

Sustainable Skylines

Building Blocks for Success

**A Step-by-Step
Implementation Guide**



*“Sustainable Skylines gives cities a flexible framework to achieve real results that improve air quality for their residents”-
EPA Regional Administrator Richard E. Greene. Region VI*

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PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDEBOOK

This guidebook is designed to provide participating Sustainable Skylines Initiative (SSI) communities with a suggested roadmap for how to develop and launch a successful SSI program. It describes the program design and implementation process, so prospective SSI partners will know what needs to be accomplished and how to get there. It is not intended to provide a full description of every topic related to program development and implementation. Rather, it is designed to:

1. Lay out and describe the basic steps for developing a successful SSI program;
2. Highlight the major issues and challenges that communities may encounter while setting up a program; and
3. Provide reference to the SSI Resource Manual. This manual is a separate document, located on the SSI website at www.epa.gov/sustainableskylines, which provides more detailed resources, tools, and suggestions.

This guidebook is divided into four steps, each of which focuses on a particular stage in the program implementation process. Completing each stage will help ensure that your program is successful and will achieve ongoing, measurable results that help protect our planet, our people, and our prosperity.

INTRODUCTION

The SSI is a locally led, EPA-supported, public-private partnership aimed to reduce air emissions and promote sustainability in urban environments. SSI provides communities with a framework that, when implemented in an area, can achieve measurable reductions within three years. Through SSI, an area creates a partnership that selects and implements projects based on their own local needs. By providing assistance, EPA helps SSI participants achieve better overall sustainability in their local areas.

EPA Grant Requirements

If you are applying for an EPA SSI grant, or have been selected to receive one, you will be required to write a work plan. The work plan will address grant-funded activities only, and will have specific requirements and issues related to aligning funded work with regulatory grant requirements and your overall SSI program. To help you identify these issues early and accelerate the grant's movement through the process, we have included suggestions in Appendix B.

EPA's goals for the SSI program are to:

- Integrate transportation, energy, land use, and air quality planning
- Accomplish measurable air quality benefits within three years
- Create an innovative program that can be replicated in other communities across the U.S.
- Provide each SSI community the flexibility to tailor projects to their priorities and capabilities
- Create a culture change toward sustainability in local governments and citizenry

While each SSI community crafts its own program to fit its situation, each program should include the following:

- Implement place-based and locally-driven projects that yield measurable air quality benefits within three years
- Promote collaboration among multiple stakeholders
- Identify and leverage resources among public and private partners
- Use a consensus-based project selection approach

The initiative began in two pilot cities - [Dallas, Texas](#), and [Kansas City, Kansas and Missouri](#). EPA has now expanded the program nationwide with the goal of enrolling 10 areas by 2010. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is the first community in the national expansion.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

When a community is selected or chooses to participate in the SSI, the responsible organizations must create a plan and a partnership structure to map out and implement emissions-reducing projects. EPA can serve as a catalyst to help communities identify local issues, build partnerships within the community, and provide a framework of technical expertise and resources to help achieve project objectives. SSI communities work with EPA and other partners to increase area participation and leverage resources to maximize program accomplishments.

An SSI community’s “partnership team” selects and implements projects it deems appropriate for meeting the vision and goals for their area. The guidelines are flexible with regard to the types of projects that qualify for SSI, provided they are appropriate and fall into five of the seven categories listed below. *Category descriptions and examples can be found in Appendix A.*

- Central City Livability
- Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy/Climate Change
- Land Use Transportation Strategies
- Diesel Engines Emission Reduction
- Green Building and Green Building Development
- Stationary and Area Sources
- Off-road/Non-road Source Emission Reductions

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

Step 1: Building the Foundation

- A. Defining your program’s vision, mission, and goals
- B. Identifying key participants, organizational structure and process plan
- C. Developing your overall program plan
- D. Building your informational foundation
- E. Selecting your projects

Step 2: Making Project Plans

- A. Defining project implementation plan
- B. Establishing your organizational structure
- C. Identifying tasks and actions
- D. Managing performance
- E. Developing project marketing plans
- F. Finding partners and leveraging
- G. Program/product overview

Step 3: Implementing and Feedback Loops

- A. Launching your program
- B. Sustaining and evaluating
- C. Modifying and re-launching

Step 4: Evaluating and Recognizing Program Success

STEP 1: BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

As you embark on an SSI program for your community, you should create your own program plan to map out goals, participants, and projects, and to define success and program metrics. You will need to enlist your key participants in this process – local government, planning organization, and early partners – to develop this foundation for your program.

