

TMDL Implementation: The Benefits of Knowing Your Customer

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Who are the implementation customers? And what do they need?

To answer these questions we used the following sources of information:

- E-mail survey of folks implementing TMDLs & watershed plans in Region 5
- Detailed TMDL/watershed stakeholder surveys
 - Iowa Watershed Improvement Customer Satisfaction Survey Report (IDNR 2008)
 - Green Bay AOC TMDL: Stakeholder Survey (Scheberle 2008)
- Input from State NPS programs, EPA NPS Expert
- University Researchers involved in TMDL implementation

Who are the implementation customers? And what do they need?

Who

Point sources

Farmers

Conservation Districts

Watershed groups

Local/County government

State Government

Watershed Coordinators

Economic Development Types

Others...

Needs

- Money
- Effective Communication & Collaboration
- Integrate TMDLs/Trading
- Fairness/cost effectiveness consideration
- Holistic view/quality study
- More NPS control
- Education
- Source assessment
- Platform for exploring policy change?
- Accountability
- Sound science/data
- Social science/behavior change
- Implementation planning on a small scale
- Stakeholder participation from the beginning

A few quotes from the field....

“I think effective implementation requires the support of key stakeholders, the ability to think creatively, the involvement of everyone from the beginning of the process.”

“The success of a TMDL depends on strong support from the affected public and local governments. Support comes from understanding, involvement, and commitment. In other words a TMDL must be a community-based effort.”

“Watershed plans written with, and therefore by, stakeholders represent the best approach to assure that such plans are applied. Do this without the people and you'll spend the majority of your time defending the plan recommendations while you could have been implementing.”

A few quotes from the field....

“When citizen stakeholders are in a collaborative (partner-like) situation with the government agency then the TMDL plans are more likely to be implemented and water quality improved.”

“Implementation of practices at a smaller watershed scale will lead to earlier detection of positive water quality changes, and consequently de-listing of impaired waters”

“The community needs to be educated, to understand that cleaner water is possible, and has great value (economic, social, aesthetic)”

A few quotes from the field....

- “Without **local ownership**, resource plans (such as TMDLs) risk never being finished, shelved and forgotten, or opposed by community members.” NRCS 1999
- “TMDLs are just a number”

A few quotes from the field....

“TMDLs bring all of the skeletons out of the closet; it helps us all understand what is going on and nobody likes that.”

“[TMDL process is an] opportunity for point and nonpoint sources to work together and create a cost-effective pollutant trading program with *real* reductions in phosphorous and sediment.”

“[Consider] tools that capture the economic incentives to make changes.”

“Do a cost-effectiveness analysis to see if we’re getting the best “bang for the buck.”

“Personalize the [TMDL] approach, indicating how the individual, the public, or the stakeholder group will benefit from the TMDL.”

A few quotes from the field....

“We need real source assessments. Saying that there are cows in the stream, or septics could be a problem is not enough. We need to define and target critical areas for action on a watershed scale.”

“Without measurable progress, the process could lose legitimacy and be subject to criticism.”

“Let the data/science guide the decisions that are made. This adds legitimacy to the process.”

“Understand that this isn’t the time to hit the point sources with more reductions.”

“Developing a TMDL is meaningless if it does not immediate translate into a plan for implementation.”