

Open Government Plan One Year Anniversary

US EPA Accomplishments: April 2010 - April 2011



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a rich legacy as an open agency, and we leveraged the Administration’s Open Government (OpenGov) initiative as a catalyst to re-examine our open practices with the goal of bringing tangible benefits to the public. In the past year we tested better and more innovative ways to expand transparency and encourage greater participation and collaboration with our stakeholders. As a result we adopted changes that improve how we meet our mission – to protect human health and the environment.

Reaching Out

We actively seek public participation in much of the work the Agency conducts, and EPA has created many opportunities for participation since the plan was released a year ago. Examples range from video contests to webinars to getting involved in the rulemaking process before a rule is drafted. Recently, we leveraged the cross-Government eRulemaking site to promote and capture public input in EPA’s portion of the Federal-wide retrospective regulatory review. This is a unique effort inviting the public to identify which regulations they would like to see altered and how.

At EPA, we routinely use a variety of social media and Federal tools to draw in and engage a broader spectrum of the public including:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- EPA’s Greenversations Blog
- Mobile applications (“apps”)
- Podcasts
- EPA’s Central Data Exchange
- Widgets
- RSS feeds
- YouTube
- Flickr
- Challenge.gov
- eRulemaking

Approach

Our general approach is to initiate a process or practice that embodies the principles of open government, and then we mature and adapt our approach based upon our experience and feedback from the public. The OpenGov team chose to focus on activities with longer-term value such as the Strategic Data Action Plan (SDAP). This is helping drive some of our Enterprise data policies and procedures with the goal of providing greater benefit and access to data managed by EPA, as well as increasing the use and combination of data within and across the Agency.

We are actively sharing our lessons learned with other federal partners and we will consider the experiences of others as we shape our own activities. This approach to creatively work within EPA, across the government and with the public embodies a key tenet of OpenGov – collaboration.

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Status of OpenGov Milestones and Commitments

As part of the process of implementing OpenGov, we are tracking a variety of milestones and commitments in the following categories:

- OpenGov Plan
- Data Specific Activities
- Governance
- Policy
- Communication
- Cross-Agency Transferability
- Flagship Initiative

EPA's open site (www.epa.gov/open) provides access to our OpenGov Plan, quarterly reports, Data.gov news and other tools to track our progress and provide us with feedback.

Self Assessment of EPA's OpenGov Plan Commitments

The remainder of this report provides a status of our OpenGov activities over the last year with the current status of each milestone in our OpenGov Plan and several new commitments.

OpenGov Plan

- Develop Plan Addendum (Completed 2010/Q3)
 - Updated [OpenGov Plan](#) to address feedback from OMB and external stakeholders
- Verify Alignment with FY 2011-2015 EPA Strategic Plan (Review Completed 2011/Q1)
 - Reviewed new [Strategic Plan](#) for alignment
 - On Track to Align with the next updated OpenGov Plan

Data Specific Activities

- Publish Strategic Data Action Plan (SDAP) (Completed 2011/Q2)
 - Created and posted [SDAP Outline](#) to guide the development of the SDAP and related products and artifacts, as well as the completion and transition plan to enterprise initiatives
 - Developed and posted [EPA Data.gov Interim Policies and Procedures](#) to help Agency staff publish data on Data.gov
 - Developed [SDAP V1.0](#), approved by EPA's executive-level Quality Information Council (QIC)
- Make 5 New High-Value Data Sets Available (Completed 2010/Q3 and Ongoing)
 - Increased EPA Data.gov holdings from under 600 in 2010/Q3 to over 1850 in 2011/Q2
 - A dataset requested by the public ([Toxic Substance Control Act Inventory](#)) was among the most popular viewed in Data.gov
 - We continue to identify and prioritize datasets/tools/geodata to publish on Data.gov

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- Define Process to Identify Innovative Uses of Data (Completed 2011/Q1)
 - Created and monitored IdeaScale posting, requesting stakeholders identify innovative uses of EPA data
 - Additional actions are planned as part of SDAP

