Questions	Answers
1. What if people want more data elements in the SMP template than already exist?	There have been significant improvements and expansions with a consensus, consultative process since the national roll out with the 2014 Template. There have been some additions including plastics, construction and demolition (C&D) categories. There has also been the inclusion of sector delineation options, import and export data along with some helpful hints such as hover over definitions and improvements to data collection clarity. A new user interface was introduced in 2017. Contact Regional or headquarters Program Managers about your suggestions **or** include them in your state feedback form within the system. All suggestions are reviewed annually, prioritized by the iTeam and implemented when there is funding for improvements. If States in a Region feel very strongly about adding new fields but a consensus is not reached with the rest of States involved in the process, an EPA Regional office with a paid subscription can request that Emerge add a separate reporting template that would only be available to States in that Region. A set number of hours to support this activity is included with each subscription fee. Complex projects requiring significant amounts of time to setup and implement, may require additional funds.
2. Can more detail be added to the SMP template (e.g. breakdown of components within C&D)?	Yes, we anticipate there will be updates to the template that States agree upon. However, with such a large and complex program, future additions will need a strong majority consensus with more than twenty states actively collecting data on the particular area of interest. All updates and enhancements are subject to resource availability.
3. What do states get for free vs. customized accounts in Re-TRAC Connect?	**FREE ACCESS FOR STATE GOVERNMENTS TO THE SMP** State governments can participate in the SMP at no cost. The EPA provides funding to provide all Regions and their states access to the SMP surveys for the purpose of submitting data as well as all of the reports that states can generate. These include reports on tonnage data (waste and recycling), descriptions of the types of waste/recycling programs in the State, and financial summaries of how the programs are staffed and funded, tonnage data on a per capita and per household basis, as well as economic benefits reports (money saved on landfill cost avoidance, recycling revenue, jobs estimation, etc.) for all States in the country. **ADDITIONAL SERVICES THAT STATES CAN CHOOSE TO PURCHASE**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Questions	Answers
	Assembling the data that state agencies submit to the SMP requires that states have a process for collecting and analyzing information about materials management within their jurisdiction. Some states use paper-based surveys or purpose-built electronic reporting systems to assemble this information. As an alternative, Re-TRAC Connect is a data collection platform that states can use to collect data from their reporting entities. Implementing a data collection program in Re-TRAC Connect requires a subscription fee. There are currently 16 states that pay a subscription to use Re-TRAC to collect data from their reporting entities (e.g. landfills, transfer stations, MRFs, solid waste districts, haulers, municipalities, etc).
4. If Tribes and/or Tribal governments are interested in participating, can they enter data into the SMP?	Tribes and Tribal governments cannot participate in the State Measurement Program (SMP) directly because they are not States. A new program is being launched in January 2018, called the Municipal Measurement Program that will be available to municipalities and tribal governments.
5. Can local governments fill out the State Data Measurement Sharing Program template(s)?	Again, the SMP is designed for use only by state governments. The Municipal Measurement Program will soon be available to municipalities who will be able use the new program to analyze their programs, benchmark their performance, and run recommendations reports.
6. How does the template relate to the resource module?	The template is for measurable quantitative solid waste, recycling related data. The SMM Resource Module is for qualitative narrative about state programs and policies including planning, legislation, landfill bans, etc.

Questions	Answers
7. What are the long-term costs to the States and EPA?	**FOR THE EPA** The present national costs for basic subscription service to the web based data management program is $80,000. Any additional enhancements or improvements cost extra. **FOR STATES** As long as the EPA is paying the annual subscription fee, there will never be any fee for State governments to participate in the State Measurement Program (SMP). State governments will always have access for free through their Re-TRAC accounts. If, however, a State government chooses to use Re-TRAC to collect data from reporting entities in their State (to replace a paper based system), then a subscription fee will be required. These activities are not directly linked because State governments that collect data are doing so for their own internal purposes, not solely for participating in the SMP. The long-term costs to the States that choose to use Re-TRAC are entirely dependent on their needs. For States that want to use Re-TRAC to collect the data and/or develop detailed reporting of their own, the subscription fee is population based. There is a higher (setup) fee the first year, and then a reduced annual subscription fee.
8. What are the bottom line requirements for funds and responsibilities for states seeking additional data collection or analysis?	Please see the list of detailed costs (population based). As far as effort, it is an investment of time to get buy in from the States, showing them the free vs. customized options. Follow this link for the GSA contract terms available to any State.

Questions	Answers
9. How does this compare to WasteWise?	Re-TRAC Connect presently hosts both programs. Waste Wise was designed for businesses and facilities to report while SMP is designed for states. The SMP has the capabilities for adaption and change while Waste Wise reporting is limited.

