

Grant Commitments Met



GRANT COMMITMENTS MET has been an Agency Learning Agenda priority since December 2019. The Year 3/Year 4 Grant Commitments Met Report builds on findings from prior reports and identifies actions the EPA could take to prepare grant programs to report on consistently defined outputs and outcomes. By adopting common definitions for outputs and outcomes, the Agency aims to better evaluate the effectiveness of the nearly \$4 billion in grants and assistance agreements that it funds each year.

The common definitions reflect extensive input from an Agency-wide Advisory Group. From October 2023 through March 2024, four grant programs participated in a pilot study of the common definitions, which included output categories such as outreach and engagement, technical assistance, equitable grant implementation, and outcomes such as reduced emissions actions and climate adaptation.

Common Definitions Pilot: By the Numbers

4

Programs participated in the pilot study

7

Of 12 output categories were relevant to the programs in the pilot study

3

Programs adopted common definitions

2

Programs are developing databases to collect, store, and analyze measures data

All 4

Programs identified benefits from the common definitions, such as improved consistency, the ability to aggregate results across grantees, and shared understanding across grantees

Conclusions



The common definitions can prepare grant programs to report on consistently defined outputs and outcomes.



Grant programs that are new or undergoing significant changes/expansion may find the common definitions particularly helpful and easy to adopt.



Standard data collection templates and electronic reporting systems can also support consistent reporting of grant outputs and outcomes.



Reducing the reporting burden on grantees and EPA Project Officers will help ensure the use of the common definitions.



Ongoing collaboration and technical assistance were important for obtaining program buy-in and adoption during the pilot; however, other approaches for scaling up the common definitions can be effective and feasible.

Key Recommendations

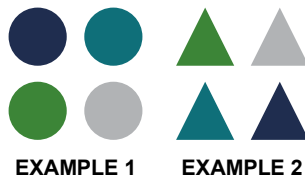
- Review the first round of grant data reported with the common definitions for consistency and the ability to aggregate results.

- Consider scaling up the common definitions but start with newer grant programs first.

Why Are Common Definitions Important?

Common definitions allow the EPA to tell a collective story about the results of the Agency's grant programs as a whole.

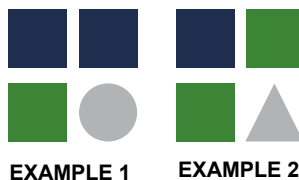
Currently, programs do not report on consistently defined outputs and outcomes.



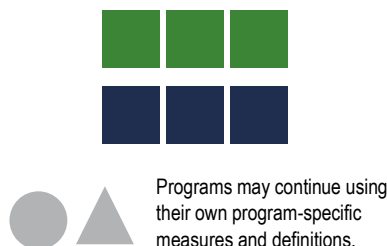
When metrics are not consistent among programs, it is difficult to measure their collective success.



The EPA identified common definitions that were **relevant** and **feasible** to programs, a number of which apply to measures that programs already track.



Common definitions allow for gathering outputs and outcomes across programs to tell a **collective story about their success**.



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2023-2024 Pilot Study

The pilot study aimed to test the application of the common definitions with four participating grant programs.

PROGRAMS: Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP), Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (EJCPS), and Promoting Readiness and Enhancing Proficiency to Advance Reporting and Data Program (PREPARED).

PROCESS: Workgroup members held extensive discussions with program staff regarding how each program could apply the common definitions and provided each program with measurement assistance. Closeout interviews gathered feedback from participants regarding common definitions and future data collection.

FINDINGS: Overall, the pilot was successful at demonstrating to programs that the common definitions can be applied across many different types of programs.

TAKEAWAY: All four programs, to varying degrees, are incorporating the common definitions and/or related measures into the processes they already have (CBP) or are currently developing (GGRF, EJCPS, PREPARED).