



Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup Strategic Plan 2013- 2018

**Prepared for:
Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup**

**Original by:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the strategic plan for the Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup (CREW). The plan is intended to serve as a framework for the development of annual work programs and budgets as well as providing strategic direction for CREW.

BACKGROUND

The Cascadia Regional Earthquake Workgroup (CREW) arose out of several regional earthquake hazard meetings funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the US Geological Survey (USGS) between 1992 and 1996. The need for CREW arose from the increased awareness of the nature of earthquake hazards in the Pacific Northwest and the interdependency of public agencies and private companies in planning for earthquakes.

Since that time, CREW has been used as forum for public, private and non-profit organizations to discuss seismic hazards issues and methods to deal with them. CREW has created several publications, including scenarios, post-disaster recovery guides and other educational materials.

This document presents the CREW Strategic Plan. The strategic plan articulates organizational priorities to make CREW an effective and viable group well-positioned to address the complex seismic issues surrounding the Cascadia Region, now and into the foreseeable future.

VISION STATEMENT:

“A disaster resilient Cascadia region.”

MISSION of CREW:

“The Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup (CREW) is a not-for-profit corporation of private and public representatives working together to improve the ability of Cascadia Region communities to reduce the effects of earthquake events and promote the economic resilience and viability of communities.”

IMPLEMENTATION

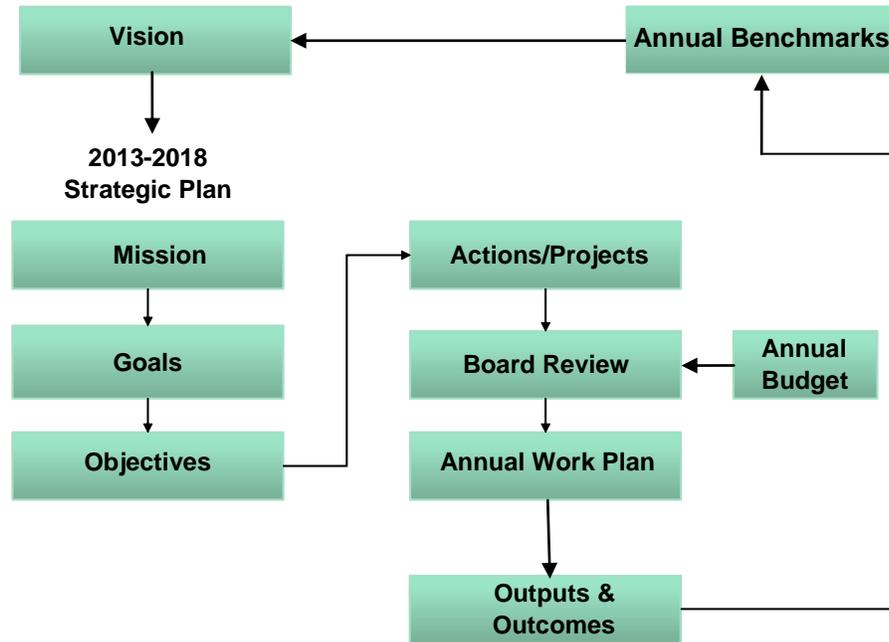
The strategic plan provides the framework for activities CREW will focus on over the next five years. CREW already develops annual work programs that are reviewed by FEMA as part of the funding requirements. The annual work programs provide considerable detail about what actions and projects staff will focus efforts on during the subsequent 12-month period. Moreover, the annual work program ties these actions and projects to budget figures. The strategic plan matrix is intended to provide guidance for the specific activities included in the annual work plans.

Because the cost of desired actions and projects almost always exceeds resources, the annual work program requires CREW to make difficult decisions regarding what tasks to prioritize and how to spend limited financial resources. The strategic plan provides a framework that can help CREW make decisions regarding the annual work program. Every action or project in the annual work program should relate to at least one objective and one goal in the strategic plan.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the relationship between the strategic plan and the annual work program. The organizational vision serves as the foundation upon which the mission, goals, objectives and actions

are based. Implementation of the strategic plan is accomplished through incorporation and refinement of listed the actions items and projects in CREW’s annual work program.