Governance

- Establish/Institutionalize Sustainable Governance Structure (Completed 2010/Q4)
 - Moved oversight of OpenGov and the commitments in the OpenGov Plan to the QIC, a standing executive body
 - The OpenGov Implementation Workgroup and SDAP Project Team, comprised of staff from offices and regions across the Agency, continue to implement OpenGov according to the OGD and EPA's OpenGov Plan
 - QIC approved the [OpenGov Implementation Workgroup charter](#) with on-going roles and responsibilities
- Hold Quarterly Governance Meetings (Completed 2010/Q4 and Ongoing)
 - The QIC has a standing monthly meetings where OpenGov is raised on an as needed basis
 - OpenGov Implementation workgroup meets twice monthly
- Update OpenGov Performance Metrics on EPA's Web Site (Completed 2010/Q3 and Ongoing)
 - Created and implemented a quarterly report to share and track EPA's progress implementing OpenGov
 - Metrics are included for commitments within the OpenGov Plan, Flagship activities, SDAP components, and emerging requirements that may come from OMB or other sources

Policy

- Promote culture change by encouraging new media & Web training (Completed 2011/Q1 and Ongoing)
 - Discussed and promoted culture change via the cross-agency OpenGov Implementation Workgroup
 - Good examples are shared and advertized on EPA's Open Website and in progress reports
- Develop policy for maintenance of public engagement site (Completed 2010/Q3)
 - Reviewed existing policy, drafted approach and incorporated into the first quarterly update

Communication

- Analysis of public input (Completed 2010/Q3 and Ongoing)
 - Captured, categorized and summarized the actionable suggestions from IdeaScale and email
 - Addressed actionable items in the revised OpenGov Plan
 - Posted the suggestions we implemented in the 2010/Q4 quarterly report
- Maintain Open Government Website (Completed 2010/Q2 and Ongoing)
 - Update www.epa.gov/open Website with quarterly reports and as new information and documents are completed and posted

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- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reporting (Completed 2010/Q3 and Ongoing)
 - Completed [OMB self-evaluation](#) in 2010/Q3 and 2011/Q2
 - Completed report of first year highlights 2011/Q2 (this document)
 - Continue to respond to information requests and special report requests as needed
- Employee Engagement Plan (Ongoing)
 - EPA believes the most effective way to instill OpenGov objectives is to incorporate them into existing efforts (e.g., Community Based Project on Web and Communications working group), rather than initiate a new and independent project
 - We have not created a formal OpenGov employee engagement plan and will periodically evaluate the need to develop one
- Update performance measures (Review Completed 2011/Q2 and Ongoing)
 - Employing an iterative approach to assessing performance through measures and metrics
 - Each Flagship has or is developing quantitative metrics (see flagship reporting within progress reports at www.epa.gov/open)
- Post and maintain Webpages for Flagship activities (Completed 2010/Q4 and Ongoing)
 - Several Flagship efforts have individual Webpages; some do not warrant a separate webpage
 - Updates are provided each quarter through the quarterly reports
- Flagship reporting (Completed 2010/Q3 and Ongoing)
 - Developed one page summary (links from Quarterly status report on OpenGov) of Flagship status with links to individual Webpages as available
- Website update (Initiated before OpenGov Plan and Ongoing)
 - EPA’s website restructuring effort pre-dated the OpenGov Plan; incremental effort with improvements each quarter and recent updates are provided
 - Launched Google search engine as EPA’s search function, addressing public feedback to improve the functionality of searches on EPA’s Website
 - Improved metadata quality to enhance information access (we tagged 10,000+ documents, including the 500 most popular PDFs)
 - Launched new microsites focused on a specific topic or audience including:
 - Compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) Recycling and Disposal Resource page <http://www.epa.gov/cfl/cflrecycling.html>
 - New Bedford Harbor: www.epa.gov/nbh/
 - Planning, Budget and Results: <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/>
 - Urban Waters: <http://www.epa.gov/urbanwaters/>
 - Established a [“Laws & Regulations” channel \(tab\)](#) which provides streamlined access to EPA’s legal and regulatory documents

