

The background features abstract green geometric shapes. On the left, a solid green trapezoid points upwards. On the right, a complex arrangement of overlapping translucent green triangles and polygons creates a dynamic, layered effect. The central text is positioned on a white background between these green elements.

Final Revised Evaluation Plan

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Beyond 2025 Steering Committee Meeting
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Overview

- ▶ Process to revise the plan
- ▶ Example ERG evaluation (covered in listening sessions)
- ▶ Evaluation questions as bounds
- ▶ ERG's Role
- ▶ Revised Questions
 - ▶ Method for each

Process

- ▶ Released Draft Evaluation Plan on 9/1/23
- ▶ Two listening sessions
- ▶ Qualtrics form for feedback
- ▶ Emails

Example: NOAA CSC Technical Assistance Evaluation

Goal = Evaluate the use/usefulness/effectiveness of “technical assistance” provided by NOAA CSC.

CSC = Coastal Services Center (Charleston, SC; now part of Office for Coastal Management)

Evaluation Questions (Issues) From SOW	Refined Evaluation Questions
1. The utility and effectiveness of technical assistance provided by the CSC, particularly assistance demanding a high level of effort such as meeting facilitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent has CSC technical assistance, particularly assistance requiring a high level of effort, been useful to its customers?• To what extent has CSC technical assistance, particularly assistance requiring a high level of effort, been instrumental in helping customers attain their desired outcomes?
2. The factors or qualities that CSC customers most appreciate about the technical assistance provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What factors or qualities of CSC technical assistance do customers appreciate the most?

Interview Guide for Initial Interviews with NOAA CSC Staff Providing Technical Assistance Services

1. Describe the types of technical assistance your group provides. Describe a “typical” request.
2. Describe your customers. What types of organizations do they work for? What are their primary assistance needs? Are there trends in the demand for technical assistance? Are there “heavy users”? Are specific types of requests becoming more common?
3. What factors drive the cost/level of effort of providing technical assistance? How important is each factor? [Examples of cost factors may be: number of hours devoted to task, travel costs, complexity of the request, etc...]
4. What challenges do you face in providing technical assistance?
5. What are the benefits to customers from the assistance being provided? What factors influence the benefits that customers experience from the assistance? Are there some success stories that you could highlight for us? Are there benefits for CSC from providing this assistance?
6. What aspects of the technical assistance are most useful to customers? [For example: technical assistance provider expertise, quick response time, high level of engagement, involvement from start to finish, avoided costs of hiring experts, etc...]
7. What do your customers think about the technical assistance services? How often do you receive feedback from your customers? Do certain types of customers tend to provide feedback? How is feedback usually provided to you (e.g. phone, email)? Are there any processes in place to track feedback from customers?
8. How would you define successful provision of technical assistance? How do you know when you’ve done a good job?
9. To what extent do you currently provide technical assistance using web-based tools? Do you see opportunities for expanding the use of web-based tools? Can you give an example?
10. We would like to contact a few of CSC’s customers to ask them about their experience with the technical assistance services. Can you recommend any particular customer(s) that we should contact?

Interview Guide for Initial Interviews with NOAA CSC Customers Receiving Technical Assistance Services

1. Please briefly describe your organization.
2. What types of technical assistance do you request from NOAA CSC?
3. What factors lead you to request assistance from CSC? Are there other avenues for you to receive the assistance you need? If so, why choose CSC over another source or vice versa?
4. What aspects of the technical assistance are most useful to you and why? [For example: technical assistance provider expertise, quick response time, high level of engagement, involvement from start to finish, avoided costs of hiring experts, etc...]
5. What are the benefits you receive from the assistance being provided? Are there some success stories (or failures) that you could highlight for us?
6. Does the assistance provided by CSC help contribute to your organization’s goals? If so, how?
7. What are the drawbacks of receiving assistance from CSC, if any? Have there ever been any challenges or “bad” experiences? What could have improved this situation?
8. How satisfied have you been with CSC technical assistance? Overall, what do you think about the services? Do you provide feedback to CSC regarding the services?
9. How would you define successful provision of technical assistance?
10. Have you received technical assistance through web-based media from CSC? Do you see opportunities for CSC to expand the use of web-based tools for providing technical assistance?