FIGURE 1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM

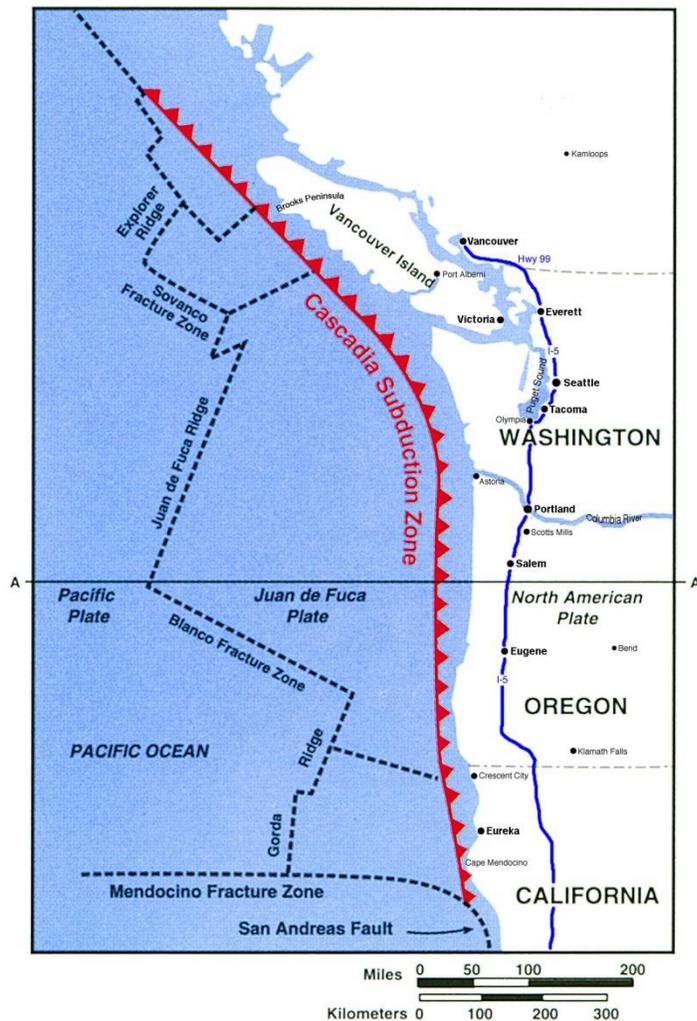


Proposed projects are reviewed by the Board annually. The review and approval process is informed not just by the vision and strategic plan, but by the available annual budget. Thus, any approved projects included in the final annual work program will be prioritized within the strategic planning framework and fit within the annual budget.

This plan directs the CREW Board of Directors to monitor performance annually through the establishment of benchmarks. The annual work program generates outputs (i.e., number of meetings, etc.) which lead outcomes (i.e., changes in behavior, etc.). The outputs and outcomes can then be benchmarked to see their efficacy. This information is used to examine how successfully CREW is achieving the vision.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This document is an update to the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan for the Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup (CREW). The implementation period for this update will be 2013-2018. This plan serves as a framework for the development of annual work programs and corresponding budgets as well as providing strategic direction for CREW.



The earth's surface consists of a series of "plates." These plates are constantly shifting and sliding over, under, or past each other. When a sudden movement occurs between two plates, we experience an earthquake.

in the Pacific Northwest and interdependency of the public and private organizations in planning for earthquakes. Several regional earthquake hazard meetings funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the US Geological Survey (USGS) between 1992 and 1996 ensued. The outgrowth of these meetings was the Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The Cascadia Region stretches from the Brooks Peninsula on Vancouver Island to Cape Mendocino in northern California, and is characterized by the Cascadia subduction zone where the Juan de Fuca plate meets the North American plate. This subduction zone is responsible for increased seismic activity. The Cascadia Regional Earthquake Workgroup (CREW) was formed to address this seismic activity and its associated risks.

HISTORY OF CREW

Since the early 1980's, scientists have accumulated evidence for great Cascadia subduction zone (CSZ) earthquakes affecting the area from northern California to British Columbia. In 1992, concern over impacts of this research and recent earthquakes in the Cascadia region prompted geoscientists and emergency managers representing all levels of government along the CSZ to convene a workshop. The participants agreed upon the need for a regional partnership to address earthquake issues in the Pacific Northwest and a resulting core group was formed. The core group recognized the need to have input from business, industry and lifeline organizations that provide the critical services and economic components on which the Cascadia region depends. There was an increase in awareness of the nature of earthquake hazards

Since that time, CREW has been used as forum for public, private and non-profit organizations to discuss seismic hazards issues and methods to mitigate them. CREW has created several publications, including scenarios, post-disaster recovery guides and other educational materials.

STRATEGIC PLAN BACKGROUND & PROCESS

In 2008, the CREW Board of Directors hired the Community Planning Workshop (CPW) at the University of Oregon to assist in preparing a strategic plan. From this workshop, CREW published the 2009-2014 CREW Strategic Plan. This plan has helped CREW carry out its mission and annual work programs and projects that reflect the mission. The strategic plan identifies priorities to make CREW an effective and viable organization positioned to address complex seismic issues facing the Cascadia Region. It provides the framework for activities CREW will focus on over the next five years. CREW already develops annual work programs that are reviewed by FEMA as part of the funding requirements. The annual work program specifies details about projects that CREW will focus efforts on during the subsequent fiscal year. Moreover, the annual work program ties the projects to a budget. The strategic plan matrix is intended to provide guidance for the specific tasks and projects included in the annual work programs.

