Grants Management Plan

2016 - 2020

Mission

To provide outstanding stewardship of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's grant funds in furtherance of the Agency's mission to protect human health and the environment.

Strategic Goals

1: Maintain Effective Grants Management Policies

2: Streamline Grants Management Procedures

3: Foster a High-Quality Grants Management Workforce

4: Ensure Transparency and Accountability and Demonstrate Results

5: Evaluate Grants Management Performance

Foreword

I am pleased to present the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) third long-term Plan for Grants Management.

This Plan provides the framework for managing the EPA's grants system, which annually transfers more than $4 billion to other governments, educational institutions and non-profit organizations.

The EPA is an agency that partners with other governments – state, tribal and local – that share responsibility for protecting human health and our nation's natural environment. Indispensable to doing this job is the EPA's systematic and transparent process of transferring federal grant dollars to support our partners' work. Through this process, the EPA furthers the principles of federalism, sustains the government-to-government relationship with Indian Tribes and Native Peoples, supports cutting-edge scientific research, and advances community knowledge and empowerment.

To manage that process responsibly, this Plan adopts leading strategic planning practices as recommended by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and embodies the core principles of accountability, transparency and results. It also builds on the lessons learned from the previous Grants Management Plan by including a process for adapting to changing circumstances.

The EPA's grant making draws appropriate scrutiny from the Congress, which appropriates the funds and deserves to know how they are being allocated across the country; from the GAO and the EPA's Office of Inspector General, which examine the Agency's work to make sure commitments to Congress and the taxpayers are being met; and from the grantees that depend on the funds to do their important jobs. We welcome this scrutiny and in implementing the Plan, will continue to work diligently to make our grant program efficient and responsive to the American public.

Karl Brooks
Acting Assistant Administrator

A Letter from the Agency's Senior Resource Officials

Dear Reader:

We are pleased to provide you with the EPA's road map for addressing the challenges and opportunities in grants management for the next 5 years. This strategic Plan builds on previous plans, but also incorporates lessons learned and reflects the changing landscape of grants management at the EPA and across the federal government.

The Plan has five complementary goals, unified by a process of continuous improvement, to establish a strong, flexible system of internal controls. Under that process, the Agency will follow a disciplined framework to develop policy, streamline processes to reduce administrative burden, support the grants management workforce, promote transparency and accountability, and annually evaluate performance. Successful implementation of the Plan will require close collaboration among Headquarters and Regional offices as well as with our external partners. As senior managers responsible for the administration of EPA grant programs, we are committed to leading this effort.

Sincerely,

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Office of Administration
and Resources Management

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Office of the Administrator

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Office of Air and Radiation

Stefan Silzer
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Financial Officer

Oscar Morales
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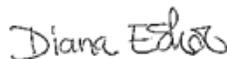Office of Research
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Introduction

Grants Management Plan Background

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awards approximately half of its budget in grants and cooperative agreements to states, local governments, tribes, non-profit organizations and educational institutions as a means to help the EPA achieve its mission of protecting human health and the environment. Awarding and managing thousands of assistance agreements under multiple individual programmatic statutory authorities involves a coordinated effort between the Office of Administration and Resources Management's Office of Grants and Debarment (OGD), National Program Managers (NPM), Regional Grants Management Offices (GMO) and Program Offices.

These offices work together to promote the effective and efficient use of the EPA's financial and other resources; ensure the timeliness of grant awards and achievement of environmental results;

and prevent waste, fraud, abuse, mismanagement and poor performance. Specifically:

- OGD formulates and issues national grant policies and guidance for the award and management of assistance agreements to ensure compliance and stewardship of EPA funds. As the Headquarters GMO, OGD is the administrative manager for all grant programs at EPA Headquarters.

- NPMs establish and carry out national programmatic policies and ensure the implementation of OGD-issued policies for grants for which they are responsible. NPMs also set funding priorities and oversee the technical and programmatic aspects of Headquarters grants.

- Regional GMOs manage the administrative aspects of the EPA's regional grant activities.

- Regional Program Offices work closely with Regional GMOs to oversee the technical and programmatic aspects of regional grants.

