

APPENDIX F: STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

F.1. What Is Stakeholder Involvement?

Before stakeholder involvement can be defined, we must first define the word *stakeholder*. A stakeholder is a group or individual who has the responsibility for implementing a management action, is affected by the action, or has the ability to aid or prevent its implementation. Watershed stakeholders often include business owners, land owners, ranchers, environmental groups, local elected officials, homeowners, developers, loggers, and so on. Stakeholder involvement is based upon the belief that expertise does not lie solely with program professionals. Stakeholder involvement means providing a method for identifying public concerns and values, developing a consensus among affected parties, and producing efficient and effective solutions through an open, inclusive process. Stakeholder involvement can be used to support and complement legally required actions such as the development and implementation of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs).

F.2. Benefits of Stakeholder Involvement in the TMDL Process

Stakeholder involvement is a vital part of the TMDL process. First and foremost, involving stakeholders is required by law. Both the Porter Cologne Water Quality Control Act and the federal Clean Water Act require, at a minimum, that TMDL proponents provide public notice and public comment opportunity concerning TMDL calculations. In addition to satisfying legal requirements for public review, working with stakeholders has many benefits. Stakeholder support, both in spirit and in dollars, helps create TMDLs that are “real solutions to real problems.” Stakeholders can also assist with specific parts of the TMDL process, such as data gathering, data review, and public education.

In addition, stakeholder involvement also helps to build trust and support for the TMDL process itself and creates a shared responsibility for implementing the measures identified in the TMDL to improve water quality. When stakeholders are involved from the outset, there is a stronger buy-in of the solutions that need to be implemented to achieve the TMDL. If stakeholders have the opportunity throughout the process to provide input on how the TMDL is developed, they are more likely to support and adopt voluntary measures that will be critical for TMDL achievement.

F.3. Identifying and Understanding Stakeholders

Before you inform and involve stakeholders you must first identify the stakeholders and research the level of interest and existing public opinion among them about the watershed or waterbody for which the TMDL is being developed. When members of the community will be responsible for implementing the management strategies developed as a result of the TMDL, it is critical to include as many different types of people and interest groups as possible. The process of stakeholder identification will help you to determine later what level of stakeholder involvement you will need to conduct—from providing the minimum information required to convening a formal stakeholder group. Identifying key stakeholders is based on considering the problem, sources, and potential solutions/actions for the specific TMDL project. Consider which stakeholders will be affected and what stakeholders could contribute. Stakeholders that are a source of the pollutant addressed by the TMDL and those who will be asked to take actions to solve

the water quality problem should be included in the stakeholder involvement plan. The key stakeholders may be easy to identify, such as municipal wastewater treatment agencies and storm water management agencies. However, it might be necessary to conduct additional research to ensure that all the relevant stakeholders are identified. There are several ways you can identify stakeholders, including the following:

- Review existing written information about the area/problem and make note of key leaders, agencies, and organizations that are mentioned
- Identify individuals or groups that may be a source of the pollutant being addressed by the TMDL
- Identify individuals or groups that may be asked to take actions to solve the water quality problem
- Conduct interviews using phone calls, written surveys, focus groups
- Ask current stakeholders who else to contact

After you have identified the types of stakeholders that you will need to involve in the TMDL, you will need to research the key issues of concern to those stakeholders, their desired outcomes for the TMDL, their current level of awareness about the TMDL process and water quality conditions in the area, and their existing or historical level of public involvement with TMDLs or other watershed restoration projects. It is also important to determine how they will approach the stakeholder process based on their own perspectives. Each stakeholder will bring his or her own biases, fears, and hopes into the stakeholder process. For example, a discharger might fear new permit requirements, or an environmental nonprofit might fear that a government organization will not do enough to protect water quality. An important part of the stakeholder process is learning these concerns and working to build trust. At this stage of the process, one-on-one interactions, phone interviews, surveys, or focus groups can be particularly helpful. In addition, reviewing relevant documents, past media coverage, community newsletters or publications from local environmental groups can also help you understand the stakeholders' perspectives.