10. What are the different benefits/selling points for:
 	
  a) a State that doesn't have a measurement system at all?
 	
  vs.
 	
  b) a State that has a measurement system they are happy with?
	For a State with no measurement system, this gives them a template to start with (that they can later adjust if they choose).
	
	For a State that already has an established data collection process, participating in the SMP does not preclude them from continuing their own system. North Carolina has a data collection system they are happy with, but saw the benefit of collaboration and data sharing. Therefore, they can transmit their data into the SMP system, while still utilizing their own system, allowing them to share, compare, and contrast with other states.

Questions	Answers
11. We need more specifics on the "Why it's good for States and local governments?"	States have been able to quickly access the data platform to save time and resources in responding to questions from policy makers and the public. Tipping fees comparisons is a classic example. Perhaps the most important benefit is that all 50 States would voluntarily report consistent data into one measurement template, allowing EPA, States, ASTSWMO, ECOS, industry, NGO's and various sectors to compare how recycling, reuse and source reduction is progressing across the country, as well as detailed information on their local programs, budgets, funding sources, grants, etc. The benchmarking of data could provide new metrics and create a series of "best practice" publications or workshops to help recycling officials maximize the amount of material that their programs divert. The measurement program could also be used to map/inventory recycling operations across the US, and connect supply (sources of recycled material) with demand (from Material Recovery Facilities - MRFs - and industries). Connecting supply and demand for recyclables will create jobs, increase tax revenues, and expand recycling options in communities across each Region. For example, the 2016 Template data indicated that 28 States plus D.C. generated over 86 million tons of recycling, saving $4 Billion in landfill avoidance costs, generating $8.5 billion revenue, and created 133,774 jobs, further demonstrating the power of this measurement program. States in Region 4 have used these reports to quantify the economic impact of recycling, thus demonstrating to local leaders the negative impact if they cut/reduce recycling programs. It has also encouraged additional State studies attempting to link supply and demand (as well as helping drive economic development/industry moving into the State). In addition to the economic reports, States can see how they compare to others around them, both on tonnage collected, tipping fees, staffing, how programs are funded, etc. and can access these comparisons online, versus contacting each individual State.

Questions	Answers
12. Some Regions are concerned because only a few states in their region collect any data. They are concerned about the majority being N/A with no data. There is concern that EPA would have to convince each county within the state to report (if the state doesn't already mandate reporting).	Region 4 had a similar situation with some of their States. What has happened is that those states who aren't reporting are using their "blanks" to show their legislators that their State is the only one in the region not doing it as an incentive to push for better reporting. Also, EPA doesn't have to convince the counties to report. The State Recycling Organization (SRO) for Georgia is encouraging local governments to report to the State. This is a long-term process.
13. What are States that are using the template using the data for/How are they using the free accounts?	One state in Region 4 (who collects some data, but isn't allowed to "report" any of it) is using the regional reports to inform their legislators that they are the only state in the region not sharing data and trying to use that to encourage better reporting.
	Several States are using the economic data (landfill cost avoidance/recycling revenue) to quantify for policy makers the true impact if they cut/reduce recycling programs in their local areas. For Region 4, the economic impact of recycling (for what's currently reported) is about $2 billion. Without this data, many elected leaders looking to reduce budget deficits would not realize the magnitude of benefits that recycling has.
	During budget deliberations, several States request comparative data (e.g. staffing levels, tipping fees, etc.). Previously, States would have to contact each other individually for this information. Now, the State can access this information online, and see how they compare to other States, saving time and effort.

Questions	Answers
14. Can a company use the information from the template to help site an industry?	Some States are beginning to use the data to help encourage industries to move into or expand their operations the State (e.g. an industry that needs specific recyclables as inputs into their own products can determine a general idea of quantities available). As in the example above, it is possible that the data could help determine the optimum location for a specific industry that requires specific materials (e.g. siting an anaerobic digester based on estimates of food waste). Data has been used to site material recovery facilities (MRFs) and private industry efforts. Likely, some additional analysis (outside of the template's capability) would be required for a full siting decision.
15. Does a State government have to purchase a Re-TRAC subscription to access the SMP and built-in analytical reports comparing state-level data?	No.
16. Does a State government have to use Re-TRAC to collect data from their reporting entities when participating in the SMP?	No, a State government can use any system they want to collect data from the reporting entities in their state (e.g. paper surveys, spreadsheet files, etc.). The State would simply need to transfer the information from their system into the appropriate areas to complete the 15-question template. Using Re-TRAC Connect is only one option to consider.
17. If a State government decides to use Re-TRAC Connect as the system they use to collect data from their reporting entities, do they have to pay a subscription?	Yes. To embed custom surveys and to take advantage of the survey administration tools available in Re-TRAC Connect, a State government needs to purchase a subscription (State governments that collect data from reporting entities always incur costs to do this work regardless of whether it's a paper-based system or an online system like Re-TRAC Connect.
18. How do we know that paid subscribing States will input their data into the national template?	Both free and subscription States can share their data into the State Measurement template. To ensure a quality control step, the States manually transfer their data into the template (there is no software-controlled automatic rollup of the data from their data into the template). There is no "mandate" that states participate/input data, so effectively, we cannot ensure it. However, as of 2017, 37 states and the District of Columbia participated.

