



# Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup 2009-2014 Strategic Plan

## Draft Report

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**Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup**

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# Executive Summary

This report contains the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan for the Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup (CREW). The plan is intended to serve as a framework for the development of annual work plans 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 2009-2014 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.

## The Strategic Plan Matrix

The strategic plan matrix serves as an easy reference guide to the strategic plan. The matrix includes the objectives for each goal. The objectives are generally classified as short-term (1-2 years) or mid-term (3-5 years). Some objectives are ongoing throughout the plan implementation period. The matrix is intended to serve as a tool to create and review the annual work plan. Staff will be responsible for monitoring progress towards strategic plan goals.

**Figure 1. CREW 2009-2014 Strategic Plan Matrix**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Goal 1: Foster productive linkages between scientists, critical infrastructure providers, businesses and governmental agencies on topics of community resilience</b> |
| Objective 1.1: Ensure CREW Board of Directors is informed and engaged with current projects or special topics   |
| Objective 1.2: Identify key partners related to specific CREW functions   |
| Objective 1.3: Develop earthquake scenarios using best available science for use by businesses, agencies, and communities   |
| Objective 1.4: Conduct annual business roundtable to discuss business needs   |
| <b>Goal 2 Promote the economic resilience and viability of communities.</b>   |
| Objective 2.1: Develop regional needs assessment tool to identify economic resilience issues  |
| Objective 2.2: Distribute CREW earthquake toolkits to local businesses  |
| Objective 2.3: Identify and develop specific strategies for promoting key components of achieving resilience  |
| Objective 2.4: Facilitate community workshops on earthquake preparedness  |
| Objective 2.5: Communicate social impact issues related to earthquake events to communities   |
| <b>Goal 3. Promote the transfer of scientific data on earthquake hazards to key decision makers</b>   |
| Objective 3.1: Prepare a crustal earthquake scenario  |
| Objective 3.2: Prepare single-page issue documents/newsletters on earthquake topics based on new science  |
| Objective 3.3: Conduct annual conferences with decision-makers  |
| Objective 3.4: Establish online resource center   |
| Objective 3.5: Develop policies and practices to distribute current science to key audiences  |
| <b>Goal 4: Leverage organization resources and develop sustainable resources</b>  |
| Objective 4.1: Prepare a resource development plan to identify leveraging possibilities and fiscal resources  |
| Objective 4.2: Identify potential linkages with other entities doing related work and form partnerships   |
| Objective 4.3: Organize active membership committee to solicit resources, both financial and in-kind  |
| Objective 4.4: Track financial leveraging and in-kind contributions   |

## Implementation

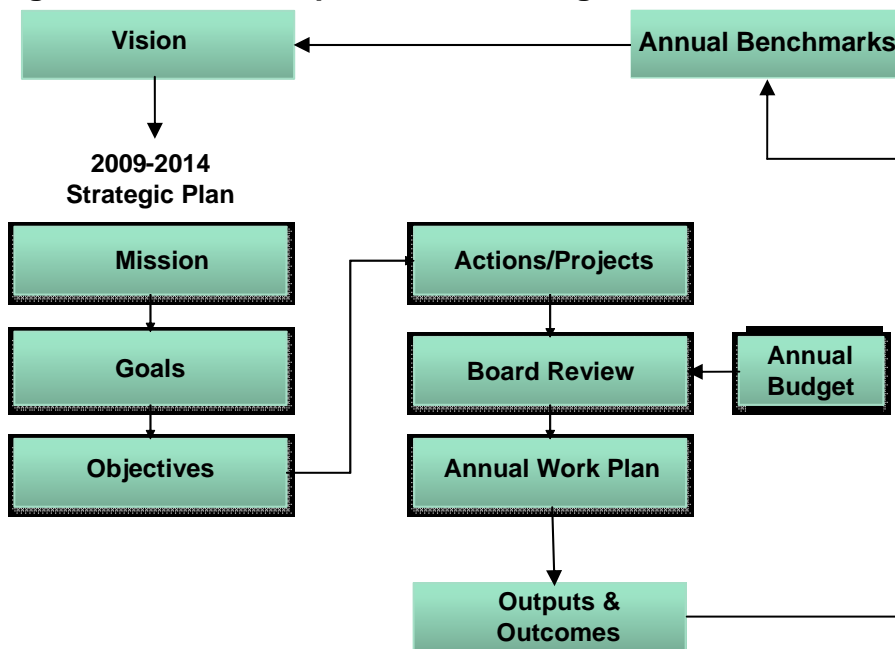
The strategic plan provides the framework for activities CREW will focus on over the next five years. CREW already develops annual work programs that are reviewed by FEMA as part of the funding requirements. The annual work programs will provide considerable detail about what actions and projects staff will focus efforts on during the next 12-month period. Moreover, the annual work plan 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 plan. The organizational vision serves as the foundation upon which all behaviors and policies 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 1: Relationship Between Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plan**



