



**Scientific Technical Assessment
and Reporting (STAR) Team Meeting**

Thursday, November 21st, 2024

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Meeting Materials: [Link](#)

This meeting was recorded for internal use only to assure the accuracy of the meeting notes.

ACTION ITEMS:

- STAR will reserve time on future STAR meetings to continue the discussion on outcome assessments and priorities lists with a particular focus on integration across outcomes and big picture connections.
- STAR's role in Outcome Assessment and Priorities List may include:
 - Facilitate collaboration of GITs with each other prior to 2-pager submissions and after 2-pager submissions and prior to the Management Board Meetings so GITs can effectively support each other.
 - Provide a venue to talk to each other about the distinctions between and what should be outcomes vs. outputs vs. indicators.
 - Provide a venue to discuss mapping out a new structure based on the Outcome Assessment.

MINUTES

Participants: Gabriel Duran (CRC), Breck Sullivan (USGS), Meredith Lemke (CRC), Amy Handen (EPA), Erin Sonnenburg (CRC), Rick Mittler (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Chris Guy (USFWS), Kristin Saunders (UMCES), Trinadee Jenkins, Emily Young (ICPRB), Rachel Felver (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Jeremy Hanson (EPA), Bill Dennison (UMCES), Katherine Brownson (USFS), Qian Zhang (UMCES), Marisa Baldine (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Dede Lawal (CRC), Laura Cattell Noll (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay), Greg Allen (EPA), Meg Cole (CRC), KC Filippino (Hampton Roads Planning District Commission), Lawrence Paul Sanford (UMCES), Ruth Cassilly (UMCES), Julie Reichert-Nguyen (NOAA), Megan Thyng (EPA), Gina Hunt (MD DNR), Christina Garvey (CRC), Emily Majcher (USGS), Ken Hyer (USGS), Peter Tango (USGS), Sushanth Gupta (CRC), Bill Dennison (UMCES), Annie Carew (UMCES), Erin Chapman (EPA), Doug Bell (EPA)

10:00 – 10:05 AM Welcome, Introductions & Announcements – Ken Hyer (US Geological Survey) and Kimberly Van Meter (Penn State), STAR chair and vice chair, Breck Sullivan (USGS) STAR Coordinator, Peter Tango (USGS) CBP Monitoring Coordinator

Announcements:

- Proposals from interested mentors for C-StREAM internship for the Summer 2025 internship season are **due by the end of day Friday, December 6th**. Please provide

one or two paragraphs for an internship description that describes the team the C-StREAM student would be placed with and the potential work/project(s) the student would complete to Melissa Fagan (faganm@chesapeake.org).

- Intern opportunity: Yale Conservation Scholars Early Leadership Initiative. Applications for host sites are **due December 8, 2024**.

Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, Workshops and Webinars

- [American Geophysical Union \(AGU\) 2024 Fall Meeting](#) – December 9-13, 2024, Washington, D.C.
- [14th National Monitoring Conference](#) – March 10-12, 2025, Green Bay, Wisconsin.
- [The 35th Annual Environment Virginia Symposium](#) – April 8-10, 2025, Lexington, VA.

10:05 – 10:50 AM [Action Items from Management Board \(MB\) NCTC Meeting](#)

Presenter(s): Breck Sullivan and Ken Hyer (USGS)

Description: Breck Sullivan and Ken Hyer will provide an overview of the discussion during the 11/12 - 11/14 Management Board meeting and action items for the Goal Implementation Teams (GITs), including next steps for the three outcomes under STAR (Climate Monitoring and Assessment, Climate Adaptation, & Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring). Timeline and Action Items can be found [here](#).

Beyond 2025

- Phase 1 – By Executive Council (EC) 2024 scope and breadth of what should be undertaken
- Phase 2 – After EC 2024 execute plan

2 Deliverables:

1. Outcome Assessment

- Rolling due date (Feb & March)
- Responsible Party: Outcome Leads
- Product: 2-pager to answer “Big Question”

2. Priorities List

- Due January 3rd
- Responsible Party: GITs
- Description of projects for moving Phase 1 recommendations forward
- Template available

Chris Guy: The Back to the Future meeting discussed the priorities list. The intention of the priorities list is for the MB to direct the GITs on what to do. Ensure that priorities from priorities list are in your Logic and Action Plans. If you want your work to be prioritized by MB, you need to get it on that list.

