitment to children's health. NPMs especially should consider existing strategic measures that reference children and their environments.

2. **Developing the NPM Guidances:** The substantive content of the NPM Guidances are contained in three major sections: (a) Introduction, (b) National Areas of Focus, (c) Program-Specific Guidance (optional), and (d) four required appendices -- FY 2018 Measures Appendix, Explanation of Changes between FY 2016-2017 and FY 2018-2019, E-Enterprise Projects, and Key Contacts.

NPMs will affirm 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. Flexibility enables EPA to work with states and tribes to streamline approaches, reduce workload, and leverage resources to advance our collective mission. To highlight the importance of flexibility, NPM Guidances will include the following:

- *Introduction:* Language that affirms and articulates the intent to address flexibility issues within identified parameters and using current or new agency processes.
 - *National Areas of Focus and Program-Specific Guidance:* Language on parameters for flexibilities, such as clearly identified areas that are discretionary, where appropriate.
 - *Where appropriate—in Introduction or National Areas of Focus and Program-Specific Guidance:* Specific guidelines for seeking approval for flexibilities and well-defined processes for elevating issues.
- a. **Introduction.*** The introduction should provide NPM-specific context and include an overarching message highlighting the most significant areas of focus for FY 2018-2019. The introduction also should:
- Describe how input received from states and tribes during the early engagement process informed priority-setting and NPM Guidance development.
 - Clearly communicate the availability of flexibilities and associated mechanisms/approaches to advance the most important environmental and human health work.
 - Encourage regions, states, and tribes to participate in or coordinate any E-Enterprise projects where they can benefit from complementary priorities, processes, or objectives.
 - Commit to at least annual consideration – in collaboration with states and tribes in the regular program discussions of the applicable Regional Division Directors and NPMs – of joint projects proposed by the regions for potential scalability as national E-Enterprise projects or for continuation as E-Enterprise-aligned projects.

- b. **National Areas of Focus:** Building on the early engagement with states and tribes, NPMs should identify national areas of focus and associated activities and strategies for FY 2018-2019.
- Translate decisions made in EPA's FY 2018 Annual Plan and Budget into operational strategies and measures to guide regional implementation with states and tribes.
 - Ensure that all National Areas of Focus align with and reflect the goals and strategies in the *FY 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan*. This includes EPA's current five strategic goals and the four cross-agency strategies that address sustainability, communities, partnerships, and EPA as a high performing organization. Note: Development of strategic goals, objectives and strategies will be underway for FY 2018-2022 EPA Strategic Plan prior to issuance of final FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances. OCFO will work with NPMs and Regions to integrate the two efforts.
 - Explain to the extent possible how adverse impacts to and disparities in vulnerable, environmentally burdened, and economically disadvantaged communities are addressed.
 - Include language on parameters for flexibilities and guidelines for seeking approval for flexibilities and elevating issues, as appropriate.
- c. **Program-Specific Guidance (only if essential):** This section provides NPMs the opportunity to discuss program areas not addressed in the previous section and provide program-specific guidance where NPM direction is critical for the two year period covered by the guidance. This also should build on the early engagement effort with states and tribes and take into account input on NPM-specific topics and those requiring coordination and collaboration across multiple programs. If this section is included in an NPM Guidance, it should contain language on parameters for flexibilities and guidelines for seeking approval for flexibilities and elevating issues within specific programs, as appropriate.
- d. **Required Appendices**
- **FY 2018 Measures Appendix:** NPMs will use the *FY 2018 NPM Guidance Measures Appendix Template* (available on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#)) to communicate new, continued, revised, or discontinued measures, indicators, FY 2018 planning targets, and any comments/clarification.
 - **Explanation of Changes between FY 2016-2017 and FY 2018-2019:** NPMs should use the *Explanation of Changes between FY 2016-2017 and FY 2018-2019 Template* (available on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#)) to provide the rationale, context and scope of changes from the FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidance and FY 2017 Addendum to national areas of focus, program-specific guidance, activities, measures, and grant guidance.
 - **E-Enterprise Projects:** As in the FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances, each NPM Guidance will use the *E-Enterprise Projects Template* (available on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#)) to update their list of E-Enterprise national and aligned projects for which the respective NPM is a project lead.
 - **Key Contacts:** NPMs should use the *Key Contacts Template* (available on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#)) to identify the key contacts for each national area of focus and program area.

