

Local Action Cohort Proposal for Local Engagement

Introduction:

During the Local Action Quarterly Progress Meeting, the Management Board (MB) discussed a common ask and made the following *decision*:

“The Local Action Cohort and the Local Engagement Team (with assistance from GIT 6) will discuss how to address insufficient jurisdictional (state and local) involvement. The group will provide an update at the March MB meeting and, based on those discussions, will present a proposal for discussion and decision at the April MB meeting. A strawman proposal will be published to the MB website by March 25. Garrett Stewart can provide staffing if need be. Proposed Next Steps summary will be posted to the MB website by March 25 for discussion and decision by the MB at the April 8th meeting.”

The group met three times and worked collaboratively to develop a proposal for effectively engaging with a variety of local audiences. The Local Action Cohort representatives agreed that the Land Use Options Evaluations outcome and the Land Use Methods and Metrics outcome are especially in need of assistance. This proposal focuses on how the MB and the leaders of the Local Action Cohort can work together to meet the jurisdiction’s outcome commitments and to address the shared request:

Establish a team to work with the Local Action Cohort and MB members to:

- Identify key messages and audiences;
- Identify translators and trusted sources;
- Refine messages and audience with help from translators and trusted sources;
- Develop interpretative communication products;
- Develop objective measures of success that the CBP can influence.

For this team to effectively work together to carry out these activities key gaps in understanding the communication pathways for sharing information through trusted sources to key stakeholders need to be explored and closed. Workgroups are seeking MB member assistance in helping to make connections with their networks of translators, trusted sources and key local audiences.

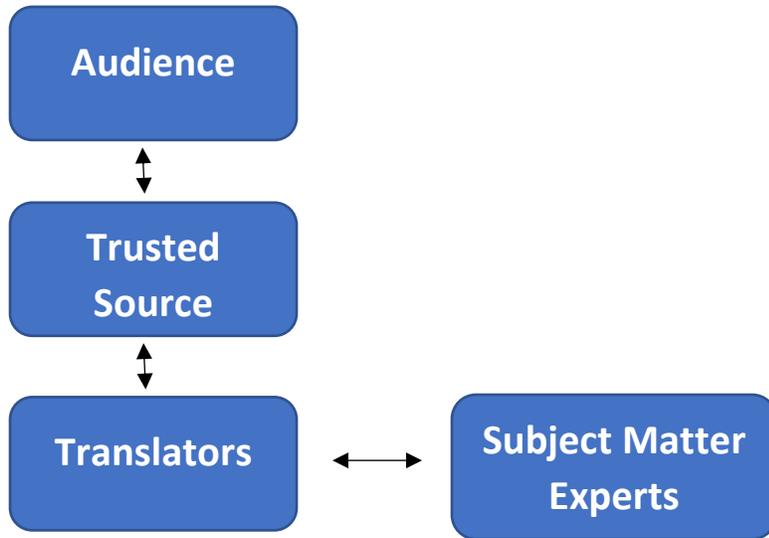
What we need from Management Board: Direction on how the partnership should engage with local audiences, including:

- a framework that outlines processes that will aid in developing connections with member’s networks of translators, trusted sources and key local audiences;
- clear roles/responsibilities for partners and CBP staff;
- a commitment to following through on these processes/responsibilities including regular check-in meetings to ensure this work stays on track.

Challenge: How should the partnership engage with local audiences (defined as non-state, non-federal partners, including local elected officials, local government staff, farmers, landowners, etc.) on tree canopy, land use options, land use methods and metrics and local leadership

outcomes? How can the partnership ensure that CBP data/tools will be used by local audiences?

Proposal: Affirm that the current framework is workable and 1) expand the Local Engagement Strategy to other local audiences (beyond just local elected officials) and 2) tailor it for each signatory jurisdiction. Agree to work collaboratively with the Local Engagement Team to develop and work on a plan of action to best connect the work that the partnership is doing with their existing networks of local audiences.



Actions	Audience	Trusted Source	Translators	Subject Matter Experts
<i>Decision on land use using the land use policy options document (example)</i>	<i>General Ex. Local Elected Officials</i>	<i>Local government associations</i>	<i>LLWG, LGAC, Communications WG</i>	<i>State agency staff, CBP staff</i>
	Land Trusts			
	County Planners			
	Stormwater			
	Watershed Orgs.			

