

Regional Networks: Network Annual Work Plan

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Presentation Purpose and Contents

This presentation is to the
Regional Networks Coordinating
Committee, on July 21st, 2016

It's purpose is to present the best
practice for creating a network
annual work plan, including:

- What the practice is and looks like
- Why the practice is worthwhile
- Who should do it and when
- How to do it, with examples

Partner Networks	Network Participants	Representing
Green Cities California (GCC)	Linda Giannelli Pratt Erik Pearson Shannon Parry ALTERNATE- Susana Reyes	GCC Managing Director (Coordinator) Hayward, CA Santa Monica, CA Los Angeles, CA
Great Lakes	Matt Naud Matt Gray	Ann Arbor, MI Cleveland, OH
Heartland	T.O. Bowman Brenda Nations	Oklahoma City, OK Iowa City, IO
Michigan Green Communities (MGC)	Dave Norwood Sandra Diorka Jaime Kidwell-Brix	Dearborn, MI Delhi, MI MGC Coordinator (Coordinator)
New England Municipal Sustainability Network (NEMSN)	Troy Moon Cyndi Veit Virginia LeClair	Portland, ME EPA- (Coordinator) Dedham, MA
Ohio, Kansas, Indiana (OKI)	Larry Faulkin Lamees Mubaslat	Cincinnati, OH Montgomery County, OH
Prairie State Network (PSN)	Catherine Hurley Dan Hughes	Evanston, IL PSN Coordinator (Coordinator)
Southeast Sustainability Directors Network (SSDN)	Peter Nierengarten Robin Cox Meg Williams-Jamison	Fayetteville, AR Huntsville, AL SSDN Coordinator
Western Adaptation Alliance (WAA)	Tamara Lawless Ashley Perl	Flagstaff, AZ Aspen, CO

What is An Annual Work

- The work plan outlines:
 - Goals: what you want to achieve
 - Strategies: how you will achieve the goal
 - Performance measurements: the way you know if you reached the goal
- A network's annual work plan gives direction and focus to the work of the group. If the vision and purpose are the point on the horizon you are striving for, the work plan is your map towards the vision over the next year.
- Additional element that are nice to include:



Annual Work Plan Development- Creating SMART Goals

Goals are high-level imperatives that collectively define the accomplishment of the mission. A strong work plan has no more than 3-5 goals.

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Specific



Measurable



Attainable



Relevant



Time Based

Purpose of an Annual Work Plan



An annual work plan will help:

1. Identify obstacles and constraints that the network must overcome
2. Create member buy in through clear activities and objectives
3. Give work efforts direction and focus
4. Provide network transparency and accessibility

Hear from your Peers

- Southeast Sustainability Directors Network: Robin Cox (7 mins)
- Michigan Green Communities: Jaime Kidwell Brix (7 mins)

RNCC Discussion Questions

- What is the hardest part of making an annual work plan?
- How are you communicating successes, challenges, and failures in completing your work plan with your network?



Samples

1. Michigan Green Communities 2015-2016 Work Plan
2. Great Lakes Climate Action Network 2016 Work Plan
3. Southeast Sustainability Directors Network: 2016 Strategic Plan Goals

Michigan Green Communities 2015-2016 Work Plan

Goal	Activities	Performance Metrics	Target Date
1. Increase participation and geographic diversity in the network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Recruit steering committee members to identify and reach out to member communities B. Develop a new member packet to use for outreach C. Recruit new members, with a special focus on underrepresented regions of the state and on colleges/universities and their host communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add ten new member communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Autumn 2015 B. Summer 2015 C. Ongoing, beginning Autumn 2015
2. Foster stronger connections among network members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Hire a network coordinator B. Convene quarterly steering committee meetings C. Host annual conference D. Host webinars and distribute newsletters to connect members E. Increase face-to-face opportunities, through resource team development and workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve response to "Get to know my Colleagues" question on annual survey • Increase number of participants in events • Increase number of face-to-face opportunities outside of the annual conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Summer 2015 B. Ongoing, beginning Autumn 2015 C. Annual, Autumn/Winter D. Monthly E. Ongoing, beginning Winter 2016
3. Position MGC as the "go to" organization for community clean energy information in Michigan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Create content-specific resource teams and experts to provide technical assistance to communities undertaking new projects and programs B. Develop case studies and action guides to highlight lessons learned and promote information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 4 resources teams on topic areas determined by network members • Produce at least 5 case studies per year on highly replicable projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Winter 2016 B. Ongoing
4. Monitor and track clean energy progress through the MGC Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Convene members and partners to evaluate Challenge metrics, interface B. Update Challenge and develop communications strategy C. Conduct the MGC Challenge annually to collect information on community progress D. Report on clean energy progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add 10 communities to the MGC Challenge each year • Clean energy progress report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Autumn 2015 B. Winter 2016 C. Annual, beginning Spring 2016 D. Annual, beginning Summer 2016