In an effort to improve the management and oversight of its grant program, the EPA issued in April 2003 the *Grants Management Plan: 2003–2008* as a mechanism to establish a clear grants management framework for the Agency. This Plan served as a road map to help the Agency manage its grant resources in a fiscally responsible and productive manner. The Plan established a comprehensive approach to address several areas of concern, including grant competition, accountability of the EPA and recipients for the proper management of grant funds, and the need to demonstrate achievement of environmental results.

The *Grants Management Plan: 2009–2013* built on the progress of the first Plan, with the goal of improving grants management by continuing to implement internal controls and establish new initiatives to increase efficiency and effectiveness. The 2009-2013 Plan committed the EPA to streamline grants management processes and to make policies and procedures more user-friendly while focusing on the achievement of results.
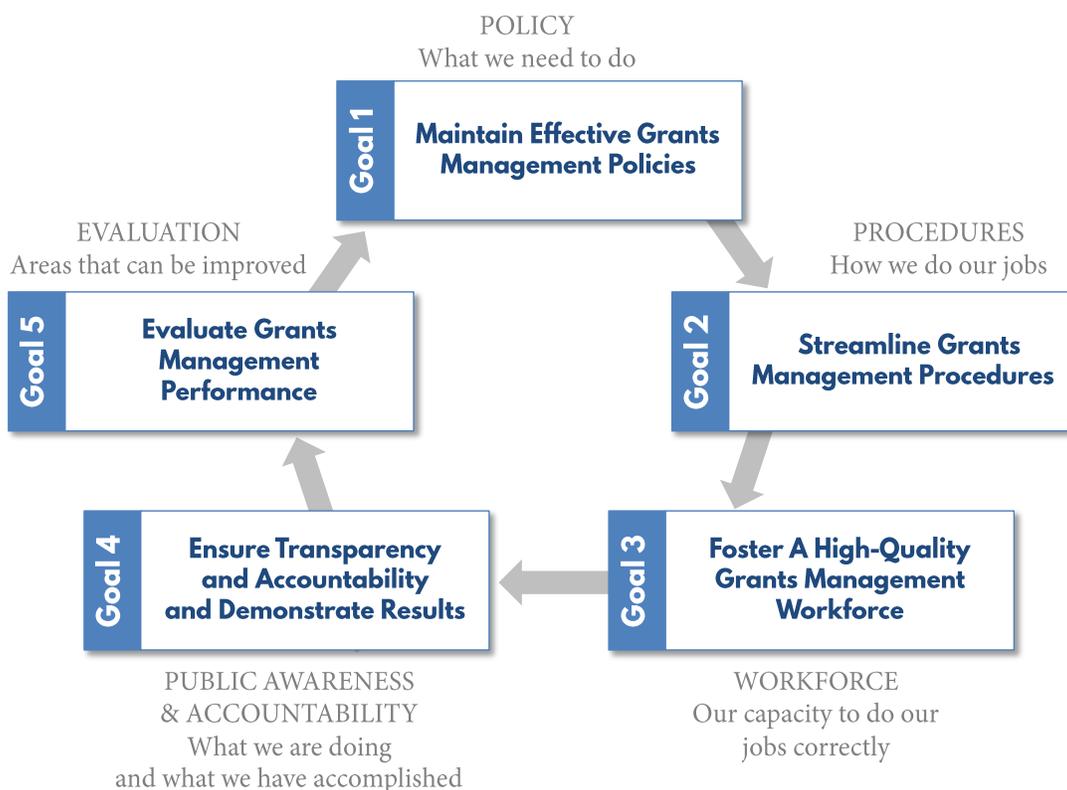
Purpose of the Grants Management Plan: 2016-2020

The *Grants Management Plan: 2016–2020* establishes goals and performance measures to ensure that grants are managed efficiently and effectively to support the strategic goals outlined in the *Fiscal Year 2014-2018 EPA Strategic Plan* and achieve the EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment. The strategic framework outlined in the Plan will guide the EPA to maintain grants management successes, identify process improvements and respond to future challenges

while continuing to meet the highest stewardship and fiduciary standards.

The Plan contains five goals that address immediate and long-term grants management considerations focused on the implementation of effective and streamlined policies and procedures, the demonstration of environmental results, maintaining a skilled workforce, ensuring accountability and transparency, and the evaluation of grants management procedures and performance to promote continuous improvement. The goals and supporting objectives are intended to be flexible in order to accommodate changing priorities and leverage opportunities to streamline processes, improve monitoring and provide enhanced reporting capabilities. The Plan also specifies several performance measures for each goal to track progress.

