



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Environmental Information

TRIBAL STRATEGY: PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION AND DECISION-MAKING IN INDIAN COUNTRY AND ALASKA NATIVE VILLAGES

May 2011 · Washington, DC



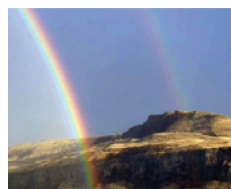
Table of Contents



List of Acronyms.....	1
Executive Summary.....	2
Office of Environmental Information Tribal Strategy.....	3
OEI Tribal Strategy Vision.....	4
Strategic Outcomes.....	5
Goals and Objectives.....	6
Goal 1: Increase/Improve Tribal Capacity to Collect, Analyze, and Share Data and Information.....	6
<i>Objectives:</i>	
A. Designate and maintain a Tribal Program Coordinator within OEI.....	6
B. Promote opportunities for raising cultural awareness within OEI.....	6
C. Provide support to build tribal capabilities to assume data and information management responsibilities....	6
D. Explore opportunities available to tribal governments to assist in technology and knowledge transfer.....	7
E. Strive to increase awareness of the various online and physical resources available through the EPA National Library Network.....	7
F. Work with EPA RENCs to identify other organizations and/or tribal governments to represent tribal issues on the ENLC, NOB and other governance bodies.....	7
Goal 2: Facilitate the Collection and Analysis of Quality Tribal Data.....	7
<i>Objectives:</i>	
A. Promote data stewardship.....	7
B. Facilitate tribal data collection.....	7
C. Improve the accessibility of tribal data and tools to the federal government, tribal governments, and states.....	8
Goal 3: Share/Move Tribal Data and Analytical Tools.....	8
<i>Objectives:</i>	
A. Strengthen partnerships with tribes and other tribal entities.....	8
B. Increase technical training to facilitate additional technology transfer.....	8
C. Collaborate to identify data elements and tools that are vital to sound tribal decision-making.....	8
D. Invest to ensure appropriate consultation and communication with tribes across OEI offices and initiatives.....	8
Measuring Success.....	9
Appendix A - Life Cycle of Information.....	A-1
Appendix B - Inventory of OEI Activities.....	B-1



Members of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe conducting soil sampling activities at a contaminated site.



The "Sleeping Chief" on the Nez Perce Reservation.

List of Acronyms



AIEO	EPA's American Indian Environmental Office
ANV	Alaska Native Village
ENLC	Exchange Network Leadership Council
EO	Executive Order
EPCRA	Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act
EQR	EPA Stat Quarterly Report
ESAR	Environmental Sampling and Results
FRS	Facilities Registry System
HIC	Headquarters Indian Program Coordinators (also known as Tribal Program Coordinators)
IM	Information Management
IPCC	Indian Program Policy Council
IT	Information Technology
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
NCAI	National Congress of American Indians
NEPIS	National Environmental Publications Internet Site
NetDMR	Exchange Network Electronic Discharge Monitoring Report
NOB	Network Operations Board
NSCEP	National Service Center for Environmental Publications
NTC	National Tribal Caucus
NWIFC	Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
OCFO	EPA Office of the Chief Financial Officer
OECA	EPA Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
OEI	EPA Office of Environmental Information
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OSW	EPA Office of Solid Waste
OSWER	EPA Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
OTOP	EPA OEI Office of Technology Operations and Planning
QA	Quality Assurance
QAPP	Quality Assurance Project Plan
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RENC	Regional Exchange Network Coordinator
RIC	Regional Indian Program Coordinator
STARS	Sanitation Tracking and Reporting System
TRI	Toxics Release Inventory
TSC	Tribal Science Council
WQCIA	Water Quality Conditions Integrated Assessment



Executive Summary



The purpose of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Tribal Strategy is to maximize the quality and utility of information and analytical tools available for making well-informed decisions in Indian country and other tribal lands. The OEI Tribal Strategy is intended to support: EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment, while recognizing the unique cultural assets and needs on tribal lands; OEI's work with EPA programs and regional offices on the importance of environmental data and how these data can be used to support tribal priorities; tribal self-governance; and strengthening the government-to-government relationships between EPA and tribes.

The OEI Tribal Strategy represents a commitment to demonstrate OEI's long-range plan to collaborate, coordinate, and consult with tribal officials when developing policies that have tribal implications in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 13175 – Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (November 9, 2000) and EPA's Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes (May 4, 2011). The OEI Tribal Strategy also seeks to further commitments made by EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson to the National Tribal Operations Committee following the November 2009 meeting of Tribal Leaders at the White House.