A. Defining Your Program’s Vision, Mission, and Goals

First, you should define your program’s vision, mission, and goals:

- Your **vision** is a future-oriented, detailed description of what you want to accomplish. What, ideally, do you want to exist, or have happen as a result of your efforts?
- The **mission statement** is a brief statement that defines the basic purpose of the program. This should be a statement of why you exist. This is your purpose. Ideally, it should be one sentence, memorable, and inspiring.
- The **general goals** should elaborate on how your program will carry out its mission. These are big steps, at the programmatic level, towards accomplishing your mission/vision. They should constitute a stretch (not something you know you can easily reach). They should align with principles and values. Goals, when accomplished, should bring you closer to your vision. To the extent possible, goals should be outcome oriented.

***Dallas SSI Program
Vision/Mission/Goals***

Vision: *A three-year partnership among the City of Dallas, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the North Central Texas Council of Governments, to promote sustainability within the city via voluntary programs which emphasize air quality improvements.*

Mission: *Bringing together community partners to reduce pollution and impacts on climate change through sustainable actions.*

General Goals:

- *Achieve measurable air pollution and other corollary environmental benefits within three years*
- *Realize a successful and reproducible program that will serve as a model for other cities*

B. Identifying Key Participants, Organizational Structure and Process Plan

Next, you need to identify key participants and the program’s organizational structure. There can be two levels of participation: the program team or core management group and the project teams. The project teams will likely be subsets of the program team, augmented with project-specific partners as Dallas has done. But you can design what will work for you. For instance, Kansas City has one team that serves both functions.

Listing roles and responsibilities will assist you in choosing who will best serve in the roles of team members and partners. Also, a list of expectations for each group and its participants allows everyone involved to know who is ultimately responsible for decisions and tasks.

| Possible Participant Roles and Responsibilities | |
|---|--|
| Core Management Group | Program Partner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide overall direction and leadership to your local SSI program ○ Select new program partners and projects ○ Serve on subcommittees to help with communications/marketing, evaluation, oversight, etc. ○ Participate in regular meetings ○ Determine how SSI funds will be spent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submit an application outlining the specific activity and/or project you will undertake as part of SSI to help improve environmental quality ○ Commit to undertaking the activity within a certain time period ○ Submit an annual summary of your activity and progress ○ Share information about your project and results so that other organizations may learn from your experience ○ Notify the core management group of any significant changes in your activity or management that may impact your involvement in SSI |

While developing your lists of roles and responsibilities, you should also identify potential partners -- organizations and people who have something to offer the program and can participate in your SSI initiative. These groups may include:

- Representatives from multiple departments of local government including transportation, environment, planning, health, and economic development
- Local media outlets (television stations, newspapers, etc.)
- Local community members
- Health agencies (local, State, and Federal)
- Minority members of the community
- Faith-based organizations and local congregations/places of worship
- Local chambers of commerce and other business organizations
- Health care providers
- Local economic development organizations
- Educational institutions (schools, universities, and colleges)
- Community development groups
- Elected officials
- Business owners and managers
- Local sports teams

Some of these entities will choose to participate on your core program team or a project team. However, even if they do not, it is helpful to keep these groups informed as to what your SSI program is doing, as it is likely that you may need to cooperate and collaborate with some of them down the road. They may also be able to provide resources to your program or choose to become full partners later on.

C. Developing Your Overall SSI Program Plan

The outcome of the visioning process and the definition of roles and responsibilities will feed into the overall program plan. This plan will define:

- how the overall program will work,
- how the teams will function and decisions will be made,
- how to define success for the overall program, otherwise known as performance management,
- an overall marketing plan for recruiting and recognizing partners, launching projects, and advertising the existence and accomplishments of the program, and
- how projects will be selected – selection criteria and priorities.

a. Managing Performance

In general, many programs and projects often run into trouble because they fail to define how to manage performance at the beginning to 1) ensure the desired results come out of the identified actions, and 2) identify metrics to measure results.

The program and projects will benefit from a well-articulated roadmap describing the logic of the program. When designing the goals and objectives of your SSI program, you can examine the logic underlying the program’s stated purpose and the activities in place to help achieve that purpose. EPA encourages, but does not require, the use of a logic model approach for this. A logic model is a diagramming process for thinking through how inputs and actions will result in desired outcomes and results. At the same time, you should also consider how to manage and evaluate your program. What types of information will you need to measure progress, and how will the information be obtained? How will measurement information be gathered during the lifetime of the project? How will you evaluate the outcomes of your activities, projects, and overall SSI program?