The Plan will support not only grants management objectives, but also the environmental and human health goals supported by the entire Agency and its state, local and tribal stakeholders.

POLICY
What we need to do

Goal 1
Maintain Effective Grants Management Policies

EVALUATION
Areas that can be improved

PROCEDURES
How we do our jobs

Goal 5
Evaluate Grants Management Performance

Goal 2
Streamline Grants Management Procedures

Goal 4
Ensure Transparency and Accountability and Demonstrate Results

Goal 3
Foster A High-Quality Grants Management Workforce

PUBLIC AWARENESS & ACCOUNTABILITY
What we are doing and what we have accomplished

WORKFORCE
Our capacity to do our jobs correctly

Applying Resources to Achieve Goals and Address Management Challenges

The EPA's *Grants Management Plan: 2016–2020* is designed to ensure that grants are managed efficiently and effectively, while also providing OGD a flexible approach for responding to evolving priorities and unforeseen challenges. As described under Goal 5, OGD will regularly evaluate its priorities, identify resources needed, and adjust planned activities for the coming year. The Goal 5 objectives and activities, which are focused on continuous improvement, complement OGD's annual priority setting process whereby the evaluation of performance for the previous year is considered when setting priorities for the upcoming year. The annual priority setting process helps OGD confirm that resources are being allocated in the most effective manner.

Grants management staff who participate in the setting of annual priorities can quickly identify potential resource issues, share information among the grants management community, and work collaboratively to determine adjustments that may be needed to accommodate grants management challenges. OGD's challenges in implementing this Plan will include successfully applying information technology and maintaining a properly supported, highly skilled workforce. Other challenges may include a reallocation of resources as a result of national objectives, legislative changes or

budgetary constraints outside of OGD's control. OGD is committed to using the Plan to advance the core values of transparency, accountability and results.

To complement this strategic Plan, the EPA will develop an implementation plan to track progress in meeting objectives and performance targets. The implementation plan will also include a description of the data used to report on progress.

Ensuring Leadership Accountability

The goals and objectives identified in the Plan are intended to guide the day-to-day activities of the EPA's grants management staff and the senior managers responsible for overseeing grant activities. Objectives that are classified as ongoing are intended to occur annually throughout the duration of the Plan. Specific milestones for objectives will be identified during the annual priority setting process described above. Under the Agency's Performance Appraisal Review System (PARS) for General Schedule (GS) employees, mid-year and year-end assessments of project officers and senior grant managers and supervisors are conducted to evaluate compliance with key grant policies and grants management activities from the pre-award through closeout phases. Specific, detailed guidance focuses attention on priority actions and performance measures as identified in the Plan. The PARS process verifies adherence to grants policies and procedures and ensures GS employee accountability for grants management.

Accountability is also ensured at the Senior Executive Service (SES) level through the SES Performance System. Consistent with the Plan's goals and objectives, all SES employees that administer grant funds are expected to manage them in a manner that instills public trust. SES National Program Managers who oversee grant programs are expected to achieve environmental results from their grant investments and to

reference the Plan in their National Program Grant Guidance. As evidenced by the Plan's introductory note, the EPA's Senior Resource Officials play a major leadership role under the Plan. This includes responsibility for agreeing on annual priorities, certifying compliance with key grants management internal controls, and coordinating the PARS process explained above. The Director, Office of Grants and Debarment, has overall responsibility for administering the Plan, including managing the annual priority setting process and providing necessary guidance to the Agency's Grants Management and Program Offices.

Consultation Efforts/Stakeholder Engagement

Collaborating with the EPA's internal and external stakeholders was an essential activity during the development of the *Grants Management Plan: 2016-2020.* OGD conducted outreach and consultation efforts with its state and local government, tribal, and non-profit stakeholder partners to inform them of the Plan, answer questions and gather input. The EPA reviewed and considered all comments received and incorporated relevant recommendations to ensure that the Plan reflects stakeholders' needs.