In 2012, the Board of Directors re-evaluated the 2009-2014 CREW Strategic Plan to determine if changes needed to occur to better align with the vision and mission of CREW. In October of 2012, in conjunction with a consultant, CREW identified updates necessary to improve upon the strategic plan. The changes were initiated by the Board of Directors. Main updates to the 2009-2014 plan are as follows:

- Refinement of goals and objectives
- Inclusion of the National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program
- Update to project proposal process
- Development of a list of partner agencies and organizations and include what role they play

PURPOSE

The purpose of the strategic plan is to provide a framework for the types of projects and activities CREW will focus on over the next five years. Specifically, the plan provides guidance to the CREW Board in:

- Developing and reviewing project proposals; and
- Developing the annual work program.

The plan establishes goals and objectives that are intended to guide CREW's activities and help establish priorities. The strategic plan is implemented through the annual work programs that are developed, reviewed and approved by the CREW Board of Directors.

FUNDING AND PARTNERS

CREW is currently funded with a grant through the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) which is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The NEHRP Vision is:

- *A nation that is earthquake-resilient in public safety, economic strength, and national security.*

The NEHRP Mission is:

- *To develop, disseminate, and promote knowledge, tools, and practices for earthquake risk reduction—through coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency partnerships among the NEHRP agencies and their stakeholders—that improve the Nation’s earthquake resilience in public safety, economic strength, and national security.*

NEHRP is comprised of four federal agencies:

- FEMA;
- the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the NEHRP lead agency;
- the National Science Foundation; and,
- The U.S. Geological Survey.

CREW has supporting board members from both FEMA and USGS that guide CREW in fulfilling NEHRP goals and objectives. As a NEHRP partner, priorities and projects in this plan and CREW’s annual work programs help to implement the goals and objectives of the NEHRP Program. In accordance with federal grant guidelines, CREW does not have the ability to lobby (see http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a122_2004#b25 for more information).

In addition to the federal agencies that support the NEHRP program, CREW partners with state and provincial emergency management and geological survey agencies and businesses in the Cascadia region. Additionally, CREW has partnerships with the three earthquake consortia and one research institute: Northeast States Emergency Consortium, Central U.S. Earthquake Consortium, the Western States Seismic Policy Council and Earthquake Engineering Research Institute.

METHODS

The methodological process used to prepare the strategic plan consisted of three interrelated phases:

Phase I: Environmental Scan – CPW conducted an environmental scan consisting of phone interviews with the Executive Board and Executive Director. CPW administered an electronic survey to the entire CREW Board and completed a comparative study which compared CREW to the other consortia groups. The comparative study included interviews with the consortia groups’ Executive Directors as well as investigating their respective financial positions. The purpose of this was to gain an understanding of the relationships between internal and external partners as well as the history of CREW.

Phase II: Strategic Planning Retreat – CPW facilitated a strategic planning session during the CREW Board of Directors quarterly meeting on October 16th and 17th, 2008. CPW facilitated discussions during the strategic planning that outlined CREW’s key audiences, core values and outcomes that best support CREW’s mission. After this discussion, the Board discussed CREW’s vision, mission and goals. This resulted in a new vision statement and refinement to the organizational goals.

Phase III: Development of Strategic Plan – The strategic plan details the outcomes of the previous two planning phases with the addition of an electronic survey sent out to CREW Board Directors. The CREW Strategic Plan was informed by these outcomes.

Update to the Strategic Plan 2013- In October of 2012, the CREW Board of Directors held a workshop to update the CREW Strategic Plan. This included updates to goals, objectives and actions of the plan. In addition, the project development and approval process was updated.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

The strategic plan matrix is presented in the Executive Summary of this document. The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

Chapter 2: How to Use This Plan provides an overview of how CREW will use the strategic plan to implement its mission through development of annual work programs and ongoing monitoring.

Chapter 3: Environmental Scan and Strategic Issues describes the results of the evaluation of factors that are likely to affect CREW's activities over the 2009-2014 period and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that face the organization.

Chapter 4: Monitoring and Evaluation describes approaches CREW can use to monitor implementation of the actions in the strategic plan and evaluate progress.

This report also includes four appendices:

Appendix A: Survey Results summarizes the results of the online survey of CREW Board members conducted in September 2008.

Appendix B: Strategic Retreat Summary presents key issues and ideas discussed at the October 2008 CREW strategic planning retreat and October 2012 Strategic Planning Workshop

Appendix C: List of Suggested Objectives lists objectives identified by CREW Board members through a second online survey.

Appendix D: 2012 Strategic Plan Update Workshop shows the process and methods used to update the strategic plan.

CHAPTER 2: HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The 2013-2018 Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for CREW's activities. It clarifies the vision, mission, and goals of CREW. The mission and goals are implemented through objectives; objectives are implemented through actions and projects. The 2013-2018 Strategic Plan provides a framework for identifying and prioritizing the specific tasks that get implemented by staff on a daily basis. This chapter describes how the plan will be implemented.

DEFINITIONS

Any strategic plan must be based on a set of operational definitions. Different organizations use terms such as "vision," "mission," "goal," "objective," and "action/project" in different ways. The definitions presented here are derived from the literature and a review of other strategic plans.

