



The NEMO Framework

Virginia NEMO & Chesapeake NEMO

This document sets out the core operating framework for the NEMO Network partnership in Virginia and the Chesapeake watershed. A separate set of more detailed standard operating procedures provides additional guidance on certain specific practices.

The NEMO Mission

Virginia NEMO and Chesapeake NEMO are linked collaborative networks helping communities in Virginia (VNEMO) the Chesapeake Watershed and Delmarva Peninsula (Chesapeake NEMO) foster well-planned growth, preserve water quality and protect natural areas. The networks provide educational outreach programs emphasizing natural resource-based land use planning and better site design. They deliver coordinated technical assistance and leverage financial resources, helping communities implement sound land use planning and watershed protection.

In doing so, Virginia NEMO and Chesapeake NEMO further the missions of the many network partners charged with protecting natural resources, improving water quality, preserving community character, promoting sustainable economic growth and fostering well-planned land use.

Core Goals & Strategies

The networks strive toward two mission goals:

- Help communities foster well-planned growth, preserve water quality and protect natural areas.
- Build commitment and capacity for applying natural resource-based planning as a core underpinning of local land use decision-making.

Achieving these goals depends on two fundamental strategies. NEMO partners work in a network to:

- Collaborate on joint projects and processes that enhance the effectiveness of their individual organizations.
- Link education, technical assistance and financial programs to enhance local land use and watershed management.

The NEMO Network Partnership

Chesapeake NEMO and Virginia NEMO are members of the National NEMO Network, an affiliation of chartered NEMO programs in more than thirty states and regions.

Both Chesapeake NEMO and Virginia NEMO are also network-based on a regional and Commonwealth level, respectively. They are each networks of participating educational institutions, state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations with programs supporting sound land and water use. Virginia NEMO consists of such organizations in Commonwealth, plus the Chesapeake NEMO coordinator. Chesapeake NEMO partners include all Virginia NEMO partners, plus participating organizations from other parts of the Chesapeake watershed.

Network Partners

Network partners recognize the challenges for any single organization or agency to address the variety of issues related to land and water use and to serve the many communities requesting assistance. So they collaborate in networks to link programs and work in assistance teams to better serve their local government clients.

Network partners do what they do best – providing education, technical assistance and financial assistance services to local governments. Network partnership in no way precludes or limits the ability of partners to provide these services independently. Rather, partnership provides:

- The efficiency and coordination that comes from shared knowledge of what all network partners are doing
- The collaborative support that comes from working as a multi-organization team on a project
- Added capacity to accomplish a project through accessing services or expertise from other network partners
- New tools and new ways to accomplish shared objectives
- Access to the network pool of contracted service providers for NEMO projects
- A closer link to grant programs administered by network partners
- Avenues to possible future work; opening doors through involvement in a current project.

Network partners are also the vital conduit to local needs. They know local community leaders and their needs. Partners help carry forward the NEMO approach and call in the network for when local interest in addressing a relevant land or water use issue arises.

Network Coordinators

Three organizations have committed dedicated staff to coordinate network support – the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, Virginia Cooperative Extension and Chesapeake NEMO at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office. In addition to their roles as regular network partners, they serve in a regular collaborative, coordinating role for Virginia NEMO:

- Shepherding development of NEMO programming and maintaining network outreach materials and services
- Recruiting network partners
- Developing and maintaining intra-network communication; and maintaining communication with the National NEMO Network
- Scoping potential NEMO assistance projects in collaboration with other network partners engaged in the particular locality; and facilitating formation of network assistance teams;
- Fostering an efficient means for communication between local requesters and service providers that facilitates identification, provision and tracking of services and projects.
- Maintaining information for tracking the results of NEMO services.

Products and Services for Communities

Presentations & Workshops: *Building Land Use Knowledge and Capacity*

NEMO partners provide educational presentations and workshops – tailored to local needs – for helping local governments and their stakeholders foster well-planned growth, preserve water quality and protect natural areas.

Core presentations focus on fundamentals – (1) the relationship between growth, land use, water, natural resources and communities, (2) natural resource based planning, and (3) stakeholder engagement. Customized presentations and workshops focus on key aspects of planning and managing land use, water, and natural resources. Core NEMO presentations are available to all communities; customized NEMO presentations and workshops are usually provided in association with – and to support – more involved technical and financial assistance projects.

Presentations and workshops are delivered by knowledgeable staff from agencies and organizations in the NEMO partnership. Presentations are carefully designed using the best techniques in learning objectives, presentation planning, story-boarding and graphic design and illustration; they emphasize a story-based, highly visual approach, incorporating the best current knowledge of land use, growth and watershed topics.

Technical Assistance & Advice: *Providing Expertise and Information*

NEMO technical assistance teams form to help a specific locally-supported initiative build or access the capacity to develop and implement management strategies for ensuring well-planned growth, preserving water quality and/or protecting natural areas.

Assistance teams are assembled from agencies and organizations in the NEMO partnership; they may also include members from a contracted pool of service providers maintained by NEMO partners. A team might involve individuals from two to four organizations, selected to best match the needs of the requesting local government.

The nature and timing of assistance are tailored to a community's need, and coordinated with appropriate NEMO presentations, workshops and funding assistance from existing grant programs. Generally, assistance projects fall into three broad areas of expertise: (1) developing community vision and goals, (2) natural resource assessments and inventories, and (3) developing and implementing natural resource and land use management tools.

Linking to Financial Support: *Leveraging Public and Private Resources*

NEMO partners include organizations administering various grant programs. The network strives to match education and technical assistance services with eligible financial assistance to help communities with an overall package of support that meets local needs. NEMO educational and technical assistance services can either (1) help communities prepare in advance for a project which might be supported through one of these funding programs, or (2) support a funded projects, preferably where the assistance is planned into the project during the grant request and approval process. This can help ensure grantees have the expertise and capacity to successfully complete local projects.

Initiating NEMO Assistance

Virginia NEMO and Chesapeake NEMO are undertaking a phased approach to providing networked services to communities, particularly more intensive linked education and technical assistance projects.

The initial phase, underway since spring 2007, uses a series of pilot assistance projects for testing and modeling core approaches and practices and delivering services and building the network. Prior to undertaking such a pilot project, NEMO coordinators work with the requesting community on a scoping process designed to fully understand the community's needs and the potential fit with the NEMO network. If the requesting community's need fits with a set of criteria for pilot assistance projects¹, NEMO coordinators work with other network partners and the community to design and agree upon a mutual scope of work prior to initiating the assistance project.

The second phase is anticipated to be based on a substantially broadened and deepened mechanism for communicating between and among requesting localities and network service providers. This is intended to facilitate identification, provision & tracking of services and projects.

¹ These criteria, and the steps of the scoping process, are set forth in a separate set of NEMO operating procedures.