

CHAPTER 4. IMPLEMENTING THE GPRA

The Department is committed to preparing and publishing complete, concise, understandable, and meaningful information about the financial and operating performance of the Department and the individual bureaus, offices, and programs which comprise the Department. The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) is a driving force toward establishing a “performance-based infrastructure” 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 toward achieving this goal.

GPRA requires agencies to develop strategic plans that elaborate the mission, outcomes and results that the 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 first required reporting of performance of funded programs required by the act begins with FY 1999.

The Department fully supports the principles embodied in the GPRA, and is creating the performance measurement framework envisioned by the Act. The Department is committed to taking the appropriate steps to comply with GPRA requirements, in coordination with efforts to comply with the GMRA requirements. The Department is taking steps to have the necessary performance measurement infrastructure in place before the statutory mandated deadlines.

The Department completed two major GPRA milestones in 1998.

- The Department completed and submitted to OMB and the Congress its first GPRA strategic plan on September 30, 1997. The plan is available on the Internet at *www.doi.gov*.
- The Department prepared and submitted the FY 1999 annual performance plans with the FY 1999 budget request to Congress.

While these are significant accomplishments, Interior recognizes that much needs to be done before the Department will have an effective performance management system in place. In response to OMB, GAO, and Congressional comments and criticism of our first plans the Department is working diligently to reduce the number of goals to a more manageable few, reduce the volume of the strategic and annual planning documents and make them more concise, readable and useful. Our Performance Management Council has just completed work on 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.

The Department and its bureaus are evaluating the usefulness of its current strategic plans and two bureaus, the U.S. Geological Survey and the Fish and Wildlife Service, are in the process of preparing full revisions to the strategic plans. The Department is reorganizing and refocus-

ing the content of the Overview section to make it more readable. For example, we are consolidating the Department's ten commitments into five broad Departmental goals, providing better linkage between Departmental goals and bureau plans and goals, and reducing management goals to the vital few that directly impact our ability to achieve the mission. The remaining bureaus will be making minor changes to the current strategic plans through the annual planning process and will prepare official revisions of their plans before the statutorily required date of September 30, 2000.

Interior is focusing on our annual performance plans and the relationship to the budget justifications. A pilot test has been conducted to examine Interior's ability to link budgetary dollars to annual performance goals. Results indicate that the Department's ability to relate budget dollars in a real and meaningful way to specific annual performance goals and target levels of performance varies with the individual bureaus. All bureaus can provide a reasonable linkage at a higher level such as GPRA program activities. For FY 2000, the Department anticipates providing a direct linkage of budgeted dollars to annual performance goals for at least three bureaus.

The Department is continuing to evaluate the data required to support the GPRA plans. This information will form the basis for performance reporting required to meet GPRA requirements. In preparation for FY 1999, the first year covered by the Results Act, the Department has taken a number of steps to ensure that accurate and reliable performance data will be available for management and reporting results.

Interior has verified the availability of baseline information and currently has over 90 percent of the baseline data available right now. The remaining ten percent are being reviewed to determine the validity of the measures and whether they should be kept, modified or replaced.

The Department has conducted a pilot test of a method for collecting and reporting data in FY 1999. The Department will be collecting available performance information on a quarterly basis, compiling the information in a Microsoft Access database and making the information available to managers throughout the Department. The Department has identified a need to automate this process to allow more timely information to flow to a broader audience. This is reflected in the Department's request for FY 1999 funding for a performance management system with network capability.

The Department is working with other agencies to resolve some of the more complex and outstanding issues associated with GPRA implementation. Interior is an active member of the National Academy of Public Administration's GPRA Consortium working cooperatively with other agencies on common implementation issues.

The Department's bureaus are also working through the Natural Resources Performance Measures Forum to examine natural resource cross cutting issues. The Natural Resources Performance Management Forum, sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management, was established in 1995 to discuss strategic goals and coordinate agency planning activities. This cross agency forum is comprised of almost all the Federal natural resource agencies and has

worked to improve the understanding of the roles and goals of the different agencies in managing natural resources. A dialog is occurring that, without the Act would not have happened. The forum is currently working on crosscutting issues and has chosen “clean water” as a pilot area for doing crosscutting planning across the member agencies.

Through the Act, we have been able to focus the efforts of multiple agencies to improve the condition of nationally significant ecosystems. The Department’s strategic plan contains measurable goals for the Pacific North West Forest and the South Florida Everglades. In the South Florida Everglades, six Federal agencies, state government and two Indian tribes have developed a strategic plan that, through the combined effort of all parties will improve the water quality and regional ecology while meeting the needs of the people who live and work in the area.

Planned Actions for 1999

- Prepare and submit annual performance plans with the FY 2000 and FY 2001 budget submissions.
- Evaluate data and reporting requirements, and improve the Department’s capacity to collect, report and verify consolidated performance measurement data.
- Include selected high level performance indicators in the Department’s Accountability Report for FY 1998.

Planned Actions for 2000 and Beyond

- Update the Department and individual bureau strategic plans.
- Prepare and submit annual performance plans with annual budget submissions.