F.4. Selecting the Right Level of Involvement

To determine the appropriate level of stakeholder involvement for each TMDL process, you must answer the following questions:

Is there an existing group that could serve as the TMDL stakeholder group?

Creating a new stakeholder group requires a significant commitment of time and resources. Before establishing a new group, determine whether an existing group, such as a watershed council, already includes many of the key stakeholders and could make an effective stakeholder group.

Uncovering Stakeholder Concerns

In response to issues raised during a presentation made at a local Farm Bureau on TMDLs, the Yolo County Resource Conservation District held a focus group discussion where area farmers voiced several concerns:

- They don't have time to come to meetings.
- They don't want stakeholders who know nothing about farming telling them how to farm.
- They want to be the only decision makers on these projects.
- There are issues of private property rights.
- They are concerned about how they are going to afford changes to their farming practices.
- They don't want to do something now and then have an agency come to them in a few years and tell them what they did was wrong and that they must change it.
- They don't feel there is enough scientific data in place to tell them what they should be doing.

Piggybacking on Existing Groups

In the Lower South San Francisco Bay area a group of public agencies, trade organizations, representatives from the business community, and other groups were already organized as the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative (SCBWM). SCBWM was formed to coordinate watershed activities on a basinwide scale. When the Regional Board set out to develop a copper and nickel TMDL for the Lower South San Francisco Bay, the Board determined that using the existing structure and diversity of the SCBWM group would be a more efficient and effective method of involving area stakeholders, rather than wasting time and money forming a new group.

Identifying existing stakeholder groups is important regardless of what level of involvement is chosen, because it is always more efficient and less burdensome on the public to use existing groups than to create new ones.

What is the general level of interest and willingness to participate in the TMDL?

Consider whether key stakeholders will be willing to invest the time and resources necessary to participate in the process. You must recognize that the same level of involvement may not work for all stakeholders. For example, some key stakeholders might not have the time and resources to participate in a high-level process; however, they might be willing to be involved through less time-intensive means, such as e-mail updates.

What is the timeline for the project?

If the TMDL project is being developed under a consent decree or otherwise tight schedule, you might need to opt for a low level of stakeholder involvement in order to meet your deadlines. If not, your schedule might be more flexible and allow more opportunities for consideration of public input.

Is the project controversial?

If you anticipate a high degree of controversy, you might want to spend additional time and resources on your stakeholder process. By contrast, if the project is uncontroversial, a low level of stakeholder involvement may be all that is required. However, in some cases, a low level of stakeholder involvement might be better for a high degree of controversy, where agreement and acceptance of TMDL technical issues or implementation strategies are unlikely. These cases sometimes result in staff intensive stakeholder efforts that do not move the project forward efficiently, meet objectives, or gain desired buy-in from stakeholders.

How will the stakeholders be affected by implementation of the TMDL?

If implementing the TMDL will require stakeholders to take significant and potentially costly implementation actions, it may be necessary to devote additional resources to stakeholder involvement. In addition, if implementation will involve lifestyle changes to be made by members of the public, such as reducing pesticide use, you may need to plan for increased outreach to the public.

What resources are available for developing and implementing the TMDL (including resources for stakeholder involvement)?

Stakeholder involvement processes involve significant financial resources for meetings, outreach materials, and comment collection and analysis. Stakeholder involvement also calls for a significant amount of staff time. Outside funding from stakeholders, through grants, or through other mechanisms, can make a higher level of stakeholder involvement possible

F.4.1 Levels of Stakeholder Involvement

There is no “one size fits all” approach when it comes to the level of stakeholder involvement in the TMDL process. The amount of involvement will be determined by the time frame of the TMDL, the level of controversy surrounding the TMDL, the number of stakeholders affected by the outcome of the TMDL, and many other variables as mentioned earlier. Listed below are the five basic levels of stakeholder involvement. (Table F-1 describes the five levels of stakeholder involvement in further detail.)

Low: Information only (Minimum required by both the Porter Cologne Water Quality Act and the Clean Water Act)

- The Regional Board releases a public notice regarding TMDL development.
- The Regional Board holds public hearings to provide the public with the opportunity to formally submit comments.
- The Regional Board prepares written responses to the public comments received and publishes those responses in the final TMDL.

