



# AREERA State Plans of Work

## About Outputs

This Plan of Work newsletter deals more in-depth with issues related to outputs for the Planned Programs section of the new 2007-2011 State Plans of Work.

### What is an output?

The Plan of Work (POW) guidelines defines outputs as “a tabulation, calculation, or recording of activity of effort expressed in quantitative or qualitative manner which measures the products or services produced by the Planned Program. The output indicator measures the success of the output. It is the evidence or information that represents the measured phenomenon. They define the data that will be collected and evaluated.” Output indicators measure a program’s activities and processes, such as counting the number of courses provided and the number of participants.

Outputs are the activities, services, events, and products that reach people (individuals, groups, and agencies) who participate or who are targeted. Outputs are "what we do" or "what we offer". Outputs are based on program-specific assumptions that lead to the program's outcomes in solving problems, meeting needs, and seizing opportunities.

Understanding and monitoring the outputs that can occur from inputs constitutes the "process evaluation" for the program. This evaluation tells us what has actually been implemented; therefore, to what the eventual observed outcomes really relate. We cannot assume that the Planned Program did or did not achieve its intended outcomes unless we can document its actual intended implementation.

### What standard outputs are in the POW?

There are three standard output measures for the FY 2007–2011 POW. The standard output measures for Extension are number of direct and indirect contacts, and Extension education methods. The only standard output measure for research in the POW is number of expected patents. We will ask in the Annual Report of Accomplishments what those patents are. The other output measures and all outcome measures are left to the discretion of the institution to craft as they deem appropriate for their programs.

In the top half of the standard outputs screen for each Planned Program, you will enter your activities, Extension education methods (for Extension users) and targeted audience.

Enter a very brief description of the activities you are planning. Just a couple of sentences, phrases, or bullets will do. Activities are what we do.

Examples of activities:

- Conduct Research Experiments
- Construct Research Facilities
- Conduct Workshops, Meetings
- Deliver Services
- Develop Products, Curriculum, Resources
- Provide Training
- Provide Counseling
- Assessments
- Work with Media
- Partnering
- Facilitating

The Extension activity methods table is explicitly for Extension programs to answer. Choose the types of Extension activity methods used in your program. Here you can choose the types of direct and indirect educational methods used in your program. We have already defined some for Extension activities and have developed a check box here. This list is not all inclusive, so we have instituted some "Other" check boxes. If we find we have a sufficient number of "Others" that are the same we will make them permanent check box choices in the future.

In the targeted audience text box please enter a very brief description of your targeted audience for this program unit or unit of work. Examples include:

- Pesticide Producers
- Extension Educators
- Commercial Producers
- Youth Aged 13-18
- Economists
- Homeowners
- Policy Makers

**What about the state-defined outputs?**

The software provides tables for your state-generated output indicators. See sample table below.

Enter your own state-generated output measure in the table's header and its associated targets if appropriate. Then choose to save when completed.

After you click "Save", you will be taken back to the previous "View Target Measures" screen to Where you may choose to edit another output target, add another output target, or "Save" the ones you entered.

You can add as many state-generated output tables as you need.

Examples of outputs include:

- Processes of Research Studies
- Dissemination of Research Results
- Papers, Citations, and Patents
- Commercialization of Techniques and Products
- Educational Workshops
- Services
- Conferences
- Community Surveys
- Facilitation
- In-Home Counseling
- Etc.

Contact Bart Hewitt, 202-720-0747, or [pow@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:pow@csrees.usda.gov) for more information on the Plan of Work.