The potential distinction between 2 deliverables -

- Outcome Assessment: An opportunity to suggest edits to the outcome language.
- Priorities List: Recommendations came out of Phase 1 that we're not currently doing, or isn't receiving the attention of MB. Priorities list is the opportunity to bring those recommendations out of Phase 1 to receive attention from MB in the form of projects.

Jeremy Hanson: I would add that there is recognition that the list can and will change in the future, so my takeaway is that we want the list to be reflective of immediate term priorities of next few years or so.

Kristin Saunders: Are goal teams able to suggest things that were in the recommendations from the small groups but appear to be missing from the list sent around? I was not clear if there is an opportunity to add.

Julie Reichert-Nguyen: From what I've heard, we can add to the list.

James Martin from GIT6 is helping to put together a template for the 2-pager deliverables. GIT Chairs will likely come out with a template (though it is not required to use the template).

Big Question: What advice do you have for the MB on how to consolidate, reduce, update, remove, replace, or add new outcomes within your GIT?

- Guidelines to consider for the outcome assessment have been sent out.

Greg Allen: Curious about the plan for Goals. Has the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) indicated goals will not be changed? Are the outcome assessments going to lead to a decision on changes to goals?

Breck Sullivan: The PSC will be taking on the vision and the goals with a recognition that they're not going to change that much.

- *Gina Hunt (chat): The PSC is responsible for all of it. The MB is simply making recommendations on the outcomes to the PSC.*
- *Peter Tango (chat): Respectfully then - why not have a structure that goes from GITs to the PSC rather than representatives of/to the PSC? We already concluded, as a community, the present MB perspective is skewed towards water quality, and we are looking ahead perhaps to diversifying and balancing across the diverse outcomes. It seems like we could work with the PSC directly more effectively as one consideration for streamlining the CBP.*

STAR's role: STAR has 3 outcomes and would like to support other GITs.

Ken Hyer: Science will remain a pillar of the partnership, and needs to be foundational to informing the partnership. Additionally, STAR can work with GITs to talk about opportunities during the outcome assessment to think critically about how science and technical support feeds in.

Chris Guy: A lot of the workgroups and GITs have been talking about this for a long time. They've thought about it in terms of the work they're doing for their outcome. They may be able to answer what language they should change the outcome to. Answering whether they are an output or outcome isn't something they've discussed yet. They will struggle with that. Then the problem is with the siloed approach. The workgroups won't want to commit another workgroup; they'll say possibly we overlap with these other groups. I wonder if STAR can facilitate the outcomes' relationships with each other.

Ken Hyer: I agree. It's not removing outcomes and taking them off the table; they may evolve from an outcome to an output, but we'll still have the same core outcomes we want to reach. I see it as a place for STAR to help but not in isolation (with the GITs).

- *Rachel Felver (chat): Please consider the Strategic Engagement Team (SET's) role as well. We are here to help as needed.*
- *Peter Tango (chat): Given the focus on social science and communication/engagement needs as even greater expectations than before, YES indeed - SET seems like it should be elevated, grown in the CBP going forward to help meet expanded expectations of engagement for the CBP.*
- *Kristin Saunders (chat): SET and STAR are two logical places where the integration conversations and holistic thinking can happen in the absence of a cross-program coordinator.*

Ken Hyer: Agreed.

- *Gina Hunt (chat): As Chris mentioned earlier we are going to have a meeting for the Outcome leads and coordinators to get us all on the same page and discuss this. So hope to discuss this more there, and develop a plan for how it is conveyed to MB.*
- *Kristin Saunders (chat): Please be mindful to include advisory committee participation in these integrative discussions if possible. (+1 from Larry Sanford with a note to include ALL advisory committees, not just STAC).*
- *Larry Sanford (chat): Yes, agree with Chris and Kristin. This suggested Assessment structure maintains current silos. STAR (and STAC) may be able to help with cross-GIT or integrative revised outcomes.*

Chris Guy: We put our schedule together in the Habitat GIT. There doesn't seem to be a lot of room in the time frame to have a conversation with STAR after doing the work in the GIT. There's not a lot of wiggle room. If STAR wants to support, we need to know when additional meetings will be integrated before March. That may be too difficult. Maybe there's a place in March to do this.