Questions	Answers
19. What if only local governments are interested in collaborating? How is that different from when a State takes the lead?	Local governments cannot participate in the SMP which, by definition, has been designed to allow State-level data to be shared between States and with the EPA. A new program called the Municipal Measurement Program (MMP) will be made available for free to municipalities and is scheduled to be released in 2019. Some of the fields in the MMP are designed to roll up to a state level and align with the SMP fields.
20. There have been several questions about definitions.	Common definitions can be found on the State Measurement Website. These definitions were chosen during a two and half year process comparing all 50 states and federal RCRA definitions. In most cases, the States either used the definitions from the Advanced SMM Fact and Figures Report, or their definitions that were legislatively mandated (and therefore not changeable). Individual definitions shared by the States are in the reports and records. Each state is asked to approximate their data to reflect the consensus definitions as best they can or specifically note any major differences.
21. How do we account for differences in how States calculate their info? E.g. NJ counts scrap cars vs NY does not. Also, how does waste to energy get counted? Are we going to count this under disposal or allow it to count as recycling?	Due to the many differences amongst the states, the SMP provides a better but not perfect data comparison system. By agreeing to participate, states are inherently agreeing to the consensus definitions to utilize the definitions and related data as closely as possible. There was a consensus to add scrap cars, so a field to track scrap cars was added to the reporting form, but those weights could be excluded from any reports generating recycling rates. It would still be useful to know how many tons of scrap cars were collected in any State that tracks that data. States have the option to re-evaluate how they calculate their recycling rates, having that material reported still provides the broader SMM diversion rate, like what Colorado does. WTE is counted under energy recovery, and is separated out from incineration and/or landfilling, etc. So, they can differentiate exactly where the tonnage is going if that data is available to them.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Questions	Answers
22. How are jobs calculated?	The job calculations for 2015 and beyond are based upon the most recent Recycling Economic Information (REI) national jobs study. 1.57 jobs per 1,000 pounds recycled.
23. Do the reports allow you to calculate the GHG emissions from the WARM model (like WasteWise)?	Yes.
24. Who enters the data into the measurement system?	Only State governments and their designees can access the SMP templates and share data with other States. Data entered by the states comes from municipalities and the entities that process or handle the materials
25. If a State government collects data from reporting entities using Re-TRAC do they still need to manually input the data into the State Measurement Template and the SMM Resource Module?	Yes. The States manually transfer their data into the template (there is no software-controlled automatic rollup of the data from their data into the template). This is intentional, as it provides a quality control step that not only allows the State to confirm they want to share the data, but also to confirm the data is accurate. States are expected to update their Resource Module information when they submit their annual data in the template.

Questions	Answers
26. How would an organization become familiar with using the Re-TRAC system?	For users of the EPA and State level accounts, Emerge is available to conduct webinars upon request. A pre-recorded training webinar for general use of the Re-TRAC Connect system is also available on demand.
27. Can third-party organizations get access to the SMP data?	State governments and the EPA can decide who they would like to share the data with. In those instances, a read-only account can be set up. This will allow a user to view the analytical reports that are available for the free State accounts. Third-party organizations will not be allowed to enter data into the system unless a State designates a third party to be authorized to place information in Re-TRAC. Aggregated data is shared through the RecycleSearch website and as requested.
28. Could an organization like New England Waste Management Association (NEWMOA) or Southeast Recycling Development Council (SERDC) or American Plastics Recyclers access the data?	EPA can provide them access to the data. See #31 above.
29. What analytical/comparative reports do State governments get access to if they complete and submit the SMP template(s)?	See Appendix A for more details and the Recycle Search website.