EPA can provide technical assistance to help you design, implement, and monitor the performance management aspects of your SSI activities and overall program. ***See Section 2 in the Resource Manual for more information on performance management.***

b. Creating a Marketing Strategy

Since both your overall SSI program and individual projects will need to be marketed, SSI communities should consider creating a formal SSI marketing strategy as part of their overall developmental process. SSI has provided a “brand” which, as we have seen with Energy Star, can be very effective for getting attention and building a reputation. But effectively encouraging individuals and businesses to adopt behaviors for the social good is different from marketing a new brand of snack food. “Social marketing” is the name given to the utilization of marketing theories and techniques to influence behavior for a social good. Research shows that behavior change is most effectively achieved through initiatives delivered at the community level. So, as a local entity, you are well-situated to change behavior with your activities provided you use effective techniques.

You will need to develop a social marketing plan for your overall program in order to recruit partners. You will also need to develop a plan for each individual project in order to recruit project partners and to accomplish the desired behavior changes. These plans will need to be based on as much information as you can gather. The social marketing guide in the SSI Resource Manual provides guidance and additional resources for developing your marketing plans, including how to:

1. set goals – which should be specific,
2. develop strategies – which will dictate subsequent steps,
3. identify and describe your product or service – including how it relates to your target audience,
4. identify your target audience – to effectively utilize resources by tailoring message and product,
5. know your competition – to identify what’s keeping folks from the desired behavior now, and
6. develop messages – that are clear, direct, and appeal to the interests of the audience.

Resources are limited. But, by following the outlined steps, doing the recommended research, and carefully thinking through the process, you can effectively use your marketing budget to pursue your SSI goals.

D. Building Your Informational Foundation

Building your informational foundation is the last step before selecting projects or confirming your preliminary project selection. This will allow you to use resources to address community priorities, set appropriate goals and metrics for the projects, and identify potential partners for whom the projects will be important. The steps for this work include:

- a. Taking stock
- b. Ranking issues
- c. Brainstorming projects

a. Taking Stock

As part of your strategic planning process, it is very helpful to inventory available resources and gather information to establish the community goals and environmental issues that warrant prompt attention.

Consider the following questions:

- What resources are available from EPA, your city, and other known partners to start your SSI program? Are there ongoing programs that are working on related issues that can be leveraged, or do you need to gather more information about them to avoid duplication?
- What general air quality and environmental issues are of most concern to your citizens, e.g., climate change, ozone, traffic congestion, toxic hot spots? What issues are most overlooked? Has a community visioning process been done that you can use?
- What specific air quality and environmental issues are of most concern in your area based on data characterizing current status and activities, past trends, and expected trends? A trends analysis is an effort to predict what your community will look like in the future if current patterns continue without intervention.
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (as in a SWOT analysis) to addressing these issues (e.g., success or failure of past efforts, lack of attention to the issues, interest or indifference of populace to issues, etc.)?

b. Ranking Issues

Using a consensus process with your program team, rank the environmental issues and problems based on their importance to your community. Consider health data, environmental surveys, and priorities identified in community visioning or public focus group activities, for example. What issues emerge as the top priorities? Which are lower priorities? Be mindful that you do not select just top-ranked issues simply because they offer convenient opportunities. The goal is to effect real-world, quantifiable results, and sometimes projects that are the most challenging end up being the most beneficial to the community.

c. Brainstorming Projects

When you brainstorm projects, create a forum that encourages creativity and consensus for your team, and begin with the end in mind. Focus on the results that you hope to see from your SSI program and what projects would most help you achieve them. Identify possible actions to address your issues by using the Climate and Air Pollution Planning Assistant (CAPPA) and other tools. (*See the Resource Manual for more tools and project ideas*). The following questions can help you flesh out issues for suggested projects, as well as help you develop your own criteria.

- Are you looking for brand new projects? Are you interested in projects that are already underway (e.g., projects that have been planned but not implemented)? Have you considered projects similar to those successfully tried in other cities (you do not always have to reinvent the wheel to have a successful project)? If you are interested in existing projects, will you be able to measure the impact of SSI on those projects?
- Can projects begin to produce actual, measurable results within a relatively short period of time? How will these results be quantified?
- Evaluate potential projects based on identified criteria and answers to the following questions:
 - Have stakeholders or focus groups identified any priority projects?
 - What projects are already ongoing by other agencies and organizations? How do they relate, feed into, or interact with SSI goals and requirements?
 - What resources, abilities, or contacts do the members of your core management group bring to the table that may help make your projects successful?
 - What other partners may become involved in the various projects?
 - What are the potential co-benefits of each project, e.g., multimedia benefits (air, water, and land), creation of green jobs, local economic multipliers? Are there any qualitative co-benefits?
 - Are there any funding restrictions on the types of projects you can implement?
 - Are the projects cost effective?
 - Will the projects continue to produce results once your SSI program has ended?
 - Will it contribute to a culture change in the community?