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Cross-Agency Transferability

- Review/evaluate success of ongoing efforts (Initiated 2011/Q2 and Ongoing)
 - Developed internal Wiki environment for EPA staff to share best practices and lessons learned on Flagships and other OpenGov initiatives
 - Loaded feedback from the Flagship efforts into the Wiki
- Identify and Share Lessons Learned (Completed 2011/Q2 and Ongoing)
 - Developed [lessons learned for pre-regulatory activities](#)
- Communicate availability of NatureServe Endangered Species Contract (Ongoing)
 - EPA contacted a few agencies to gage the level of interest in their use of the Nature Serve Species Contract
 - We are designing an Interagency Agreement process that does not impact existing resources
- Identify, monitor, and participate in cross-agency activities (Initiated 2011/Q2 and Ongoing)
 - Example activities are captured in each of our Quarterly progress reports

Flagship Related Milestones

- Identify Web 2.0 strategy and tools (Completed 2010/Q3)
 - Issued [Interim Guidance on Representing EPA Using Social Media](#)
 - National Pollution Discharge Elimination program conducted an evaluation of the eRulemaking/Exchange site and selected it as a tool to support their pre-rule effort
- Implement Web 2.0 strategy and tools (Completed 2010/Q4 and Ongoing)
 - Extensively used Web 2.0 tools in OpenGov and other initiatives including:
 - Chesapeake Bay Webinar Series <http://www.epa.gov/chesapeakebaytmdl/>
 - NPDES Pre-rulemaking <http://www.regulations.gov/exchange/topic/npdes/agencyintro/npdes-exchange>
- Three new programs/projects integrating Web 2.0 tools to engage the public (Completed 2010/Q3 and Ongoing)
 - Numerous and ongoing effort, including three of note:
 - [Rulemaking Gateway](#)
 - NPDES use of Exchange site <http://www.regulations.gov/exchange/topic/npdes/agencyintro/npdes-exchange>
 - Chesapeake Bay webinar series <http://www.epa.gov/chesapeakebaytmdl/>
- Hold two new outreach events (Completed 2010/Q3 and Ongoing)
 - Numerous and ongoing effort, including three examples:
 - EPA regional staff joined with community groups and citizens to cleanup Soundview Park, Bronx, NY <http://southbxnews.blogspot.com/2010/09/volunteers-cleanup-soundview-park.html>
 - EPA's Marine Debris Prevention Team and Urban Waters Team partnered with the Ocean Conservancy to host a pilot [Urban Waters/International Coastal Cleanup Event](#) at Anacostia Park in Washington, DC

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- Two recommendations for new/revised policies/procedures that support OpenGov (Completed 2011/Q2)
 - Issued Web 2.0 Guidance with information on EPA’s Social media use, necessary steps for setting up Web 2.0 applications such as Wikis and blogs, and tips on how employees should interact when representing the government on social media sites
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/oei/webguide.nsf/socialmedia>
 - Drafted and published [Interim EPA Data.gov Guidance and Procedures](#) in 2011/Q1 to provide instruction and support to Agency data owners when publishing datasets and tools to Data.gov
http://www.epa.gov/open/EPA_DataGov_Guidance_Procedures_2010_12_21.pdf
 - Drafted and published [Strategic Data Action Plan \(SDAP\) V1.0](#) in 2011/Q2 with a number of recommended data publication activities
 - EPA’s Enterprise Data Policy is being updated
- One new program/project using mobile phone application (app) to support citizen environmental decisions (2011/Q1 and Ongoing)
 - MyRTK is a mobile app that allows a user to enter an address, and a map displays nearby facilities regulated under federal environmental laws <http://myrtk.epa.gov/info/>
 - All mobile apps can be found at m.epa.gov