A vision statement is a statement that describes the organization's preferred or desired future. The CREW vision statement is:

"A disaster resilient Cascadia region."

A mission statement is an action-oriented formulation of the organization's reason for existence. It serves to define how you propose to get from where you are to where you want to go. It is not defined in expressions of goals or objectives; rather it reflects a realistic but farsighted determination of who the organization is, who it serves, what it does, and what it can accomplish. Finally, the mission statement is broad enough that it need not change unless the environment changes. CREW's mission statement is:

"The Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup (CREW) is a not-for-profit corporation of private and public representatives working together to improve the ability of Cascadia Region communities to reduce the effects of earthquake events and promote the economic resilience and viability of communities."

CREW has a vision and mission statements that reflect the organization which were developed in the 2009 plan. Those alone, however, do not provide sufficient specificity to establish operational priorities.

Goals are intended to represent the general end toward which an organizational effort is directed. Goals identify how an organization intends to address its strategic issues, considering both its success factors and its core competencies, and in support of the Mission and Vision.

A goal should provide a sense of what level of performance is expected but it should not specify how the organization is to achieve that level. Generally, there should be a goal assigned to each critical issue or programmatic area within the organization. Moreover, goals link "downward" to objectives. Every goal should have at least one objective associated with it.

Objectives are the directions, methods, processes, or steps used to accomplish or achieve organizational goals. Objectives link "upward" toward goals.

Actions/Projects are defined activities or projects in the annual work program that implement objectives and are used to support the accomplishment of an objective, goal and mission. They are linked to specific resources and have been assigned to a committee for implementation.

Actions should relate to the vision, mission, and goals—and should lead to desired outcomes.

FIGURE 2-1 SUMMARIZES THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS AGREED UPON DURING THE OCTOBER 2012 PLANNING SESSION AS RELEVANT FOR THE 2013-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN.

Goal 1: Foster productive linkages between scientists, critical infrastructure providers, community groups, businesses and governmental agencies on topics of earthquakes and community resilience.
<i>Objective 1.1: Identify and engage key partners to help in development of specific CREW functions</i>
Action a) Develop an awards and/or recognition process to showcase best practices in earthquake and tsunami preparedness, risk reduction, and resilience-building efforts completed within the CREW region.
Action b) Issue an annual ‘Community Outreach Memo’ that informs state, local and federal liaisons of ways to participate with CREW projects and disseminate CREW-developed products.
Action c) Approach the media and international communities in creating partnerships.
<i>Objective 1.2 Build relationships with business owners throughout the community to encourage resilient business practices.</i>
Action a) Conduct annual business roundtable to discuss business needs, identify opportunities to forge strategic partnerships or collaborations, and share products developed through CREW, such as business continuity planning toolkits.
Action b) Host community forums at least twice a year on topics of current interest within the CREW region
Goal 2: Promote regional earthquake hazard solutions that support the resilience and viability of communities.
<i>Objective 2.1: Ensure CREW has current information regarding regional communities.</i>
Action a) Identify and develop specific strategies for promoting key components of achieving resilience within communities that have recognized earthquake and tsunami hazards.
<i>Objective 2.2: Enhance opportunities to communicate social impact issues related to earthquake events within the CREW region</i>
Action a) Distribute a regional newsletter informing communities on ways to access CREW materials i.e. website address, relevant information on recent earthquakes & tsunamis, partnering agencies’ information, etc.
Action b) Distribute CREW earthquake resources to key constituencies, such as local businesses. .
Action c) Facilitate community workshops on earthquake preparedness in collaboration with CREW partners, such as state earthquake risk reduction programs
<i>Objective 2.3: Promote ‘Risk Reduction Strategies’ in accordance with FEMA & NEHRP.</i>

Action a) Consult NEHRP language when preparing material for community distribution.
Goal 3. Promote actionable information about earthquake hazards.
<i>Objective 3.1: Make sure scenarios are current.</i>
Action a): Evaluate and update scenario distribution mechanisms.
Action b) Update content of scenarios every 10 years or sooner if needed.
<i>Objective 3.2: Ensure that findings on new earthquakes are disseminated.</i>
Action a) Keep website news up to date.
Action b) Develop contact list of key decision makers.
<i>Objective 3.3: Pursue opportunities to meet with decision makers and communicate earthquake and tsunami resilience strategies.</i>
Action a) Participate and promote CREW at one or more conferences a year.
<i>Objective 3.4: Maintain up-to-date online resources.</i>
Action a) Maintain CREW website and social media outlet i.e. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube.
Action b) Link to online resources (USGS, USACE, FEMA, etc.)
Goal 4: Leverage organization resources to greatest extent possible and identify opportunities to develop sustainable resourcing to accomplish CREW mission.
<i>Objective 4.1: Ensure CREW becomes a recognizable non-profit regionally (Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia).</i>
Action a) Identify potential linkages with other entities doing related work and form partnerships.
Action b) Engage local advocates by teaming them up with regional professionals.
Action c) Provide an 'introductory' letter to "key decision makers" on an annual basis that invites them to join CREW's mailing list, be informed of CREW meetings, explains what CREW does as an organization, etc.
<i>Objective 4.2: Pursue new funding sources, outside of NEHRP and FEMA.</i>
Action a) Prepare a resource development plan to identify leveraging possibilities and fiscal resources.
Action b) Organize active membership committee to solicit resources, both financial and in-kind.
<i>Objective 4.3: Develop a system for tracking financial leveraging, new funding opportunities, and in-kind contributions.</i>

Action a) Create a Development Committee to explore nonprofit funding sources.
Action b) Identify annual focus group (as outlined in Annual Work program) and leverage funds from that audience.