For OGD's internal stakeholders, the EPA convened a grants management plan workgroup comprised of grants management staff from across the Agency. The workgroup collaborated to develop and refine the Plan's goals, objectives and performance measures. During conference calls, members of the workgroup identified lessons learned from the previous plans and outlined a vision and framework for the current Plan. The GAO reviewed draft iterations of the Plan in the course of its review of the previous Grants Management Plan, and provided comments as well as guidance about best practices for strategic plans. The EPA incorporated these leading practices to ensure that the Plan provides an effective framework to achieve grants management goals and overcome challenges. The EPA's Grants Management Council, which is comprised of the Agency's Senior Resource Officials, reviewed and approved the draft Plan prior to publishing.

Goal 1
Maintain Effective Grants Management Policies

The Agency seeks to improve and streamline its process for administering grants management policies, including development, issuance and periodic evaluation. The EPA establishes policies and procedures that encompass the entire grants management process from pre-award through closeout. The EPA also implements policies to address government-wide efforts to streamline grants management.

As grants management policies change over time, it becomes increasingly important for the EPA to have in place an effective process for issuing new grants policies and procedures, as well as their implementing guidance. It is equally important for the Agency to have a mechanism to identify potential duplicative or inconsistent guidance and resolve potential conflicts within EPA grants policies before those policies become effective. To achieve this goal, the Agency will establish a comprehensive management framework to

provide the foundation for evaluating new and existing policies. The EPA will use the framework to review and evaluate the need for and effectiveness of each policy, and identify the burden that each policy places on EPA grants management staff, EPA Program Offices and external stakeholders. To implement the framework, the EPA will create a formal process to review existing and new policies, resulting in recommendations to add, modify and rescind policies as needed.

The EPA will also enhance communication with Agency staff and stakeholders to improve transparency and inclusiveness in the development of grants management policies.

Objectives

1.1 **Develop a comprehensive grants management framework to govern the development, issuance, implementation and review of orders, policies and guidance. [2016]**

- Create an inventory of the EPA's existing grants management policies, orders and guidance.
- Determine the structure of the grants management policy framework.
- Identify for each existing policy the date of issuance, expiration (if any), and the date by which it must be reviewed against the framework.

1.2 **Establish a formal process for reviewing policies. [2016]**

- Develop criteria for reviewing grant policies against the framework (for example, relevance and need, applicability, dependencies, effectiveness, and level of compliance).

- Create a priority list of policies and internal controls to be evaluated for effectiveness.

- Identify the Agency staff responsible for conducting the review of policies based on the formal process.

1.3 **Review existing policies against the new framework. [Ongoing]**

- Use the framework to assess each existing policy.

- Evaluate each policy for effectiveness and make recommendations for future action (update, modify, rescind or re-review).

1.4 **Ensure policy-making is transparent and inclusive of stakeholders. [Ongoing]**

- Provide Agency staff access to the comprehensive grants management framework and the formal process for reviewing policies.

- Work in partnership with Program Offices, Regional Offices, GMOs and external stakeholders to improve communication about development and implementation of new policy requirements.

Performance Measures for Goal 1

Measures	Targets	
Percentage of existing policies assessed against the comprehensive grants management framework.	2016:	20%
	2017:	40%
	2018:	60%
	2019:	80%
	2020:	100%
Number of policies or internal controls on the priority list evaluated for effectiveness using the comprehensive grants management framework (2 policies or internal controls added to the priority list each year).	End of 2017:	1 evaluated
	End of 2018:	3 evaluated
	End of 2019:	6 evaluated
	End of 2020:	10 evaluated

Goal 2
Streamline Grants Management Procedures

The Agency's comprehensive pre-award and post-award management procedures ensure that the EPA follows established policies and meets administrative and programmatic requirements. The EPA seeks to further standardize and streamline these procedures and find ways to decrease administrative burdens without diminishing quality or accountability.

To achieve this goal, the Agency will identify and implement best practices at a national level and expand access to available grants management data and tools. The primary emphasis of Goal 2 is on the EPA's internal grants management procedures. Considerations of the burdens on external stakeholders, including applicants and grant recipients, are addressed under Goal 4.

