Setting data and document standards

Why it's important

Many people who depend on our data and documents to make important decisions, and we're committing to meeting those needs.

For example, the agency asks staff to collect spatial — or location — data in conjunction with our environmental data-gathering efforts. Spatial data allows us to offer features like "What's in my Neighborhood" — an online application that shows users environmental data about specific Minnesota communities.

What we did

We piloted the new standard-setting process (steps 1-8) with a new agency standard for records management, which was released in October. The process emphasizes evaluation and discussion of proposed standards, and review of released standards, to ensure buy-in by managers and staff.

What's the issue?

Some areas of the MPCA are managing data and documents well, but agency-wide standards have been difficult to develop and apply.

For time-tracking and other data processes, we lacked:
► Management commitment
► Understanding of issues
► Functional tools
► Business processes that consistently integrated data and document management

To compound the problem, programs have an increasing amount of data and documents to manage.
We discovered that data and document management systems are not fully supported in the agency, because we don't have agreement on how standards are created.

MPCA Standardization Process
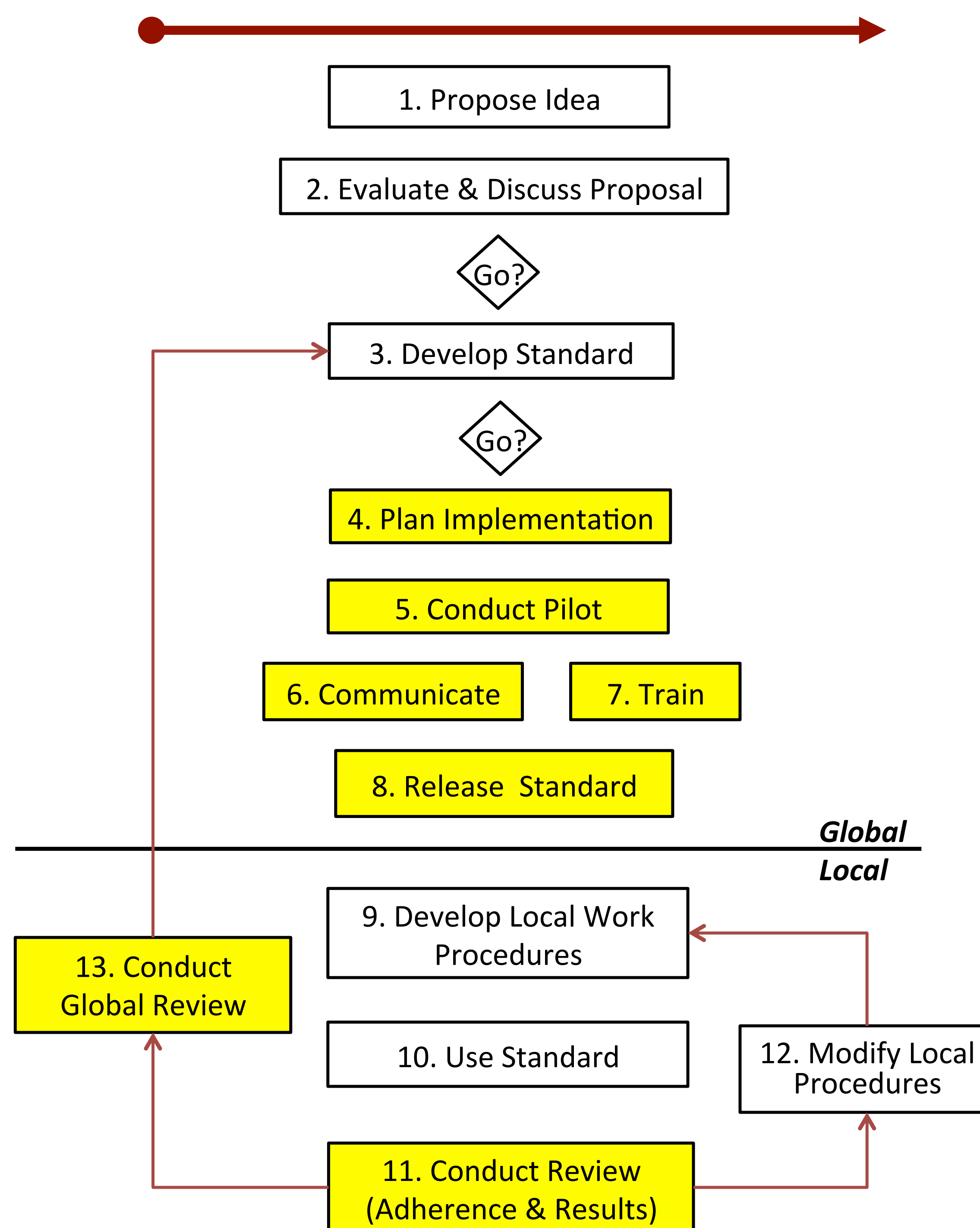
*areas in yellow are new best practices

Results

As a result of the new process, we now have:

► A uniform way of establishing agency-wide data or document management standards.

► Consistent use of existing standards.

Team members: Cathy Moeger, Randy Hedegaard, Chris Malec, Scott Parr, Pete Hawksford, Milt Thomas, Chris Johnson, Barb Blackburn, Roxanne Wehausen

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency