



LOCAL LEADERSHIP

LOCAL LEADERSHIP WORKGROUP | ENHANCE PARTNERING, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT GOAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM (GIT 6)

CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED AGREEMENT OUTCOME LANGUAGE

PROPOSED DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE: Continually increase the knowledge and capacity of local government leaders to empower them to make decisions and implement local actions that support the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

EXISTING 2014 OUTCOME LANGUAGE: Continually increase the knowledge and capacity of local officials on issues related to water resources and in the implementation of economic and policy incentives that will support local conservation actions.

PROPOSED TARGET	New Target / Update of Existing Target	Date estimate for target being developed
Increase the percentage of local government leaders reporting water resource management actions biennially.	Update of Existing Target	2025

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Rationale and context for proposed draft outcome language:

- Recognizes the critical role local governments play in the success of the Watershed Agreement and respects local decision making.
- Positions the LLWG to support the Partnership in effectively engaging and educating local governments.

Topics/challenges for Management Board guidance (Optional):

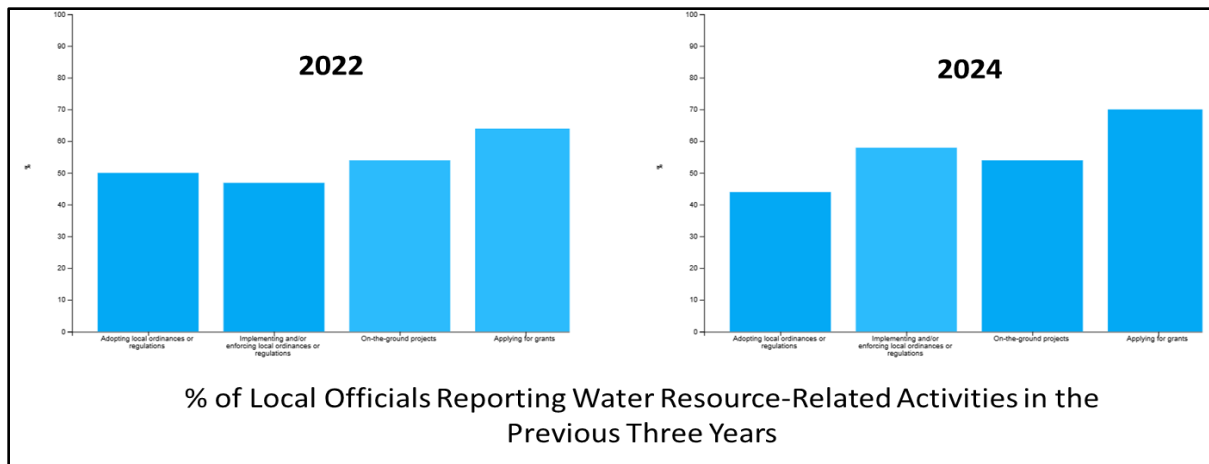
- Key [factors that impact progress](#) at the local government level impede efforts to include a specific percentage increase. These factors include:
 - Local officials face a wide array of important and urgent issues that are constantly vying for their attention and local government resources. As a result, they must continuously prioritize among competing demands, often making difficult trade-offs to address immediate community needs versus planning for long-term resilience. This constant balancing act can strain limited budgets, staff capacity, and the ability to respond to emerging environmental challenges.
 - Many local officials do not have scientific or technical training or access to a knowledgeable person with technical capacity. This lack of expertise can make it challenging to interpret complex data and assess risks. Without a clear understanding of the underlying science, they may inadvertently overlook critical vulnerabilities or miss opportunities to apply data-driven solutions.
 - There is a constant stream of newly elected and appointed officials. This continual turnover can disrupt institutional knowledge and slow the momentum of ongoing projects or policy initiatives. It also creates a recurring need for orientation and capacity-building to ensure new leaders are equipped to make informed decisions from the start.
 - The complexity of the watershed and variety of jurisdictions create distinct regional needs. This complexity means that a one-size-fits-all approach is often ineffective, as each area may face unique environmental, social, and economic challenges.

Coordinating across multiple jurisdictions requires tailored strategies and strong collaboration to address the variety of priorities across the watershed.

- Possible alternative Targets:
 - Directly engage with # local government leaders through training and education opportunities annually. Challenge: Increase burden of reporting.
 - Indirectly engage with # local government leaders through online publications annually. Challenge: Correlating indirect engagement with local government actions and decisions.
 - Support outcomes that have identified local government audiences in their management strategies and work plans in effectively engaging and educating local governments annually. Challenge: Not SMART.

Methodology for data collection and tracking of each Target (Optional):

Data collection and tracking processes to support this target are already in place, with established baselines drawn from ongoing efforts of the Local Leadership Survey. Conducted biennially across the watershed, this survey gathers data from local government officials to assess their knowledge and capacity related to water resource issues, document the types and extent of water-related actions being taken, and further identifies the needs and priorities of local governments. The results inform the [Local Leadership Indicator on Chesapeake Progress](#) and continue to shed light on the challenges and opportunities for increasing local officials' understanding and engagement. Findings from the [2022 survey](#) and those from the [2024 survey](#), provide essential insights to guide future support and outreach strategies to ensure local governments have the information and tools to make the best decision for their community and the watershed.



Links to documentation that provide Target justification/context and/or rationale (Optional):

The [2014 Agreement](#) Principle to “*Acknowledge, support and embrace local governments and other local entities in watershed restoration and protection activities,*”¹ underscores the critical role local governments play in the success of the Watershed Agreement. Since 2014, the Local Leadership Outcome has supported the Partnership in increasing the knowledge and capacity of local officials, typically defined as local elected officials, local appointed officials and senior staff. In 2015 and 2017, extensive interviews and focus groups culminated in foundational recommendations about how to successfully engage local government officials. The Local Leadership Survey currently tracks the amount and types of water resource related activities local governments across the watershed have taken; a baseline was established in [2022](#) and progress was measured in [2024](#).