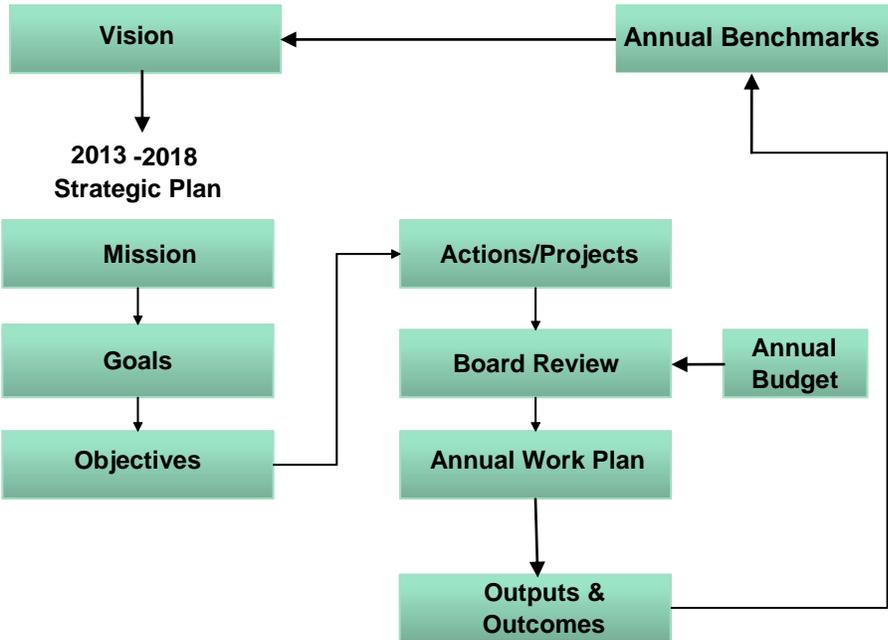
FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A strategic plan does not guarantee success. Success is measured by outputs and outcomes. The strategic plan provides the framework for activities CREW will focus on over the next five years.

A common framework for implementation is to use the strategic plan to provide the broad direction and to refine the implementation through a business plan or an annual work program. CREW already develops annual work programs that are reviewed by the FEMA as part of CREW’s funding requirements. The annual work programs provide detail about what CREW will focus its’ efforts on during the next 12-month period. Moreover, the annual work program ties tasks to budget figures.

Figure 2-2 provides a visual representation of the relationship between the strategic plan and the annual work program. The organizational vision serves as the foundation upon which all behaviors and polices are built. It does this through the mission statement, then goals to achieve that mission, and objectives to meet individual goals. Outside of the strategic plan are the actions and projects necessary to complete those objectives.

FIGURE 2-2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRATEGIC PLAN AND ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM



A simple implementation framework is necessary for CREW. The process of developing the annual work program, in general terms, is as follows:

1. CREW staff under direction of the Executive Board will develop a list of proposed projects based on the goals, objectives and action items listed in the Strategic Plan approximately four months prior to distribution of the annual grant guidance.
2. The Executive Board reviews the proposed actions and projects. Once agreement is reached by the Executive Board the proposed actions and projects will be distributed to the CREW Board of Directors for project development. All of the proposed actions and projects and uses the following evaluation criteria:
 - i. Fits with the mission of CREW
 - ii. aligns with and maximizes CREW project goals and objectives
 - iii. proposed project methodology is realistic and outcome-oriented
 - iv. outcomes and deliverables are clear, measurable and tangible
 - v. cost estimates have been vetted and are reasonable
 - vi. benefits more than one state or province within the CREW region
 - vii. overall value of the project is high (general relationship of benefit to cost)
3. The CREW Board will hold a project development workshop in conjunction with a quarterly board meeting to develop the details of each project. Each project must have at least one project lead to carry out the project.
4. The project lead(s) must use the standard form for the project (see Appendix C).
5. The timeframe of projects can extend over multiple years. However, because we are funded through the NEHRP program on an annual basis, each project must include an annual deliverable.
6. Project proposals can be a collaboration between CREW and other agencies but at least one CREW Board Director must be a co-project lead. If CREW is successful at gaining funding outside of the FEMA grant, a new project development process can be discussed, as needed.
7. Based on the projects proposals developed at the workshop, the CREW Board of Directors will approve the projects for the annual work program.
8. The Board directs staff to prepare an annual work program based on these projects.
9. The work program is submitted to the FEMA for review and approval.
10. After approval, those actions and projects are assigned to the Board Director as project lead.