3. Reviews

- a. **Internal Agency Review:** EPA will conduct an internal agency-wide review prior to disseminating draft NPM Guidances for public review and comment. The internal review provides an important opportunity for agency-wide vetting. The internal draft NPM Guidances

and the *Internal Comments and Response to Comments Template* will be posted on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#).

During the internal review period, NPMs will engage with internal commenters, as needed, to ensure input is understood clearly and considered fully.

- b. **Public Review:** The draft FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances will be posted to the [NPM Guidance website](#) for a one month public review and comment period.
- **In preparation for the public comment period,** NPMs will use the templates available on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#) to prepare and submit to OCFO a *Summary of Key Changes for States* and a *Summary of Key Changes for Tribes*.
 - These summaries should address significant additions, changes, deletions, and work-sharing/streamlining opportunities.
 - The summaries will be posted with the draft FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances on the [NPM Guidance website](#) to facilitate engagement during the public review period.
 - Draft NPM Guidances, Summary of Key Changes for States, and Summary of Key Changes for Tribes.
 - **During the public comment period,** NPMs and Regions will:
 - Clearly communicate to stakeholders the objectives of the review process and broadly publicize the opportunity to comment.
 - Engage with states, tribes, and other external stakeholders to discuss key changes from the FY 2016-2017 NPM Guidances and the FY 2017 Addendums.
 - Participate in national teleconference call(s) for tribes to provide an overview of the process for commenting on the draft FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances and discuss key changes that may affect tribes.
 - States, tribes, and other interested parties may submit comments using the *External Comments and Response to Comments Template*, which also will be posted on the [NPM Guidance website](#).
 - NPMs will use this template to respond to all comments from states, tribes, and other interested parties by providing a brief explanation of how comments were addressed in the final FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances.
 - The responses to public comments are posted with the final NPM Guidances; they must be Section 508 compliant and have a NSCEP number.

IV. FORMAT REQUIREMENTS FOR NPM GUIDANCES

When developing draft and final NPM Guidances, NPMs should consult and follow the EPA's [Grammar, Style and Usage Guide](#). NPMs should use the § 508 compliant *NPM Guidance Template*, which will be available on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#), and which adheres to the following outline:

1. **Paginated Table of Contents:** NPM Guidances must contain a paginated table of contents.
2. **NPM Introduction:** The Introduction should include a sentence linking to OCFO's NPM Guidance Overview, which will be posted on the [NPM Guidance website](#). The Introduction should be no longer than three pages.
3. **FY 2018-2019 National Areas of Focus Guidance:** The guideline is up to eight national areas of focus; however, NPMs can include additional national areas of focus if they determine doing so is essential for advancing EPA's mission. The guideline is no more than 2-5 pages for each national area of focus using the following format:

- **Short Title of National Focus**
 - **Description:** Briefly describe the national area of focus for the two upcoming fiscal years.
 - **Activities:** List the activities 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.
 - **Measures:** As appropriate, NPMs will describe the key measure(s) associated with the national area of focus and clarification necessary. At a minimum, NPMs should cite where in the Measures Appendix the supporting measures are described [e.g., “See ACS measures with code numbers (insert #) in Appendix # on pages #.”]
4. ***FY 2018-2019 Program-Specific Guidance (Optional):*** NPMs may discuss program areas not addressed in the previous section. The guideline is up to one page per program area using the following format:
- **Short Title of the Program**
 - **Description:** Briefly describe the specific program for the two upcoming fiscal years.
 - **Activities:** List the activities supporting the specific program for the two upcoming fiscal years. Use bulleted format. Specify when states and/or tribes are responsible for the activities.
 - **Measures:** 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 #.”]
5. ***Appendices:*** Required appendices to the draft and final FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances are: FY 2018 Measures Appendix, Explanation of Changes between FY 2016-2017 and FY 2018-2019, E-Enterprise Projects, and Key Contacts. NPMs will use the § 508 compliance templates located on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#) to prepare these documents. NPMs can include additional attachments/appendices to provide supplemental information, as needed.

V. 508 COMPLIANCE AND PUBLICATION NUMBERS

Each NPM is required to submit its respective draft and final FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances to OCFO in both Word and PDF format compliant with § 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act (for detailed instructions, see [EPA Web Workgroup on Accessibility](#)).