OEI will implement this Strategy through the following goals:

- Increase/Improve Tribal Capacity to Collect, Analyze, and Share Data and Information
- Facilitate the Collection and Analysis of Quality Tribal Data
- Share/Move Tribal Data and Analytical Tools

OEI is committed to measure progress toward achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the OEI Tribal Strategy and to continue outreach and consultation with tribes. The vehicle for reporting achievements and lessons learned will be via the Annual Accomplishments Reports, the first of which will be the Fiscal Year 2010 OEI Tribal Accomplishments Report. This Strategy will be revisited in five years based upon accomplishments during this time and feedback from tribes.





OEI was established in Fiscal Year 2000 to centralize all information technology and information management (IT/IM) functions within a single organization at EPA. Established at the end of a decade of dramatic change in information technology and management, OEI is designed to be a center of excellence that advocates the use and management of information as a strategic resource to enhance public health and environmental protection. OEI continues to build programs that address the needs of all audiences and constituencies within the arena of IT/IM.

While OEI continues to coordinate with tribal governments, tribal consortia, and tribal-serving organizations to ensure environmental information programs and services are built to maximize tribal benefit and participation, considerable work remains toward this goal. This Strategy represents the foundation upon which OEI will build stronger communication with tribes¹ within every applicable environmental information program and service. The purpose of OEI's Tribal Strategy is to maximize the quality and utility of information and analytical tools available for making well-informed environmental decisions in Indian country² and Alaska Native Villages (ANVs). To this end, the OEI Tribal Strategy will support:

1. The mission of EPA and federally recognized tribes to protect human health and the environment.
2. OEI's work with EPA programs and regional offices to identify and support tribal needs and dialog with tribal governments on the importance of sharing environmental data; how these data can be used to support tribal priorities; address tribal communities' environmental and public health priorities; and how EPA can support both tribal governments and tribal communities in these areas. (See Appendix A: Life Cycle of Information: Context in which OEI and tribes work together.)
3. Tribal self-governance, to be consistent with the federal trust responsibility, and to strengthen the government-to-government relationships between tribal governments and EPA. (See Appendix B: Inventory of OEI Activities.)

The OEI Tribal Strategy seeks to fulfill OEI's responsibilities to develop a strategy responsive to the EPA Policy for the Administration of Environmental Programs on Indian Reservations (November 1984) and the Tribal Operations Action Memorandum (July 1994), which address working with federally recognized tribal governments. The OEI Tribal Strategy also acknowledges OEI's responsibility to consult and coordinate with tribal officials in development of policies that have tribal implications in accordance with Executive Order 13175 – Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (November 2000) and EPA's Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes (May 4, 2011). A White House Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies (November 5, 2009) primarily directs each agency to submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) a detailed plan of action to implement the policies and directives of EO 13175 and progress reports on the status of its plan.

OEI developed this robust strategy, in collaboration with tribal partners and EPA environmental program managers, which includes strategic outcomes, goals, objectives, and accomplishments to guide our mutual work. Annual accomplishments reports will derive from the OEI Tribal Strategy and guide programmatic and resource decisions.

¹ In this Strategy, "tribes" includes federally recognized Indian tribes and Alaska Native Villages, tribal communities, key tribal organizations and tribal stakeholders, including, but not limited to: the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), Northern Arizona University, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP), Haskell Indian Nations University, and the National Tribal Caucus.

² Use of the terms "Indian country," "tribal lands," and "tribal areas" within this document is not intended to provide legal guidance on the scope of any area being described, nor is their use intended to expand or restrict the scope of any such area, or have any legal effect.



OEI Tribal Strategy Vision



The *vision* that guides the OEI Tribal Strategy is:

a future where tribes and EPA recognize information as a strategic resource for environmental improvements and a driver for success and where both tribes and EPA have the information needed to understand how and where environmental challenges affect tribal lands and communities.

To accomplish this vision, OEI will develop annual accomplishments reports on progress made toward achieving the OEI Tribal Strategy's desired goals and objectives and stimulate greater information sharing, integration, and analysis. OEI will use existing and new tools and services to consolidate information, report cross-jurisdictional information, analyze constituent information, and publish data and information to better understand environmental conditions in a specific geographic location, within certain sectors and regions, across Indian country, or across the United States. In addition, OEI will strive to make these tools available and relevant to tribal governments to assist in their management of environmental programs, environmental analysis and decision-making.



