

Accountability Overview

How has NRCS addressed the issue of Accountability, as outlined by GRPA and the President's Management Agenda?

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed and implemented the Integrated Accountability System (IAS) that will enable the agency to meet each initiative within the President's Management Agenda. This system is a system of data collection tools, processes, and related applications that provides information in a timely manner to support the agency's strategic and performance planning and monitoring, budget formulation, business planning, operations management, workforce planning, and accountability activities. The system is designed to collect high quality information with minimal burden on the field, to ensure consistency nationwide in the data collected, and to make the information accessible to those who need it in a timely manner.

In FY1998, NRCS initiated the development of a comprehensive management information system to fully meet the needs of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

What are key questions integral to the NRCS Accountability efforts?

Concerns: *What are the nation's most critical natural resource concerns, and what is their geographic distribution and extent?*

Workload: *What is the long term workload to address these concerns, and what is achievable in the short term with existing resources?*

Goals: *What are NRCS's national and state strategic goals and annual targets to address these concerns?*

Staff: *What staff is available, both NRCS and partners, to do the job, and where are they located?*

Progress: *What progress is being made towards our strategic goals and performance targets?*

Outcomes: *What environmental and socio-economic outcomes are resulting from NRCS's efforts?*

Costs: *How are NRCS staff spending their time and how much does it cost, by program and activity?*

Operations: *Is NRCS using its resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible, and is the public being served in an equitable manner?*



Where can I get accountability information from NRCS?

A large part of our accountability information, particularly performance information, is available to the public, in the form of tabular reports and maps. Reports can be displayed for the entire Nation or by state. Depending upon the type of information, the data may be summarized by state, county, watershed, Conservation District, or Congressional District. Information on specific individuals is NOT collected nor reported through any IAS database, protecting our customers' confidentiality.

Where to get more information about Accountability in NRCS?

For more information on the Integrated Accountability System or the use of accountability in NRCS, call the NRCS Operations Management and Oversight Division at (202) 720-8388.

Where does the NRCS's Integrated Accountability System get its data and information?

The *NRCS Integrated Accountability System* brings together information collected from the agency accountability-related data collection systems, as well as information from external sources:

Performance and Results Measurement System (PRMS) - provides data on NRCS and partnership accomplishments; updated daily.

Total Cost Accounting System (TCAS) - provides data on how NRCS staff resources are being used; updated every 2 weeks.

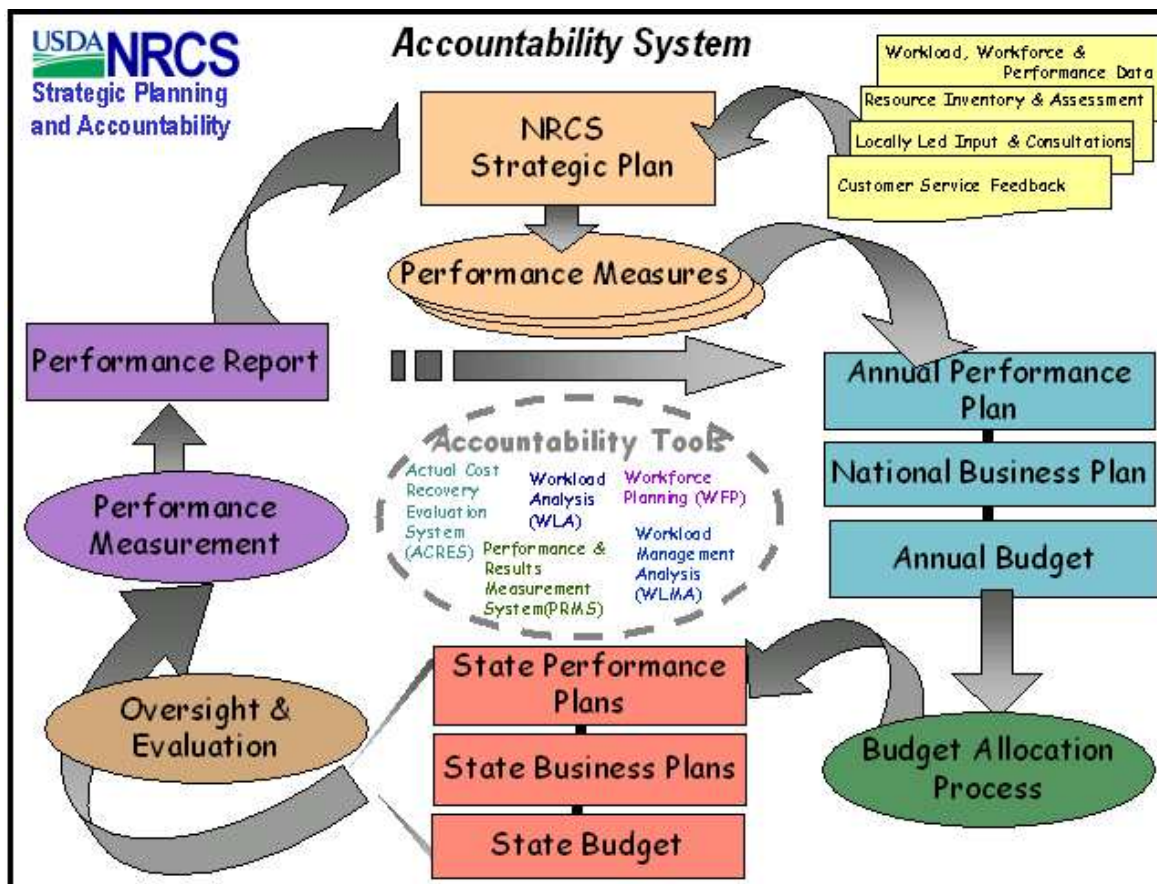
Workload Analysis (WLA) - provides data on conservation partnership workload and staff needs; updated on 3-year interval.

Strategic & Performance Plans - provides performance goals by state, region, and nationally; updated annually.

NRCS Business Plans - provides information on key activities and tasks from national and state business plans (updated annually).

The NRCS State of the Land Website - provides resource maps and tables from the National Resources Inventory, the Agricultural Census, NRCS Soils databases, and other sources.

Other External Databases - provide data to support the IAS or the accountability-related data collection systems. Examples include the National Soils Information System, the Water Supply Forecasting database, the PLANTS website, program databases from the Farm Services Agency, the Conservation Technology Information Center database, RC&D database, Watersheds Programs database, and others.



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Addresses and telephone numbers for NRCS' Civil Rights Staff are: NRCS Civil Rights Program Compliance Division, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Mail Stop 5471, Beltsville, MD 20705-5471; phone: (301) 504-2287. NRCS Civil Rights Employment Division, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Mail Stop 5472, Beltsville, MD 20705-5472; phone: (301) 504-2181.