Dallas SSI projects include:

- Addressing urban heat island and stormwater mitigation
- Supporting green taxi and rental car initiatives
- Supporting green building ordinances, weatherization programs and green construction initiatives
- Implementing a Greenhouse Gas reduction strategy
- Conducting a renewable energy and energy efficiency outreach/education program with the general public, local schools, and civic/community groups
- Offering technical assistance in the form of free energy audits/inspections for interested institutions/organizations in conjunction with the Texas environmental agency
- Initiating a program to address emissions from off-road sources like lawn-maintenance equipment and mowers

E. SELECTING YOUR PROJECTS

After defining your vision, mission, and general goals, building your informational foundation, and brainstorming possible projects, you are now ready to select your projects. (Remember that to qualify for SSI status; you must have five or more projects from at least five of the seven project categories). It is up to your team to decide how to rank and select from the brainstormed project ideas. To secure buy-in from all partners, this should be done using a consensus process or other methodology that all partners agree to ahead of time. Group dynamics are such that, when group members are comfortable with a process, they are usually comfortable with the decisions that result.

The Kansas City SSI team’s method of ranking and selection is one that can be emulated or used as background for developing your own process. *Examples of the materials developed and used are in the Resource Manual.* The Kansas City process had four steps:

1. The team brainstormed projects and presented them (described at a broad goal level) in a matrix under headings for the seven categories.
2. Each participant picked their top three projects for each category and added comments to address three questions – How would you see it implemented? How would additional funds be leveraged? Is there overlap with existing programs that could be leveraged?
3. The average ranking for each possible project and all the notes related to it were placed in a matrix for informed discussion and decision-making.
4. The team used the information about priorities, opportunities for leveraging, and other information gained in all the feedback, and selected the top projects based on the consensus of the team members. While the projects selected were not necessarily the highest ranked, the process provided the information and the format for making decisions with which all participants were comfortable.

This predetermined process enabled easier consensus at the end, because partners knew the basis for decisions at the beginning. Your team could choose to use parts of this method, or use the same structure with different questions for the ranking surveys. Or, you could develop your own methodology with which your team would feel most confident in the resulting selections.

STEP 2: MAKING PROJECT PLANS

Now that you have selected your five projects, you can follow the same general step-by-step process described in Step 1 for each individual project.

A. Defining Project Goals and Objectives

Your project goals and objectives should align with the SSI program vision, mission, and goals you defined in Step 1, but attuned to project-level needs. Your project *goals and objectives* should be:

1. Precise, so that program partners can better understand and fulfill the mission of the initiative,
2. Within the initiative’s span of influence, and

3. Defined in a manner that allows future assessments to be made on whether they were or are being achieved, as well as incremental progress.

Objectives can be broken into sub-objectives, or action items, to address specific issues not captured in the broad objective statements. You will need to tailor them to the circumstances in your area and the types of environmental issues that you would like your SSI program to address.

In Dallas, there are five project categories in which a partner may participate in SSI. Each category identifies specific project goals and objectives:

1. Enhance central city livability
 - a. Mitigate the urban heat island effect and reduce stormwater runoff through the use of strategic shading and tree planting, green and reflective roofs, permeable surfaces for parking lots, etc.
 - b. Replace existing fleets of taxis and rental cars with ultra-low or zero-emitting vehicles as a demonstration for the rest of the region to duplicate
2. Promote green buildings and developments
 - a. Assist in constructing highly energy efficient, affordable homes with partners
3. Implement and promote renewable energy/energy efficiency
 - a. Complete an energy-related air emissions reduction strategy for the City of Dallas and implement selected voluntary measures to reduce air emissions from electrical grid power use and commercial natural gas use
 - b. Perform various outreach efforts to promote renewable energy/energy efficiency, focusing on two different sectors: large retail companies and schools
4. Reduce emissions from stationary sources/area sources
 - a. Reduce air emissions at Dallas-area industries using Texas Commission on Environmental Quality’s existing “Site Assistance Visit+ Program”
5. Reduce off-road emissions
 - a. Replace small gasoline- and diesel-powered off-road equipment with electric-powered equipment, concentrating on small equipment such as lawn maintenance equipment and small utility vehicles, thereby demonstrating feasibility for widespread change-outs.

B. Establishing Your Organizational Structure

Your project teams will be responsible for implementing projects within your five selected SSI categories. Each team should have a leader and members responsible for assigned tasks. Once the team is established, you may want to select partners to help with project implementation. When selecting project partners, make sure they can fulfill their responsibilities for the entire length of your SSI program, or at least until their project is complete. In some areas, this may mean requiring partners to sign memorandums of understanding (MOU) or other types of formal agreement that commit the organizations to their roles in your SSI program.