Strategic Outcomes



The OEI Tribal Strategy is also a road-map to stronger government-to-government consultation and tribe-to-EPA collaboration. OEI developed five desired outcomes for this Strategy to be achieved within the next five years. This Strategy and the Strategic Outcomes will be reevaluated and updated after five years based upon accomplishments during this time and feedback from tribes. The five Strategic Outcomes are:

1. OEI and tribal governments mutually recognize the importance of sharing sound data and share a commitment to continually improve information important to sound environmental decision-making.
2. OEI will demonstrate, through action, an increased understanding of tribal sovereignty and the diversity of tribal cultures.
3. OEI and tribal governments will better understand the environmental challenges in Indian country and ANVs and work with tribal governments and EPA Regional Exchange Network Coordinators (RENC) to develop the needed information infrastructure to collaboratively protect human health and the environment.
4. Tribes will receive value-added technical and programmatic support to increase their capacity to effectively collect, analyze, understand, and share tribal and EPA environmental data on tribal lands.
5. OEI and tribal governments will jointly recognize information as a strategic asset to support effective, proactive environmental decision-making.

These Strategic Outcomes are relatively broad, but are strengthened by a strong, specific, and far-reaching set of goals and objectives to measure progress toward these mutual outcomes.



Goals and Objectives



During the five-year timeframe of this Strategy, OEI will demonstrate action toward the mutual strategic vision through the following goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Increase/Improve Tribal Capacity to Collect, Analyze, and Share Data and Information

Objectives:

- A. Designate and maintain a Tribal Program Coordinator within OEI.** OEI will designate and maintain a Tribal Program Coordinator as part of OEI's commitment to engage and consult with tribal governments on relevant data and information efforts. In addition, the Tribal Program Coordinator will be responsible for identifying and coordinating OEI-wide tribal efforts, as well as ensuring OEI's understanding and engagement in EPA tribal program activities and efforts, to include working with OEI and EPA regional counterparts (e.g., Regional Indian Program Coordinators (RIC), RENCs, Regional Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Coordinators, etc) to identify concerns and needs, where appropriate.
- B. Promote opportunities for raising cultural awareness within OEI, measure results, and adjust strategies, if necessary, to achieve measurable results.** OEI management and the Tribal Program Coordinator will be responsible for:
- Increasing awareness among management and staff of the commitment to engage tribal governments in OEI's relevant program activities;
 - Recognizing and discussing the major differences between Western and Eastern tribes and the challenges they face, and understanding the impact of these differences on OEI's efforts with tribal governments;
 - Informing staff and management of the federal trust responsibility and how this translates into tribal involvement in their relevant activities;
 - Encouraging OEI staff to take the "Working Effectively with Tribal Governments" online training (www.golearn.gov) to better understand the unique government-to-government relationship between the U.S. government and federally recognized tribes and OEI's federal responsibility; and
 - Delineating the roles and responsibilities of all EPA Headquarters and Regional Offices that work with tribal governments on the Environmental Information Exchange Network³ (hereinafter referred to as the Exchange Network) and how they work together to achieve objectives.
- C. Provide support, through training and technical assistance, to tribal governments or entities that assist tribes to build tribal capabilities to assume data and information management responsibilities.** Such support will include using in-person meetings, webinars, conference calls, EPA and OEI Regional Program Coordinators (e.g., RICs, RENCs, Regional Quality Managers, etc), and collaboration with groups that broadly represent tribal governments.

³Environmental Information Exchange Network – a partnership among states, tribes, and EPA that is revolutionizing the exchange of environmental information, by sharing data efficiently and securely over the Internet (www.exchangenetwork.net).





