

# Integrating Evaluation and Accountability at U.S. EPA



Environmental Evaluators Network Forum

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June 22, 2006

# Presentation Topics



- Program Evaluation at EPA: A Brief History
- GPRA and Evaluation
- PART and Evaluation
- Integrating GPRA, PART, and Program Evaluation
  - Challenges
  - Steps for improving integration

# Definitions



- Program Evaluation
  - “An individual systematic study that uses objective measurement and analysis to answer specific questions about how well a program is working to achieve its outcomes and why.”
- Accountability
  - “Monitoring, measuring, and evaluating the results of policies, programs, and processes to ensure that the desired results are achieved.”

# Performance Measurement vs. Program Evaluation



Performance Measurement	On-going	Monitoring & reporting	Whether program is meeting goals/objectives	Track Outputs & Outcomes
Program Evaluation	One time or periodic	Assessment	Whether processes are working as intended. Why program is/ is not meeting goals/objectives.	Relationship among activities, outputs & outcomes

# Program Evaluation at EPA



- 1970s – 1995: Centralized program evaluation unit
  - Process/management studies
- 1995 – present: Decentralized approach
  - Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation
  - Office of the Chief Financial Officer
  - Office of Inspector General
  - EPA Program and Regional Offices

# Program Evaluation at EPA



- Evaluation Support Division
  - Capacity Building Through Training and Information Sharing
  - Agency-wide Competition for Project Funds
  - Emphasis on Innovative Approaches

# Driving Forces for Evaluation/Accountability



- Government-wide Requirements & Initiatives
  - Government Performance & Results Act (GPRA) planning & reporting
  - President's Management Agenda
    - OMB's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)
- National Water Program Challenges & Opportunities
  - Growing management challenges to national water program
  - Opportunities for innovation & new approaches

# GPRRA and Evaluation

## Strategic Plan:

- “...a description of the program evaluations used in establishing or revising general goals and objectives, with a schedule for future program evaluations”

## Annual Report:

- “...include the summary findings of those program evaluations completed during the fiscal year covered by the report.”



# GPRA and Evaluation: Challenges



- Program evaluation not required under Act
- Programs not held accountable for evaluations in Strategic Plan
- Three year planning for evaluation lacks utility
- Does not promote internal evaluation capability
- Historical emphasis has been on performance measurement & monitoring

# PART




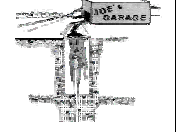







- OMB tool developed to assess the effectiveness of government programs.
- Initiated for the FY2004 Budget, each year additional programs undergo the PART exercise
- Focuses on integrating budgeting and performance measurement

# PART 101

Section	Purpose	Answer	Value
I. Program Purpose & Design	Assess whether the program design and purpose are clear and defensible	Yes, No, or Not Applicable	20%
II. Strategic Planning	Assess whether the agency sets valid annual and long-term goals for the program	Yes, No, or Not Applicable	10%
III. Program Management	Rate program management, including financial oversight and improvement efforts	Yes, No, or Not Applicable	20%
IV. Program Results	Rate program performance on goals reviewed in the strategic planning section and through other evaluations	Yes, Large Extent, Small Extent, or No	50%

# PART Ratings for National Water Program

	Program	Years Evaluated	FY 06 PART Rating	FY 05 Budget
	Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	2002 / 03 / 04	Adequate	\$843 million
	Public Water Supply Systems	2004	Adequate	\$100 million
	Underground Injection Control	2004	Adequate	\$11 million
	Nonpoint Source	2002 / 03 / 04	Adequate	\$207 million
	Clean Water State Revolving Fund	2003/04	Adequate	\$1.1 billion
	Mexico Border	2004	Adequate	\$50 million
	Tribal Grant Assistance Program	2002	Adequate	\$62 million
	Alaska Native Villages	2004/2006	Ineffective	\$44 million
	Surface Water Protection	2005	Moderately Effective	\$184 million
	Pollution Control State Grants (106)	2005	Adequate	\$208 million
	Oceans & Coastal Protection	2005	Adequate	\$36 million
	Drinking Water Protection	2006	TBD	\$93 million
	Chesapeake Bay	2006	TBD	\$ 23 million

# PART Evaluation Questions



- Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need?
- Do independent and quality evaluations of this program indicate that the program is effective and achieving results?

# PART & Evaluation: Challenges



- Agency evaluations rarely accepted by OMB
  - insufficient in scope or strictly process-focused.
  - lack independence or irregular
- Agencies efforts to broaden OMB's evaluation standard has had some success
- PART may have negative impact on interest in internal evaluations for program improvement

# Integrating Evaluation & Accountability: Challenges



- PART and GPRA cycles are out of sync & sometimes conflict with each other
- Performance monitoring & measurement dominate evaluation resources
- Focus is on meeting target/commitments (the what) rather than evaluating for improvement (how and why)
- Both PART and GPRA have had limited success in enhancing program evaluation use

# Steps Toward Greater Integration of PART, GPRA, and Program Evaluation



- Strategic Plan should underlie all PART submittals
  - Maintain consistency between Plan and PART goals, targets, & measures, if possible
  - Alignment of PART & Plan has provided mutual benefits
- GPRA/PART performance monitoring systems should be used to flag program vulnerabilities and measure weaknesses



# Steps Toward Greater Integration of PART, GPRA, and Program Evaluation



- Develop internal annual evaluation plan to focus attention & resources on priorities
  - Establish an on-going, internal process for identifying, selecting, and funding evaluation projects.
  - Synchronize w/ GPRA annual plan/budget and Performance Report
- Use program evaluations as a tool for improving PART reviews
  - Conduct evaluation in advance of PART/re-PARTs
  - Devote resources to limited number of independent, high quality evaluations (questions 2.7/4.5)
  - Work w/ OMB to include evaluations in PART follow-up actions.

# Steps Toward Greater Integration of PART, GPRA, and Program Evaluation



- Enhance Agencies' capability to provide technical & coordination support for managers and project leaders on evaluation tools and methods.
  - Training on measures management & program evaluation use