Amy Handen: Sarah Brzezinski's email noted the roles of GITs, Workgroup (WGs), signatories, and advisory committees, but there is a missing piece of the roles of federal agencies. Federal agencies' administrative goals and legislative mandates and priorities are important. Maybe we can add a space for federal agencies to elevate the goals that they are most invested in.

- *Kristin Saunders (chat): Amy, that point is exactly why I suggested the question about "what do we lose" if an outcome goes away....knowing that many of those outcomes need federal or NGO partners who bring money and capacity.*

Ken Hyer: Agreed. The role of the federal agencies is one we need to connect across multiple levels. As people put together 2-pagers, I hope we are sharing them really broadly. We want advocates in the room for how your outcomes go forward. We can do that through STAR and FOD.

Gina Hunt: The condensed timeline will make it hard to have conversations about aligning and combining outcomes, especially by the first of the 3 meetings. Maybe we could have some sort of final pieced together project in March (a sort of map of the new structure) to present to the MB about those aligning and combining aspects, rather than waiting for the MB to piece together the 3 meetings after the fact. Also, conversations about combination may develop more between meeting 1 and meeting 3.

Peter Tango: I agree Gina - some synthesis of the 3 meetings' worth of presentations is essential to show the relationships and links.

Ken Hyer: Let's reserve time on STAR in December and January to integrate the pieces and look at the big picture. I've seen folks working on re-aligning the outcomes. We could do an exercise to do this with STAR in December. Those of us closest to the outcomes have a better perspective on the nuance of it.

10:50 – 11:45 AM Initial Response to Outcome Impact Assessment

Presenter(s): All GITs – Round Robin

Description: Based on the outcome's efforts to the Reaching 2025 report, outcome attainment documents, and Strategy Review System, what is each outcome's first cut to, "provide advice to the Management Board on whether to consolidate, reduce, update, remove, replace or add new outcomes." You do not have to provide a response, and you are welcome to state the outcome is considering multiple paths. We are asking this question because this information will help STAR with planning their future meetings and interactions with GITs and give outcomes an opportunity to share what groups they need to meet with for cross-coordination.

Here is an example of a response you may provide based on the Water Quality Standards Attainment (WQSAM) Outcome:

- *We are looking to revise our outcome because it does not directly relate to water quality and is not quantitative ("Continue to..."). The revision may result in multiple outcomes because of all the factors the current outcome includes. We will want to coordinate with the WIP Outcome for future revisions.*

Breck: For the WQSAM Outcome, we stated in our Strategy Review System (SRS) meeting last week that we want to revise our Outcome. There is no quantitative aspect, and it doesn't directly speak to water quality attainment. The Outcome includes multiple factors such as reporting trends and information and monitoring capacity. We include tracking water quality standards attainment and information on response to the WIPs.

Peter Tango: It's very output oriented – the goal is about the outcome of clean waters. There's room for growth and revision in line with the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound (SMART) outcome assessment. The Eastern Research Group (ERG) report said we were not a SMART outcome.

Breck Sullivan: We will need to coordinate with the Water Quality GIT moving forward.

Kristin Saunders asked regarding the WQSAM Outcome suggested revision: Breck and Peter, do you envision having reference to shallow water attainment as a piece of the revision?

Peter Tango: This needs to be discussed. We can do that a bit with some new analyses coming from monitoring team. But nobody has agreed on a definition of shallow water. We're offering one perspective.

- *Jeremy Hanson (chat): Tiered implementation is already on the priority projects list and I think we need all that work before we're at a point to have a clear, concise revision about shallow water.*

Julie Reichert-Nguyen: Our workgroup has had a lot of conversations around our Climate Adaptation Outcome. We have similar language to the WQSAM Outcome ("continually pursue") which is not quantitative. We will have more conversations within our workgroup. Place-based work could be an opportunity for crossover with other outcomes. For the Monitoring and Assessment Outcome, we need to have more conversations with the workgroup. It is also hard to measure progress on, and there are different thoughts on how to do so.