- To understand what is required to maintain § 508 compliance, OEI offers Introduction to Accessible Microsoft Word 2013, Introduction to PDF Accessibility, Advanced Accessibility for PDFs and other [pre-recorded and live webinars](#). To request additional training, contact OEI Section 508 Program at section508@epa.gov. To ensure draft and final NPM Guidance documents submitted to OCFO are § 508 compliant, NPM Planners are advised to contact your respective [Section 508 Liaison](#) and/or [Web Council Member](#) for guidance, which may include assistance. If in-house assistance is unavailable, NPMs may purchase the [Web and Applications Development](#) Working Capital Fund service to perform § 508 compliance. OCFO encourages each NPM Planner to determine your preferred approach early and make the appropriate arrangements. Regardless of selected approach, NPM Planners should build in the lead time required to ensure documents are § 508 compliant.

- The draft and final FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances also must include a National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) number. NPMs can request a NSCEP number via the [NSCEP Website](#). NPMs should display the NSCEP number on the cover of their respective NPM Guidance.
- OCFO's Web Editor-in-Chief will return noncompliant documents to each NPM's respective [Section 508 Liaison](#) and [Web Council Member](#) for analysis and resolution. OCFO will not post NPM Guidance documents to the NPM Guidance website until they are § 508 compliant and have a NSCEP number.

VI. ANNUAL COMMITMENT SYSTEM (ACS)

EPA will use the Annual Commitment System (ACS) to track annual headquarters and regional performance information and results. While 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 2018 regional commitments. A user manual and instructions for entering information in ACS is found at <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.

OCFO is developing a new agency-wide performance system as part of EPA's new Budget Formulation System (the new Budget Automation System), which will replace ACS in 2017. OCFO will provide an update to this guidance when the new system is launched.

VII. ADJUSTING AND REPORTING FY 2017 ANNUAL COMMITMENTS

1. **Mid-Year FY 2017 Commitment Adjustments:** OCFO emphasizes that *mid-year commitment adjustments are not a re-opening of the FY 2017 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 [May 2017](#) for NPMs and regions to enter mid-year adjustments. An adjustment is permitted only *in those limited cases where both the NPM and region believe it is **significant and critical***. Commitment adjustments for FY 2017 operational measures associated with the budget (i.e., budget measure targets) are not allowed, unless the adjustment aligns the commitment with the budget target following OMB approval of FY 2017 target changes after the commitment was finalized.
 - NPMs will work with regions on the proposed commitment adjustments and keep changes to a minimum.
 - NPMs will submit proposed changes to OCFO (buchard.beth@epa.gov and murphy.dan@epa.gov) using the *Mid-Year Adjustments FY 2017 Commitments Template* found on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#).
2. **Reporting FY 2017 Results:** NPMs and regions should report mid- and end-of-year progress following issuance of OCFO's reporting and analysis guidances 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.

VIII. ESTABLISHING FY 2018 OPERATIONAL MEASURES AND ANNUAL COMMITMENTS

NPM Guidances govern operational measures that are managed in ACS, many of which align with annual budget measures. NPMs, along with regions, states, and tribes, should review the FY 2017 operational measures and consider changes in measures that result in a useful 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. NPMs and regions should adhere to the following guidelines when developing FY 2018 operational measures and commitments:

