

Part 401 – Planning

Subpart E – Business Planning

Business Planning Terms and Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this part:

- (1) **Accountable Official.**—Member of the NRCS executive leadership with responsibility for a ConservationSTAT annual initiative in whole or in part.
- (2) **Activities.**—Activities, efforts, outputs, products, and services that help attain the milestone’s target and measure. Activities should have start and finish dates.
- (3) **Annual Initiatives.**—Fiscal year priority initiatives that NRCS executive leadership has determined necessary to achieve strategic plan goals, objectives, and performance measures. Annual initiatives are not routine efforts but rather those unique initiatives that will move the agency forward.
- (4) **Annual Performance Budget (APB).**—A budget presentation that links performance goals (key performance measures) with costs for achieving a target level of performance. The performance budget and performance plan are prepared as part of the President’s budget, which is published each February for the following fiscal year.
- (5) **Annual Performance Plan (APP).**—Provides the link between the agency’s budgeted resources and specific performance measures within the core mission and authorities of the agency. The APP identifies the key performance measures and targets that the agency is held accountable for achieving with budgeted resources.
- (6) **ConservationSTAT.**—The outcome-focused planning approach and management tool to assist executive leadership in developing and monitoring progress on annual efforts toward meeting the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.
- (7) **Crosscutting.**—Includes involvement of more than one Deputy Area within the agency to complete milestones and activities in the annual initiatives.
- (8) **Executive Leadership.**—The Chief, Associate Chief and Office of the Chief, Regional Conservationists, and Deputy Chiefs of NRCS.
- (9) **Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 and GPRA Modernization of 2010.**—Requires all Federal agencies to develop strategic plans describing their overall goals, objectives, performance targets, and strategies for achieving them. Requires annual performance plans containing quantifiable measures of their progress and performance reports describing their success in meeting those standards and measures.
- (10) **Initiatives.**—Visionary undertakings to achieve intermediate or end outcomes; may be short-term (annual initiative) or long-term (strategic initiative).
- (11) **Key Performance Measures (KPMs).**—Previously known as budget performance indicators (BPIs). The Department and Office of Management and Budget approve the KPMs and targets that are included in the annual performance plan published in February of each year with the President’s budget. These are the measures that NRCS is held accountable for achieving each fiscal year.
- (12) **Measure.**—Measures are quantitative indicators of performance and should be specific, measureable, attainable, realistic/relevant, and time bound (SMART). Measures for annual initiatives and milestones should be aligned with performance measures in the NRCS Strategic Plan.
- (13) **Milestone.**—Scheduled event that indicates the completion of a major deliverable (or a subset thereof). A major accomplishment in the pursuit of attaining an initiative. Generally,

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- a milestone involves more than one Deputy Chief or work area. An example of a milestone is “implement the Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative (CDSI) readiness strategy.”
- (14) Outcome.—The intended result of carrying out an effort or activity. An event or condition that is external to the program or activity but is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries or the public. An example of an outcome from implementing a set of conservation practices in a watershed would be reduced sediment in the stream system.
 - (15) Output.—Products and services delivered by the agency. An example of an output from implementing a set of conservation practices within a watershed is acres of practices installed.
 - (16) Performance Measure.—Indicators used to gauge performance. Examples include strategic performance measures found in the strategic plan and key performance measures found in an annual performance plan.
 - (17) Point of Contact.—Person assigned by the lead accountable official who is responsible for the maintenance of annual initiative information in the ConservationSTAT database and who serves as the primary contact between the work areas and Strategic Planning and Policy Division (SPPD).
 - (18) Responsible Official.—Person responsible for an activity or task within an annual initiative. Usually, this person would be a direct report to the accountable official (e.g., a division director).
 - (19) Target.—The quantifiable objective of a measure that tells how well or at what level a program aspires to perform; should be ambitious but achievable. An example is “100 percent of quarterly deficiency findings are corrected.”
 - (20) Work Area.—Group of employees working within a Deputy Area or the Office of the Chief on an activity or task.