SSDN Strategic Goals

- 1. Capacity Building:** Through SSDN, members will learn applicable knowledge and skills that strengthen their professional capacity. The optimal outcomes for this strategic goal are as follows:
 - A. Member needs are identified to support capacity building in content areas and skills sets
 - B. Members access new knowledge and skills through network coordinated activities
 - C. Members implement and advance practices, programs, and policies based on learnings and skills gained through the network
 - D. Network coordinated activities are assessed by members at least bi-annually for their knowledge and skill building value and effectiveness
 - E. SSDN creates its first network communications plan. This plan will develop strategies for this goal using existing SSDN tools including: case studies, newsletters, webinars, and websites. Note: the forthcoming goals will likely be in multiple strategic plan goals areas.
 - F. Members build and maintain strong connections with each other
- 1. Member Collaboration:** SSDN will provide opportunities for meaningful, dynamic engagement among members that builds trust, strengthens knowledge-sharing pathways, and adds value to members' work.
 - A. The annual SSDN face to face meeting supports members creating and plugging into collaborative projects
 - B. Members trust each other
 - C. Member weaving strategies help members plug into collaborative efforts in the network
 - D. SSDN members participate in collaborative projects
- 1. Network Strength:** SSDN will attract and manage funding and membership to support a thriving network that is culturally and geographically representative of the region.
 - A. A 1-year work plan and budget are developed in order to determine following year fundraising needs. After rhythm is established expand planning timeframe to 2 then 3 years.
 - B. Members are empowered and capable of fundraising for the network
 - C. The annual budget is fully fundraised for (including network admin, annual meeting, collaborative projects, working groups, etc.)
 - D. A SSDN Membership Sub Committee is established to make recommendations for network policies on membership dues, recruitment, size, representation, and evolution of state-based groups. Policies are reviewed for potential updates no less than once every three years.
 - E. The network financial status and strategic plan progress are reviewed and assessed regularly.
- 1. Regional Influence:** SSDN will establish a foundation for regional influence by building relationships with strategic partners to advance sustainability.
 - A. What/who qualifies as a strategic partner is defined and strategic areas for partnership are identified

Great Lakes Climate Action Network

Goal	Strategies	Metrics
1. Establish tools and activities for members to communicate with each other through the network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the USDN Regional Network pilot – Ann Arbor/Cleveland leads Use the USDN.org website to share information and resources Hold annual face-to-face meeting Hold quarterly conference calls Explore newsletter creation options through USDN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of members on USDN website # of members participating in meetings / calls
2. Identify and track metrics for climate adaptation in the Great Lakes region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply USDN framework for developing adaptation metrics Produce list of shared metrics for network members to track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of shared metrics to track
3. Increase access to climate information for member communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop climate fact sheets for network members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of members with climate fact sheets
4. Identify and pursue collaborative grant opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop list of potential funders Draft one-pager to distribute to different types of potential partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of collaborative projects underway Dollars invested in the GLCAN
5. Engage with local partners in the Great Lakes region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Map” partners across the region to identify new partners and areas of overlap across communities Develop engagement policy for network partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map of partners New partner members Partnership policy
6. Produce inventory of Great Lakes climate adaptation work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the USDN website to share climate adaptation projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of posts/tags to USDN website

Vision/Mission Statement: Connecting the Work to the Purpose



Including the vision / mission statement in the annual work plan will:

- Show clear alignment between the functional purpose of the network and pursued work
- Give members the ability to easily clarify the connection between the work and the vision / mission

Goals: The Base of an Annual Work Plan

Measurable annual goals are broken down into strategies, outlining projects and activities on which the network is actively working (or wishes to work on)

These activities are further clarified with **focused performance metrics** that will help the network assess the success of their efforts



Current Progress and Next Steps

A *Current Progress Update* includes:

- Outcomes of completed work
- Progress of active work and success
- Barriers that have arisen and ways these are being addressed

Next Steps include:

- An assessment of the past and current work
- An outline of a plan for upcoming work during the year



Past Achievements and Organizational Background

Including background information in the annual work plan gives members a point of reference for current and future work

**Past achievements and organizational background is best added as an appendix*

- Past Achievements can be arranged in a matrix or table, so members and funders can quickly reference what has been accomplished
- Organizational Background can include a variety of information - depending on the needs of the network. Items include but are not limited to:
 1. Governance Models
 2. Funding Sources
 3. Network Membership/Committees