This level of stakeholder involvement is the lowest level allowed by law for TMDL development. A low level of involvement serves only to inform affected and interested parties of recommendations or decisions regarding development and implementation of the TMDL, allow some input on TMDL development, and assist Regional Board staff in making decisions about how to implement the TMDL.

Medium-Low: Information with request for specific input

- The Regional Board conducts outreach and education in an effort to inform stakeholders and solicit input in addition to the required public notice and public hearings.
- The Regional Board prepares written responses to the public comments received and publishes those responses in the final TMDL.

Medium: Feedback and ongoing input

- The Regional Board works with a core stakeholder group from the outset of the TMDL process.
- The Regional Board invites stakeholders to participate in an informal, periodic manner.
- Formal stakeholder forum is organized with some local leadership.

Medium-High: Active partnership effort

- A stakeholder forum is developed early in the TMDL process.
- Stakeholders may do significant analysis, not just review reports.
- Technical Advisory Committee, Public Advisory Committee, or other formally recognized group.

High: Full consensus

- A formal stakeholder forum is organized with local leadership.
- Stakeholders are involved from outset in TMDL effort.
- Stakeholders may do substantial analysis, not just review reports.
- Stakeholders attempt to seek agreement on TMDL content.

Table F-1. Levels of Stakeholder Involvement

Level	Key Elements	Decisionmaking Process	Advantages	Disadvantages	When to Use
Low <i>(Required Minimum)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information only Public notice and public hearings provide formal opportunity for TMDL review Written responses to public comments in final TMDL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform stakeholders about the decision Facilitate limited, formal input Make decision on TMDL Implement decision through enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less time- and resource-intensive Satisfies minimum public participation requirements Avoids duplication of effort when TMDL is based on previous, uncontroversial decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interested parties may not hear about TMDL Reduces chance of local support and buy-in May be dissatisfying to stakeholders who want more involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under consent decree Schedule is critical Litigation is unavoidable and there is no prospect for consensus Decision is uncontroversial
Medium-Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information with request for specific input Community outreach and education with stakeholders during TMDL development Written responses to public comments in final TMDL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss tentative decisions Inform group of progress and draft analysis, seek input Make final decision Stakeholders implement TMDL with regulatory oversight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less time-intensive Educates the public Increases awareness of and general support for TMDL Provides opportunity for some local involvement in TMDL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not reach all interested parties May be dissatisfying to stakeholders who want more involvement Difficult to manage expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule does not permit more stakeholder involvement There are a few competing interests Level of local involvement is low
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback and ongoing input Core stakeholder groups involved from outset of TMDL Stakeholders can participate in an informal, periodic manner Formal stakeholder forum with some local leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present the issues or problems Solicit ideas, suggestions, alternatives Make final decision Stakeholders implement TMDL with local monitoring and regulatory oversight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders can be involved to varying degrees Increases chances for local education, support of TMDL process, and acceptance of decisions Earlier identification of difficult or contentious issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderately time- and resource-intensive Difficult to manage expectations Problematic for TMDLs with tight, inflexible deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are existing formal stakeholder groups Formal stakeholder effort will result in long-term commitment Adequate time exists in the schedule
Medium-High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active partnership effort Stakeholder forum developed early in TMDL process Stakeholders may do significant analysis, not just review reports Technical Advisory Committee, Public Advisory Committee or other formally recognized group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the issues and define the legal requirements Decision is arrived at in partnership with the stakeholders Approve final decision Stakeholders implement final decision with regulatory oversight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases chances for local support/buy-in Earlier participation of stakeholders builds trust and support Local groups can bring resources to TMDL process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very time- and resource-intensive May be difficult to bring divergent groups together Requires strong local leadership and commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex issues and strong competing stakeholder needs exist Partnership will lead to a stable watershed stewardship program Adequate time exists in the schedule
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full consensus Formal stakeholder process with local leadership Stakeholders involved from outset in TMDL effort Stakeholders may do substantial analysis, not just review reports Stakeholders attempt to seek agreement on TMDL content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the issues and define the legal requirements Facilitate stakeholders in decisionmaking process Approve final decision Stakeholders implement final decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best chances for local support/buy in Improves ability to identify and evaluate implementation measures May reduce resources needed for analysis since other parties do some analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very time- and resource-intensive Often unrealistic to get consensus on TMDL May be unsatisfying to interested stakeholders Extensive time commitment may not work for stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under exceptional circumstances where there is a high likelihood of success Plenty of time exists in the schedule

