

Indicators Discussion Takeaways

GABRIEL DURAN

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Summary:

1. The Chesapeake Bay Program's indicators framework includes influencing factors, outputs, and performance indicators to track implementation and progress toward Watershed Agreement outcomes.
2. There is a need for supplemental, more relatable metrics to enhance understanding and engagement.
3. Using AI to develop consistent vocabulary for potential factors and mapping their relevance across the outcomes to improve cross-outcome analysis, support geographic targeting and enhance future management strategies.

Aligning Indicators with public Communication

It's important to make indicators not only scientifically valid but also clear, relatable and capable of telling a story. Indicators should be used to build narratives that resonate with diverse audiences.

Indicators should help both policymakers and the public understand whether we are making meaningful progress. Efforts to communicate success should consider that maintaining conditions or slowing decline is often a victory, even if harder to explain.

Clarifying the role and distinction between targets and indicators

We need to indicate the distinction between *targets* and *indicators*. It was broadly understood that the two serve different purposes. Indicators should reflect ecosystem response and resonate with public values, while targets may not always be measurable in the same way.

Framing indicators to reflect ecosystem and human responses

Indicators should capture not just environmental metrics but also reflect the ecosystem response and how program actions and external factors influence progress.

We should consider having internal indicators (not public-facing) for performance and more contextual factors affecting success. This could support a more holistic assessment.

Cross-outcome indicators

Current reporting of outcomes operates in isolated silos. Some outcomes can share indicators - *cross-outcome indicators*. This approach could better highlight the interconnected nature of multiple outcomes and create more powerful public-facing messages about ecosystem health and community benefits.

Discussion Questions:

1. If an outcome is not ready to state what their indicators will be, what discussions or information would help you identify your indicators?
2. Outcomes with targets still under development, do you have any updates? Do you need any support from STAR to finalize your measurable target?
3. Would groups find it beneficial to bring back their indicators to STAR for workshopping and possibly bringing in outside expertise?
4. Do STAR members think the revised outcomes and targets should all have the same timebound?

i.e. Wetlands and Brook Trout state to accomplish by 2035. WQSAM states to achieve a percentage annually. Protected Lands state to accomplish by 2040. Stream Health targets 3% improvement every 6 years but no timebound. SAV has timelines for a goal of 90k acres by 2030 & 95k acres by 2035.