- D. Explore opportunities available for tribal governments to assist in technology and knowledge transfer, particularly with respect to the collection, sharing, and analysis of quality, secure tribal and EPA data, information, tools, as well as best practices and lessons learned.** Specifically, OEI will:
- Work with EPA’s Quality, Data Standards, Facilities Registries, and Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) programs to identify opportunities relevant to their programs in the above mentioned areas;
 - Work with EPA’s RENCs to evaluate the feasibility of and possible approaches for conducting tribal baseline assessments; and
 - Identify specific technical resources available for EPA RENCs to work with grantees and potential grantees on the technical aspects of network integration.
- E. Strive to increase awareness of the various online and physical resources available to tribes and the public at large through the EPA National Library Network.** OEI, in coordination with groups that broadly represent tribal governments will explore opportunities to identify mechanisms for transferring knowledge among those tribal governments that have built data and information capacity and those tribal governments or organizations that are interested in attaining that capability. Such knowledge and technology transfer activities could include: in-person meetings, conference calls, and webinars. In addition, these opportunities could facilitate the exchange of lessons learned and fostering of best practices among interested tribes.
- F. Work with EPA RENCs to identify other organizations and/or tribal governments to represent tribal issues on the Exchange Network Leadership Council (ENLC), Network Operations Board (NOB), and other governance bodies.** OEI Headquarters will work with RENCs to expand dialogue with tribal organizations and tribal governments to ensure a diverse set of tribal needs and concerns are represented within the various Exchange Network governance bodies.

Goal 2: Facilitate the Collection and Analysis of Quality⁴ Tribal Data⁵

Objectives:

- A. Promote data stewardship by ensuring appropriate management, control, maintenance, or integrity of tribal data resources.** Wherever possible, tribal data should be appropriately flagged prior to entering EPA data systems to facilitate their distinction and use by EPA tools and users. OEI will also work with the EPA RENCs and Regional Quality Assurance community to identify opportunities for increasing technology and knowledge transfer of procedures and tools and training to assist tribes with quality-related activities essential to the appropriate collection and use of environmental information. In partnership with EPA Regions and tribal governments, such opportunities can provide a better understanding as to how appropriate identification and collection of data can better support tribal decision-making.
- B. Facilitate tribal data collection.** Work with EPA RENCs and tribal organizations to identify tribal data needs and barriers to tribal participation in the Exchange Network. Within EPA, identify Agency data needs and data gaps with respect to tribal programs.

⁴Quality: Sufficient, relevant, appropriate, reliable, and desired data.

⁵Tribal Data: Data on environmental conditions on tribal lands and surrounding areas that affect tribal lands.





- C. **Improve the accessibility of EPA and tribal data and tools to the federal government, tribal governments, and states by assessing EPA’s available tribal data and provide access to these data through existing or new tools.** OEI will work across EPA to identify opportunities to leverage the capability of existing or new tools to provide data of interest, where feasible, to tribes as well as to assist EPA in enhanced environmental and health decision-making in Indian country and ANVs.

Goal 3: Share/Move Tribal Data and Analytical Tools

Objectives:

- A. **Strengthen partnerships with tribes and other tribal entities.** OEI will continue to expand and strengthen its collaboration with groups that broadly represent tribal governments. OEI will work with these entities, as well as Headquarters and Regional Program Coordinators (e.g., RICs and RENCs) and tribal organizations, to seek input on OEI activities relevant to tribal governments and increase awareness of and seek feedback on new and ongoing efforts. OEI plans to leverage the Regional Coordinators’ unique role in understanding particular tribal needs, concerns, and having the ability to directly reach out to tribes in both an outreach and technology/knowledge transfer capacity.
- B. **Increase technical training to facilitate additional technology transfer.** In coordination with EPA Regions and tribes, OEI will strive to identify training needs and suitable approaches in the areas of quality assurance and/or quality management. OEI will work with RENCs, tribal governments, and other tribal organizations to promote knowledge and technology transfer, including best practices and lessons learned regarding experience with the Exchange Network.
- C. **Collaborate across EPA to identify data elements and tools that are vital to sound tribal decision-making based upon priorities identified by tribal governments.** OEI will evaluate and consider priorities identified by the National Tribal Caucus, the National-EPA Tribal Science Council, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), and others or via consultation and outreach efforts with tribes and how these relate to existing OEI and Agency tools and information efforts. Wherever possible, OEI will work across EPA Offices and Regions to determine whether these priorities can be addressed within existing EPA efforts or via greater internal collaboration.
- D. **Invest to ensure appropriate consultation and communication with tribes across OEI offices and initiatives.** OEI will review and identify regulatory and non-regulatory efforts relevant to tribes and determine in coordination with EPA Regional Coordinators, where appropriate, when consultation with tribal governments is warranted. Where tribal governments would benefit from increased communication and outreach, OEI will utilize the National Tribal Caucus (NTC) and National-EPA Tribal Science Council (TSC) monthly calls, as well as calls with Headquarters Indian Program Coordinators (HIC, or also known as Indian Program Coordinators) and RICs, to communicate these opportunities and to seek feedback, where needed. For regulatory and other programmatic issues with an impact to one or more tribes, OEI will work with EPA Regions, tribal organizations, and EPA’s American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) to identify the most appropriate and effective approach for tribal consultation or review.



