



Chapter 6

Develop Project Partnerships

6-1 Introduction

Many municipalities are short staffed and have too many initiatives and too little funding. Developing partnerships can help you accomplish your projects cost-effectively. Municipalities can partner with regulators, other municipalities, federal agencies, state and local governments, and citizen groups to accomplish various environmental objectives, share resources, access expertise, and resolve regulatory issues. In addition, public works offices can partner with other municipal offices, such as emergency management, to accomplish complex or integrated projects.

6-2 Why Form Partnerships?

A partnership is the easiest way to develop and implement successful projects because everyone is involved from the onset. This upfront involvement means the ultimate plan will truly have the consensus of all parties with a stake in the watershed and assets. In general, forming partnerships with others can help do the following:

- *Lower project costs.* If other parties are already involved in the project, you can reduce the time it takes for approvals, improve logistical support, and obtain volunteer labor or technical assistance. Saving time also means saving money.
- *Build good community relations.* Partners relay their positive experiences to others within the community.
- *Build advocates for your program.* Other municipal offices or the public can be powerful advocates for change if involved from the beginning of projects.

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- *Obtain additional funds (subject to county and state fiscal legal restraints).* Other offices, federal agencies, state and local governments, local businesses, or citizen groups may be interested in sharing costs on projects.
 - *Receive grants and awards.* EPA, state agencies, and other organizations offer grants and awards to help promote watershed management.
 - *Coordinate volunteers to conduct monitoring, stream cleanup, and stream or watershed restoration days.*
 - *Provide technical expertise for demonstration projects.*
 - *Coordinate and conduct field trips and tours.*
 - *Establish and run meetings and workshops.*
 - *Develop focus groups.*
 - *Conduct opinion surveys.*
 - *Provide media relations.*
 - *Support and develop educational programs for schools, civic groups, and other local organizations.*

Partnerships can be challenging: it takes time and skill to create successful ones. Maintaining motivation and enthusiasm is another challenge, especially if positive results do not happen quickly. All relevant stakeholders must believe their efforts are necessary. As you build partnerships, you will encounter these and other challenges. Keep in mind, however, that the benefits of partnerships usually far outweigh the challenges.

6-3 What Are the Steps?

There are some basic steps in forming and building partnerships:

- Identify opportunities that lend themselves to partnering.
- Identify potential partners.
- Develop partnerships.
- Collaborate to implement the projects.
- Share success and praise with outside stakeholders.

6-3.1 Identify Opportunities

The first step is to identify opportunities for partnering. By completing the forms, you have already identified activities and solutions that could benefit from partners.

6-3.2 Identify Potential Partners

Ways to identify potential project partners vary. For example, EPA and a variety of non-governmental organizations have developed a catalog of organizations involved in protecting local waterbodies, including government agencies, formal watershed alliances, national groups, local groups, and schools that conduct activities such as volunteer monitoring, cleanups, and restoration projects.

In addition, many websites offer access to organizations that can assist your efforts:

- EPA hosts a *Catalogue of Watershed Groups* website at <http://www.epa.gov/adopt/network.html>. This website contains the
 - group name and Internet site (if available);
 - contact name, address, e-mail address, and phone number;
 - watershed and locations of interest;
 - description of activities; and
 - number of volunteers.
- EPA hosts the *River Corridors and Wetlands Restoration (RCWR) Partnership*, at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/rpart.htm>. The RCWR partnership is an ad hoc team consisting of public agencies and private organizations that engage in wetland and watershed restoration efforts, share information, and find opportunities for collaboration. The team promotes and supports community-based projects that improve the quality of life of the community and the health of its watersheds. EPA recognizes that restoration efforts require a team approach and welcomes any national organization with similar interests to join the RCWR partnership.

You can use Exhibit 6-1 as a template for tracking potential regional partners (refer to <http://www.epa.gov/win/contacts.html>). You can use Form 2, Block 8, if you want to track potential partners at a project-specific level.

