

ELI National Training Workshop on CWA 303(d) Listing & TMDLs, April 2013

Handout for Session #7 – Vision Goal and Programmatic Measures

Objective: The 303(d) Listing and TMDL Program around the country have changed over the past decade, and the drivers that led to the development of more than 50,000 TMDLs [pollutant budgets] have evolved. There is a broad recognition now that the program needs to look at more than the pace of TMDL development alone to describe program progress in a meaningful way. The goal of this session is to discuss new approaches to measures that will be more meaningful for States and EPA given the new vision and goals for the next decade.

Guiding Principles: During the State and EPA 303(d) Program Training Workshops held in April 2012, States and EPA Regions identified guiding principles important to consider in the development of a new Strategic Plan measure for the Program:

1. Links to values (e.g., fishing, drinking water, etc.)
2. Visual – able to experience what it means when measure is met
3. Incremental – identifies progress
4. Links to strategy for improvement
5. Identifies a meaningful target
6. Reflects 303(d) program vision and goals (under development)
7. Useful to States
8. Reflects ultimate goal of CWA, but bounded by what program has control over
9. Outcome (vs. output) oriented
10. Reflects counter pressures
11. Integrates with other CWA program measures
12. Acknowledges alternative benefits of TMDLs (e.g., supports site-specific criteria)
13. Involves lower reporting burden
14. Considers variable baseline (non-2002 baseline)

Potential Approaches for a New Measure: Three approaches brainstormed and discussed by States and EPA in 2012-2013:

- “Vision Strategy” Approach – Measure the development (and implementation?) of individual State strategies to pursue the new 303d goals. A measure, or suite of measures, would be developed; some measures may only be useful at the State level while others may only be useful at the national level.
- “Straight to Measure” Approach – Measure one (or more?) specific indicators (e.g., % of waters assessed) nation-wide.
- “Hybrid” Approach – Measure the cascade of 303d program progress from percentage of priority waters assessed to those with a TMDL or alternative plan to those with implementation actions to those with WQ improvement or attainment.