Keep in mind that not every TMDL situation fits easily into one of the defined levels. You might need to develop a unique level or type of involvement based on the research you have conducted in the watershed. In general, the medium-low, medium, and medium-high levels of stakeholder involvement are most often used. In the San Francisco Bay Region, there is no consent decree, so the TMDL project schedule allows for a higher level of involvement. Many TMDL projects are controversial to some degree, and implementation strategies therefore benefit from stakeholder buy-in. It is often the case that the many benefits of increased stakeholder involvement justify more than the minimum, required (low) level of involvement. By contrast, a high level of involvement requires extensive staff time and funding without necessarily providing additional benefits. With the diversity of perspectives among key stakeholders, full consensus, in which every interested party agrees with every aspect of the TMDL, is rarely a realistic goal.

Also, the level of involvement that is desired, or realistic, may change over time. For some projects, the early stages of a project may involve a significant time investment, while later stages require a less-intensive stakeholder process. For other projects, it might be better to start with a lower level of involvement, adding more time and resources when it is time to release a significant product, such as a TMDL Project Report. Selecting the right level of stakeholder involvement can involve a certain amount of trial and error. Regular reevaluation of goals, priorities, tools, and methods is helpful.

F.4.2 Do I Need a Higher Level of Stakeholder Involvement?

As noted in Section F.4.1 (Table F-1), a low level of stakeholder involvement is all that is required by law. However, most TMDLs require more than what is provided through a low level of involvement. It is very important that you analyze your TMDL situation to determine whether you need more than the minimum. If the TMDL situation has any of the following characteristics, you will need to raise the level of stakeholder involvement to allow more input:

- The potential exists for disapproval or appeal of the decision.
- The interested parties have the power to influence the outcome.
- There is a high level of public interest and controversy in the TMDL or in water quality issues in general.
- The TMDL involves technically complex data and information that need to be understood by stakeholders.
- There is a need for broad community/public support for the implementation strategy.
- The project will require stakeholders to do advanced planning such as develop funding, adopt a willingness to pay (e.g., for management practices by growers), or change personal behaviors (e.g., use less pesticide or fertilizer around the home).
- There is a need for interagency cooperation.
- Resolution depends upon policy decisions for which there are no absolute, objective solutions.

The following are other factors that can contribute to the need for a higher level of stakeholder involvement:

- The number of parties is small enough to negotiate effectively.
- The issues are mature and the parties are ready to decide them.
- The parties are willing to negotiate and have the information necessary to do so effectively.
- There is sufficient pressure to resolve the issue (or the Agency will do so instead).
- The parties have something to gain from the negotiation.
- There are enough contested issues to allow trade-offs between parties.
- The watershed setting, water quality problem, and pollutant sources are relatively complex.

- The level of public interest and controversy concerning water quality issues is relatively high.
- Prospective costs to implement pollution controls are relatively high.
- Sufficient state resources are available to staff the public participation process.
- The state has access to trained facilitators on staff or through other organizations.
- Sufficient time is available to carry out a more time-consuming process, and there are no imminent “hard” completion deadlines.
- All interested parties have the time and expertise necessary to participate fully in the process.
- The TMDL decisions are likely to rely heavily on state exercise of “best professional judgment.”

Another good way to determine what level of stakeholder involvement is needed is to let the stakeholders themselves decide. Hold a stakeholder orientation meeting to introduce stakeholders to the TMDL process, the water quality issues and concerns being addressed by the TMDL, and to one another. At the meeting, you might lead a facilitated discussion of the level of stakeholder involvement needed. Ask for feedback from the group either by voting on the preferred level of involvement or taking suggestions on alternative levels and working toward a consensus decision.