1. **Establishing FY 2018 Operational Measures:** Most NPMs will use the FY 2017 operational measures as the starting point for FY 2018. In December 2016, OCFO will copy FY 2017 annual commitment measure codes and assignments, text, and additional information in ACS to use as draft FY 2018 performance measures.
 - NPMs should adjust the draft FY 2018 measures (e.g., edit, delete or add measures) to reflect any changes from FY 2017, including consideration of state and tribal input.
 - Measure adjustments should be consistent with EPA's *FY 2018 Annual Plan and Budget*.
 - If measures are revised or new measures are added, NPMs should use the OCFO [performance measures guidelines](#) and the [Phase I](#) and [II](#) supplemental guidance documents, to ensure accurate and high-quality data for each measure.
 - FY 2018 planning targets for operational measures generally should not be less ambitious than FY 2016 actual results or final FY 2017 regional commitments, unless there is a compelling reason (e.g., policy changes; resource constraints).
 - Once OCFO posts the final FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances to the [NPM Guidance website](#) in 2017, NPMs will have one week to finalize operational measure language in ACS.
2. **Meaningful Engagement with States and Tribes on Commitment-Setting for FY 2018:** From spring - fall 2017, 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. During this time, NPMs and regions should:
 - Clearly communicate the purpose of the NPM Guidances in relation to commitment-setting, and clarify, as needed, the relationship with grant work planning.
 - Reflect input from states and tribes as the basis for beginning negotiations with NPMs.
3. **Entry of Draft FY 2018 Regional Commitments in ACS:** 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.
 - NPMs and regions also should consider past performance, program areas of focus, and budget realities as they set FY 2018 targets and enter initial bids.
 - To provide transparency in the commitment process, regions, as appropriate, should consider identifying contributions from states and tribes in achieving FY 2018 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 2018 regional commitments are due in ACS in summer 2017, and regions must email OCFO (burchard.beth@epa.gov and murphy.dan@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](#).
4. **Draft FY 2018 Regional Performance Commitments:** Sharing draft bids can help 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. To facilitate this, in summer 2017 OCFO will share reports of draft FY 2018 regional performance commitments with the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) to distribute to states. These reports can also serve as a useful tool to facilitate engagement.

- To ensure the reports display only commitments for operational measures *relevant to states and tribes* (e.g., commitments associated with grant work plans), NPMs will identify those measures in ACS by clicking the “Public Access” box in the “Edit” screen.
- Prior to distribution to ECOS, OCFO will notify NPM and regional planning contacts and post the draft FY 2018 regional performance commitment reports to the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#) for review.

During the NPM/regional bidding, regions should 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.

5. **Reaching Agreement on Final FY 2018 Commitments:** Reaching agreement in ACS is the final step of the FY 2018 commitment-setting process. Performance results will be reported against these mutually agreed-upon commitments during FY 2018.
 - Regions should engage with states and tribes to obtain their comments on regional performance commitments.
 - NPMs and regions should finalize all bids during fall 2017.
 - 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.
 - Once NPMs and regions reach agreement on final FY 2018 commitments in ACS, NPMs must close bidding by checking the “Parties in Agreement (bidding closed)” box in ACS.

NPMs and regions must email OCFO (burchard.beth@epa.gov and murphy.dan@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 Issues for Unresolved FY 2018 Commitments Template* (available on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#)). OCFO will elevate any remaining unresolved issues to the DCFO for resolution.

IX. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS

NPMs should coordinate with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), and the Office of General Counsel (OGC), as appropriate, to ensure that applicants for and recipients of EPA financial assistance are in compliance with the civil rights nondiscrimination regulations [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (Pub. L. 92-500), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Age Discrimination Act)]. These specific tasks may include: coordinating efforts on OCR complaint investigations and assistance with post-award compliance review and/or technical assistance to EPA recipients; review and coordination of EPA’s Form 4700-4 (Pre-award Compliance Review Report for All Applicants and Recipients Requesting EPA Financial Assistance), and assistance and coordination of any needed pre-award technical assistance to grantees as a result of grantee responses to Form 4700 questions.

X. GRANTS MANAGEMENT

1. **Alignment of Grants Guidance with The Two Year NPM Guidance Process:** Considerable progress has been made in aligning grant guidances with the two-year NPM Guidance cycle. Alignment of NPM and grant guidances reduces the workload burden for regions, states, and tribes by streamlining the grant work planning process. The grant guidances listed below are aligned with

their respective NPM Guidance; grant guidances not listed are issued on other schedules. The workgroup will continue to work with NPMs to align other grant guidances not listed below.

NPM	Grant Guidance
OAR	Effective Use and Distribution of STAG Funds (Air Program State Grants)
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 Guidance
OECA	Toxic Substances Compliance Monitoring Cooperative Agreement Program Grant Guidance (TSCA Sec. 28 & 404)
OCSPP/OECA	Joint OPP/OECA FIFRA Sec. 23(a)(1) and (2) Cooperative Agreement Guidance [<i>Note: The guidance will be updated this Fall 2016, concurrently with the development of the FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidance.</i>]

2. **Compliance with Grants Policies:** NPM guidances and grant guidances should comply with the Office of Grants and Debarment's (OGD) [Grants Policy Issuances](#) (GPI), including (but not limited to):

- **G15-01, 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.
- **17-01**, (Sustainability in EPA Assistance Agreements). Beginning in FY 2018, NPM guidances shall include the requirements of GPI 17-01 for sustainability in EPA assistance agreements.