Chris Guy: Fish Passage updated their Outcome 4-5 years ago, and further conversations need to happen in the workgroup around it. Wetlands has had many discussions about it but needs further discussion additionally. They couldn't get anyone to work on wetlands for the first half of the agreement. Wetlands had planned to ask to change the Outcome through the SRS cycle. Black Duck will have discussion in partnership with Wetlands. Streams has been working on GIT funded projects to add new outputs. Brook Trout needs further conversation and those discussions will start on Friday. SAV has already been having some discussions.

Greg Allen: Toxic contaminants policy and prevention needs to have conversations about it. Greg views the potential changes as a continuum. On one end, we decide that we don't have the power and capacity to achieve reduced toxic contaminants and we divest from trying to do that. On the other end, we lean in and bear down on it and give it more resources and use the force of the partnership behind it. In the middle is a sort of continue the status quo option. We

need to hear from the workgroup about where we want to fall on that scale. Toxic contaminants research has an idea of what they want to do.

Katie Brownson: For forest buffers and tree canopy, the workgroups need to have discussions on outcome assessments and haven't done this yet. However, based on previous discussions and work there is some idea about where they want to go. There is a gap around conservation in these outcomes.

Larry Sanford: One of the big shifts in Beyond 2025 is a focus on conservation and you could talk to that.

Julie Reichert-Nguyen: Climate Adaptation Outcome also has a gap around conservation. E.g., landscape change due to climate change and the connection to conservation needs to be worked in somehow.

Katie Brownson: I agree. It's hard with this siloed approach to do big scale thinking. If there are creative ways to insert these bigger picture ideas into the conversation, we should do this now, not at the end of the process.

Gina Hunt: Possibly could have broader forestry outcomes and several outputs.

Kristin Saunders: We could be looking for a unified conservation of habitat linked resilient forests, wetlands, etc to support living resources and people along with water quality with healthy watersheds a piece as well. Conserved and maintained to survive landscape/climate change over time.

- *Peter Tango (chat): I think resilience by overcoming fragmentation is linked with biogeography theory, biodiversity needs, resistance and resilience to ecosystem change, links to aquatic and terrestrial connectivity needs... There is a lot here well beyond water quality. Some of what Chris is saying here.*

Chris Guy: Forest Buffers and Tree Canopy have only been viewed in the last 10 years as BMPs for water quality. We can leverage STAR to shift mindsets in how the functions of outcomes such as Forest Buffers are viewed. Forest buffers shouldn't just be considered a Best Management Practice (BMP) for Water Quality, but a whole outcome/output in and of itself.

Peter Tango: And, there are many human dimension connections - cooling patches in urban environments, well-being elements for aesthetics of forest patches, and on and on. So much more value than water quality.

Rick Mittler: GIT 6 will be meeting to discuss Local Leadership. Initial conversations have just begun.

Jeremy Hanson: For the WIP Outcome, the Water Quality GIT has an idea of what they want to do but conversations need to be had.

- *Kristin Saunders (chat): Jeremy, will they be looking at an outside date of when they think they can meet the implementation outcome?*

Peter Tango: Jeremy - does a management plan equate to an ecological metric of our ultimate goal of a restored ecosystem? Isn't WIP planning a scope of work exercise and not an ecological endpoint? Devil's advocate thinking for the moment.

Jeremy Hanson: I think that's an example of a clarification we can make. Since the Outcome is practices in place and not the planning itself.

Larry Sanford: I wonder if it would be appropriate to consider updating the evaluation period for WIP effectiveness. Given the influence of climate change so far. What if you ran the same WIPs on 2010-2020 and they suggested an entirely different set of evaluation levels?

Jeremy Hanson: Heard. Going back to Forestry Workgroup, this along with other groups play a much broader role. WQGIT leadership is open to how we organize and facilitate cross collaboration with Beyond 2025.

- *Kristin Saunders (chat): Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response (CESR) report asked us to consider multiple lines of evidence (beyond counting BMP practices). Could the outcome revision at least reference this given that will be a topic of work for the next few years?*
- *Peter Tango (chat): I'm with you Kristin - if all practices yielded the same impacts, counts are good. We know they don't, it's much more complex, so is counts of a management practice effective to translating into the definition of a restored Bay?*

Julie Reichert-Nguyen: Is there an opportunity to emphasize rising water temperatures? Maybe in WIP Outcome, maybe not? Rising water temperatures in streams and the Bay will continue to present large challenges to Living Resources.