Exhibit 6-1. Regional Partnering Template

Project Partnering Opportunity Template				
Project title:		Project description:		
Municipal project lead office				
Municipal project lead office:			Contact phone:	
Point of contact name:			Contact e-mail:	
List potential regulatory agency, citizen group, other partners				
Organization name:	Point of contact:	Contact phone/ e-mail:	POC address:	Potential role in project:

6-3.3 Develop Partnerships

Successful partnerships should include the following key elements:

- Clear communication of objectives and identification of opportunities for shared interests in project write-ups and execution.
- Establishment of clear roles and responsibilities.
- A written agreement between partners.

For detailed guidance on building local partnerships, review *Building Local Partnerships: A Guide for Watershed Partnerships* at the *Know Your Watershed* website of the Conservation Technology Information Center at www.ctic.purdue.edu/KYW/Brochures/BuildingLocal.html.

6-3.4 Collaborate to Implement Projects

The next step is to collaborate with the identified partners to implement projects.

6-3.5 Share Success and Praise with Outside Stakeholders

The last step is to share the success of the partnership effort and project success with outside stakeholders.

6-4 Working with Other Municipalities

Just as important as forming partnerships with citizen groups, is the formation of a good working relationship with other municipalities. You can work with other municipalities to obtain technical assistance, establish standard approaches, and share resources.

6-5 Working with Regulators

You can work with your state and local regulators to determine appropriate TMDLs and establish and participate in an effluent trading program.

6-5.1 Working with Regulators During TMDL Determinations

Municipalities may have the opportunity to work with EPA and state regulatory officials during the state TMDL determination process. A TMDL provides the water quality analysis and planning process for determining the specific pollution reductions necessary to attain or maintain water quality standards. The TMDL process includes legal requirements for public participation and implementation through NPDES permits.

Summary

You can and should participate in the TMDL determination process. Your completed forms provide all the necessary information for the TMDL determination process.

By working with regulators during the TMDL determination process, you may have the opportunity to negotiate a tradeoff between reduced NPDES point source permit limits with changes in land management or non-point source management practices. Therefore, you can and should participate in the TMDL determination process. Your completed forms provide all the necessary information for the TMDL determination process.

6-5.2 Working with Regulators to Establish Effluent Trading

Since the early 1990s, EPA has been promoting the use of effluent trading to achieve water quality objectives and standards within watersheds. EPA issued a Final Water Quality Trading Policy in 2003,¹ which encourages states, interstate agencies, and tribes to develop and implement water quality trading programs for nutrients, sediments, and other pollutants where opportunities exist to achieve water quality improvements at reduced costs. More specifically, the policy encourages voluntary trading programs that facilitate implementation of TMDLs, reduce the costs of compliance with CWA regulations, establish incentives for voluntary reductions, and promote watershed-based initiatives. A number of states are in various stages of developing trading programs.

To take advantage of trading, you must have a point source that is in compliance and remains in compliance with applicable technology-based limits. Intra-plant trades must also have a technology-based floor, while the technology floor for pretreatment trading is determined by the categorical standards. EPA expects that most trades will be covered by TMDL or similar watershed-based analysis.

The items you can trade are the pollutant reductions or water quality improvements. Under trading, a source that can more cost-effectively achieve greater pollutant reduction than is otherwise required would be able to sell or barter the credits for its excess reduction to another source unable to reduce its own pollutants as cheaply. To ensure that water quality standards are met throughout a watershed, an equivalent or better water pollutant reduction would need to result from a trade.

EPA's implementation framework for effluent trading under the TMDL program is a companion to its effluent trading policy. It encourages trading and assists in evaluating and designing trading programs. The framework provides the following:

- Background information on effluent trading and its benefits.
- The conditions necessary for trading, including those that ensure protection of water quality comparable to the protection that would be provided without trading.

¹ The Final Water Quality Trading Policy can be downloaded from the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/trading/tradingpolicy.html>.

- A template of regulatory, economic, data, technical, scientific, administrative, accountability, and enforcement issues that facilitate identification and evaluation of trading opportunities.
- Worksheets and checklists to evaluate whether potential trades meet threshold conditions.

You can download a copy of this framework from the EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/trading.htm>.

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