

Sustainable Development Strategy Team
Input to Executive Committee on Strategy Recommendations and Priorities

This paper provides the review comments of the Sustainable Development Strategy Team to the guidance paper developed by Dave Ullrich for the Executive Committee regarding priority setting. It also provides input regarding a proposed format for the recommendations of all Strategy Teams.

The Sustainable Development (SD) Strategy Teams concurs with the need for guidance to all Teams regarding the recommendations in the Team reports, and offers the following comments and suggestions relative to the guidance on priority setting (draft dated 13 Jan 05):

- The factors identified for consideration in priority setting are appropriate for issues that are focused on a specific resource-based problem, such as contaminated sediments and invasive species, but these factors do not translate as readily to process or practice-based issues like SD and indicators and information which are cross-cutting in nature.
- For these cross-cutting issues, priority setting should be based on factors such as:
 - the degree to which these processes or practices are limiting progress in other priority issues;
 - implementability;
 - stability (once implemented, will they be able to be maintained without a major, continued effort), and;
 - return on investment.
- For SD, the metrics for priority settings must address the impacts of the recommendations on all three legs of the sustainability stool; societal, economic and environmental.

The paper on priority setting guidance discusses the format for recommendations only so far as to suggest that these recommendations address the near-, mid- and far- term actions. The SD Team concurs with the need to highlight recommendations based on a timeline for implementation, but would encourage the Executive Committee to consider more specific guidance regarding the format for Team recommendations. The SD Team offers the following suggestions regarding the format for Team recommendations and the overall presentation of the Strategy:

- Team recommendations should be organized by the appropriate levels of responsibility, to include specific actions for federal, state, tribal, cities, industry/private sector, NGOs, and individual stakeholders. This approach will provide each stakeholder sector their own set of priority actions, and emphasize the message that the restoration of the Great Lakes is a shared responsibility.
- Because the SD and Indicators/Information issues cross-cut all other priority issues, recommend that the Strategy be structured so that the Sustainable Development portion is placed first to set a backdrop on the practices of sustainability that cross all issues and that the portion on Indicators and Information be placed at the end to roll-up the metrics

of progress that need to be applied across all issues. This approach will “sandwich” the resource-specific issues between the sustainability and indicators issues, and enhance the integration of all priority issues.

Finally, the SD Team would like to encourage the Executive Committee to include in the draft Strategy a discussion on the roles, responsibilities, and mechanics of the Collaboration in implementing the Strategy after December 2005. The Framework signed in December 2004 did not offer a clear vision of the Collaboration’s functionality after the final Strategy is released. This discussion in the draft is necessary to orient the stakeholders that will review the Strategy, and provide an opportunity for comments on the processes envisioned by the Executive Committee.

Jan Miller
U.S. Army Engineers
SD Team co-chair

Gary Becker
Mayor, City of Racine
SD Team co-chair