**The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS)**



**Peer-to-Peer Business Process Improvement**

**Skills Exchange Program**

May 2016, draft

**Background**

ECOS uses the term “business process improvement” to refer to a suite of business-oriented methodologies designed to streamline a given enterprise’s operations and achieve efficiencies in order to reduce costs and maximize shareholder value. These methodologies include Lean, Six Sigma, Kaizen, 5s, Kanban, Value Stream Mapping (VSM), etc. and have been applied broadly over the course of the last 30 years throughout the private sector and government.

State environmental agencies have adopted a variety of business process improvement (BPI) methodologies to help them improve services, cope with tight budgets, and more efficiently perform their functions of protecting our states’ natural environment. ECOS seeks to support states to build individual state capacity and share information such as state lean event summaries with their state and EPA counterparts.

In 2016, ECOS finalized a cooperative agreement with U.S. EPA’s Office of Policy to conduct several activities in support of state capacity building, outreach and engagement, and training focused on business process improvement. Later that year and in early 2017, six states participated in the first cohort of the program; their experiences are detailed in a 2017 ECOS [green report](https://www.ecos.org/documents/green-report-ecos-business-process-improvement-skills-exchange-program/).

**Skills Exchange Program**

The ECOS Skills Exchange program pairs key experienced state lean staff with less experienced state programs to facilitate peer-to-peer lean knowledge and skills transfer. Selection will be based on corresponding needs and experience, geography / EPA region, and other factors. Based on this pairing, ECOS would work with both states to build an intensive exchange lasting for a period of one week or less. During this period, the experienced state would play a key role examining the activity and needs of the less developed state program, designing specific training, and sharing reflections about completed projects to highlight benefits received, improvements gained, and potential challenges.

ECOS will also provide support for discussions, meetings, webinars, travel, and website postings required over the course of program implementation; will conduct state outreach and recruitment, conference calls, training and technical assistance as required. Following the exchange, ECOS may work with participants to give presentations online or at conferences, and develop case studies or other promotional materials to share and highlight specific learning benefits and to share with state, local, tribal or EPA partners.

If you are interested in learning more, or in being involved in the skills exchange as an experienced state staff or as a state interested in building capacity, please send a completed application form (following page) or any questions to Owen McAleer, [omcaleer@ecos.org](mailto:omcaleer@ecos.org), (202) 266-4922.

**Application to Participate in ECOS’**



**Peer-to-Peer**

**Business Process Improvement (BPI)**

**Skills Exchange**

**Application Form**

If you are interested in participating in a state-to-state Business Process Improvement (BPI) skills exchange as either an experienced BPI state staff or as a state environmental agency or office interested in building its BPI capacity, please enter the following information. Please send completed forms to Owen McAleer at [omcaleer@ecos.org](mailto:omcaleer@ecos.org). Forms received by **Friday, October 20, 2017** will be reviewed by the ECOS Innovation and Productivity Committee leadership. Applications received after that date are welcome and may be considered for future iterations of this program.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The state environmental agency and office you represent: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your job title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you an experienced state BPI staff?  Yes  No
2. Are you interested in building your state’s BPI capacity?  Yes  No
3. Why you are interested in participating in the ECOS BPI skills exchange?
4. What do you hope to get out of participating in the ECOS BPI skills exchange?
5. Please describe your BPI experience (any trainings completed, qualifications) including brief summary of completed events or your BPI needs as appropriate.
6. Which of the following events and activities interest you related to a skills exchange (either conducting or receiving)? (You may select and/or rank any that apply.)

\_\_\_ Agency-wide or all-staff training

\_\_\_ BPI event observation

\_\_\_ Department-specific training

\_\_\_ Real-time BPI event facilitated by the visiting official

\_\_\_ Development of an agency-wide or department-specific BPI strategic plan

\_\_\_ Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. States and U.S. EPA have also begun discussions about potential priority programmatic areas for replication and transfer of completed BPI events. The following is a list of areas under consideration:

\_\_\_ Clean Air Act State Implementation Plan Projects

\_\_\_ RCRA Facility Investigation and Remedy Selection Track (RCRA FIRST)

\_\_\_ Financial Assurance

\_\_\_ RCRA PCB Cleanup Program Review & Approval Process

\_\_\_ Combined Enforcement/Inspection Tools

* 1. Is your state interested in conducting BPI activity related to any of the areas on this list? (Your answer will not disqualify your state from participation in the skills exchange program.)

 Yes - Please specify and/or indicate above: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 No

* 1. Do you have any suggestions for programmatic areas to add to or remove from the list?

 Yes - Please specify and/or indicate above: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 No

1. Please provide any additional comments you may wish to make.

*Thank you for your interest in the ECOS BPI Skills Exchange. For more information, please contact Owen McAleer,* [*omcaleer@ecos.org*](mailto:omcaleer@ecos.org)*.*