The Agency is in the process of deploying a Next Generation Grants System (NGGS) that will provide significant opportunities to further streamline procedures. The new system will help EPA staff improve monitoring and performance

data and provide more robust reporting tools. For example, increased availability of accurate, complete and up-to-date information will minimize the amount of effort that EPA grants management staff spends on manual processes. Overall, this goal will continue to help ensure that the Agency's automated processes are compliant, user-friendly and cost-effective. As the EPA implements procedural changes based on the new IT system, the Agency will continue to review opportunities for streamlining the business process for applicants and recipients.

The EPA will also measure the effectiveness of standard procedures by assessing compliance with grants management requirements. Finally, the EPA will measure satisfaction with standard procedures, available data and tools.

Objectives

2.1   Apply best practices for grants management at the national level. [Ongoing]
- Identify best practices observed during or developed from process evaluation events conducted at Regional or Program Office levels.
- Schedule and conduct process mapping exercises and evaluations to assess opportunities to streamline procedures.
- Share with Agency staff through the OGD Intranet (or SharePoint site) the results of relevant process mapping exercises.
- Evaluate the results to decide which best practices are appropriate for

implementation at the national level, following the process developed under Goal 1 if a policy is required to be implemented at the national level.

- Develop standard operating procedures based on best practices and other evaluation tools such as mapping exercises to illustrate processes, workflows and responsibilities.

2.2 Minimize burdens on grants management staff. [Ongoing]

- Implement a process to document the anticipated costs and benefits for new requirements or standard operating procedures.
- Provide a mechanism for staff to submit feedback about existing burdens and new requirements or procedures.
- Increase the number of major grant programs that develop standardized Funding Recommendation templates, where use of the template is practical, as determined by an evaluation of current template use in the Regions.

2.3 Ensure accurate grants management data are available and readily accessible to grants management staff. [Ongoing]

- Continue to deploy the NGGS.
- Develop a timetable and plan for adopting electronic records management.
- Increase grants management staff awareness of existing web-based tools.
- Provide documentation and training to help staff use existing web-based tools

and understand how to accurately interpret available data to better monitor compliance.

- Enhance existing IT tools based on stakeholder feedback and the needs of grants management staff.
- Conduct annual testing with Agency staff to ensure that data and performance reports accurately reflect performance. As necessary, modify reporting tools to address discrepancies.
- Clarify performance review guidance for grants management staff to ensure that performance targets are based on data that are within staff control (for example, use a more specific definition for a "timely closeout.")
- Develop a trackable measure that fairly and accurately assesses Program Office performance in ensuring timely grant awards.

Performance Measures for Goal 2

Measures	Targets	
Increased awareness of and satisfaction with grants management data and web-based tools, as reported by Agency staff.	2017:	Baseline, to be calculated using 2016 data after December 31, 2016
	2018:	Increase of 20% from baseline
	2019:	Increase of 25% from baseline
	2020:	Increase of 30% from baseline
Percentage of all grants awarded within 60 days of receipt of the final funding package.	2016-2020:	At least 90% annually
Percentage of grants that expired in the previous fiscal year and are closed out (excluding expired grants that have open audits).	2016-2020:	90% annually (as specified in EPA Order 5700.6A2)
Percentage of grants that expired in fiscal years before the previous fiscal year and are closed out (excluding expired grants that have open audits).	2016-2020:	99% annually (as specified in EPA Order 5700.6A2)
Percentage of major (to be defined) grant programs that develop standard Funding Recommendation templates for grant awards.	2017:	25% of programs
	2018:	50% of programs
	2019:	75% of programs
	2020:	95% of programs

Goal 3

Foster a High-Quality Grants Management Workforce

To meet the highest stewardship and fiduciary standards, the EPA will maintain a skilled, well-trained and valued grants management workforce with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The workforce includes grant specialists (including grants management officers) and project officers to manage its grants, as well as trained managers and supervisors with grant-related or oversight responsibilities. The Agency will develop guidance for these roles and responsibilities to strengthen oversight and improve accountability. Additionally, it will enhance existing recognition programs to highlight the important contributions of the grants management workforce in advancing the Agency's mission.

The Agency will also continue to provide training to ensure that the skills and competencies of the workforce are aligned to its responsibilities. Since 2011, the EPA has developed new trainings for the grants management workforce. These trainings use multiple formats, including online modules and recorded webinars, to improve access to information and enhance the learners' experience, as well as reduce the costs for relying on classroom-based training alone.