Next Steps: Schedule meetings between jurisdiction representatives, the Local Action Cohort and the Local Engagement Team to:

- Identify the issues, challenges, and actions needed to help meet the partners’ outcomes
- Review existing data/tools and communication that may be of interest and/or of use to local audiences
- Review communication pathways of engagement (for the local action cohort outcomes as a pilot)

- Discuss which audiences might be interested in these data/tools and how they might use it in an ongoing way to achieve the partners' outcomes
- Fill-out the table above for each jurisdiction.

Example

Attendees: Jurisdiction's department of environment/natural resources representative, Local Action Cohort, Local Engagement Team

Data/Tools: New high-resolution land use/land cover data

Use of tools: inform county comprehensive plans (10-year cycle), inform MS4 permits, local advocacy for land protect, local advocacy for tree canopy, forest buffer etc., inform decision-makers

Actions	Audience	Trusted Source	Translators	Subject Matter Experts
	Land Trusts	Jurisdiction's Land Trust Org	Jurisdiction's Communications staff Land Trust Org	Land Use Workgroup Jurisdiction Rep Healthy Watersheds GIT
	County Planners	Chapter of APA Department of Planning	Department of Planning	Department of Planning Land Use Workgroup
	Stormwater Engineers, MS4 Coordinators	Municipal Stormwater Association Chesapeake Stormwater Network	Jurisdiction's Communications Staff Chesapeake Stormwater Network	Stormwater WG Jurisdiction's Rep
	Watershed Organizations	Choose Clean Water Coalition	CBP Communications Office	Land Use Workgroup
	Local Elected Officials	State Association of Counties State Municipal League	Local Leadership Workgroup Local Government Advisory Committee	Jurisdiction's Rep Other State Reps

				Land Use Workgroup Healthy Watersheds GIT
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Local Engagement Background:

November 2018: As part of the Local Leadership Quarterly Progress Meeting (QPM), the Management Board asked the Local Leadership Workgroup (LLWG) to work with the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) to develop a strategy for CBP engagement with local elected officials.

May 2019: A [Local Engagement Strategy](#) was [presented](#) to Management Board that outlined a road map for engagement with local elected officials. The strategy defines the roles of different players involved and articulates a mechanism for ‘translating’ technical material into language that would resonate with local elected officials and for disseminating of that tailored material through trusted sources.

The strategy relied heavily on two previous GIT Funded reports: [Chesapeake Watershed Local Leadership Development Programs](#) and [Strategic Outreach Education Program for Local Elected Officials in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#).

August 2019: As part of a QPM, Healthy Watersheds Cohort presents a [common request](#) for ‘Outcome connection to local leadership engagement’.

September 2019: The Management Board discusses the common ask and makes a [Decision](#): *There are three previous and ongoing efforts that are related to increasing outcome engagement with local leaders: The EcoLogix report that identified local level priorities, the local leadership engagement strategy presented to the Management Board in May 2019, and an upcoming GIT funding project on creating cross-watershed education materials. Once there is more progress on these efforts, the local leadership workgroup coordinator will report to the Management Board.*

September – October 2019: LLWG held informal meetings with Healthy Watersheds cohort to clarify this common ask and make process on the MB decision. These discussions made it clear that:

- ‘Local engagement’ was being used as a catch-all term to describe many different audiences (government, non-profit, community, etc.) and many different types of actions (including communications, outreach, engagement, etc.).
- GITs/Workgroups need help with ‘local engagement’. Specifically, many outcomes need help clarifying their audiences, asks, trusted sources and strategies. They also requested help creating and translating messages/materials that resonate with their audiences, planning for outreach/engagement and implementing engagement strategies.

- The full breadth of ‘local engagement’ needs and existing resources was unknown. There appears to be significant overlap in audiences/asks among the Outcomes and therefore the potential for strategic cross-outcome collaboration.

October 2019 – January 2020: An ad hoc ‘Local Engagement Team’ meets to discuss common request, efforts to address MB decision and findings from preliminary conversations. The team decides to assess ‘local engagement’ needs and existing resources (similar to the Scientific, Technical, Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Team’s Strategic Science and Research Framework) and builds a form, spreadsheet and other materials needed to conduct the assessment.

February 2020: Presentation to Coordinators/Staffers about the *Local Engagement Needs and Resource Assessment*. Outcome leads were asked to participate in the assessment by submitting their local engagement needs via a google form.

