

Tribal Infrastructure Task Force

Accomplishments and Current Activities



Recent Accomplishments

Did you know...

that approximately 12% of tribal and Alaskan native homes do not have safe water and/or basic sanitation facilities? To address these sanitation deficiencies, and to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goal committed by the U.S. in 2000, a multi-agency Infrastructure Task Force (ITF) assembled in 2003. This document describes recent ITF accomplishments and current activities.

Increased Access to Sanitation: Between 2009 and 2012, 43,006 tribal homes received access to safe drinking water, and 28,015 tribal homes received access to basic sanitation – of the 400,000 homes in Indian Country.

Focus on Sustainability: Providing sanitation access to the remaining homes in Indian country hinges on maximizing the limited, and often declining, resources available for new infrastructure. To ensure existing infrastructure meets its design life, in 2012 the task force:

- Developed a *Sustainability Goals and Concepts Document* that describes what appropriate infrastructure is and the elements of a sustainable management entity.
- Implemented a new mission statement: “Access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation shall be provided through entities that are sustainable and implemented through integrated agency planning that links the development goals of the tribe with the need for such services and infrastructure.”

Renewed the Federal Commitment to Tribes: EPA, USDA-RD, HUD, DOI, and HHS recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding confirming their commitment to coordinate and share resources to provide sustainable, long-term access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation in Indian Country.

Learning from Other Tribes: Following a series of listening sessions, the ITF identified best practices that improved the sustainability of water and wastewater infrastructure. These best practices can be adopted by other tribes to improve sustainability of their systems and is online at: <http://www.epa.gov/tp/pdf/itf-commonalities-12.pdf>.



Recent Accomplishments Continued...

ITF Now Includes Solid Waste: In 2012 the task force partners recognized the overlapping issues between the management of water and solid waste in Indian Country and are now collaborating to address this need through joint EPA and HUD trainings and technical assistance.

Technical Assistance and Information Exchange: The ITF developed an online directory of regional federal contacts to provide information exchange and technical assistance for tribal and state water and wastewater operators. The directory is available at <http://smallwatersupply.org/TribalResources/SearchtheContactManager/tabid/70/Default.aspx>.



Current Activities

A New Multi-Agency Preliminary Engineering Report:

To simplify the application processes of multiple federal funding sources, the task force supported the USDA-led federal and state interagency effort to develop a common preliminary engineering report that will satisfy the needs of all agencies in a single document.

Assessing Tribal Water Utility Operation and Maintenance

(O&M) Costs: The ITF is developing a pilot program to estimate O&M costs for tribal drinking water and wastewater systems. The results will be used to estimate total costs to operate water and waste water systems in Indian Country.

Enhanced Regional Coordination: The task force aims to strengthen its on-the-ground coordination efforts by institutionalizing regular communication activities among member agencies in each geographic region.

Streamlining the Application

Processes: The ITF is distributing a summary matrix of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for tribal projects.



More questions?

The ITF is sharing ongoing progress online at: www.epa.gov/tp/trprograms/infra-water.htm

