Selecting Outcomes and Indicators: Factors for Success

Inclusive Process:

- Sponsoring group should consist of high-level, well respected leaders that can pull together cross-sector leaders
- Invite staff who can support the process with subject matter expertise
- Create a comment process with public hearings and focus groups

Selecting Outcomes

Responsibility for progress does not, and cannot, rest with any one government - or even government itself.

- What statements capture the **most important desired conditions**? Reduce to phrases including population, geography, and desired condition.

- **Avoid referencing services**. Outcomes are not about data (indicators) and not about service (strategies). Outcomes that include services or providers create circular thinking:
    - *Outcome*: All children receive high quality child care
    - *Indicator*: % of children who receive high quality child care
    - *Story*: Not enough high quality child care
    - *What* works: More high quality child care

  If the outcome is instead "All children are ready for school," the argument shifts to how child care is one part of a larger strategy, rather than another service competing for money purporting to be the only solution.

- **Avoid multiple levels of outcomes**. It makes the work more complicated. Try having one level of outcomes and then using indicators to address what would otherwise be a second or third level:
    - *Outcome*: Clean Environment
        - *Indicator*: % of days with clean air
        - *Indicator*: % of stream miles meeting water quality standards

Selecting Indicators

For each outcome, there is a set of indicators that reflect the extent to which the result is being achieved.

- **Avoid referencing services**. Indicators that include services or providers create circular thinking.

- **Select the best ones using simple criteria** –communication power, proxy power, and data power:
    - Communication: Does the measure communicate to a broad and diverse audience?
    - Proxy: Does the measure say something of central importance about the desired result or outcome? If this indicator goes in the right direction, will others as well?
    - Data: Do we have quality data that is timely, reliable, and consistent?

Outcome:			
Indicator	**Comm.**	**Data**	**Proxy**
	☐H ☐M ☐L	☐H ☐M ☐L	☐H ☐M ☐L
	☐H ☐M ☐L	☐H ☐M ☐L	☐H ☐M ☐L
	☐H ☐M ☐L	☐H ☐M ☐L	☐H ☐M ☐L

- **Don't make the need for better data a pre-condition** for starting. Use a three-part indicator list:
    - Primary/Headline Indicators: 3 or 4 most important, the ones that rise to the top
    - Secondary Indicators: Any other meaningful measures for which there is good data.
    - Data Development Agenda: Priorities for new and improved data, with a plan to resource.