C. Identifying Tasks and Actions

To help ensure the effective implementation of each project, ask each project team to submit a work plan that describes how the project will be undertaken. The work plan development process is a great time to make assignments and attain commitments to follow through on actionable items.

The project plan can take many formats, but at a minimum, it should include:

- A list of goals and objectives/actions items
- A description of the staff and organizations responsible for implementing the projects
- Actions/activities/tasks that will be undertaken for the project – in sufficient detail to understand how they will be done and how they will accomplish the goals
- Timelines for reaching various milestones
- An evaluation plan – can include interim and final evaluations
- A detailed budget

C. Managing Performance

You should monitor and evaluate the progress of your activities and projects in achieving the goals and objectives of your SSI program. You can apply the same performance management techniques discussed in Step 1 to each of your projects and activities. EPA can provide technical assistance to help you design, implement, and monitor the SSI performance management. *See Section 2 in the Resource Manual for more information on performance management.*

D. Developing Your Project Marketing Plan

Just like the overall SSI program, individual projects will benefit from a marketing strategy accomplish the desired behavior changes. SSI teams should consider creating marketing plans as part of the project work plans. *You can again use the social marketing process mentioned in Step 1 and explained in the Resource Manual.*

E. Finding Partners and Leveraging Resources

You should establish criteria for soliciting partners – those who will undertake tasks, as well as those who will contribute funding. In addition to your team’s “in-house” capabilities, you can solicit outside funding for assistance, logistics, marketing materials, and Web site development through local nonprofit organizations or local businesses.

Develop a strategy for approaching partners. This strategy can include:

- Developing an appealing prospective partner packet which includes a letter of invitation, a description of SSI and your area’s five project categories, program and partner benefits, and a partner application form.
- Identifying organizations or businesses that could provide useful resources or actions for your projects and visiting those prospective partners.



June 14, 2007

Dear Prospective Partner,

As a growing area, a city the size of Dallas faces many environment-related challenges. As a way to address these challenges, the City of Dallas has embarked on a new partnership with the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The **Dallas Sustainable Skylines Initiative** is a joint effort with the primary goal of implementing sustainable practices to help improve Dallas' air quality. Through Initiative-guided voluntary projects, the Initiative aims to achieve measurable environmental benefits--particularly the reduction of air emissions, but also the significant improvement of water and land quality--while simultaneously contributing to the vitality of the Dallas economy and the quality of life of Dallas' citizens. In the longer term, the Initiative aims to create a successful and reproducible program that serves as a model for other cities.

When it comes to environmental improvement, we live in a multi-media world. To that end, the categories of projects we are embarking on reflect that multi-media imperative:

- Enhancing central city livability
- Promoting green buildings and developments
- Implementing and promoting renewable energy/energy efficiency
- Reducing emissions from stationary and area sources
- Reducing air emissions from off-road equipment

We are encouraged with the interest Sustainable Skylines has already generated among potential partners. The efforts of our project partners are essential for the Initiative's success. As a member of the local business community, we invite your organization to become an active partner in our new endeavor and to help us achieve environmental sustainability for Greater Dallas.

Enclosed are summaries of our initial seven projects for your review. If one of these project opportunities interests you, or you have an idea of your own that would fit into one of our five project categories, we invite you to contact our Initiative's Partner Coordinator, Joshua Hathaway of the City of Dallas, for more information.

We look forward to building a sustainable Dallas with you.

Sincerely,

Mary Suhm,
City Manager, City of Dallas

Mike Eastland,
Executive Director, NCTCOG

Richard Greene,
Administrator, EPA Region 6

Addressing Air Quality
...from the Ground, UPI

Measurable Environmental Benefits

Initiative-guided projects

Voluntary Partnerships

Dallas
Joshua Hathaway
Office of Environmental Quality
214-671-8978
joshua.hathaway@dallascityhall.com

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency
Clovis Steib, III
US EPA Region 6, Dallas
214-665-7266
Steib.clovis@epa.gov

North Central Texas Council of Governments
Mindy Mize
Telephone: (972) 968-2346 (metro)

This is an example of an invitation letter used by the Dallas SSI team. **More complete information on the Prospective Partner Package for Dallas can be found in the Resource Manual.**

F. Program/Projects Overview

Once you have collected plans for all of your projects, you can combine them into an overall operating plan for your program. Such a compendium of goals, tasks, and milestones can guide you as you enter the next phase and officially launch your SSI program.

STEP 3: IMPLEMENTING AND FEEDBACK LOOPS

The implementation phase is when you actually launch your program and get it moving forward. This section provides information on the three parts of program implementation: the launch phase, the sustaining phase, and the re-launch phase.