Questions	Answers
30. How many States are currently paid subscribers?	Sixteen state agencies currently (August 2018) use Re-TRAC Connect to collect information for their own State-required reporting. The following sixteen States have utilized Re-TRAC Connect: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas (Texas Recycling Data Initiative) and Vermont. State governments using the measurement system have reported significant savings in the cost of managing their reporting programs. The many robust, integrated features available can significantly reduce the amount of time and money required to collect, manage, and analyze waste management and recycling data while improving the efficiency of the process for both the organization collecting the data and their reporting entities. For example, the State of Tennessee has saved significant time and money since implementing this system. • $75,000 per year on Annual Reports (staff time, paper, storage costs, etc.) • $500,000 on reporting Tire Manifests (postage, paper, FTEs, reduced complaints) • $20,000 on Recycling Markets Directory (eliminated another contract) Florida has indicated that the use of a commercial system with shared definitions of reporting elements has saved staff time and many hours of data entry and management. South Carolina noted that the system is core to their reporting operations, while industry and trade association groups along with organizations like The Recycling Partnership, Keep America Beautiful and others support this effort and see partnership opportunities.

Pricing

There have been numerous questions about pricing, and this can be a bit confusing. We have included an overview and some scenarios to assist in better understanding this:

Originally developed by the eight states of EPA Region 4, the State Measurement Program (SMP) is being rolled out nationwide with a Measurement Template of 15 questions and a SMM Resource Module of state programmatic information. These data collection and information exchange tools were designed for State governments to fill out the template and update the module annually.

State governments can participate in the SMP with a Free Re-TRAC Connect account. State governments can also use Re-TRAC to collect data from their reporting entities if they choose, but a subscription fee is required for them to use this additional functionality.

The main distinction between a free account and a paid account for State governments is that the free account is used for reporting state level data and participating in the SMP and the paid account is used if a State has reporting requirements in place and wants to collect this information on-line using Re-TRAC Connect.

Some examples include:

    a. North Carolina collects data from their reporting entities through their own paper-based reporting system, but saw the benefit of sharing information across the region. Therefore, NC takes the data they have that pertains to the 15-question template and manually inputs that into the Re-TRAC system. This is FREE for them. This allows NC to share their data and to view the 15 question results from other States using the template, but still utilize their own reporting system.

    b. Florida has a state mandate that counties in Florida report their waste and recycling information. Before using Re-TRAC Connect to collect this data, FL used a paper based reporting system to collect this information. The paper forms were filled out by the counties and mailed in to FL DEP. This information was then manually entered into a database program. Now they have a paid Re-TRAC Connect subscription and are collecting annual reports from their counties on-line using Re-TRAC Connect. The counties who are mandated to report into Florida's system have access to the FL Annual Solid Waste Report on-line form for FREE and fill out and submit the information electronically. There is no data re-entry required at the state level and a wide range of analytical reports are available instantly. The State of Florida pays for the subscription as it is now the system used as their data collection system.

As it relates to the national template, Florida takes the data collected from their counties through Re-TRAC Connect, reviews it for accuracy, and then manually transfers the data that is relevant to the 15-question template. This "transfer" is not automated because we wanted to ensure it as a quality control step, and a chance for the State to confirm that "yes this is the information I want to share with others on the national template."

Tennessee has a similar paid subscription but has expanded even more. Their customized report includes several categories, and has replaced their tire manifesting system (for collection/recycling of tires), with e-manifesting. The subscription allows for greater flexibility and filtering, and the ability to email respondents (or a subset of respondents).

c. Local governments can use the new, free Municipal Measurement Program that will be released in 2019.

d. Regardless of which option the entities choose, all States/territories in the US can choose to start with a free account, where they collect the data necessary to respond to the 15-question national template (to the best of their ability). They can then choose whether they want to use Re-TRAC Connect to help with the collection of the data and/or want to develop a more extensive list of questions for their own use.

Appendix A

Free Account Reports

The following report module is available with a Free account. Note that these analytical comparisons are available for only those States within the jurisdiction of an EPA Regional Office (not for all State data).

State Data Measurement Summary Reports Available with the Free Account

The following summary reports are available based on the data being submitted by each state participating in the survey:

- Disposal by State
- Disposal Characteristics
- Municipal Solid Waste Disposal Facility Information
- Recycling
- Other Diversion Activities
- Recycling Collection Systems
- Recycling System Types
- Pay As You Throw Systems
- Organic Materials Management Systems
- Disposal System Types
- Hauler Information Statistics
- Landfill Capacity
- State by State Qualitative Information
- State Staffing
- State Program Funding
- Local Government Funding (or total programs using systems)
- Tipping Fee Gate Charges
- Recycling and Diversion Rate
- Pounds/Person By Activity
- Landfill Cost Avoidance
- Economic Benefit of Recycling

A partial list of other analytical reports available include:

- Questions 1 to15
- Per Capita
- Per Household
- Economic Benefits
- Environmental Benefits
- Diversion Components
- Materials Analysis
- MAPS - Solid Waste Import/Export
- MAPS- Tip Fees
- MAPS- State Snap Shot

SMM Module: Key Drivers

SMM Module: Planning Reports

SMM Module: Strategies

SMM: Material Specific Strategies

Shared Analytics