Measuring Success



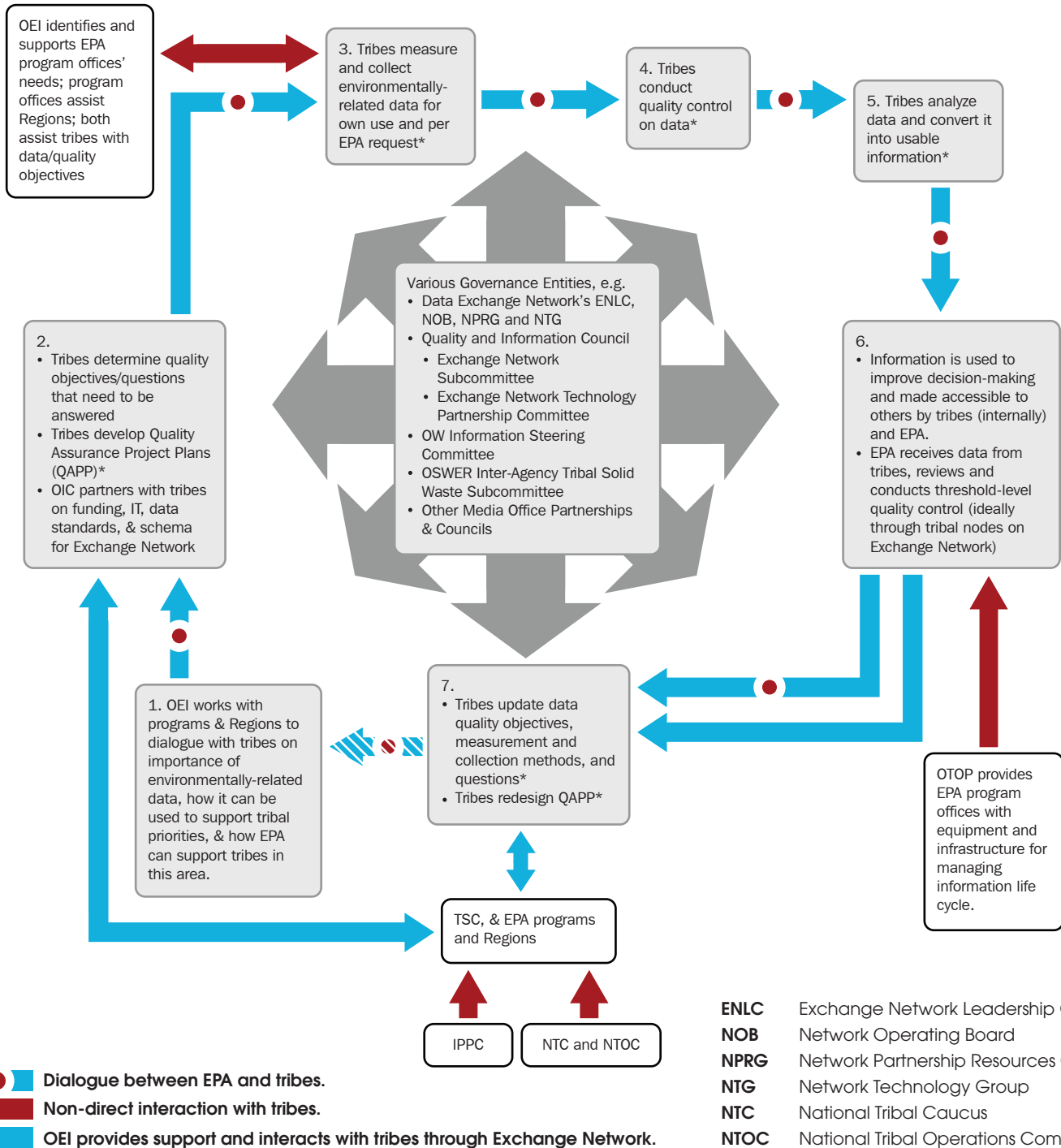
Fundamental to this Strategy is OEI's recognition, through word and action, that EPA's programs are stronger and more protective of the environment when they meet the needs of a broad, diverse universe of partners. Protection of human health and the environment requires raw data from this broad, diverse partnership, which when transformed into information, can allow all parties to make stronger, more inclusive decisions.