F.5. Developing a Framework for Stakeholder Involvement

After you have identified and researched your stakeholders, you now need to outline a framework for the stakeholder involvement process. Ideally, this will be only a preliminary framework. You will need to ask the stakeholders to comment on and provide their own input on how they think the stakeholder process should operate. This effort will build support for the process and set the stage for a consensus-based approach to the TMDL.

Be sure to flesh your preliminary framework out in writing. This will become your stakeholder involvement plan. The importance of putting your stakeholder involvement plan on paper cannot be overstated. Putting the plan in writing allows you to essentially test the plan on paper before you invite stakeholders to the first meeting. Such a plan can be referred to throughout the process to ensure that goals and objectives are met timely and inclusively. The plan should include the results of all the research you conducted while identifying and analyzing the key stakeholders. A written plan will also communicate your plans to all parties, such as the State Board, that will be involved in supporting the effort and allow time to make changes to the plan if necessary. This is especially important for controversial TMDLs.

F.5.1 Setting Goals and Objectives

The first step in developing a framework is setting the goals and objectives of the stakeholder involvement process. This might sound redundant after having identified the stakeholders and selecting the appropriate level of involvement, but it is important that everyone is clear on the goals and objectives so that the process does not stray off course.

Goals are general statements that express the broad focus of your effort. For example, the overall goal of your stakeholder involvement process might be to gain public support for voluntary adoption of a set of best management practices that will help meet TMDL requirements. One of the most important steps in the

Changing Course

When the San Francisco Bay Regional Board set out to develop a TMDL for copper and nickel in the Lower South San Francisco Bay, they determined that an impairment assessment conducted by the City of San Jose showed that a full TMDL was not necessary because an impairment the most sensitive beneficial uses, those involving aquatic life, were not likely to be threatened by either current ambient dissolved concentrations of copper and nickel or the somewhat higher SSOs.

planning process is setting realistic goals. For example, achieving full consensus on the technical and policy issues of the TMDL project might not be an attainable goal. It might be possible, however, to have the key stakeholders agree that the science behind the TMDL is sound. Another example of a realistic goal is to keep stakeholders informed of the development of the TMDL and request feedback on a specific element, such as the source analysis. Goals should be clearly stated with measures for success identified in the objectives that are set to achieve the goals.

Objectives are tasks that are identified that are critical to achieving the goals that have been set. Objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Relevant, and Time-focused (SMART). For example, one objective might be to conduct 3 public hearings over the course of 1 year to collect public comments on the proposed TMDL strategy.

F.5.2 Setting Priorities

With limited time and resources, setting priorities within a TMDL project is crucial to optimize use of staff and financial resources. Setting priorities often involves clarity about your goals (e.g., deciding whether you are primarily striving to share information or are seeking specific feedback from stakeholders). Priorities should be reevaluated regularly to ensure that goals are being met.

In addition to ongoing project-specific priorities, the San Francisco Bay Regional Board has identified two overarching priorities for their stakeholder involvement processes: 1) focus on achieving consensus on the science behind the TMDL, rather than on achieving full consensus on all the technical and policy aspects of the TMDL; and 2) focus outreach on “interested, knowledgeable” parties as opposed to the general public. While they continue to strive to reach both audiences, they focus their time, attention, and approach on the interested parties who have some knowledge of and active interest in the TMDL process or a specific TMDL. This priority is reflected in which outreach tools are used and how outreach materials are designed and developed.

F.5.3 How Will the Stakeholder Involvement Process Operate?

While developing a stakeholder involvement plan, you must determine how the stakeholder group will be structured, how decisions will be made throughout the process, and the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders.

