EPA Data Governance Council

Meeting Summary – September 26, 2022

General Updates

- The Data Skills Subcommittee will conduct desired state of data skills interviews during October to assist in the development of targets for future training goals.
- Alation, the selected enterprise metadata management tool, is now deployed in the Data Management & Analytics Platform (DMAP) environment. The Data Inventory Subcommittee is working on implementation of Alation to get it ready for enterprise-wide usage.
- The Data Sharing MOU with Amazon Web Services (AWS) is almost complete which will allow no-cost sharing of some large data sets with the public.
- Heather Barnhart is requesting feedback on the draft Data Officer Position Description (PD). Additionally, through November and December, there will be conversations with Data Governance Council (DGC) members, Senior Information Officials (SIOs) and other critical roles regarding the rollout of the Data Officer position.
- Ongoing DGC project updates are available in the 09/26/2022 DGC Projects Update wiki.

Updates on Data Coordination of the IIJA and IRA

- Carol Terris provided a presentation on data coordination for the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).
- The IIJA Data and Performance Workgroup's primary guidance is OMB M-22-12. It focuses primarily on performance, data and reporting on IIJA.
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance includes requirements for both project phase and location.
- The OMB has narrowed the focus of the project phase to construction projects which for EPA primarily relates to Superfund actions. However, most Superfund actions are completed under contract and interagency agreements which are not captured under OMB's reporting requirements.
- OMB's Guidance is most applicable to EPA's location data. The workgroup is coordinating with the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) on OEJ's definitions of disadvantaged and underrepresented communities.
- Location data guidance is based on OMB M-22-12 and Justice 40 (J40) requirements.
- OMB issued a recent data call regarding definitions for underrepresented communities.
- The workgroup's role is to ensure the required connections are made so the location data can be used and reported on.
- Current tasks include working with the Next Generation Grants System (NGGS) program which captures data for the main grant award recipient but does not capture the community level impact of the reward. There is not yet a good Information Technology (IT) solution for such a detailed level of reporting.
- The Workgroup drafted a questionnaire document to collect information about how other groups handle data flows, housing and collection methods. Those responses will be collated to

create a single solution that will help them achieve the goal of publishing this information in Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) through DMAP or in Qlik.

- o The workgroup would also like for the document to lead to the creation of an actual data standard. Carol requested that DGC members share their comments in the document.
- Katherine Dawes shared about the IIJA Evidence and Evaluation topics.
  - o Evidence and Evaluation topics relate to what data is collected, how it is collected, and how it is analyzed.
  - o The group is working to establish learning priorities. The goal is to consolidate and align learning priorities to create solutions that work for multiple programs while maintaining a flexible approach.
  - o Because other federal agencies are also struggling with the same issues, there is a request for a federal workshop to help define evidence and evaluation strategies.
- Robin Richardson and Katherine Dawes discussed the Grants Commitments Met effort.
  - o The Grants Commitments Met effort began building a learning agenda in 2020, with a focus on identifying environmental results being achieved through the grants programs and best practices.
  - o The survey results and other information from this effort can be leveraged to define standards for data collection and grant processing under IIJA and IRA.
  - o The survey results showed that there is a wide variety of ways that programs are collecting and storing grants data.
    - ▪ The survey revealed the common use of Word documents and the use of 55 databases that do not speak to one another.
    - ▪ Each program has different ways of collecting, storing and analyzing their data which limits how the data can be shared.
  - o Because of reporting requirements for IIJA and IRA, grant commitments met strategies must be adjusted to focus on communicating results.
- Discussion
  - o These issues are Agency-wide. How do we all start working together? How do the speakers suggest the DGC start having internal conversations?
    - ▪ They could share the logic model being created that should help connect a lot of the dots.
  - o When a new regulation is created, it would be helpful to have language specifying the requirement of a new IT system and the data that will be collected and analyzed.
    - ▪ It may be difficult to graft that requirement into the Office of Policy's process, but we should work with them to identify a solution. We could also incorporate it in the responsibilities of the new Data Officer role.
  - o The specific challenge around Environmental Justice (EJ) is if they establish new data collection systems rather than to pull from the existing catalog. From a standardized reporting and performance perspective, it would be beneficial if the EJ starts by reviewing the data products and pipelines that could be conformed to support their new system. It would result in better connectivity and longevity.
    - ▪ A responsibility of the Data Officers will eventually be to support programs in making these types of connections.

- Are the IIJA and IRA funds only for grants or is there a budget for the creation of a data platform?
    - A case could be made for funding the creation of systems that need to be used to support the new programs.
- It would be beneficial for leadership to prioritize leveraging existing resources.
    - Senior leadership is open to leveraging existing resources and is focused on benefiting the Agency as a whole, rather than building one-off systems.
- How do we maintain communications with the DGC regarding the upcoming survey efforts?
    - This conversation was a great first step in increasing DGC awareness. Moving forward, the DGC can review documentation and questionnaires to provide input.