March 2020: Initial results from the assessment were compiled. Participating GITs included: Sustainable Fisheries, Habitat, Water Quality, Maintain Healthy Watersheds, Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship and STAR. A total of 12 Outcomes identified 33 local engagement needs. Local actions were varied and difficult to group, but included wetland restoration, land conservation, BMP implementation and others. Key audiences identified included non-profits, planners, elected/appointed officials, senior staff, landowners, local champions and others. Most outcomes indicated that they are in Stage 1: Identifying local action, audience and trusted source (57%), but that they also need help with translation (48%), creating strategies (66%) and implementing local engagement strategies (69%). Many existing opportunities were identified that can help address these needs. Full results are available upon request.

April - May 2020: Results of the [*Local Engagement Needs and Resource Assessment*](#) were shared with the Local Engagement Team, SRS Planning Team, Coordinators/Staffers, Communications Workgroup and LLWG.

June – November 2020: Local Engagement Team meets biweekly to process needs/resources identified by assessment. The team works to incorporate local engagement into the SRS process, reviews SRS materials and consults on local engagement related needs/resources.

December 2020 – January 2021: Local Action cohort identified a common ask: Establish a team to work with the local action outcome cohort to:

- Identify key messages and audiences;
- Identify translators and trusted sources;
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February 2021: At the Local Action Quarterly Progress Meeting, the Management Board discusses this common ask and makes this [decision](#). The Local Leadership Action Cohort and the Local Engagement Team (with assistance from GIT 6) will discuss how to address insufficient jurisdictional (state and local) involvement. This group will provide an update at the March MB meeting and, based on those discussions, will present a proposal for discussion and decision at the April MB meeting. A strawman proposal will be published to the MB website by March 25. Garrett Stewart can provide staffing if need be. Proposed Next Steps summary will be posted to the MB website by March 25 for discussion and decision by the MB at the April 8th meeting.

February – March 2021: Local Engagement Team and Local Action Cohort meet multiple times to discussion action item and the proposed strawman proposal.

Glossary of Local Engagement Terms

Action words:

Communications - the process of passing/sharing information and understanding. Communications has a one-directional model for delivering information.

Outreach - considers that all interaction affects relationships and employs a two-way model to planning interaction, where both parties benefit and deepen understanding. Outreach is a pathway from communication to engagement.

Engagement - involves an interactive partnership in which there is a mutually beneficial, two-way relationship between the two parties

- **CBP stakeholder engagement** involves an interactive partnership in which there is a mutually beneficial, two-way relationship between the CBP and stakeholder groups.

Translation - the process of taking words, text, or messages from one language and expressing it in another language.

- The **translation** of CBP-related terms (e.g., “water quality”) into terms that resonate with local stakeholders (e.g., “clean water”) is important when doing communications, outreach, or engagement.

Audience words:

Local leader - a person who represents the interests and perspectives of a community and/or has a high degree of control or influence over actions, laws, and policies that affect the well-being and improvement of their communities.

Local champion – a person who takes extraordinary interest in the adoption, implementation, and success of a cause, policy, program, project, or product.

Local government - an administrative body for a geographic area smaller than a state, such as a borough, town, city, township, county, district or other municipality.

Local government includes:

- **Local government leader** - elected and appointed officials, as well as senior staff.
- **Local planner** - government employees responsible for developing land use plans and programs that help create communities, accommodate population growth, and revitalize physical facilities.

Community - a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage. A community may be a group of individuals that live in a county, city, district, or neighborhood.

- **Community member** - an individual who is part of a community.

Other local audiences may include:

- Farmers
- Local landowners
- Watermen
- Underrepresented individuals - people of color and others* who are currently not represented in the leadership, decision making and implementation of conservation and restoration activities.

(*The CBP is working to expand the diversity of the workforce and participants in restoration and conservation activities to include a wide range of people of all races, income levels, faiths, genders, ages, sexual orientations and disabilities, along with other diverse groups.)

The following may be audiences OR trusted sources*:

- Underrepresented stakeholder organizations that are led by people of color and/or do work that serves/supports communities of color, low-income communities, environmental justice communities, and other underrepresented individuals and groups.
- Land trusts
- Watershed organizations
- Non-profits

*Trusted sources are organizations, entities, and people that have well-established relationships with our target local audiences. Trusted sources may organize events/conferences that convene our target local audiences and/or have mailing lists and other communications set up that reach targeted local audiences. They are organizations, entities, and people that our target audiences go to for information, support, peer-to-peer learning, networking, idea sharing, etc.