OEI is committed to measure progress toward achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the Strategy and to continue outreach and consultation with tribal partners. The vehicle for reporting on these achievements will be via the Annual Accomplishments Reports, the first of which will be the Fiscal Year 2010 OEI Tribal Accomplishments Report.





Life Cycle of Information: Context in which EPA/OEI and Tribes Work Together



*Subject to grant requirements, CIO policies (www.epa.gov/quality/qa_docs.html), and EPA Program Office approval (sometimes HQ/sometimes Regions)





Inventory of OEI Activities

Organized by the Three OEI Tribal Strategy Goals

Goal 1: Increase/Improve Tribal Capacity to Collect, Analyze, and Share Data and Information

- A. **Designate and maintain a Tribal Program Coordinator within OEI.** OEI's Tribal Program Coordinator is responsible for coordinating OEI efforts relevant to tribes.
- B. **Promote opportunities for raising cultural awareness within OEI, measure results, and adjust strategies if necessary to achieve measurable results.**

Collaborative Effort to Develop Culturally-appropriate Environmental Information Materials

- OEI collaborated with EPA Region 8 to develop and disseminate culturally relevant material to increase mercury awareness for tribal communities. This effort included the development and sharing of information and teaching tools to communicate complex messages and used approaches to assist communities in avoiding or reducing risks from exposure to mercury.
- C. **Provide support through training and technical assistance to tribes, or entities that assist tribes, to build tribal capabilities to assume data and information management responsibilities.**

Exchange Network

- Building capacity to help tribes better understand the Exchange Network grants and data quality.
- Each organization within the governance structure of the Exchange Network includes tribal representation. In the past, Robert Holden (NCAI) sat on the Exchange Network Leadership Council (ENLC). Bruce Jones (Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC)) is on the Network Operations Board (NOB). Angie Reed (Penobscot Nation) is on the Network Partnership and Resources Group (NPRG) and Tony Hartrich (Quinault Nation) is on the Network Technology Group (NTG). OEI will work with the EPA RENCs to identify future tribal representation on the leadership organizations.
- In coordination with EPA, NCAI issued a survey of tribal capacity to participate in the Network. EPA is looking for NCAI leadership to identify short- and long-term strategies to substantively address the issues that limit tribal participation in the Exchange Network. EPA expects recommendations that both increase the number of tribes participating on the Exchange Network and broaden the number of data flows for participating tribes.
 - The baseline survey asked tribes about their current capacity and how EPA can assist them in strengthening their capacity.
 - The survey also asked if the tribes were interested in participating in the Exchange Network and provided EPA contact information for additional details. NCAI will analyze survey responses and identify strategies to address the issues limiting participation.

Toxics Release Inventory (TRI)

- OEI expanded outreach to increase tribal participation in TRI webinars and the National Training Conference on the Toxics Release Inventory and Environmental Conditions in Communities.





- D. Explore opportunities available to tribal governments to assist in technology and knowledge transfer, particularly with respect to the collection, sharing, and analysis of high quality tribal data, information, tools, as well as best practices and lessons learned.**

Collaborative Effort to Develop Culturally-appropriate Environmental Information Materials

- In a Region 8-specific effort, OEI provided financial support and assistance with search services and navigational aids to ensure partners can find and use the Agency's vast information resources (EPA Web site, libraries, etc). This effort supported Executive Order 13021 to support tribal colleges. EPA Region 8 also worked with college and tribal community partners (Rocky Mountain College and allied Tribal Colleges in Montana) to develop environmental information materials for public use.

- E. Strive to increase awareness of the various online and physical resources available to tribes and the public at large through the EPA National Library Network.**

EPA National Library Network

The EPA National Library Network supports Agency efforts to help the public, including tribes, obtain information through a variety of channels.