XI. **CONSOLIDATED LIST OF TEMPLATES** (Available on the [NPM Guidance SharePoint Site](#))

Templates for Internal Documents

Mid-Year Adjustments for FY 2017 Commitments
 Summary of Issues for Unresolved FY 2018 Commitments
 Internal Comments and Response to Comments Template

Section 508 Compliant Templates for Externally Published Appendices and Documents²

NPM Guidance Template
 Measures Appendix Template
 Explanation of Key Changes between FY 2016-2017 and FY 2018-2019 Template
 Key Contacts
 Summary of Key Changes for States
 Summary of Key Changes for Tribes
 Public Comments and Response to Comments Template
 E-Enterprise Projects

² The use of a § 508 compliant template does not obviate the requirement for NPMs to conduct a separate § 508 compliance review of the completed templates.

APPENDIX A: KEY MILESTONES

OCFO will provide an update to this Appendix with specific 2017 target dates once the schedule for issuing the FY 2018 President's Budget is final.

Target Date	NPM Guidance Development
July 26, 2016	NPMs submit to OCFO a § 508 compliant, one-page timeline on their planned approach to early engagement with states and tribes on FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidance development
July – December	NPMs solicit input from states and tribes to inform development of the NPM Guidances
Summer	OCFO initiates the consultation and coordination process with tribes on the FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances
December 1	NPMs submit to OCFO a § 508 compliant Summary of Early Engagement that describes (1) the early engagement process used; and (2) the input received from states and tribes, including feedback on the most important areas of work
January 2017	Transition to a New Administration
Spring	FY 2018 Annual Performance Plan and Congressional Justification due to Congress
June	Initial Draft of EPA's Strategic Plan Due to Administration
TBD	Internal 2-week EPA review of draft FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances. Comments provided to appropriate NPM and OCFO contacts. Draft guidances will be available on the NPM Guidance SharePoint site
TBD	Revised, draft § 508 compliant FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances due to OCFO
TBD	External comment period on the draft FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States/ECOS/NPM conference calls • National teleconference with tribes • External partners provide comments to appropriate NPM and OCFO contacts
TBD	Final § 508 compliant FY 2018-2019 NPM Guidances due to OCFO

Target Date	FY 2017 Mid-Year Adjustments and Performance Reporting Process
March 2017	OCFO issues FY 2017 Mid-Year Performance Reporting and Analysis Guidance. NPMs and regions enter FY 2017 mid-year performance results in ACS
May 22 - June 2	ACS is reopened to allow limited mid-year adjustments to FY 2017 commitments
June 9	NPMs notify OCFO of any Mid-Year Adjustments to FY 2017 commitments
Summer	OCFO issues <i>FY 2017 End-of-Year Performance Reporting and Analysis Guidance</i>

Target Date	FY 2018 Annual Commitment Process
December 2016	OCFO copies FY 2017 measures as draft FY 2018 measures in ACS
Spring - Summer 2017	NPMs finalize text for FY 2018 commitments in ACS
Spring	NPMs initiate FY 2018 commitment process in the system by entering a value (including "0," if applicable) in the "Proposed Bid" field for each commitment
Summer	FY 2018 draft regional performance commitments due in ACS. Regions email OCFO (Burchard.beth@epa.gov and murphy.dan@epa.gov) indicating they have entered draft FY 2018 regional performance commitments
Summer	OCFO shares FY 2018 draft regional commitment reports to facilitate state and tribal review and comment
Summer - Fall	NPMs engage regions, states, and tribes in negotiating final FY 2018 regional performance commitments
Fall	Deadline for states and tribes to comment on FY 2018 draft regional commitments
Fall	NPMs and Regions begin finalizing FY 2018 commitments, including those that inform grant work plans
Fall	FY 2018 regional final commitment information reflecting DRA approval due in ACS
Fall	NPMs and regions reach agreement in ACS on FY 2018 performance commitments
Fall	NPMs and regions email OCFO (Burchard.beth@epa.gov and murphy.dan@epa.gov) indicating DRA/DAA approval of final FY 2018 performance commitments in ACS, and acknowledgement of any unresolved FY 18 commitments requiring DCFO involvement
Fall - Winter	ACS locked to prevent any adjustments to FY 2018 commitments