Jeremy Hanson: I would like to see collaboration and cross-program work (Stream Health, Healthy Watersheds) to help work to affect water temperature up in the watershed. Another blind spot we have right now is invasive species.

- *Peter Tango (chat): Temperature - warmer productive systems exist down to the tropics. They change but the systems function and produce fish, shellfish, other critters. Since we don't speak to biodiversity directly in the agreement (touch on it for example in Forage, maybe implicit in "Forest" since monocultures are different than most natural forest patches), and community shifts both manmade and resulting from climate, kind of like Larry saying the old critical period is not reflective of a nonstationary environment. SMART planning would say we foresee species shifts and changes and should expect it*

and say so. New species arrive every year - community change is fundamental, temperature influences included.

11:45 AM – 12:00 PM How can STAR support GITs during Phase 2 of Beyond 2025?

Presenter(s): Breck Sullivan (USGS)

Description: Breck Sullivan will go through the timeline established at the Management Board meeting and highlight opportunities where STAR can be involved. She will also provide examples of how STAR could support the GITs and ask for feedback on what would be most helpful.

Examples on how STAR can support GITs:

- *Utilizing STAR Meeting to learn about SMART goals from partners that have incorporated this approach.*
- *Extending the time of our January 23rd STAR Meeting to go over 2-pagers Outcomes are sending to the Management Board on January 30th to provide suggestions on clarification, suggestions on cross-GIT alignment, etc.*
- *Host a meeting to showcase various data available through the partnership to support potential revisions of outcomes. GITs may bring questions they have on monitoring.*
- *How best to inform setting climate-adapted outcomes and indicators? Identify climate projects, research, and data/vulnerability assessments that could help inform discussion.*
- *Host a meeting to discuss how to present overarching themes in the new framework (i.e. Climate, DEIJ).*
- *Other ideas from STAR membership?*

SET is also asking how they can support the outcomes through this process.

STAR is able to change our schedule if needed.

- *Greg Allen (chat): Perhaps shared learning on the science of impact assessment and trade-off analysis.*

Chris Guy: For Habitat there's no room before we submit the document. However, there are two weeks between when the documents are submitted and when the MB meets when we could insert a STAR discussion. If we understand what everyone at each MB meeting is putting forward, then we can advocate for each other and synthesize it. We can talk about how STAR can be that connector.

Gina Hunt: Agreed. Habitat GIT has Outcomes in every MB meeting so we don't get a break. Having a chance to collaborate with each other, STAC and STAR prior to 2-pager submissions will be helpful, but also share thoughts with each other after our 2-pager submissions. We won't have all the details worked out in the 2-pager, but we'll have enough they can think about it and that requires us to talk to each other. It's a lot of work for everyone (signatories as well as GITs). Something we have to consider with planning is we have to support them.

Amy Handen: Can some time be reserved at an upcoming STAR meeting brainstorming some ideas around the governance topic? Some bigger picture questions. I worry that while the MB identified the June or July meeting to talk about this perhaps there is some pre-thinking we can do so we can hit the ground running and coalesce around ideas. I know GIT 6 is planning to take a leadership role and STAC is going to help out.

- *Katie Brownson (chat): Did you all talk about what the implications of shifting outcomes to outputs? How will outputs be tracked/prioritized? Will these shift to just being indicators?*

Breck Sullivan: Yes, I was viewing them as shifting them to being indicators. The outputs are what we're tracking to reach the outcome.

Chris Guy: Just because something is moved from an outcome to an output doesn't mean it doesn't need a workgroup. I'm seeing the potential for an increase in workgroups even if we reduce outcomes.

Gina Hunt: I do think there is a distinction between outputs and indicators. Bill Jenkins is better able to describe that. We still need somebody working to get there. Remember that the Bay program influence it is one of the considerations. If the Bay program has influence, it should be there whether it's an outcome or output and it needs people working on it. I'm not sure if that's true of indicators per se. I don't know if we'll have more workgroups but we'll be better organized and streamlined. I think about Wetlands has two workgroups in it that meet separately, and all of Wetlands meet together. That's how I think about outcomes and outputs. Having a conversation about what is an outcome, output and indicator at STAR will be helpful.