A. LAUNCHING YOUR PROGRAM

The initial launch of your program should include the following tasks:

- Ensuring all projects get underway in a timely fashion.
- Conducting a launch event to serve as an official beginning to your SSI program and securing earned media coverage.
- Implementing your marketing plan.

a. Getting Projects Underway

Now you need to prepare each project for implementation by initiating planned action items. You may want to:

- Ask each project partner to sign an MOU or similar agreement with your SSI program. (*Example of Dallas' MOU is in the Resource Manual.*) This way, project partners commit to their responsibilities and tasks in writing.

From January 30, 2008 press release issued by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment:

“The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), along with eight other local, State and Federal entities, today signed a “Commitment to Sustainability” that establishes a partnership to implement Sustainable Skylines, an initiative aimed at bringing cleaner air to the entire Kansas City metropolitan community.”

- Provide the necessary support and resources to help make each project successful. Again, by assuring partners' official commitment from the start and having them participate in the work plan process, everyone should have a good understanding of their tasks, roles, and resource commitments. Should it become necessary to seek additional funds or resources, your MOU and work plan can provide the supporting documentation needed for your request.
- Make team members aware that there will be accountability with their commitments for project participation
- To ensure all projects get underway, you should hold meetings with your program partners and project managers to answer any last minute questions and to review their work plans. If particular projects are in need of assistance or support, do not be afraid to call upon the resources of the core management group or other program partners to help get them moving.

b. Implementing Your Marketing Plan

Before your launch event, you will want to begin implementing your marketing plan. Doing this effectively means ensuring that you:

- Implement the action items according to established timelines.
- Provide staff with the resources necessary.
- Consistently evaluate what strategies are and are not working and make course corrections as necessary (if you have done tested the effectiveness of your outreach materials or other aspects of your marketing plan to a focus group ahead of launch, you can be more confident of your efforts).
- Give yourself sufficient time to work, as you will not reach all of your goals and objectives immediately; proper implementation will require patience and flexibility.
- Collect feedback from your audience as you implement the plan.

c. Holding a Launch Event

A launch event can be critical to getting the media, the public, the business community, and other audiences excited about each project, and making your audiences feel like they are a part of a community working together to improve air quality and local quality of life. These types of events can also be used to strengthen the relationship between partners, earn media attention for the program projects and partners, and provide program information to the public.

Consider holding your own event that is exclusively focused on your SSI program. This will ensure that your program receives the spotlight. If time, funds, or other resources do not allow this, you can hold a launch event during a prescheduled event that would attract similar audiences.

B. SUSTAINING AND EVALUATING

The sustaining phase is when you move your program forward and produce results. Before beginning this phase, and while planning your overall initiative, it may be wise to establish an abbreviated sustaining phase for the first year of your program. This will allow you to identify unexpected glitches in your plans and to make necessary, midcourse changes to ensure the long-term success of your initiative.

Project team activities for this timeframe include:

- Visiting project sites to assess activities and/or collecting project progress reports.
- Keeping your target audiences updated on the progress of your SSI program.
- Performing continuous outreach to maintain awareness of the program.
- Tracking what is working and not working to enable continuous improvements and to accomplish the intended outcomes.
 - Is there an increased awareness of the issue and project? If not, why not?
 - Have citizens or businesses changed their behavior in response to the program? If not, why not?
- Identifying ways to improve the program and possible mid-course corrections based on current information.

C. MODIFYING AND RE-LAUNCHING

Periodically, you should use the information from the teams' project tracking activities to assess the progress of your program to date. Based on the results of this assessment, any necessary changes should be made to individual projects as well as to your overall initiative. During this phase, you may want to:

- Use the results of the evaluation to determine which aspects of the program or projects should be kept, which should be modified, and which should be discontinued.
- Evaluate how the core management group and other staff are working together. Determine if you need to make changes to roles and responsibilities.
- Make changes to or write new goals and objectives if the previous goals and objectives have been met.
- Update the marketing plan and other plans to account for any new goals and objectives or other changes that were made as a result of the evaluation.
- Recruit new projects and partners if desired and/or necessary.
- Re-launch your program.

To re-launch your program, you may elect to hold another launch event to draw attention to any new projects underway or new aspects to your program.

STEP 4: EVALUATING AND RECOGNIZING PROGRAM SUCCESS

Because the SSI program aims to achieve measurable emissions reductions in three years, you will need to evaluate the outcome of your entire program at the end of the three-year program period. By creating a performance management plan at the beginning of your SSI program, you will have a system in place to help you evaluate the achievements of your program. EPA can provide technical assistance to help you conduct the outcome evaluation. (*More information on performance management and outcome evaluation is available in the Resource Manual.*)

However, remember that an important goal of the SSI program is to create culture change and an ongoing self-sustainable collaborative program for continued improvements in air quality in your community. As such, it would be useful to consider the outcomes of your program for the first three years, and use the lessons learned to create an ongoing performance management system for the ensuing years of the program.