In summary, the strategic plan provides guidance for the annual work program, but does not identify annual priorities. This architecture is intentional and allows flexibility to respond to emerging issues and redirect resources on an annual basis as necessary.

CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC ISSUES

The strategic planning process included an “environmental scan.” The purpose of the environmental scan was to identify key issues that may affect CREW’s operations. The environmental scan assessed both the *internal* and *external* environment.

CPW began this process by conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. CPW used the results of the environmental scan to identify a set of strategic issues that were presented at the strategic planning retreat. This chapter summarizes the results of the strategic issues identified by the environmental scan.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

An environmental scan is typically the first step in a strategic planning process. As its name implies, the purpose of the environmental scan is to understand the environment in which the organization is currently operating, and the factors that are likely to affect operations in the near term. The environmental scan assesses both the *internal* and *external* environments. The internal environment includes factors that are internal to the organization: staff and CREW Board members primarily, but also budgets and other factors. The external environment includes everything else: factors that CREW does not have direct control over. CPW used several methods to conduct the environmental scan. The tools are summarized below:

Phone interviews: CPW interviewed the members of the CREW Executive Board as well as the Executive Director. The purpose of these interviews was to better understand the history of CREW as well as what those interviewed saw as the future of the organization.

Electronic survey: An electronic survey was sent to all the members of the CREW Board. The survey asked questions relating to CREW’s mission, goals and future. The respondents were also asked to identify CREW’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Comparative Study: As the final component of the environmental scan, CPW conducted a comparative study. This study compared CREW to the other three earthquake consortia groups. The other consortia organizations were founded at roughly the same time for the same purpose and as such were excellent subjects for a comparative study. CPW interviewed the organizations Executive Director and collected financial data and information on policies and procedures.

IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC ISSUES

One element of the strategic planning process was to identify strategic issues. Strategic issues are internal or external issues that are likely to affect CREW’s operations in the next five years. The identification of strategic issues built from the environmental scan and included an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT)

The environmental scan identified a number of strategic issues (characterized as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) relevant to the planning process. Table 3-1 summarizes the SWOT analysis.

Table 3-1. Summary of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis

SWOT Component	Statement
STRENGTHS	Unique Market Position Knowledge Base of the Board Relationship Between Board and Director
Weaknesses	Lack of Strategic Direction Size/Structure of the Board Membership Underutilized Majority of Funding from a Single Source
OPPORTUNITIES	Collaborations and Partnerships Increased Demand for Products through Marketing Leveraging Unique Position in the Region
Threats	Decreasing FEMA Funding Increased Competition from Other Organizations Loss of Support/Relevance in Region

STRENGTHS

- *Unique Market Position* – There is no other forum in the Cascadia Region that deals with seismic issues the way CREW does. Having this market position makes CREW uniquely suited for enacting necessary changes in the Cascadia Region.
- *Knowledge Base of the Board* – The knowledge base of the CREW Board of Directors represents a wealth of skill and experience. Bringing together a wide range of organizations and knowledge sets allows CREW the opportunity to leverage these assets and create meaningful and important products for the Cascadia Region.
- *Relationship Between Board and Director* – In the background research CPW conducted into CREW showed that there is a productive working relationship between the CREW Board of Directors and Executive Director. This is a solid foundation to build off and implement this Strategic Plan.

WEAKNESSES

- *Lack of Strategic Direction* – Previous to this strategic plan, there were no measureable objectives or action items for CREW’s goals. There was no formal project prioritization process or criteria, and there are numerous audiences CREW is trying to reach. All of suggest a lack of strategic direction within the organization.
- *Size/Structure of Board* – There are presently 25 members of the Board of Directors for an organization with a single part-time staff member and relatively small budget. A board this size

discourages efficient decision making and action, especially when not divided into smaller committees with specific topic areas.

- *Membership Underutilized* – The Executive Director of CREW has a list of roughly a hundred members that at one time expressed an interest in CREW. It is CPW’s opinion that not enough is being done to include and use those members in CREW’s operations.
- *Majority of Funding Single-Source* – Strong and diverse funding streams are the lifeblood of any organization. Most of CREW’s funding is provided by FEMA grants. A non-profit should have diverse funding streams to ensure financial stability.

OPPORTUNITIES

- *Collaborations and Partnerships* – CREW should focus on using its advantages (unique forum, knowledge) to minimize its constraints (small staff/funding size). This can be done through collaborations and partnerships with other compatible organizations.
- *Increase Demand for Products Through Marketing* – There is a perception within CREW acknowledging that the organization creates quality products but that not enough people are using them. This lack of demand or ignorance can be combated by an increased focus on marketing the products of CREW.
- *Leveraging Unique Market Position* – CREW should capitalize on its unique marketing position. This could be done through realizing some of the previously mentioned opportunities, or by simply making policy-makers know that CREW is the premier forum for seismic issues in the Cascadia region.

