



# AREERA State Plans of Work

**T**his Plan of Work (POW) newsletter focuses on the Outcomes section of the 2007 Annual Report as part of the recently released 2009 – 2013 Plan of Work and 2007 Annual Report software.

## Focus on Outcomes

The Plan of Work (POW) guidelines defines outcomes as “an assessment of the results of a program activity compared to its intended purpose. The outcome indicator measures the success of the outcome. It is the evidence or information that represents the phenomenon that is being measured. They define the data that will be collected and evaluated.”

The main focus of the Annual Reports should be on Outcomes and Impact Statements, not Outputs. The emphasis should be on change in knowledge or learning, change in action or behavior, and change in condition outcomes. However, reporting milestones on the way to condition and behavior change is also an excellent way to show progress toward these changes if these outcome changes have not yet occurred.

We are not calling on you to build an expensive database of quantitative measures, but where available, these are most valuable for documenting results. If available, we would like to have outcomes with quantitative measures. We recognize the importance and value of qualitative outcome statements. Qualitative

outcome statements can tell an important story. You may submit qualitative outcome statements as an alternative to, or in addition to the quantitative outcome measure.

We prefer that States focus on fewer meaningful higher level outcomes in the Plan of Work and Annual Report. Focus first on change in condition outcomes if available. If change in condition outcomes are not available, the focus should be on change in behavior outcomes, followed by change in knowledge outcomes. The goal is to report outcomes as far along the logic model as possible.

Moreover, if you have concrete data for a change of condition outcome, it is not necessary to show the data for the related change of behavior outcome or the related change in knowledge outcome. If you do not have data for a change in condition outcome, but have data for a change in behavior outcome, it is not necessary to show the data for the related change in knowledge outcome. However, it is still important to acknowledge that lower level outcomes exist in the Plan of Work by including the text for them in the outcome tables.

For example: In a situation where the goal is to reduce the level of phosphorus in water caused by agricultural runoff.

Change in Condition Outcome: Percent reduction of phosphorus in water.

Change in Behavior Outcome: Number of Farmers changing to low phosphorus feed.

Change in Knowledge Outcome: Number of Farmers increasing knowledge of benefits of using low phosphorus feed.

If a state can show a specific percentage reduction in phosphorus in a targeted water supply, it is not necessary to show the number of farmers that increased their knowledge, or the number that changed to low phosphorus feed to get to the ultimate outcome. But please acknowledge those change in knowledge and behavior outcomes in the Plan of Work outcome tables text.

Example of a Qualitative Outcome Statement:

**Issue:** Need for alternative fuels.

**What has been done:** Researchers developed a model of the market for gasoline, gasoline additives and gasoline substitutes specifically to analyze the market for ethanol. This market has a variety of regulations related to clean air and the use of additives, explicit subsidies for ethanol and other renewable fuels, and import restrictions. The model develops an indicator of competitive position, the cost difference between ethanol imports from Brazil and domestic production in the United States under ideal conditions without tariffs in the ethanol market.

**Results:** The model shows that biomass fuel could replace 20 percent of current gasoline usage without major land conversion and about 45 percent of current usage with land conversion.

### Software Features for Outcomes

A new feature of the software provides for additional qualitative outcome/impact statements that cut across two or more outcomes at the Planned Program level. You may use this feature for important impacts not planned for in the Plan of Work, research impacts for past projects which are just now showing an impact, or to relate a brief success story related to the Planned Program.

Another feature of the software provides checkboxes to classify outcomes by Knowledge Area(s) already defined by the Planned Program. For integrated and combined submissions, the software will now enable you to designate which institution type(s) is responsible for the outcome. There are four possible institution types in the Plan of Work and Annual Report:

1. 1862 Extension
2. 1862 Research
3. 1890 Extension
4. 1890 Research

You will only see those designations which apply to your Plan and Report, and you may choose all that apply. Plans and Reports with single entity submissions will not need to choose. It is preselected.

These designations become very important when querying performance data for the CSREES budget, and for the National Program Leaders (NPLs) in their new Leadership Management Dashboard as part of the One Solution Initiative.

### What's Next?

Future newsletters between now and April 1, 2008, will continue to highlight individual sections of the Annual Report. Please send requests for the next newsletter to Bart Hewitt at [pow@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:pow@csrees.usda.gov).

### AREERA Plan of Work Dates

2007 Annual Report due by April 1, 2008

2009 - 2013 Plan of Work Update due by April 1, 2008.

**For more information on the Plan of Work, e-mail the Plan of Work staff at [pow@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:pow@csrees.usda.gov), or call Bart Hewitt, 202-720-0747.**