To manage grants in the EPA's Integrated Grants Management System (IGMS), grants management staff are required to complete the basic training appropriate for their role and then take refresher training every 3 years. Similarly, managers of staff who perform grants management functions must complete a training course every 3 years to be granted signatory authority for processing grant applications and awards. The Agency will continue to refine its training programs for project officers and grants managers to address EPA policies and government-wide initiatives.

Objectives

3.1   Provide training that meets the needs and requirements of the grants management workforce. [Ongoing]

- Update and maintain existing online training courses for project officers, grants specialists, GMOs and grants signatory officials.

- Develop new training courses, including program-specific and train-the-trainer courses, as needs are identified by program and regional offices.

- Offer webinars and online modules for EPA grants management staff that address specific policies, topics and procedures (such as competition, environmental results, pre-award applications and post-award monitoring) and training for how to effectively use available tools (IGMS, Data Mart and SharePoint sites).

3.2 **Provide guidance on the roles and responsibilities of Agency personnel to strengthen oversight and ensure accountability. [Ongoing]**

- Collect input from project officers, grant specialists and other grants management staff about existing responsibilities and workload challenges.
- Update the Roles and Responsibilities Matrix to define the primary and supporting roles by office (for example, OGD, GMO, National Program Managers and Interagency Agreement Shared Service Center) and, to the extent necessary, by position (such as senior resource official, junior resource official, project officer, grant specialist or interagency agreement specialist) for the entire grants cycle, from planning through closeout.
- Request input from project officers, grant specialists and other grants management staff about updates to the Roles and Responsibilities Matrix.
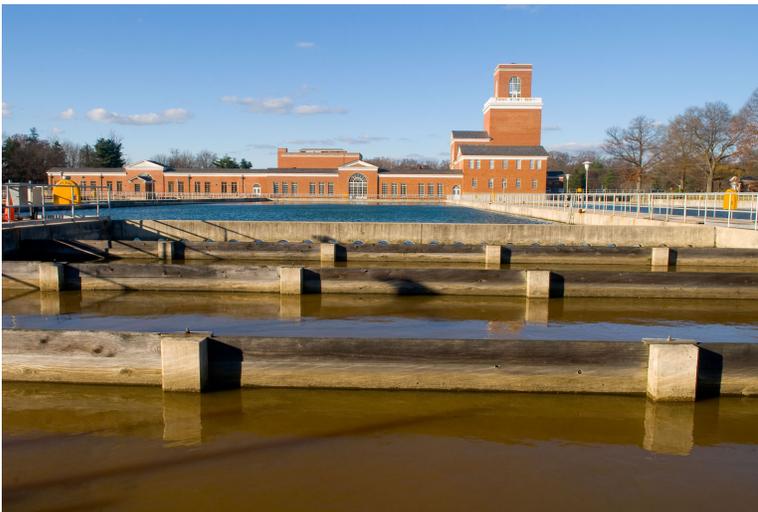
3.3 **Improve coordination between Headquarters and Regional Offices on new requirements and training needs. [Ongoing]**

- Provide central access to grants management policies, procedures, manuals, training and resources through the OGD Intranet and available collaboration tools.
- Use collaboration tools (SharePoint sites, wikis and webinars) to solicit and collect feedback from grants management staff in Headquarters and Regional Offices about job responsibilities, policies, best practices, challenges, training needs and other issues affecting the performance of the grants management workforce.
- Request input and feedback from the grants management workforce (for example, through Grants Customer Relations Council [GCRC] meetings and internal working groups) about short- and long-term priorities.
- Prepare GCRC customer satisfaction survey to measure satisfaction with grants management tools and collaboration between Headquarters and Regional Offices.
- Produce an annual training schedule that incorporates feedback on training needs.

3.4 **Strengthen recognition programs for the grants management workforce. [Ongoing]**

- Identify existing recognition programs for grants specialists and project officers, including the Agency's Assistance Management Awards Program.
- Explore options for improving existing recognition programs.