APPENDIX B: KEY CONTACTS

Project	OCFO Lead	Tel
NPM Guidance	Joe Greenblott (<i>Management Advisor</i>) Beth Burchard (<i>Project Lead</i>) Dan Murphy	202-564-4250 202-564-6981 202-564-3227
ACS	Dominic Nelson Billy Faggart	202-564-0106 202-564-3576
FY 2018-2022 EPA Strategic Plan	Vivian Daub (<i>Management Advisor</i>) Linda Hicklin (<i>Project Lead</i>)	202-564-6970 202-564-2688

NPM	NPM Planner	Tel
OAR	Margaret Walters Marc Vincent Daniel J. Hopkins	202-564-4107 202-564-0876 202-564-8626
OW	Sharon Vazquez Venus Reyes	202-564-1622 202-564-0156
OLEM	Howard Rubin	202-566-1899
OCSPP	Jennifer Vernon	202-564-6573
OECA	Kim Chavez	202-564-4298
OEI	Jill Smink	202-540-9196
State Grant Work Plans	Jennifer Hublar	202-564-5294
OCIR/NEPPS	Michael Osinski	202-564-3792
OITA	Mike Weckesser	202-564-0324

Region	Regional Planner	Tel
1	Sarah Levinson	617-918-1390
2	Kevin Hurley Danla Boykin	212-637-3420 212-637-3587
3	Angela Ithier	215-814-5248
4	Dipesh Fifadara	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	Andrea Westenberger	206-553-6111

Region	NEPPS Coordinator	Tel
Region 1	Jennifer Brady	617-918-1698
Region 2	Richard Yue	212-637-3424
Region 3	Tracey Clarke	215-814-5267
Region 4	Angie Washington (Billups)	404-562-9943
Region 5	Morgan Jencius	312-886-2407
Region 6	Dannell Brown	214-665-7279
Region 7	Richard Sumpter	913-551-7661
Region 8	Gerard Bulanowski	303-312-6141
	Anthony Deloach	303-312-6070
Region 9	Kathy Meltzer	415-972-3714
Region 10	Andrea Westenberger	206-553-6111
HQ Lead	Alison Kent	202-564-7645

Region/NPM	FY 2015-2016 Lead Region Coordinator	Tel
Region 1 (OCSP)	Hugh Martinez	617-918-1867
Region 2 (OLEM)	Kristin Giacalone	212-637-4407
Region 3 (ORD)	Michael Dunn	215-814-2712
Region 4 (OW)	Mary Jo Bragan	404-562-9275
Region 5 (OEI)	Steven Dean	312-886-4446
Region 6 (OECA/OGC)	Stacy Murphy	214-665-7116
	Barbara Nann	214-665-2157
Region 7 (OA/OITA)	Katy Miley	913-551-7916
Region 8 (OAR)	Eric Wortman	303-312-6649
Region 9 (OARM/OCFO)	Kathy Meltzer	415-972-3714
Region 10 (RCRA & UST)	Melissa Winters	206-553-5180
HQ Lead	Alison Kent	202-564-7645

Region/NPM	FY 2017-2018 Lead Region Coordinator ³	Tel
Region 1 (RCRA & UST)	TBD	
Region 2 (OCSP)	Caroline DeDora	212-637-3924
Region 3 (SF - HS)	TBD	
Region 4 (ORD - RST)	Bobbi Carter	706-355-8708
Region 5 (OW)	Kate Balasa	312-886-6027
Region 6 (OEI)	Kim Graves	214-665-6565
Region 7 (OECA - OGC)	Toni Gargas	913-551-7193
	Sarah LaBoda	913-551-7424
Region 8 (OA - OITA)	TBD	
Region 9 (OAR)	Idalia Perez	415-972-3428
Region 10 (OARM - OCFO)	Russell Harmon	206-553-1793
HQ Lead	Alison Kent	202-564-7645

³ The complete list of FY 2017-2018 Lead Region Coordinators will be available on the [Lead Region Website](#).