THREATS

- *Decreasing FEMA Funding* – By being essentially solely FEMA-funded, CREW opens itself up to the possibility of financial instability. If FEMA decides that they no longer wish to fund this organization, CREW’s future is in jeopardy.
- *Increased Competition from Other Organizations*–Other organizations may begin to insinuate themselves into the same fields CREW works in. This might threaten the uniqueness of CREW’s present market position.
- *Loss of Support/Relevance in Region* – If CREW cannot create a clear strategic direction and pair it with valuable products usable by the community, CREW risks a loss of relevance and support in the region.

CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING AND FUNDING

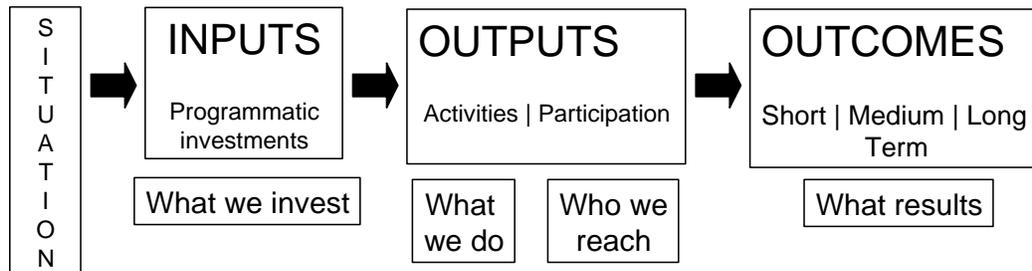
As CREW implements the strategic plan over the next five years, the question of “how well are we doing?” will inevitably arise. This chapter provides a framework that CREW can use to monitor progress towards the strategic plan goals.

EVALUATING PROGRESS

At one level, implementation of the strategic plan is simple: use the strategic planning matrix as a checklist. As each action is accomplished, note what was done and check the action off the list. The limitation of the checklist approach is that it does not measure whether meaningful progress is being made towards CREW’s mission and the goals stated in the strategic plan. Documenting how activities (called tasks in CREW’s annual work program) relate to goals, strategies, and actions. That said, it is a good first step in monitoring and evaluating progress towards the goals of the strategic plan.

Most organizations begin evaluations by developing a “logic model.” The logic model is a systematic and visual way to present and share the understanding of the relationships among the resources the organization has (inputs), the activities to be implemented (outputs), and the changes or results the organization hopes to achieve (outcomes). In short, the logic model shows how programmatic activities relate to goals.

Figure 4-1. Sample logic model



Inputs are materials, financial resources, and human resources that the activities take in and then process to produce the desired results. Those inputs include the resources from agencies represented by knowledge, employees, and many more. The inputs make the next level of the logic model possible: activities.

The activities have an intention to make changes in the Cascadia region. Those intended changes are identified as outcomes. Intermediate outcomes are the changes that occur at the individual or organizational level. For example, an output might be the number of people that attend an earthquake forum. The short term outcome might be that those individuals share their experience and knowledge with others in their community. The ultimate outcomes include changes in norms, policies, or actions at a community-wide level.

The issue is how CREW can monitor progress — how it measures outcomes. CREW does not have to wait until it is ready to conduct an evaluation to develop a logic model based on the strategic plan and the annual work program. One approach would be to use performance-based monitoring strategies.

PERFORMANCE-BASED MONITORING

Performance-based monitoring is a technique that involves the identification of “benchmarks”—a set of performance indicators with specific targets. Data on the indicators is gathered and reviewed on a continuous basis.

WHY BENCHMARKS?

Benchmarks provide the tool for measuring progress towards a vision. In the simplest terms, benchmarks provide numerical measurements of some part of the world in which we live. Whether they measure the amount of development in the interface or the percentage of residents with defensible space, benchmarks measure some element of our mission that is of value. As a measuring stick, they are vital to the long term visioning process. By assessing conditions in the present, benchmarks help guide policies and activities in the future. Through tracking benchmarks over the long term, benchmarking helps ensure that steps take the organization in the right direction.

HOW DO BENCHMARKS WORK?

Each goal should have one or more related benchmarks. Each benchmark should have an associated target that defines the desired future outcome. Each benchmark will have one or more indicators (data variables) that allow the benchmark to be measured over time. For example:

Goal 1: Forster productive linkages between scientists, critical infrastructure providers, community groups, businesses and governmental agencies on topics of community resilience.

Objective 1.2: Build relationships with business owners throughout the community to encourage resilient business practices.

Action 1.2.a: Conduct annual business roundtable to discuss business needs.

Benchmark: Over 10 people coming to each roundtable held.