Organizational Structure

Stakeholder groups range from informal, ad hoc groups to highly organized, formal committees. Smaller, informal stakeholder groups usually result in faster consensus building and require less logistical planning. In such cases stakeholders might only meet

Stakeholder Process Tips

- If key groups or interests are not adequately represented, consider reducing the intensity of the planned public process to better accommodate the abilities of these groups or interests to participate. If feasible, consider providing financial support for members of these groups to attend meetings or hire expert assistance.
- Time is needed to build trust among participating stakeholders and to educate the public on TMDL process basics. This is easier in processes that have substantial time to do their work. Even in projects where public participation is limited, it is important to do some outreach to educate the public about TMDLs.
- If a significant number of people or groups are interested in discussing the technical aspects of TMDL development, convene a separate technical advisory group to discuss these issues, and provide separate forums for discussing policy and allocation issues that may be of greater interest to the lay public. Members of the general public, and many leaders of agencies and private entities generally lack the time, interest, or expertise needed to engage in technical details.
- Schedule stakeholder meetings at different times of the day, including some evening and/or weekend meetings to accommodate people who cannot attend weekday meetings.

when needed. Whereas formal stakeholder groups or committees require regular meetings and information dissemination to reach consensus.

If you have a relatively small number of stakeholders, you might decide to just work through the TMDL process together as one group. However, if you have a large number of stakeholders, or if the TMDL issues are particularly complex or controversial, you might want to consider setting up subcommittees or technical advisory groups. Subcommittees can be created to gather information, identify concerns, or develop alternative strategies to address water quality issues and report back to the group at large. Subcommittees could be formed for activities such as media relations, data collection, feedback on recommended BMPs, or monitoring.

Decisionmaking Methods

No one decisionmaking method is appropriate for all decisions. TMDL proponents can gather input informally from stakeholders and make a decision themselves. Conversely, they can delegate decisionmaking to a formal stakeholder committee. Keep in mind that as the level of involvement in decisionmaking increases so does the level of commitment to the outcome. There are recommended decisionmaking processes that apply to each level of stakeholder involvement (Low – High). Refer to the column titled “Decisionmaking Process” in Table F-1 for a description of the recommended procedure for each level.

Circumstances can sometimes warrant the selection of a lower or higher level of decisionmaking than the chosen level of stakeholder involvement or the development of an entirely new decisionmaking process. In those cases, the time available to the stakeholders to participate, the time frame of the TMDL, the importance of the decision, the information needed, and the need for buy-in of the decision should all be considered.

Generally speaking, the higher levels of stakeholder involvement require decisionmaking that is more consensus-based than the decisionmaking at the lower levels of stakeholder involvement. Generating decisions based on consensus means that all stakeholders are willing to support the decision selected. It does not mean that all stakeholders are supporting their first choice. Rather it is a decision that the group agrees to live with. When making decisions by consensus, be sure to include a fallback position in case consensus cannot be reached. This is especially important for controversial TMDLs. A fallback position might be “If we cannot reach consensus on whether to allow nutrient trading among pollution sources in the watershed, we will vote and go with the majority decision.”

Roles and Responsibilities

A stakeholder involvement plan that describes the contribution expected from each stakeholder can reinforce collaboration and cooperation. Outlining roles and responsibilities for the stakeholder group will also help clarify expectations and reduce conflict. These roles should be strategically assigned to ensure that the stakeholder group is capable of achieving its goals and objectives. Members should be responsible for issues or areas in which they are most skilled and have the greatest

Stakeholder Steering Committee Leads TMDL Development

A steering committee of watershed stakeholders has been involved from the beginning of the San Joaquin River dissolved oxygen TMDL development process. Operating in a consensus-based approach, the steering committee is responsible for evaluating past actions taken in the TMDL development process as well as to set future goals. This process provides multiple opportunities for stakeholder feedback. The steering committee evaluates yearly goals and objectives, establishes new goals and objectives for the following year, provides feedback on implementation plans, and even periodically evaluates its decision making process. The feedback generated helps the steering committee keep the TMDL development on track as well as make sure the committee itself is functioning properly.

stake. It is important that all members have roles they consider meaningful and significant.

Different individuals or groups need to be charged with managing the TMDL stakeholder involvement process and the input gained from the process. Outside facilitators or another neutral parties should be used to help manage the process by encouraging discussion, diffusing conflicts, and keeping the decisionmaking process productive and timely.

Stakeholders will be responsible for the input gained from the process. Stakeholders should have responsibilities such as ensuring all relevant interests are addressed and providing input on potential best management practices (BMPs) recommended in the TMDL. Stakeholders such as government agencies (e.g., U.S. Geological Survey, state departments of transportation) can provide input on regulatory requirements, current practices, or ongoing research that could affect the decisions made during the TMDL development process.

