

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS: PHASE II WIPS

What is the primary purpose of the Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans?

The primary purpose of the Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) is to ensure that local partners who play a key role in cleaning up our waterways are engaged and ready to help implement the WIPs. As articulated in the [Guide for Chesapeake Bay Jurisdictions for the Development of Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans](#) released on March 30, 2011, Phase II provides the Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions with the opportunity to facilitate implementation and refine their WIP strategies and commitments through local partner engagement. Although it varies by jurisdiction, “local partners” could include local governments, conservation districts, planning commissions, federal agencies, utilities, and watershed groups.

The most important element of the Phase II WIP is the narrative, which explains how jurisdictions will work with key partners to get the necessary practices in place by 2025, with practices in place by 2017 that would achieve 60% of the necessary reductions between 2009 and 2025. Jurisdictions are expected to demonstrate in their WIP narratives that local partners (1) are aware of the WIP strategies; (2) understand their contribution to meeting the TMDL allocations; and (3) have been provided with the opportunity to suggest any refinements to the WIP strategies.

What are different ways that jurisdictions could express “local area targets” in their Phase II WIPs?

The purpose of “local area targets” is to provide local partners with specific actions or goals that represent their contribution toward meeting the Chesapeake Bay TMDL allocations. Jurisdictions can decide how to define and set local area targets based upon what makes the most sense to their key partners. Examples of ways to express local targets could include:

- Implementation goals, such as:
 - The number of BMPs that need to be implemented (e.g. 5,000 animal waste management systems compared to 1,000 in place today) or the number of acres receiving BMPs (e.g. cover crops on 500,000 acres compared to 300,000 today).
 - The percent of sources with BMPs (e.g. 100% of dairy on feed management compared to 10% today or non-commodity cover crops on 80% of lands compared to 20% today).
- Phase 5.3.2 Watershed Model inputs or outputs, such as pounds of pollutant reductions to be achieved by individual counties.
- Programmatic actions, such as adopting ordinances that will help municipalities meet Bay TMDL allocations for stormwater.

How many input decks that identify nutrient and sediment controls for model analysis does EPA expect the 7 Bay jurisdictions to submit as part of their Phase II WIPs? What level of detail is required for these input decks?

EPA is asking for two input decks from each jurisdiction as part of its Phase II WIP: the first would meet the Phase II WIP planning targets in each major basin by 2025, and the second would include actions in place by 2017 to get 60% of the reductions. Each jurisdiction can decide to what extent they involve local partners in the development of these input decks. EPA has provided Scenario Builder workshops and the CAST tool to help jurisdictions and/or local partners create these input decks.

The Phase II WIP input decks for 2017 and 2025 can focus on meeting the major river basin planning targets in each jurisdiction, or jurisdictions may choose to create input decks that meet finer scale local area targets in each county or sub-watershed. Either way, EPA expects the jurisdictions to submit Phase II WIP narratives that clearly articulate local partners' roles and responsibilities for implementing their share of the WIP strategies. For example, if jurisdictions target input decks so that some areas are expected to implement more BMPs than others, the WIP narrative strategy would demonstrate how resources and strategies are being targeted to high implementation areas. Alternatively, if input decks do not target BMP implementation to particular areas, the WIP narrative would explain how localities throughout the jurisdiction are prepared to meet implementation goals.

How will EPA decide if federal actions are necessary?

Any federal actions in response to the Phase II WIPs or 2-year milestones will be guided by common sense, the best available information, and a shared goal to clean up our waterways. EPA's review will take into consideration all available data and information, including load reductions associated with pollution controls and programmatic actions that jurisdictions and local partners are taking to build capacity for additional, future reductions. EPA recognizes that the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership will continually work to credit new practices, factor in new scientific understanding, and account for previously underreported implementation actions.

EPA has full discretion to determine whether federal actions are appropriate based on the degree to which reduction goals are missed, the reasons why, and additional actions that jurisdictions are taking to ensure that load reductions will remain on track to meet the Partnership's goal of all practices in place by 2025 to meet applicable water quality standards. EPA has already demonstrated this discretionary authority when deciding whether to establish backstop allocations and adjustments in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.