Target: 10 people attending per roundtable

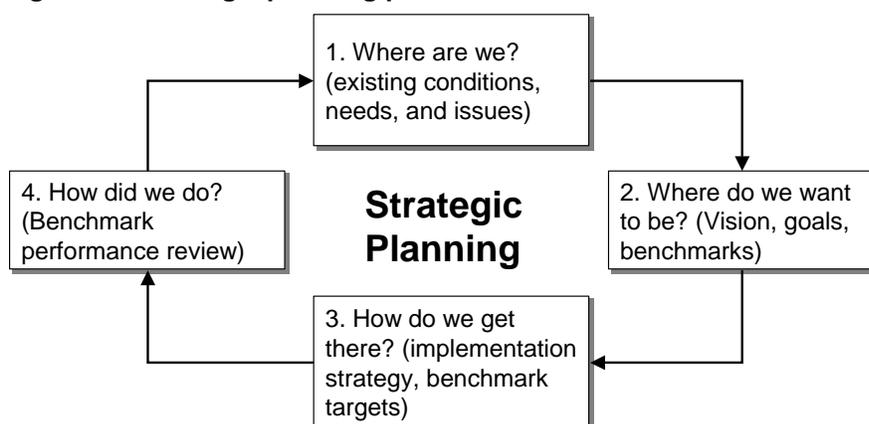
Data source: Attendance records.

This example does not necessarily mean that this is an appropriate benchmark, but underscores the types of data issues common in benchmarking. Many goals and benchmarks may not have data sources available to measure them.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BENCHMARKS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Most benchmarking processes are linked to a strategic planning process. Strategic planning can be thought of as an iterative, cyclical process which shapes the future by committing to a destination and the strategies required to get there (Figure 4-2).

Figure 4-2. Strategic planning process



The strategic plan addresses steps 1-3 in Figure 4-1. The strategic plan does not present benchmarks (Step 4 in Figure 4-1), however, CREW could choose to take the next steps in the process: translating goals into benchmarks, establishing benchmark targets, and identifying specific data indicators that allow for benchmark performance reviews.

WHAT ARE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES?

Outcomes are *results*. Outputs are the *activities* that lead to results. Outcomes are frequently classified as “high-level” and intermediate. A high-level outcome typically represents a societal goal or statement of well-being. Intermediate outcomes are steps that are taken to achieve the high-level outcome.

In the previous example, greater economic resilience of the business community was the desired outcome. An intermediate outcome could be increasing earthquake awareness through roundtables and outreach.

Outputs are the building blocks that achieve outcomes. Continuing with the business resilience example, outputs might include: conducting X roundtables; doing periodic media releases; or working with partner organizations to get the message out.

HOW ARE BENCHMARKS SELECTED?

Many potential approaches exist for selecting benchmarks. At least two criteria are relevant to this process. First, select benchmarks for which data are consistently and readily available or can be easily collected. Because it is important to show trends, it is vital that the data selected for the benchmarks will be available in the future. Second, benchmarks must reflect the goals contained in the strategic plan.

Recent efforts by the State of Oregon Progress Board have focused on linking the benchmark process to state programs and budgets. The Progress Board’s process also recognizes the linkage between outcomes, goals, and indicators. The steps that follow were adapted from the Oregon Progress Board process.

- I. Review the goal and make sure it is realistic (or sufficiently ambitious).
 - Examine current level and historic trends and comparisons with other national programs and countries. (Where are the best practices and results - what goals do we want to address.)

- If possible, identify the payoffs from achieving this goal in terms of the top-level outcomes identified in the Strategic plan.
- II. Examine recent efforts to address this problem.
- Programs and budgets, both by the Working Team and other entities.
 - Who have been the key players?
 - What successes? What setbacks?
 - Have strategies already been developed to achieve these goals?
- III. Examine the best practices from other regions/countries.
- Look widely for innovative new ways to achieve benchmarks. Don't presume that the goal can only be achieved by spending more money on current programs.
- IV. Develop a work program (tasks) to implement the action. It could focus on one or more of the following areas:
- Programs
 - Organizational change
 - Incentives
 - Budgets
- V. Summarize what it will take to achieve the goal and what different levels of effort can be expected to achieve.
- VI. Identify specific indicators (data points) that are appropriate measures for the benchmarks and have data that is either readily available or could be easily collected.

Each benchmark should have an associated target. The target represents the desired value of an output or outcome at a given point in time. Targets should be ambitious but realistic. Targets should also reflect a level of commitment – how high are we willing to aim?

SUMMARY

The benchmarking process is intended to assist in monitoring the outcomes of strategic planning efforts. As such, it is closely tied to the strategic planning process, which requires organizations to make a number of normative decisions about future conditions. Benchmarks should reflect realistic goals and require data sources that are easy to obtain and, at minimum are published annually.

THE FUTURE

From the October 2012 Strategic Plan Workshop it became clear that resource limitations and funding are a key discussion that needs to occur among Board Directors. At this point, CREW funding comes in whole from the

NEHRP program administered by FEMA but there is a strong interest in expanding this. Many different ideas to increase funding capacity were discussed but it is clear that a concise and defined funding strategy should be developed over the next five year planning period.