F.6. Outreach and Communication Methods

Meetings, presentations, fact sheets and other outreach documents, public notices, mailings, Web site postings, focus groups, and one-on-one interactions with key stakeholders are among the tools used to conduct outreach. Each of these tools has its own set of advantages and disadvantages. For example, meetings can be a great opportunity for all of the key stakeholders to sit down together to discuss technical information and policy issues. Yet, meetings are time consuming for all involved and are not always productive. Stakeholder processes generally necessitate a combination of all available outreach tools, with a focus on the tools most appropriate for the specific project, such as presentations or Web site postings. It is important to evaluate the applicability of various in-person forums carefully and select the best type and frequency. Available models of forums include technical advisory committees, steering committees, public advisory committees, watershed councils, and open-invitation public workshops. Sometimes a new forum needs to be established specifically for the TMDL project, but often an existing forum can be used.

The same forums or other outreach tools may not work for all stakeholders. For example, some key stakeholders may not have the time and resources to participate in multiple meetings and face-to-face decisionmaking activities, but could be involved through less time-intensive means, such as e-mail updates and online discussions. In addition, some key stakeholders may be uncomfortable sharing concerns in a large group meeting setting, but will e-mail or phone this information to a project contact or other stakeholder.

F.7. Evaluating Success

Even the best-planned stakeholder processes have room for improvement. Evaluation provides a feedback mechanism for ongoing improvement of your stakeholder involvement effort. Many people don't think about how they will evaluate the success of the effort until after the TMDL has been developed. Building an evaluation component into the stakeholder involvement plan from the beginning, however, will ensure that at least some accurate feedback on effort is generated. Ideally, feedback generated during the early stages of the stakeholder process will be used immediately in making preliminary determinations about what level of involvement is needed and how the process will proceed. Adapting elements of the effort continually as new information is received ensures that ineffective components are adjusted or scrapped, while the things that are working are supported and enhanced.

Specific measures for success in a TMDL stakeholder involvement effort can include productive comments on draft documents, attendance at meetings, and stakeholder buy-in on the technical aspects of the TMDL.

Evaluation tools must be built into your stakeholder involvement process at the beginning and along every step of the way to ensure that accurate feedback is generated from all interested parties. This method is commonly called *adaptive management*. Adaptive management is a process for continually improving your goals and objectives, messages, formats, and distribution mechanisms by learning from the tasks you have implemented. Adaptive management keeps you from either charging ahead blindly or being paralyzed by indecision. It helps you learn from your mistakes and repeat your successes.

F.7.1 Types of Evaluation Indicators

There are two main types of indicators that can be used to evaluate the success of your stakeholder involvement effort—process indicators and impact indicators. Process indicators are related to the execution of the stakeholder involvement effort itself. The number of stakeholders involved, the frequency and number of meetings held, the number of attendees at each meeting, and the number and types of outreach materials distributed to the stakeholders are all process indicators. Process indicators focus on implementation of activities as they relate to milestone achievement, budgets, etc. Process evaluation should occur as the TMDL and corresponding stakeholder involvement process is being carried out to allow modifications before too many resources have been expended or too much time has passed.

Impact indicators relate to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the stakeholder involvement plan. Impact evaluations assess the outcome or impacts produced by the effort. Stakeholder involvement impact indicators might include whether consensus was reached on the types of BMPs selected, changes in perceptions or behaviors, or more water quality-related indicators such as the number of miles of streams fenced off from cattle (which implies a direct effect on water quality). Tools to assess impact include focus groups, surveys, before and after photos, or water quality monitoring.

Building both process and impact indicators into your stakeholder involvement plan will help ensure that the goals and objectives are met, that the TMDL will be developed with the appropriate amount of public input, and that stakeholders will be happy with the TMDL outcome and resulting implementation strategy.