This omission of actions is intentional and allows the Board flexibility. Actions and projects are proposed to CREW and 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 actions and projects included in the final annual work plan will be priorities within the strategic planning framework and fit within the annual budget.

CPW recommends that CREW 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 report contains the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan for the Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup (CREW). The plan is intended to serve as a framework for the development of annual work plans and budgets as well as providing strategic direction for CREW.

## Background

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.

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. During this time, there was an increase in awareness of the nature of earthquake hazards in the Pacific Northwest and interdependency of the public and private organizations 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 mitigate them. CREW has created several publications, including scenarios, post-disaster recovery guides and other educational materials.

In the summer of 2008, CREW asked the Community Planning Workshop (CPW) at the University of Oregon to assist the organization in preparing a strategic plan. This document presents the 2009-2014 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 facing the Cascadia Region now and into the foreseeable future.

## Purpose

The purpose of the 2009-2014 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 will provide guidance to the CREW Board in:

- Reviewing project proposals; and
- Developing the annual work plan.

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 plans that are developed by staff and reviewed and approved by the CREW Board.

## 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 on a number of levels 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 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. 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 documents the outcomes of the previous two phases as well as an additional electronic survey. The CREW Strategic Plan was informed by these outcomes.

## 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 plans 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 five 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.

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

**Appendix D: Project Proposal Form** includes a form CREW can use to solicit project ideas.

**Appendix E: Annual Workplan Template** includes a template CREW can use to prepare its annual workplan.



# Chapter 2: How to Use This Plan

The 2009-2014 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 2009-2014 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.

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

***"A disaster resilient Cascadia region."***

**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."***

CREW created the organizational vision and reviewed the mission statement during the October retreat. Discussions among the CREW Board at the October retreat resulted in the conclusion that CREW had vision and mission statements that reflect the organization. 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 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 plan 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.

## Framework for Implementation

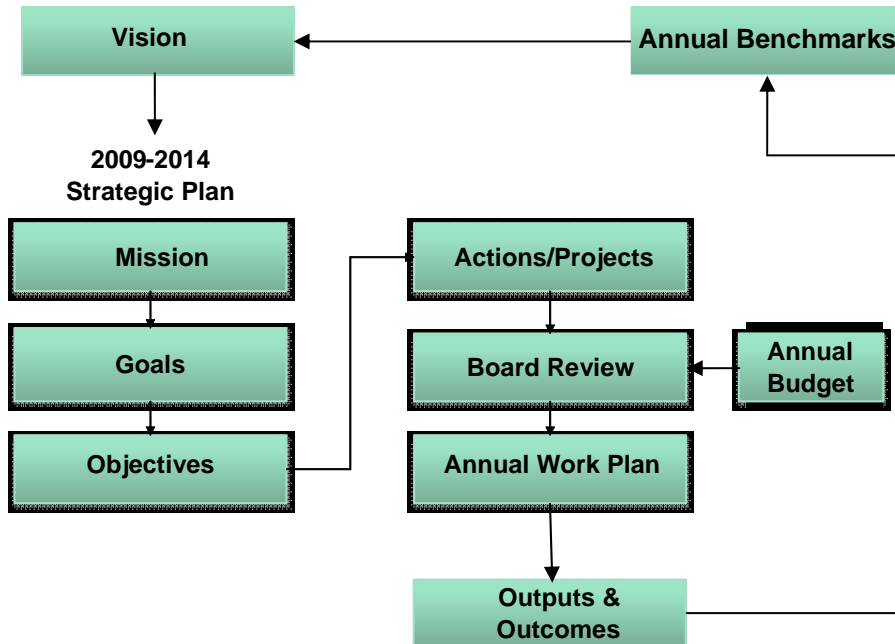
A strategic plan—even a good one—does not guarantee success. Success is measured by outputs and outcomes. The strategic plan provides the framework for activities CREW will focus on over the next five years.

