

## SNEP Work Group Meeting Summary

April 25, 2016  
US EPA, Boston, MA

Regional Administrator Curt Spalding kicked off the meeting with a welcome and an overview of SNEP status and meeting objectives. Curt highlighted that SNEP is not another NEP, but rather is intended to operate as a “big idea initiative” that matches in scale the types of problems and the urgency of action required in the face of the profound impacts of climate change. He sees SNEP as a network-based effort that catalyzes solutions and energizes outcomes. He noted that after three years of funding, SNEP now has the substance, track record, and stability to move to the next level, but could benefit from either potential legislation in addition to the program authorization or other endorsement that could provide the full tool box needed to make that move. Such more formalized longer-term authorization would enable SNEP to more effectively align program priorities than the current competitive project solicitations, and while keeping EPA in a leadership role, would also provide for more direct engagement by SNEP participants. Finally, Curt reminded the group that the purpose of the meeting was to first figure out what SNEP seeks to accomplish going forward, including defining its difference from existing programs, and bring those goals to the RI and MA delegations for their advice.

There was also some discussion that, although the Rhode Island delegation joined the meeting, there was a lack of engagement from the Massachusetts delegation. The importance of speaking with RI first as the initial supporters of the program was underlined, but the group recognized they have a role to play to rally support and have a strong bi-state delegation.

In light of that introduction from Curt, the group considered elements of an ideal program. These included:

- More flexibility to allow diffusion of resources across jurisdictions and problems, including ability to target resources to selected priorities without triggering either FACA or conflicts of interest;
- High-level program support for interstate connections and coordination
- Emphasis on regional significance, projects that deliver statewide or system-wide impacts
- An inclusive stakeholder process;
- Investment in more holistic structure to achieve environmental results, address gaps in current solutions

Additional comments from the group included:

- Program definition is currently driven by EPA’s solicitation process; need substantive workgroup input to develop specific SNEP projects and priorities that can then be channeled through concrete directions and avenues that aren’t clouded by conflicts of interest;
- RFPs need to seek projects that generate the broadest impacts, ideally at a regional scale; the size of a project can be small but the impact could be huge because of the potential impact across the region, but alternatively, an RFP could seek a single project that addresses the entire SNEP region;
- There is a need for multi-year funding to support the desired structural flexibility; monitoring support over the long-term was cited a number of times;
- An annual work plan process is needed that brings people and resources together, recognizing that SNEP priorities should be expected to evolve over time

The group also discussed the interim and future structure of SNEP proposed by EPA before the meeting. Each organization’s responsibilities were discussed, and the members expressed its support of structure and the creation of the proposed subcommittees, including reconstituting the workgroup as a formal Steering Committee. Each subcommittee (Policy, Monitoring, Ecosystems) should have at least 1-3 people that are also represented on the Steering Committee<sup>1</sup>. A work plan for SNEP will further define the responsibilities of each subcommittee, its

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membership, and priorities. Further discussion is needed to determine additional Steering Committee and subcommittee membership.

The needs of the program (in no particular order) were identified as:

- Monitoring, measurement, testing need
  - Multi-year commitments
  - Ecosystem services
- Innovation
  - Projects tying into the themes that focus on policy, approaches or technology innovation, finance
  - Awards are based on concepts that help address or advance new ways of doing business (science and policy)
- Policy development & planning, enabling conditions related to the right scale.
  - How to take limited resources and maximize impact over time.
  - Example: Green infrastructure – needs strong regulatory enforcement to incentivize its use.
- Scaling up and leveraging other resources
- Capacity building to help people help themselves at the appropriate level, facilitate doing things differently

## DECISIONS MADE:

- The Work Group will hence forth be named the Steering Committee
- Three subcommittees will be established (Policy, Monitoring and Ecosystem)
- There will be an event late summer that brings together the partners, the projects funded with FY14 and FY15 funds and to announce the selection of new projects funded with FY16 resources

## NEXT STEPS:

- EPA will begin to develop a work plan
- EPA will reach out to the Steering Committee to establish subcommittee membership, identify potential other organizations who should participate
- Steering Committee members will discuss elements of a new authority
- EPA will arrange a conference call with the Steering Committee before the public announcement of projects selected under the RFP
- Establish schedule/calendar for future Steering Committee meetings

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<sup>i</sup> Subcommittee membership could be either Steering Committee members or their designated staff