Performance Measures for Goal 3

Measures	Targets	
Increase in satisfaction with online training modules based on participant surveys for courses offered in the Agency's learning management system (LMS).	2016:	Baseline, to be calculated using participant surveys collected in 2016
	2017:	Increase of 5% from baseline
	2018:	Increase of 10% from baseline
	2019:	Increase of 15% from baseline
	2020:	Increase of 20% from baseline
Availability of up-to-date Roles and Responsibilities Matrix.	2017:	New up-to-date matrix
	2018-2020:	Up-to-date matrix annually
Increase in satisfaction with collaboration between Headquarters and Regional Offices, as reported by Agency staff.	2017:	Baseline, to be calculated using 2016 data collected after December 31, 2016
	2018:	Increase of 20% from baseline
	2019:	Increase of 25% from baseline
	2020:	Increase of 30% from baseline

Goal 4

Ensure Transparency and Accountability and Demonstrate Results

The EPA is accountable to its stakeholders and the public for managing grant funds with the highest stewardship and fiduciary standards to advance the EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment. Under this goal, the Agency will continue to improve access to information about EPA grants programs.

The Agency strives to provide transparent information about EPA grants programs. Over the last 8 years, the Agency has implemented quality control procedures to confirm the accuracy and timeliness of information about grants programs that is available to the public through the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). The CFDA provides up-to-date and complete details for each of the Agency's grant programs, including eligibility requirements, application and award processes, and post-award requirements. The Agency also has established internal controls to ensure that grant solicitations clearly describe requirements and

selection criteria, including the requirements for documenting results in work plans and progress reports. Through USAspending.gov, members of the public have access to comprehensive data about how the EPA spends tax dollars on grants by fiscal year. Under this goal, the Agency will assess the usefulness of available information and collect feedback from stakeholders about how to improve transparency. In addition, the EPA will make more grant data available to the public through Agency-managed tools, such as geographic information systems maintained in the EPA GeoPlatform.

Each year, the EPA conducts baseline monitoring activities for every EPA grant and advanced monitoring for a statistical sample of awards. The EPA uses monitoring activities to assess compliance with federal requirements and confirm that grantees appropriately use funds to achieve the anticipated results. Under this goal, the Agency will improve the process for conducting post-award monitoring. The Agency will also look for opportunities to use the results of monitoring activities to improve training for applicants and recipients, refine internal guidance for EPA staff to address management challenges, and establish best practices to inform future policy.

Additionally, the EPA will strengthen its process for conducting grants Management Effectiveness Reviews of selected Regional or Headquarters offices. These reviews are designed to assess the Agency's compliance with grants policies and procedures and its management of grants

management office and project officer resources. The Agency will use the results of these reviews, supplemented as appropriate by other OGD analyses, to enhance the EPA's internal grants training program as well as the Agency's overall management of the grants specialist and project officer workforce.

Objectives

4.1   Provide to the public timely and accurate information about EPA grants programs. [Ongoing]

- Assess the usefulness of available data.
- Publish data to reporting platforms such as USAspending.gov and online spatial tools such as those developed in the EPA GeoPlatform.

4.2   Integrate partner and public viewpoints into grants management policies and requirements. [Ongoing]

- Obtain feedback from the Agency's applicant and recipient communities to assess their satisfaction with the EPA's policies and procedures.
- Request pre-decisional recommendations about new policies and procedures.
- Collect input from external stakeholders and grant recipients about how to address burdens.

4.3   Improve post-award monitoring procedures to ensure that recipients comply with grants management requirements. [Ongoing]

- Conduct baseline monitoring on all awards, including monitoring of unliquidated obligations.
- Implement nationwide a standard operating procedure for conducting advanced administrative monitoring reviews. (2016)

- Identify best practices for using post-award monitoring to help recipients increase their capacity to successfully manage awards and provide training to grants management staff to implement the best practices.
- Use information gathered from post-award monitoring reviews to identify trends, develop tools and correct deficiencies.
- Encourage the use of cooperative audit resolution.

4.4   Strengthen accountability in Regional and Headquarters Offices by improving the Management Effectiveness Review Process. [Ongoing]

- Develop a standardized review protocol.
- Update project officer and grants specialist training to address identified areas of potential vulnerability.
- Use review results to identify recommendations for improved management of the grants specialist and project officer workforce including recommendations on workforce structure and planning as well as grant workload.

