

**U.S. EPA Webcast:**  
**Measuring Up: How to Track and Evaluate Local Sustainability  
Projects**  
**November 18, 2014**

*Questions in bold were asked during the webcast.*

Victoria/Emma

1. **What is the timing of availability of the other 5 parts of the Local Climate Action Framework?**

All six sections of EPA's Local Climate Action Framework will be released in the spring of 2015. To receive updates on this resource, please join EPA's State and Local Climate and Energy Newsletter at: <http://www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/newsletters/index.html>.

2. How does this program differ from other GHG frameworks. For example ICLEI's IEAP or NYS's Climate Smart Communities program?

EPA's Local Climate Action Framework explores overarching processes (including obtaining resources, developing a communications strategy, and developing and tracking performance indicators) that are relevant to any type of climate program or project across the country. While it discusses categories of actions (e.g. greening government) its focus is not on specific actions (e.g. fleet efficiency). The Framework is not prescriptive and elements can be completed in any combination or order.

In comparison, the NY Climate Smart Communities guide lays out specific action areas necessary to participate in the state program and is targeted towards communities in New York State. ICLEI's Climate Pathways milestone approach addresses many of the same areas as the EPA Framework, however many of the recommended ICLEI tools and resources are only available to ICLEI members. The Framework materials can be used as a supplement for ICLEI member cities or as a stand-alone resource for communities that are not ICLEI members.

We encourage communities to look at multiple approaches and combine the elements that are the most helpful to them as they implement climate programs.

3. Have you constructed a QA plan, or considered incorporating QA into your framework?

The Local Climate Action Framework does not discuss quality assurance as a separate step in the process of designing and implementing successful local climate and energy programs. Both the "Take Action" and "Track and Report" sections of the framework cover important principles of quality assurance, such as monitoring your program throughout its implementation to make sure you are on track to meet your goals and promoting consistency in the quality of your data. More specific information on quality assurance is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/quality/>.

4. Is there any way to combine resources into one website? In other words, EPA's local climate action/showcase communities; EPA-HUD-DOT Sustainable Communities and DOE's Better Buildings Residential Program Solution Center have great resources and plenty of redundancy. One clearinghouse might help all communities advance sustainability more efficiently and expediently.

Each section of EPA's Local Climate Action Framework contains key steps, checklists, and case studies based on local government experiences and links to informational resources, data sources, tools, and templates from a range of federal, local, and non-governmental sources. The framework was designed to complement existing resources with comprehensive, step-by-step guidance not available elsewhere. The federal government is working to increase access to resources on climate change through efforts such as the Climate Resilience Toolkit (see: <http://toolkit.climate.gov/>). EPA will explore opportunities to include our framework in this toolkit and other clearinghouses as they are developed.

### Ted

1. Will any water use efficiency indicators be included in the catalog?

We are planning to add indicators in the future, and water use efficiency may be one of them.

2. Do you work with the STAR Community Rating System?

Representatives from STAR were on the advisory panel and attended the workshops.

3. When we talk about "job creation" as an economic indicator, should we net the number against jobs lost, say in traditional industries?

Yes, usually net jobs is a good metric, unless you are specifically trying to measure the number of jobs created as a result of a new development or policy.

4. Would it be better to measure "area of impervious surface per capita" rather than gross area or percentage of area? *[NOTE: We combined questions 5 and 7 into this one, as they were quite similar.]*

It depends on how the measure is to be used. In general the amount of impervious surfaces will be higher in areas with greater population density. Many communities see multiple benefits from policies that accommodate greater population densities while preserving open space and incorporating green infrastructure at different scales. Measuring the "area of impervious surface per capita" would be good for tracking progress toward this goal. If the intention is to measure changes in the amount of green space or impervious surfaces in a neighborhood or community over time, then percentage of gross area may make more sense.

How would one collect that data?

That data is available through the National Land Cover Database (NLCD)'s "Percent Developed Impervious Surface" data (<http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/nlcd-impervious>).

**Alex/Graham**

1. **For the job creation metric - do you use a standard conversion of economic activity to jobs?**
2. It appears that this program is similar to the PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Programs? Please explain.

PACE is essentially a loan program for energy efficiency or renewable energy projects coordinated through the local government with loan repayment made via, essentially, a property tax adjustment.

Our program helps homeowners and small businesses figure out what energy efficiency projects make sense, helps direct people to qualified contractors, provides direct assistance with part of the cost of projects via incentive funds, and helps with utility rebates and quality assurance. In the past we had a loan program, and we do recommend available loans to clients who may need them to complete projects. But these loans are not a core element of our program, and in any case are not repaid via the property tax adjustment (which is the defining feature of PACE programs).