

CHAPTER 4. IMPLEMENTING THE GPRA

GOAL: Implement the Government Performance and Results Act as a driving force toward establishing a results orientation within the Federal government.

The Department of the Interior has made significant progress over the last year in implementing the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). GPRA is a driving force toward establishing a results orientation within the Federal government. The Congress, the Administration, and taxpayers want greater accountability in the management and operation of Federal programs. Implementation of the GPRA is a key step towards achieving this goal.

GPRA requires agencies to develop strategic plans that elaborate the mission, outcomes and results that agency programs are dedicated to achieving. Further, the Act requires that agencies set performance goals that will reflect progress toward outcomes, measure performance against goals, and report annually on accomplishments. The Department fully supports the principles embodied in the GPRA.

The Department is committed to building the performance measurement infrastructure needed to accurately track performance. Interior recognizes that much needs to be done before the Department will have an fully effective performance management system in place. Interior is focusing efforts on the following areas:

- Improving the collection, verification, and validation of performance data.
- Strengthening and reducing the number of goals and measures in its GPRA plans, and presenting its GPRA documents in clear, concise formats.
- Improving coordination and alignment between its planning, financial, and budget processes.

The Department is also working with other agencies to address some of the more complex cross-cutting issues associated with GPRA implementation. For example, the Department's bureaus continue to play an active role in the governmentwide Natural Resources Performance Measures Forum. The Forum, which is sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management, was established in 1995 to discuss strategic goals and coordinate agency planning activities. The Forum is comprised of almost all the Federal natural resource agencies and has worked to coordinate planning activities of the different agencies in managing natural resources. The Forum is currently working on a pilot project to develop a coordinated approach to water quality as a test case for coordination of agency strategic planning. Interior is also an active member of the National Academy of Public Administration's GPRA Consortium working cooperatively with other agencies on common performance management issues.

Interior coordinates much of its GPRA planning activities through the Performance Management Council, which consists of the senior planning officials from the bureaus, as well as representatives from the Department's planning, budget, finance, human resources, and information management offices. This team approach has enabled Interior to build a broad-based departmental infrastructure to implement performance management.

FY 1999 Accomplishments

- *FY 1999 Annual Performance Plan:* 1999 is the first year where the Department is operating under a GPRA annual performance plan. The plan was submitted to Congress along with the proposed 1999 budget in February 1998. Several bureaus revised their performance targets after enactment of the FY 1999 budget. The Department has used the performance goals established for 1999 to help guide management and build accountability for results. For example, the Office of the Secretary has held performance review meetings with each of the Department's bureaus to review progress toward meeting performance goals and discuss areas of concern. The Interior Management Council also reviews GPRA status reports on a monthly basis.
- *FY 2000 Annual Plan:* The FY 2000 annual plan was submitted to Congress in February 1999. This document featured several improvements over the 1999 plan. The 2000 plan tracked performance to budgets through "GPRA Program Activities," which provide a crosswalk between the budget structure and performance goals. GAO's review of the 2000 plan noted improvements in the consistency and format of the plans. However, GAO's review also identified data reliability and limitations as key concerns with Interior's GPRA plans. The Department recognizes the need to better ensure the accuracy and reliability of its performance measurement process and will continue to address this issue through improving its performance measurement and data reporting systems.
- *Data Reporting System:* The Department has taken a number of steps to ensure that accurate and reliable performance data will be available for management and reporting results. The Department completed two pilot tests of methods for collecting and reporting data in FY 1998. Based on the results of these pilot tests, the Department instituted a quarterly data reporting system in FY 1999. The system uses Microsoft Access software as the vehicle for submitting data. A reporting form has been created to enter data for each measure in an agency's Annual Performance Plan. To facilitate the use of the system, Interior's National Business Center is developing a web-based data entry format with appropriate security protocols. It is expected that the new web-based data entry system will be operational by Fall 1999.

Using the system to track performance on a quarterly basis will help ensure that data is available when needed for developing the Annual Performance Report, and will encourage the use of performance measurement as a viable management tool. The Department has also initiated an annual Department/Bureau meeting to review performance data around the midpoint of the fiscal year. The meeting is an opportunity to discuss progress and problems and to avert or resolve issues while it is still possible to make course corrections.

- *Strategic Plan Updates:* In response to OMB, GAO, and congressional reviews of Interior's strategic plan, the Department made a number of improvements in FY 1999. For example, the Department's ten "commitments" in the strategic plan were consolidated into five broad Departmental goals. In addition, the strategic plans for the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the Office of Surface Mining (OSM), and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), were updated to reduce the number of goals. Our Performance Management Council developed a common format for all bureaus to use as the plans are revised. This includes common nomenclature for goals and a common format for presentation of required GPRA information. This will address the concerns raised by OMB and Congress about the lack of consistency across bureaus in the first round of plans.

PLANNED ACTIONS

Ongoing Activities

- Include selected high level performance indicators in the Department's Accountability Report and bureau annual reports.
- Evaluate data and reporting requirements, and improve the Department's capacity to collect, report, and verify consolidated performance measurement data.
- Continue to build accountability for results by linking managerial performance to GPRA-related performance goals.
- Continue to reinforce GPRA implementation at the field level.

FY 2000 Planned Activities

- *Strategic Plan Revisions:* GPRA requires a formal revision agency strategic plans at least once every three years. The Department and its bureaus are developing revised strategic plans which will be completed by March 2000. The revised plans will cover the years 2000-2005. The revised plans should continue to build on the progress the Department has made in 1999. The plans will feature a smaller number of goals, presented in a concise, common format across the Department. The number of management and means-type goals included in the plan will be reduced. The departmental overview section of the plan will be upgraded to serve as a "stand-alone document" which will provide a better summary of Interior's programmatic responsibilities.

- *FY 2001 Annual Performance Plan/FY 1999 Annual Performance Report*: The Department's first annual performance report, which covers FY 1999, is due to Congress in March 2000. The Department plans to combine the FY 1999 annual performance report with the FY 2001 annual performance plan, which will be submitted to Congress along with the budget in February 2000. By combining these documents, the Department will provide a single reference for performance information, showing past performance and future estimates of performance in a single document. Combining the documents also saves preparation of a separate annual performance report document. The trend information in the consolidated document will provide a longer term view of Interior's performance over time. The document will also include any revisions to the FY 2000 performance goals resulting from final enactment of the FY 2000 budget. Departmental guidance on the combined document has been developed by the Performance Management Council and provided to Interior's bureaus and offices.