7. It was easy for me to identify the correct CSC person to talk with.

- (a) Strongly agree
- (b) Agree
- (c) Neither agree nor disagree
- (d) Disagree
- (e) Strongly disagree
- (f) *Not applicable*

8. It was easy for me to make contact with CSC to request assistance.

[Review note: response options omitted for the remainder of this set of questions to conserve on space. All are on the agreement scale.]

9. *CSC responded promptly to my request for assistance.

10. *The CSC staff person I communicated with was courteous.

11. I was able to understand CSC's response.

12. CSC took time to understand my need.

13. CSC's response was appropriate to the importance of my need.

14. *The assistance provided by CSC met my needs.

15. The assistance provided by CSC exceeded my expectations.

16. *CSC's assistance helped me perform the task that I requested assistance with.

Evaluation Questions as Bounds (Scope)

- ▶ Will the questions cover explicitly (or implicitly) cover the topics we need to address?
- ▶ Interview questions cover many details
 - ▶ Adapt as needed
- ▶ Discussions during interviews will be bounded by evaluation questions
 - ▶ Allow for far-ranging discussions

ERG's Role

- ▶ Funded under EPA's Conflict Prevention and Resolution Services (CPRS) Contract
 - ▶ Neutral third party
- ▶ ERG's role is to support the Steering Committee and the EPA in this evaluation effort

Evaluation Question 1

To what extent does the current organizational structure of the Program and processes used by the Program support: (1) effective decision-making, (2) outcome attainment, (3) collaboration, (4) use and dissemination of science, (5) adaptive management, and (6) functioning as a partnership? If so, why? If not, why not? What aspects of the structure and processes need to be kept or changed to support those aspects?

Definitions

- ▶ **Program:** The set of groups defined in and/or covered by the Governance document and the activities that those groups are directly responsible for.
- ▶ **Structure:** All levels including and below the Management Board (e.g., Teams, Committees, Workgroups, STAR, STAC), including how the Management Board interacts with levels above and below it.
- ▶ **Processes:** The processes specified in the Governance document (SRS, etc.), as well as other informal processes to be identified as work progresses.
- ▶ **Decision-making** defined as any decisions made by Program entities in administering the Program (excluding decisions where the Program has no/little control, e.g., state laws).

Evaluation Question 2

To what extent does the Program know the external decision-makers and stakeholders it needs to reach? To what extent does the Program understand the needs of the decision-makers and stakeholders outside the Program? To what extent is the Program providing decision-makers and stakeholders outside the Program with the information needed to assist the Program in attaining its outcomes? [Note: Each question above should address diverse and disadvantaged populations.]

Definitions

- ▶ **Stakeholders:** Individuals or entities who are external to the Program (as defined under EQ1) that have an interest in the Program's goal attainment, primarily focusing on those individuals or entities who reside within the watershed.
- ▶ **Decision-makers:** Individuals or entities who are external to the Program who make decisions that can impact the Program's goal attainment. This includes (but not limited to) local government officials, businesses, landowners, farms and other businesses, and residents living in the watershed.
- ▶ **External to the Program:** Entities or individuals that are not regular participants in Program meetings and/or processes.
- ▶ **Information:** Materials and communications that are distributed or could be distributed by the Program including science-based information and/or outreach materials.
- ▶ **Decisions:** Actions that could be taken (or not taken) that would impact the Program's goal attainment. (With some limits on what could be reasonably be affected by the Program.)

Evaluation Question 3

EQ3. What is the unique contribution of the Partnership in terms of outcome/goal attainment (i.e., the value-added)? Is the program investing in the appropriate outcomes and goals? Are there missing goals and/or outcomes?

Definitions

- ▶ **Program logic model:** The *flow* from program activities to outputs to outcomes to goals. Logic models are used to define how a program is intended to meet its goals and outcomes.
- ▶ **Theory of change:** A theory of change for a program are the collective set of assumptions that describe how the program's activities will lead to the desired outcomes and ultimately the goals. We note that logic models and theories of change go hand-in-hand; while a logic model depicts the flow from activities to goals, a theory of change explains why those flows should be expected to occur.