



What is the State Data Measurement Sharing Program?

State governments across the country are voluntarily sharing Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) related information with each other through the State Data Measurement Sharing Program (SDMSP), an on-line reporting and measurement template. The State Measurement Template (consisting of 15 questions) and the State SMM Resource Module (compendium of state programmatic data) that allows States to share a wide range of information including annual tonnage data (waste, recycling and composting, etc.), descriptions of the types of waste and recycling programs in the State, and financial summaries of how the programs are staffed and funded. After the data has been entered, State governments (and the EPA) can generate a series of analytical reports that summarize, aggregate, and present the data on a State, regional, and national level.

The State Data Measurement Sharing Program provides a measurement and tracking methodology that was created and tested across the eight EPA Region 4 States from 2006-2011. Based on the success of this pilot, the program is being implemented nationally. The 2012 Template had 20 states participate and the 2013 Template had 34 states and the District of Columbia participate.

What is the state measurement template?

The state measurement template consists of fifteen questions that allows States to share a wide range of information including annual tonnage data (waste, recycling and composting, etc.), descriptions of the types of waste and recycling programs in the State, and financial summaries of how the programs are staffed and funded. After the data has been entered, State governments (and the EPA) can generate a series of analytical reports that summarize, aggregate, and present the data on a State, regional, and national level.

Background on state measurement template

EPA is facilitating a more effective and comprehensive state measurement system nationally. The current Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Characterization Report uses a top-down material flow methodology that relies heavily on estimated (mass balance) data. While it has been an effective tool for evaluating national trends, it does not scale down to States/Regions; does not provide actual,

empirical data; and does not provide real-time data, but only an annual "national snapshot." EPA has worked over the past several years assessing the original recycling measurement effort done in the late 1990's, improving the MSW Characterization report and overall data collection and measurement.

The ideal measurement system would provide consistent data, a cost effective way for local governments to participate, the capability to "look across state lines," and the ability to compare program successes. Led by the state of Tennessee, the eight states in EPA Region 4 started a collaboration pilot to share recycling and solid waste data and state program information back in 2008. By 2012, the web based measurement template was operational and all eight states were inputting their 2011 data and program information. This regional pilot is now being implemented nationwide through a three-year phased in process starting in the fall of 2013. Funded by EPA, this database system, called ReTRAC Connect by Emerge Technologies, is already used by the various states, communities, NGO's, the private sector along with EPA's [WasteWise](#) and [SMM](#) Challenges. It provides real-time data, reduces administrative time associated with paper-based reporting, increases the accuracy of reporting, assists States responding to legislative requests, and saves valuable time and money.

What is the SMM Program Module?

Because successful state SMM programs are critical to the success of the national SMM effort, EPA began working with states in 2012 to develop an online tool that can be used by states to benchmark their own programs and to find out more about programs in other states. The current module, which was made available to all states in September 2014, includes information on state and local planning efforts, goals, and specific strategies including: life-cycle based approaches, source reduction, recycling market development, product stewardship, pay-as-you-throw, environmentally preferable purchasing and material-specific efforts. A limited number of materials are specifically addressed in the current module: organics (food and yard waste), electronics, construction and demolition materials, packaging, and tires.

States are encouraged to review and update this programmatic information annually (at the same time they enter data into the measurement template). EPA anticipates working with states to identify ways to use and build on the information in this module.

Outcomes for Nationally Consistent Measurement:

Accelerates managing materials and products on a life-cycle basis

Drives market signals and economic interventions to improve materials management

Improves data, tools, research, and internal/external processes

Expands the public dialogue on how materials management impacts the environment

Engages the business community to think across the life cycle and the value chain

Promotes the replication of successful recycling, reuse and source reduction ideas and programs

Benefits

While participation in the State Measurement Program is voluntary for State governments, there are several important benefits available to States that participate:

- Cost effective by providing free options to state & local governments
- Creates a national data clearinghouse that provides significant efficiencies, reduces duplication of efforts, and allows resources to be spent on analysis instead of data collection
- Maintains integrity of each State's program
- Provides the ability to map sources/locations of materials
- Allows an "apples to apples" comparison across States and Regions
- Calculates the economic benefits of recycling (\$ saved on landfill cost avoidance, recycling revenue, jobs estimation, etc.)
- Encourages Peer-to-Peer networking
- Transforms benchmarking data into a series of best practice publications or workshops to help recycling officials improve their programs.
- Provides local, state, regional and federal policy makers with more data to drive program success.