Your SSI program will require significant funds and commitment on the part of all participants. All your achievements and progress are testament to those efforts and should be publicly recognized.

APPENDIX A

The Seven Sustainable Skylines Initiative Project Categories

Central City Livability

Projects should increase the livability of the city. This will help lure people back to the city center to reside and allow them to conduct their everyday activities with minimal use of cars. A “livable” city is designed for relatively easy, even enjoyable, travel between work, errands, and pleasure. It is aesthetically pleasing and welcoming. The built environment is in harmony, as much as possible, with the natural environment and there are opportunities for citizens to enjoy nature conveniently within the city. Adopting “livability” as a goal suggests that citizens, government, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and businesses embrace livability as a local priority. Examples include:

- Addressing heat island impacts by decreasing the amount of heated surfaces, increasing urban tree canopy, or increasing permeable surfaces.
- Creating multi-use natural areas such as stormwater-managing rain gardens, road medians, or sidewalk plantings, or turning parking lots into parks.
- Increasing city walkability by advancing mixed-use buildings, creating complete street or green sidewalk conversions, facilitating transit use, or creating opportunities for walkable events like farmers’ markets.

Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy/Climate Change

Projects should encourage and facilitate the use of less energy and less polluting forms of energy since energy production depends primarily on fossil fuels and produces both climate-impacting greenhouse gases and conventional pollutants. Increasing energy efficiency (EE) is an important strategy to getting more work from a given amount of electricity. EE measures can be instituted very quickly and have a high financial return on investment, returning savings directly to the bottom line. Other energy use or production techniques can provide the same benefits. Examples include:

- Instituting a local government facilities energy audit and improvement program that could include LED exit signs, LED stoplights and LED parking lot lighting [e.g., North Carolina Utilities Savings Initiative <http://www.energync.net/programs/usi.html>].
- Conducting energy audits to find where improvements in equipment, lighting, appliances HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), or building envelope (wall insulation, improved windows) will save energy in a cost-effective manner
- Identifying opportunities for businesses to build or switch to distributed generation (usually with cleaner fuel and increased reliability), co-generation (heat and steam to get twice the use from the same amount of fuel), or district energy systems (one plant, more efficiently powering a local neighborhood or campus).
- Creating a green power procurement program which will catalyze additional renewable power production in photovoltaic or wind turbines.

Land Use Transportation Strategies

Project should facilitate or encourage ways to reduce vehicular emission and improve air quality by reducing or changing the flow of traffic or encouraging less use of cars. Examples include:

- Instituting ways to reduce vehicle miles traveled, such as improving public transit, and facilitating carpooling and other ride-sharing programs.
- Creating infrastructure changes such as bus and HOV lanes, and bicycle lanes or paths.
- Facilitating traffic flow, such as timing street lights and identifying traffic bottlenecks.

Diesel Engines Emission Reduction

Projects should address emissions from on-road diesel engines, such as trucks, school buses or construction equipment. There are three operating strategies to reduce diesel emissions which will also increase efficiency and fuel and money savings. They include: (1) equipment idle control and reduction, (2) engine preventive maintenance, and (3) equipment operator training. Examples include:

- Creating a diesel retrofit program for school buses or local truck fleets.
- Facilitating truck stop electrification which can eliminate overnight idling.

Green Buildings and Green Building Development

Projects should encourage green or sustainable building practices. Building “green” increases building efficiency while reducing impacts on human health and the environment throughout the building’s life cycle. Elements of green building include:

- Sustainable sites – e.g., infill development or site reuse, minimal clearing, walkable location
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy - including measurement and verification
- Water-use efficiency – including fixtures, appliances and landscaping
- Environmentally preferable building materials – e.g., certified sustainable wood and non-toxic, reused and recycled materials
- Waste reduction and materials recycling – planning for less waste and recycling leftovers
- Indoor Environment – low-emitting materials, ventilation, mold prevention
- Smart growth and sustainable development

Examples include:

- Linking green building techniques with affordable housing initiatives.
- Creating a green building education and outreach program.

Stationary and Area Sources

Projects should address pollution emissions from stationary sources (any facility which emits any air pollutant in significant amounts, such as a factory with a stack) or area sources (smaller sources of air pollution that, with other varied sources, can create cumulative impacts.) Areas sources are sometimes defined as “everything else,” such as dry cleaners, consumer products, and burning leaves in the fall, and are the least regulated sources. Examples include:

- Conducting pollution prevention audits for small businesses to substitute process chemicals with those less toxic.
- Conducting citizen outreach to prevent polluting behaviors like burning leaves and use of polluting consumer products.