- *Kristin Saunders (chat): Friendly suggestion: it might be helpful to make that distinction between outcomes and outputs when presenting this information. There is a mindset among some signatories that removing outcomes results in removing workgroups or shaving down what goal teams are working on.*
- *Katie Brownson (chat): Yes, it would be helpful to clarify and also to know what (if anything?) the broader partnership will do to support outputs vs. outcomes.*
- *Peter Tango (chat): Gina, Chris - I had long imagined we don't have to create all the indicators we need. If we define the expectation, and need an indicator that is produced regularly by some other agency, institution, group but feeds out needs, that offers us a blend to use what is readily available and add what we produce for a set of metrics that in total give a progress assessment. Food for future consideration.*
- *Chris Guy (chat): Yes!*
- *Greg Allen (chat): It was unfortunate that we used the word Outcome for the goal statement element that is below goals. Something like targets or subgoals would allow us to use outcomes and outputs in the best way that each goal allows given their individual maturity.*

Breck Sullivan: Do you know why we are talking about outputs now? Is there any background?

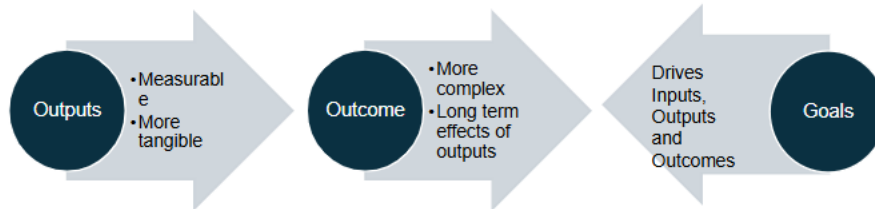
Gina Hunt: It was in the ERG report, and I highlighted it. I thought we would talk about it and come to a common understanding. ERG report definitions of outcome and output are not the best definitions for the Chesapeake Bay Program. The MB will be better prepared come February on the distinction. I said what I said today at the NCTC meeting (that just because it's an output not an outcome doesn't mean we won't have workgroups or people doing the work).

Breck Sullivan: What does it mean if we're revising it to an output in terms of how the CBP functions.

Chris Guy: That is planned for the January MB meeting which is far too late to us. The slide show the Gina sent around has an excellent presentation of what an output and outcome is. I don't think the MB will radically change that.

- *Julie Reichert-Nguyen (chat): Here's what AI says: The main difference between output and outcome is that an output is the result of an action, while an outcome is the change that results from that action: **Output:** The tangible or observable results of an action, project, or process. Outputs are the immediate deliverables that can be measured and assessed. **Outcome:** The change in behavior, attitudes, perceptions, knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors as a result of a project. Outcomes are the results of the activities that help achieve outputs. I like this phrasing: Outputs represent the tangible, measurable results achieved within a specific timeframe, while outcomes encompass the broader, long-term impact and desired changes brought about by those outputs.*
- *Gina Hunt (chat): This too is a nice story on outputs.... <https://youtu.be/-bHiy4Vbqtc?si=9q5DZdQdryz9wcOI>*

The main difference between an output and an outcome is that an output is what is produced or accomplished, while an outcome is the effect of that output on the desired result.



Output

The tangible or observable results of an action, project, or process (i.e. Inputs/activities). Outputs are more immediate deliverables that can be measured and assessed. Outcomes answer the question “So what?” For example, XXX acres of wetland were restored due to the landowner outreach program (i.e. a specific action).

Outcome

Outcomes are the results of the Inputs/activities and Outputs that help achieve the desired result. For example, XXX acres of wetland were restored across the Bay watershed by 2030 (based on the Inputs/activities and Outputs).

Outcomes measure the long-term effects of a process, task or activity, such as a change in the environment or in people's behavior. Outcomes are often more complex and more difficult to measure than outputs, and can take a long time to manifest. Measures can be qualitative and overall trends.

Image description: Slide created by Habitat GIT chairs describing the difference between outputs and outcomes.

Top of slide reads: The main difference between an output and an outcome is that an output is what is produced or accomplished, while an outcome is the effect of that output on the desired result. Two arrows showing outputs and outcomes face an arrow showing goals with the respective text - Outputs are: Measurable, more tangible, while outcomes are more complex, long term effects of outputs. Goals drive inputs, outputs and outcomes.

The bottom of the slide reads:

Output

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12:00 PM Adjourn

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 19th, 2024, from 10 AM – 12 PM