

## Section 9 - Communications and Outreach

### 9.1 Introduction

The development of the Strategy and the move toward implementation require an important set communication tools to make sure SLTs, public interest groups, the business sector, and the general public have access to information on a timely basis. Without a concerted communications and outreach effort, expected changes to air monitoring networks may not be understood and appreciated for their benefits, which are summarized below.

#### 9.1.1 Benefits to State and Local Air Agencies, Public Interest Groups and the General Public

**a. Increased data to the public.** The Strategy seeks to incorporate new, continuous technologies into the national network. Incorporation of these new technologies will lead to more efficient, electronic reporting of real-time data (similar to the ozone network reporting system). Moving from filter-based methods and periodic reporting, to continuous methods and subsequent satellite-GIS type reporting via internet networks will provide the public with more timely and current information.

**b. Conservation of resources.** Periodic review, assessment, and realignment of the monitoring network assure that resources are prudently invested to meet the most pressing air monitoring needs. This does not mean omitting monitors in crucial areas: it simply means using the local regional assessment to determine which monitors are providing redundant or little-value-added information and relocating them to locations which will provide more meaningful data.

**c. Integrated NCore monitoring.** Since NCore sites will include multiple-pollutant measurements, the foundation for health studies is improved, and future information about pollutant health effects will benefit the public. Also, a local area will have a basis for comparing its local measurements with national data, since each NCore Level 2 site will include similar monitors, FRM methods, and laboratory techniques. Trend assessments will also be performed at the NCore sites, which will yield more valuable information about the local area's air quality in relation to the Nation.

**d. More resources for local issues.** As NCore is implemented, there will be greater emphasis on monitoring programs to meet local needs. This flexibility, created by splitting Federal funds between Level 2-3 NCore sites and local sites, will allow agencies to monitor for pollutants which are of greatest importance to local communities. These needs could cover hot-spot monitoring, local source characterization, environmental justice issues, or any other need the local authority deems necessary.

**e. Public involvement.** A public education and outreach program is needed to communicate the purposes of air monitoring networks and to ensure adequate public

involvement early in the process. SLT agencies are encouraged to identify special interest groups and conduct outreach efforts as appropriate to discuss potential monitoring network changes, with the understanding that monitors are placed to meet specific objectives, both national and local. Once those objectives are met, site and monitor relocations are a necessary process to assure that new objectives and priorities will be met in the best way possible. The public needs to be aware that consolidation or relocation of a monitor or monitoring station within a community means an improvement in the quality, value, and timeliness of the information provided by the network. SLTs are working with EPA to develop such a public education and outreach program.

### **9.1.2 Benefits to the Research and Academic Community**

The networks operated by State and local agencies provide an enormous resource of “routine” data that complement the more advanced measurements conducted by research organizations. The data help them attempt to uncover the specific causes of adverse health effects related to air pollution, or test air quality simulation models that try to replicate the complex physical and chemical behavior of the atmosphere.

The NCore network will be designed to ensure that long-term research interests will benefit from the routine monitoring conducted by SLTs. This strategy recognizes the leveraging value of a spectrum of other air monitoring efforts, including intensive research oriented studies (NARSTO, PM<sub>2.5</sub> Supersites, CRPAQS, PM health centers), deposition monitoring (CASTNET, IADN, NADP) and numerous other smaller research projects. NCore will also provide, via the Level 1 sites, several national locations convenient for testing newly developed monitoring instruments under differing meteorological and air pollutant regimes.

It is anticipated that the NCore approach will meet scientific air monitoring needs to a much greater degree than the networks currently provide.

### **9.1.3 Benefits to Tribal Communities**

The Strategy will have many of the same benefits for tribal air programs as it does for State and local agencies. However, the benefits of additional flexibility in targeting monitoring to each reservation’s needs and priorities will be particularly important for the tribes. This flexibility is particularly important because the tribes are in the process of assessing air quality on Indian lands, and thus have ability to explore environmental and health concerns that are specific to their needs. (See Section 10.)

## **9.2 How This Information Will be Communicated**

The essential information contained in the preceding paragraphs need to be communicated effectively to several different audiences. To do this, several communication products are currently being planned and/or developed:

- **Fact Sheet.** At approximately the same time as the release of the Draft Strategy Document, a fact sheet was posted on AMTIC and distributed to SLTs explaining, in general terms, the technical need for a revised air monitoring strategy. This fact sheet is approximately two pages in length, and covers points on continuous monitoring technology as well as establishment of an “NCore” network. This item targets most audiences
- **Quarterly Newsletter.** A quarterly newsletter is being distributed on AMTIC. (The website address is: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/amtic/newsltr.html>. The newsletter provides updates on reviews, availability of materials (documents and presentations), the regional assessments, and other timely topics. It is intended to remain active during the implementation phase of the Strategy. The target audience is agency, tribal, and all public/private representatives with a more detailed interest in the latest progress for the Strategy.
- **Specialized Briefing Presentations.** Several packaged slide presentations are being developed for use and dissemination to different audiences. One will be more technical and detailed and will be targeted for use by EPA, Regional representatives, and SLTs (regional briefing package). A second presentation will be tailored for public interest groups, and knowledgeable groups and individuals (public interest briefing package). A third presentation will be simpler and less technical, and can be used by Federal, state and local agencies and tribes in communicating the Strategy to the general public (public-oriented briefing package). Having these packages available will help to assure consistency in communications throughout the country.
- **Monitoring Strategy Brochure.** A trifold brochure has been developed for a simplified, concise, non-technical explanation of the Strategy and air monitoring networks in general. This brochure has been developed by EPA, and coordinated with STAPPA/ALAPCO. Distribution will occur shortly after the finalization of the Strategy document in 2004. The brochure is targeted primarily for the general public.

### 9.3 Schedule

In developing a communications strategy, the following schedule has been developed:

<b>Spring 2004:</b>	Quarterly Newsletter posted on AMTIC Release of revised Fact Sheet National release of Monitoring Strategy Public Brochure Press release issued by EPA
<b>Summer 2004:</b>	Availability of regional and public interest briefing packages Release of Final Strategy Implementation Plan

#### **9.4 Public Comment Process**

A Draft Strategy document was released in September 2002, comprised of two key components: (1) a summary document which, in question and answer format, contained highlights of all the key elements of the Strategy; and (2) a main document which described in much greater detail all the elements of the Strategy. Both documents were available to the public via EPA's website, and a letter to the EPA Regional Offices and the State and local agencies, announcing the release of these documents, was issued by Stephen Page, Director of EPA OAQPS on September 27, 2002. At that time, responses were requested by December 1, 2002. Because several other interested parties requested more time to review and comment, the comment period was extended to February 28, 2003, and finally to June 1, 2003.

In total, there were 29 comment letters received. Of these, 21 were from State and local agencies; 3 from EPA Regional Offices; 2 from the public/public interest groups; 2 from industry; and 1 from the Tribes. Each letter was carefully reviewed and summarized, and a list of the key comment points was provided to the NMSC for review. As a result, a "Response to Comments" Addendum to this Strategy Document has been prepared, covering over 160 topics represented by the comment letters. The Addendum provides responses to each of these topics. Where appropriate, changes to the Strategy were made in response to the comments. Thus, this final Strategy document represents and includes meaningful public input.