Off-road/Non-road Sources Emission Reductions

Projects should address emissions from non-road sources, such as aircraft and its support equipment, locomotives, commercial marine and pleasure craft, and equipment used for construction, logging, mining, agriculture, and lawn and garden care. Examples include:

- Creating a program to reduce landscape equipment emissions through sustainable lawn irrigation and turf management.
- Facilitating a “green airport” conversion, electrifying ground equipment, reducing idling associated with pick up and drop off, addressing waste and recycling, etc. [<http://www.cleanairports.com/>].
- Replacing stationary diesel generators with alternative-fueled generators.

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Appendix B

For SSI Grant Applicants or Recipients

Regulatory Restrictions on Use of Clean Air Act Section 103 Grant Funds

There are strict restrictions for the funding of projects under Clean Air Act Section 103 grant. Section 103 states that grant funds must be used only for : "*... conducting and promoting research, investigations, experiments, demonstrations, surveys, studies, and training related to air pollution*" and "*...demonstrations generally must involve **new or experimental** technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not a demonstration.*"

In selecting projects for the SSI program, there are two main issues that arise from the Section 103 requirements. First, projects need to be innovative; and second, the funds must not be used for implementation. The suggestions below should help address these issues in the development of your SSI grant work plan.

Because sustainability, energy efficiency, and other such projects are rapidly replicating across the globe, it will be harder and harder to argue that some projects themselves are "*new or experimental.*" However, when developing your work plan, you should consider two things with respect to the project. First, the grant will only cover part of the project, and only that funded part need be innovative. Second, an innovation does not need to be a new technology or practice, although it can be. An innovation can also be an innovative application of an established technology (e.g., a diesel retrofit of a fishing boat); an innovation in marketing or communicating a proven methodology (e.g., communicating or social marketing in a way to overcome barriers of culture or local social norms); or a new way of deploying a technology. In sum, use innovative thinking in designing your program and projects to recognize how your plans are innovative, and reflect that in your grant's work plan.

The second issue is that of not using funds for implementation or deployment of an established technology or method can be approached similarly. Remember that implementation, such as purchasing and deploying equipment is only part of the project, and partners' funds can be used for the implementation aspects of the project. Design of the project and development or testing of measurement or evaluation methodology, for example, are not considered implementation tasks and will be acceptable for funding.

When selecting and designing SSI projects, it is best to state a broad goal, broad enough to get many people/organizations involved. Projects can have both innovative and non-innovative, and implementation and non-implementation parts. Define exactly what part of the project EPA can fund and what part will need to be funded by SSI partners.

There may also be issues or requirements for your own or your partners' organizations regarding acceptance of grant funds, such as match, budget, organizational commitments, process, board presentations, and the like. You should identify these as soon as possible, and work to find resolution between the grantee and grantor requirements, so that you can get your SSI grant through and your program on the road as soon as possible.

Here is the approach SSI Kansas City used in their “Solar City” program:

- Overall goal: encourage adoption of renewable energy in our city to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- SSI Project goal: 20% of the schools in our city use renewable power
- EPA funding used for: education campaign and student/teacher training on renewable energy
- Leveraged (private) funding used for: purchase and installation of solar panels

Appendix C Overview of the Process

Step 1: Building the Foundation

- A. Defining your program’s vision, mission, and goals
- B. Identifying key participants, organizational structure and process plan
- C. Developing your overall program plan
 - Identifying tasks and actions
 - Managing performance by defining and measuring program success
 - Planning how to market your program to the community and potential partners
- D. Building your informational foundation
 - Taking stock
 - Prioritizing issues
 - Brainstorming projects
- E. Selecting your projects

Step 2: Making Project Plans

- A. Defining project implementation plan
- B. Establishing your organizational structure
- C. Identifying tasks and actions
- D. Managing performance
- E. Developing project marketing plans
- F. Finding partners and leveraging
- G. Program/product overview

Step 3: Implementing and Feedback Loops

- A. Launching your program
 - Getting projects underway
 - Implementing your marketing plan
 - Holding a launching event
- B. Sustaining and evaluating
- C. Modifying and re-launching

Step 4: Evaluating and Recognizing Program Success

NOTE to READERS --

This is a draft document still under development. We are interested in hearing if this is a helpful and resourceful document and what additional information may be needed. Please forward comments to Yvonne W. Johnson at johnson.yvonne@epa.gov or call 919-541-3921.