Best Practices for an Annual Work Plan

Keep the work plan:

1. **Detailed** – Identify the who, what, where, when, and why of each activity
2. **Measurable** – How is this activity quantifiable? Make sure that each activity has an outcome that can be tracked and measured
3. **Achievable** – Is it possible to make measurable impacts within the outlined timeframe? Identifying and troubleshooting possible obstacles and constraints will make annual outcomes more attainable
4. **Relevant** – mission / aligns with the network activity



Be Specific

- Avoid broad and vague goals and strategies
- Keep language concise
- Make goals and accompanying strategies clear and attainable
- Identify expectations for how the goals will be achieved



Make it Measurable and Achievable



- **Keep individual goals small** and identify strategies that clearly correlate to each goal
- **Make performance metrics easy** to define, apply to work, and quantify
- **Assign responsibility** to specific network members for oversight and completion of the work
- **Give each goal a clear timeline**
 - For instance, consider: do you want to see results for your goal in the next month, six months, or a year?

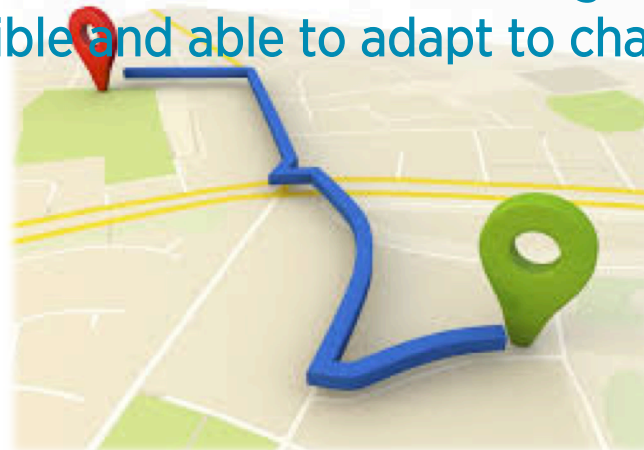
Keep it Relevant: Identify Past, Present, and Future Goals

- Use comparative studies to determine the future direction of the work plan
- Use evaluation metrics to ensure that annual goals and strategies align with network goals and initiatives
- Assess past efforts and their outcomes to determine if work is still relevant
- Identify any constraints and obstacles to past work to inform future work and goals



Create a Map for Network Success

- An annual work plan **explains how a network will use its resources** to achieve overarching goals
- It **acts as a guide** to keep members moving together in the correct direction. Creating a clear and focused annual work plan lays the path forward for long term network effectiveness
- By reassessing network direction and goals every year, **outlined activities will be flexible and able to adapt to changes within the field as they arise**



Creating an Annual Work Plan: Committees and Timing

An annual work plan is an intensive process that **requires input from all members**

It is important to **integrate comprehensive input** from individuals as well as various network committees. It is helpful to:



- Assemble a committee to **develop work plan content**
- **Compile data** from member surveys, past project results, and outcomes from various subcommittee network efforts
- **Time the work plan to incorporate input** from individual members collected at the previous year's annual meeting
- **Put clear a timeline on the work plan development** to keep efforts from stagnating

Member Surveys and Input

- It is important to assess the feedback from network members to ensure that the annual work plan is relevant and achieving central goals
- Member surveys are a great way to collect feedback and can be completed post project convening as well as at the annual meeting
- Develop member surveys to include data that will be useful for work plan development
- Annual meeting surveys should incorporate evaluation of feedback of past year as point of comparison and





Discussion



1. Based on the vision/mission of the network, what goals would your organization like to achieve this fiscal year?
 - Improved relationship development between members
 - Build stronger relationships with members outside of the leadership team
 - Evolve beyond information sharing to support collaborative work groups
 - Identify and secure new funding opportunities
2. What projects and activities will support/achieve the overarching goals?
 - Incorporate relationship building activities into the annual meeting
 - Host quarterly information sharing webinars, create a funder briefing document to share with prospective funders



Discussion



4. What is the network currently working on? What progress has been made?
 - Increasing network bandwidth
 - Growing membership
 - Developing steering committees
 - Annual conference organization
 - Funding programs
5. Where does current work fall with regard to future goals? Is current work in line with the direction the network is headed?
6. How will the network measure progress and achievements?
 - comparative studies to past endeavors
 - post-event member surveys
7. What are the next steps that need to be taken in order achieve network goals?
8. What other information would be useful to members in the annual work plan?

A background graphic of a network diagram with blue circular nodes of varying sizes connected by thin grey lines, forming a complex web.

Thank you!

For more information, please contact:

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