- All regional EPA libraries are open to walk-in traffic from the public and feature publicly accessible reading rooms and computer workstations. All laboratory and specialty EPA libraries are open to public visitors during designated hours or by appointment.
- Members of the public can seek assistance from EPA libraries through in-person visits, telephone, e-mail, postal mail, or fax.
- The Library Network maintains up-to-date library hours and contact points on its Internet site (www.epa.gov/libraries).
- In addition to questions fielded by EPA's physical libraries, EPA's Frequent Questions knowledgebase answers thousands of public reference questions through self-serve and customized response formats. Internet librarians at Headquarters provide customized answers to these virtual reference questions from the public.
- Each year, the EPA National Library Network attends major library association conferences to connect with other libraries in an effort to help inform the public about EPA's library services and access points.
- The public can browse EPA library holdings through its publicly accessible online catalog, OLS (www.epa.gov/libraries/ols.htm), which contained a collective 283,584 unique records for books, EPA documents, and other materials in Fiscal Year 2009.
- The public can obtain access to hard-copy EPA library materials by submitting an interlibrary loan request through their local public library.
- The EPA National Library Network actively cooperates with other libraries to provide access to EPA library materials. EPA libraries collectively provided over 9,200 interlibrary loan documents to other libraries in Fiscal Year 2009.
- The Agency's publicly-accessible digital archive, the National Environmental Publications Internet Site (NEPIS: www.epa.gov/nscep), includes over 33,000 electronic full-text EPA documents, and that inventory grows as digitization efforts continue. NEPIS users downloaded more than 79,000 documents in Fiscal Year 2009.





- The Agency's National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) maintains over 7,000 hard-copy EPA publications, which the public can order free of charge via telephone, mail, e-mail, and fax.
 - The EPA National Library Network promotes an e-mail address for public feedback on its services (library.feedback@epa.gov).
- F. Work with EPA RENCs to identify other organizations and/or tribal governments to represent tribal issues on the Exchange Network Leadership Council (ENLC), Network Operations Board (NOB), and other governance bodies.**

GOAL 2: Facilitate the Collection and Analysis of High Quality Tribal Data

- A. Promote data stewardship by ensuring appropriate management, control, maintenance, or integrity of tribal data resources.**

Quality Staff Efforts (Headquarters and Regional)

- The Quality Staff holds teleconferences every month to provide information to the quality assurance community. The monthly conference calls discuss products and services, not just environmental data.
- With assistance from the Quality Staff, Region 9 developed a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) tool for water quality monitoring. This tool has been made available to tribes via several different forums, include tribal conferences. The QAPP tool will be made available to the EPA RENCs and other EPA staff, upon request.
- The Quality Staff conducted a quality assurance assistance visit (winter of 2008/2009) to talk with EPA's AIEO about its quality management system.
- The Annual Conference on Managing Quality Systems is held in conjunction with the Environmental Information Symposium. The conference is a national forum for disseminating and exchanging information on managing the quality of environmental data; discussion and action on issues of national concern; training; and technical presentations.

Indian Program Policy Council (IPPC) Data-Measures Initiative

- The IPPC has identified an ongoing need for EPA to continue its efforts to ensure relevant, accurate, usable data, and use this information to develop solutions in Indian country.

- B. Facilitate OEI tribal data collection.**

Exchange Network

- The Exchange Network is a partnership with states, territories, and tribes to support better environmental decisions through improved access to, and exchange of, improved environmental information.
- Facilities Registry System (FRS)
- FRS provides a comprehensive view in one place of all program-related topics.
- FRS already has placeholders for tribal designations. FRS has a designation data element to indicate facilities that are on tribal lands and regulated by EPA. That universe or inventory is NOT complete in FRS. Its development will be an important piece of information as EPA's





Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) and other programs target compliance assistance and permit monitoring and enforcement actions on key “places” or areas that might focus on Indian country.

- The overall universe of facilities in Indian country is another area in which FRS is engaged and would like to improve the inventory of regulated facilities on tribal land.

Data Standards Efforts

- Data standards are adopted through the development of an Action Team comprising subject matter experts and data sharing partners. The definitions developed by the Action Team must be approved by the ENLC. The following are examples of standards that exist or are currently being created.
 - Tribal ID Standards – ongoing work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to update the list of tribal entities that are federally-recognized.
 - Water Quality Monitoring Data Standard – the standards have not been developed, but Data Standards staff are currently working through the ENLC to recruit Action Team members, other tribal representatives. The Water Quality Conditions Integrated Assessment (WQCIA) standard will be developed for use among EPA programs and Exchange Network partners and consistent with the Water Quality Assessment and Total Maximum Daily Loads Information and program requirements. The standard will essentially take existing database elements as well as schema elements and formalize them into a data standard (at this point there would be no new reporting requirements or duplication). The difference between Environmental Sampling and Results (ESAR) and WQCIA is that ESAR was developed for broad use (cross program application) and the WQCIA standard will be specific to the Office of Water.

