

Attachment B –

Summary of Meeting Sphere Data (Collected 8/30/2012)

An essential part of strategic planning is examining 'where we've been,' and 'what worked and didn't work.' To that end, we asked two questions and received responses that include the following:

1.1: What stands out for you when you think about RTOC past activities and accomplishments?

- There are specific past areas where the RTOC has been successful in moving national policy or taking other nationally or regionally significant action, like the Baseline Needs Assessment, input on the Guidebook, increases to tribal set-asides, the AIEO reorganization, and other successes.
- There are things that the RTOC does well, which aren't specific accomplishments but reflect the RTOC's areas of strength, like planning, providing a good forum for discussion of issues, advocating for tribal interests, enhancing communication and coordination, and engaging leadership.
- The RTOC is a useful means of disseminating information (among tribes, EPA, and other Agencies and entities).
- The RTOC provides valuable networking opportunities.
- The RTOC provides a venue for elevating issues among tribes and/or within the Federal family.
- There are areas where the RTOC can improve as a functioning body.

1.2: What have we learned from RTOC efforts that were successful and those that were not as successful?

- The RTOC has been successful at bringing tribes together, building relationships among tribes and with the Agency, sharing information, and resolving issues.
- The RTOC can work to overcome barriers to common understanding, ensure consistent participation, address issues in a timely manner, and engage tribes effectively.
- The RTOC Charter Workgroup should consider, when developing the new Charter and SOPs, making some edits to meeting structure, preparation, and organization that would benefit the functionality of the group.

We wanted to assess our current "state of affairs:"

2.1: What are the RTOC's possible strengths that will help us be successful and possible weaknesses that will affect our work?

- The RTOC benefits from passionate, knowledgeable participants, and from being a forum where EPA and tribes are comfortable engaging on important issues.

- The RTOC may struggle because not all the right people are in the same place at the same time, there may not be enough time for quality dialogue, and because of misunderstandings or personal differences.
- The RTOC structure includes great processes for elevating and resolving issues, provides a venue for creativity, is an opportunity for quality engagement, and allows us to focus on the work and build the relationships necessary to be successful.
- The RTOC structure could benefit from some changes to allow more time for deep discussion, greater organization, a better method to ensure broad representation of tribal issues...and much, much more.
- Our work together is sometimes limited by funding to travel and funding to support work in Indian Country.
- The Agency's continued funding of the RTOC as a priority makes a strong statement about commitment to the tribal dialogue.

2.2: What are the possible external opportunities and threats we need to be aware of?

- The amount of Federal funding, and limitations on the use of those funds, seems to be increasing.
- There are emerging opportunities to leverage funds, help each other, and bring additional partners into the conversation.
- There are some limitations, both in leadership positions and at the staff level, that may hinder our successes, for example staff turnover, political leadership changes, etc.
- We have a wealth of opportunities in our existing representatives, tribal staff, communities and leaders that we can leverage to great effect.
- There are great opportunities for leveraging non-cash resources that we could explore!
- There are environmental threats, like climate change, natural disaster, population shift, and similar that concern us.
- There are social and political changes that may affect our ability to be successful, including local and national politics, legal questions, the economy, etc.
- There are emerging technologies that may help us work better, smarter, and faster.

And, finally, we wanted to have participants look at the current areas of focus and identify what might be missing, from their perspective:

3.1: What Policy issues does it make sense for RTOC to focus on in the next 12-18 months? Review the list of RTOC policy work. Identify if there are key policy issues that are missing from this list.

- The RTOC should focus on Solid Waste issues and funding.
- The RTOC should focus on drinking water, groundwater, infrastructure, and watershed health.
- The RTOC should focus on preparing for a potential political transition.

- The RTOC should focus on cross-media areas of broad potential impact, such as capacity building, traditional ecological knowledge, increased funding flexibility, etc.
- The RTOC should focus on air quality issues.
- The RTOC could find ways to help tribes move forward, such as streamlining grant processes, ensuring funding availability, and addressing policy flaws.
- The RTOC could focus on ways to bring other Agencies into the conversation.