4.5   Demonstrate environmental results achieved through EPA grants programs. [Ongoing]

- Continue to require that grant applicants and recipients identify potential outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, outcomes in their work plans and progress reports, as required by EPA Order 5700.7A1.

- Include in the Agency's Annual Performance Report the significant environmental results achieved through completed assistance agreements.

4.6   Enhance training for grant applicants and recipients. [Ongoing]

- Update the online *Grants Management Training for Non-Profit Applicants and Recipients* training course.

- Develop online resources such as tutorials and webinars to help grant applicants and recipients better understand requirements (for example, demonstrating outcomes and environmental results).

Performance Measures for Goal 4

Measures	Targets	
Perform Management Effectiveness Reviews of grants management offices.	2017-2020:	2 reviews conducted annually
Percentage of awards for which the place of performance is identified in the EPA's GeoGrants application.	2017:	Baseline, to be based on existing data as of December 31, 2016
	2018:	Increase of 10% from baseline
	2019:	Increase of 20% from baseline
	2020:	Increase of 30% from baseline
Competitively award at least 90% of the dollars or 90% of new awards subject to the competition policy.	2016-2020:	At least 90% of dollars or number of new awards annually (as specified in EPA Order 5700.5A1)
Percentage of awards/recipients subject to EPA Order 5700.6A2 receiving programmatic and administrative baseline monitoring.	2016-2020:	100% annually (as specified in EPA Order 5700.6A2)
Percentage of awards/recipients receiving advanced programmatic monitoring.	2016-2020:	10% annually (as specified in EPA Order 5700.6A2)
Publish a standard operating procedure for advanced administrative monitoring	February 2016	

Goal 5
Evaluate Grants Management Performance

Under this goal, the Agency will assess grants management practices and evaluate progress toward the achievement of the objectives described in goals 1 through 4 of the GMP. As needed, the EPA will change policies based on the results of the assessment and guided by the comprehensive grants management framework developed under Goal 1.

The EPA seeks to maximize the capabilities of available systems and tools to improve grants management processes. As described under Goal 2, the EPA is in the process of deploying an updated NGGS IT system. Other information technology tools are also being made available to Agency staff to increase collaboration. The EPA will use the new system and tools to streamline procedures and improve information sharing, which may require updates to policies and guidance. The new system may also create opportunities to more efficiently monitor grants and increase transparency.

Tracking progress is an essential element of the GMP to ensure that the Agency is making positive changes to improve grants management and is holding managers responsible for the commitments outlined in the GMP. The EPA also has the ongoing responsibility to allocate necessary resources to meet grants management requirements and priorities. This goal provides a mechanism for the EPA to adapt to evolving requirements and resource constraints while continuing to use the Plan to guide operations and build on achievements made each year.

Objectives

5.1 **Ensure the grants management policy framework (developed under Goal 1) addresses evolving priorities. [Ongoing]**
- Assess the alignment of the grants management policy framework with goals and objectives based on the annual priority planning process.
- Recommend updates to policies and internal controls, as appropriate, based on the evaluation. For example, if a policy or internal control is not meeting the intended objectives, use the comprehensive grants management framework to change the policy, procedure, internal control or other management resource (such as training or reporting tool).

5.2 Maximize grants management systems to improve and measure performance. [Ongoing]

- Assess the capabilities of grants management IT systems to support operations and measure performance.

- Coordinate with National Program Offices and Regional Offices to identify innovative uses for existing grants management systems, tools and best practices that can be incorporated into future guidance.

5.3 Track progress as part of the Agency's annual priority planning process for grants management. [Ongoing]

- Prepare an implementation plan to formally track progress toward achieving the goals in the GMP.

- Establish a process to annually assess and prioritize GMP objectives, milestones and performance targets to reflect evolving requirements and available resources. Each year, the highest priority objectives will be classified as Tier 1 objectives.

- Develop a process to identify and track objectives, activities and performance measures to be considered for inclusion in the next GMP.

Performance Measures for Goal 5

Measures	Targets	
Number of policies or internal controls added to the priority list to be evaluated for effectiveness.	2016-2020:	2 policies or internal controls per year
Percentage of Tier 1 milestones and performance targets met.	2016-2020:	90% - 100% of Tier 1 milestones and targets annually

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