

## ***EPA SMALL BUSINESS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN IS FINAL!***



On October 12, 2004 EPA finalized its Small Business Strategy Implementation Plan. The Plan supports EPA's *Small Business Strategy* which was signed in final form by EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman on June 27, 2003.

The *Small Business Strategy* reflects the changes in EPA's approach to achieving its mission of protecting human health and the environment. Over the years, EPA's focus has transitioned from strict command and control regulations, to employing voluntary policies and innovative regulatory approaches. The Agency has also made great strides in acknowledging the relevancy of the small business community to its mission, as well as to the U.S. economy. The *Strategy* recommended a wide variety of traditional and innovative approaches for addressing small businesses.

The overall goal of the Implementation Plan is to bring unity and improved effectiveness to Agency-wide efforts to assist small businesses in improving their environmental performance, and it establishes a general framework outlining how EPA's Program and Regional Offices will coordinate, collaborate, and unify environmental and regulatory compliance assistance to small businesses. It does not apply to federal assistance for contracting, grants, or cooperative agreements.

A cross-Agency workgroup comprised of 52 EPA staff representing eleven Program Offices and six Regional Offices were directly involved, over a period of two years, in developing both the *Strategy* and the Implementation Plan. That workgroup recommended activities to implement the *Small Business Strategy* and prioritized them based on expected outcome, feasibility, and resource requirements. Most of the activities addressed already exist and are, to some degree, operational within the Agency. The Implementation Plan is expected to build on those activities, as well as on other work underway in partner agencies at the federal, state, and local levels. The Plan does not include specific operational details such as lead personnel, schedules, and milestones. It is not a workplan, but rather a general plan of action that focuses on broad actions and commitments.

As an internal *Strategy* and Plan, external Stakeholder involvement was not required; however, to ensure all issues and needs were considered, EPA's Small Business Division conducted intensive external and internal outreach starting in May, 2000. This outreach included Interviews with many external small business representatives, with representatives of over twenty EPA offices and Regions, as well as numerous internal meetings through Summer, 2004.

With the Implementation Plan completed, the Small Business Division is moving forward. The first priorities addressed include identifying opportunities to involve small businesses early in the rulemaking process; considering small business needs and limitations in the E-Government initiative; and establishing a full-time "point-of-contact" at each EPA Region. These topics were discussed during a recent "Small Business Forum" where EPA Deputy Administrator Steve Johnson challenged small business stakeholders to test the *Small Business Strategy* for what does and does not work. They will serve as the platform for the second *National Summit on Small Business and the Environment* planned for Spring 2005.

The final *Small Business Strategy* is available at:  
[http://www.smallbiz-enviroweb.org/html/pdf/Strategy\\_Final\\_062303.pdf](http://www.smallbiz-enviroweb.org/html/pdf/Strategy_Final_062303.pdf)

Contact: Elsa Bishop, 202/566-2814

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