C. Improve the accessibility of tribal data and tools to the federal government, tribal governments, and states by assessing EPA’s available tribal data and determine the feasibility of providing access to these data through existing tools.

IPPC Data-Measures Initiative

- Identified as a priority, the IPPC created a Data-Measures Workgroup co-led by OEI and AIEO (with significant OCFO participation) to focus on the effective utilization of existing data for tracking and assessment of work being done in Indian country. In addition, there is a lack of readily accessible data and baseline measures for work conducted in Indian country and ANVs.





GOAL 3: Share/Move Tribal Data and Analytical Tools

A. Strengthen partnerships with tribes and other entities.

Tribal Government Authorities

- EPA is considering a proposal that would include provisions to enable tribal governments to participate more fully in the TRI Program.

B. Increase technical training to facilitate additional technology transfer.

TRI

- Tribes may use TRI to identify sources of toxic chemical releases in their geographic areas. EPA has provided information to help communities use TRI. The information collected under TRI helps tribal citizens paint a picture of the hazardous substances, chemicals, and toxics found in or in proximity to Indian country and Alaska Native Villages. It also aids tribal communities in working with industries to reduce the use and releases and other waste management of toxic chemicals and prevent chemical accidents.
- Most of all, tribes are data users. TRI has established an online Clearinghouse, www.ChemicalRight2Know.org, to increase access to a broad range of TRI and other toxic chemical data and information.
- If an industrial facility in a covered North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) on tribal lands exceeds the reporting threshold, the facility owner or operator is required to report.

C. Collaborate to identify data elements and tools that are vital to sound tribal decision-making.

Exchange Network

- The flagship method of reaching out to partners is the Exchange Network Grants Program.
 - The program initially awarded \$25 million per year for grants; however, the allocated funding amount has decreased over time.
 - Ten percent of the funds are allocated for tribal initiatives and projects.
 - In FY 2008, EPA awarded \$13.5 million in Exchange Network grants with \$1.8 million going to tribes.
 - For FY 2009, EPA received 76 applications for \$13 million – \$5 million requested from tribes. EPA awarded nine grants to tribal organizations totaling \$1,980,000.
 - For FY 2010, EPA awarded \$8.8 million in Exchange Network grants with \$1.7 million (approximately 20 percent of the funding) going to nine tribes.
 - Similarly, in FY 2011 EPA remains committed to a minimum award to tribes of 10% of the requested funding.
 - EPA awards a grant for \$200,000 annually to NCAI.
- There are nine tribal nodes currently in place.
- OEI's Office of Technology Operations and Planning (OTOP) provides equipment and infrastructure for managing the information life cycle, as well as for hosting information systems and tools of interest to tribes (e.g., TRI, EPA's Exchange Network, FRS, and the Tribal Portal).





D. Invest to ensure appropriate consultation and communication with tribes across OEI offices and initiatives.

National-EPA Tribal Science Council (TSC) Priorities

- The goal of the TSC is to identify science priorities in Indian country and ANVs, address priorities via existing Agency activities and budgetary requests, foster improved communication about the use of traditional knowledge/native science and western science, as well as communicate progress on implementation of science priority activities.
- OEI's role is to assist with any data and information issues that arise. Quality assurance is a large concern among tribes and the OEI Quality Staff have assisted with a few key TSC efforts and inquiries.
- OEI is serving on a TSC workgroup to develop a process and timeline for identifying tribal science priorities and how they are related to EPA activities. This will assist in building a collaborative process to develop solutions for national priorities.
- Tribal traditional lifeways encompass the unique cultural, spiritual, economic, and language practices pursued by tribal communities and have been a long-term focus of the TSC. OEI has assisted with the discussions regarding this issue.
- TSC is holding on-going discussions regarding how western science and native science interact. EPA is discussing how observational data can be captured and how the Agency can utilize the data.
- TSC held the first Tribal Science Forum in 2006 at the Quinault Indian Nation, in Washington State. The Forum was a success because it promoted tribe-to-tribe information sharing and technology transfer. The TSC held its second Tribal Science Forum in 2010, hosted by the Grand Traverse Bay of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians in Michigan. OEI served on the Budget and Planning committees for the 2010 Forum.