F.8. Where to Go for Help

The SWRCB's Office of Legislative Affairs and Office of Public Affairs support the State Boards and Regional Boards with media contacts and public outreach tools (e.g., training, manuals, brochures) to assist in the development of TMDLs. For more information on the resources offered, visit <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/>. In addition to the technical support provided by the SWRCB, the following resources are available to help you get your stakeholder involvement effort started off on the right foot and ultimately develop and implement TMDLs that watershed stakeholders own and accept.

Getting in Step: Engaging and Involving Stakeholders in Your Watershed

This guide provides the tools needed to effectively engage stakeholders to restore and maintain healthy watersheds through community support and cooperative action. Developed through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water. Available online at www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/outreach/documents.

Getting In Step: A Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns (due to be printed soon)

This guide is an update of the 1998 publication *Getting In Step: A Guide to Effective Outreach in Your Watershed*. This updated version includes more specific information on how to work with the mass media to conduct outreach campaigns and includes new information on using social marketing techniques to generate sustainable behavior change. The guide is available online at www.epa.gov/owow/nps or by calling 1-800-490-9198. Ask for publication number EPA 841-B-03-002.

Watershed Restoration: A Guide for Citizen Involvement in California

Some of the best science and technical tools available to citizens involved in coastal watershed management are available in this guide. Although it was developed for California, this well-constructed guide might spark ideas for use in other watersheds. Published in December 1995, it can be obtained by contacting the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Coastal Oceans Office, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Phone: (301) 713-3338; Fax: (301) 713-4044.

Stakeholder Involvement & Public Participation at the U.S. EPA: Lessons Learned, Barriers, & Innovative Approaches

This report takes a look at USEPA efforts to involve the public in the formal review process by reviewing formal evaluations and informal summaries from across USEPA that identify, describe, and/or evaluate stakeholder involvement and public participation activities. The report identifies key crosscutting lessons learned, pinpoints unique barriers and ways to overcome them, and highlights innovative approaches to stakeholder involvement and public participation. Available online at www.epa.gov/stakeholders/pdf/sipp.pdf.

Bridge Builder: A Guide for Watershed Partnerships (Facilitator's Handbook)

The purpose of this handbook is to make the facilitation of watershed planning and management as easy as possible. Many exercises, transparencies, forms, checklists, and other sources of information and examples are included throughout the text. To obtain a copy of this handbook, contact Conservation Technology Information Center, 1220 Potter Drive, Room 170, West Lafayette, IN 47906-1383. Phone: (765) 494-9555; Fax: (765) 494-5969; Internet: www.ctic.purdue.edu.

The Watershed Project Management Guide

The Watershed Project Management Guide focuses on the complexities of the watershed management process, the watershed partnership's role in the processes, and what needs to be done next. This process can be used to implement a management strategy to meet the load allocations required by an approved TMDL. This 296-page guide was written by Tom Davenport and published in 2002.

Developing Technical Policy with Citizen Groups

This article from *Stormwater* magazine, aimed at state and local agency officials, provides an overview of the public involvement process. It outlines the steps necessary to define a group, the issues to be covered, and the process used to address the issues. The article contains techniques, approaches, and skills helpful in bringing a disparate group to agreement on diverse issues. To view the article visit www.forester.net/sw_0105_developing.html.

Conservation Partnerships Field Guide

This field guide to public-private partnering for natural resource conservation is designed to help both the novice and the experienced practitioner successfully use partnerships as equitable, effective, and efficient means of achieving results. It includes an overview of projects and partnerships. The field guide is available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Training and Education, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203. Phone: (703) 358-1711.

Know Your Watershed: Watershed Management Starter Kit

Want to start a watershed management partnership for your local watershed? This complete kit includes five guides (*Getting to Know Your Watershed*, ***Building Local Partnerships***, *Putting Together a Watershed Management Plan*, ***Managing Conflict***, and *Leading and Communicating*), a 13-minute video (*Partnerships for Watersheds*), 10 companion brochures, and an application to the National Watershed Network. In other words, it includes everything you need to get started. It is available from Conservation Technology Information Center, 1220 Potter Drive, Room 170, West Lafayette, IN 47906-1383. Phone: (765) 494-9555; Internet: www.ctic.purdue.edu/Catalog/WatershedManagement.html.