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 plan ties tasks to budget figures.

Because the cost of desired tasks 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 tool that can help the CREW Board make decisions regarding the annual work program.

Figure 2-2 provides a visual representation of the relationship between the strategic plan and the annual work plan. The organizational vision serves as the foundation upon which all behaviors and policies 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 Plan**



CPW proposes a simple implementation framework for CREW. Every action in the annual work program should relate to at least one objective and goal in the strategic plan. The process of developing the annual work program, in general terms, is as follows:

1. The CREW Board and staff distribute an annual solicitation for actions and projects. Projects that involve funding must go through the annual proposal review process. Proposal review is a two step process. Proposers must submit their proposals in the standard format (see Appendix C)
2. The CREW's Grants & Projects Committee reviews all of the proposed actions and projects. They are evaluated for consistency with the strategic plan and for their budget implications and provides recommendation to CREW Board.
3. The CREW Board prioritizes proposed actions and projects and directs staff to prepare a draft work program.
4. The draft work program is submitted to the FEMA for review and approval.
5. After approval, those actions and projects are assigned to committees for oversight.

In summary, the strategic plan provides guidance for the annual work program, but does not identify annual priorities. This architecture is intentional – CPW developed the strategic plan in a manner that 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<br>Knowledge Base of the Board<br>Relationship Between Board and Director                                   |
| Weaknesses     | Lack of Strategic Direction<br>Size/Structure of the Board<br>Membership Underutilized<br>Majority of Funding from a Single Source |
| Opportunities  | Collaborations and Partnerships<br>Increased Demand for Products through Marketing<br>Leveraging Unique Position in the Region     |
| Threats        | Decreasing FEMA Funding<br>Increased Competition from Other Organizations<br>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 coming from FEMA. A non-profit should be as 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

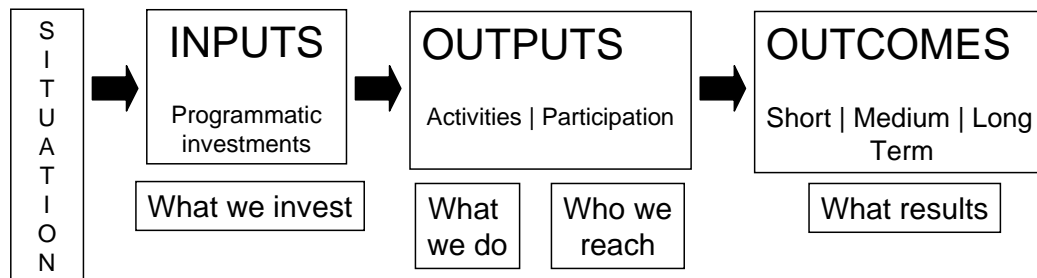
As CREW implements the strategic plan over the next five years, the question of “how well are we doing?” will inevitably arise. This chapter provides a framework that CREW can use to monitor progress towards the strategic plan goals.

## 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 plan) relate to goals, strategies, and actions. That said, it is a good first step in monitoring and evaluating progress towards the goals of the 2009-2014 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 plan. 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:** Promote the economic resilience and viability of communities

**Objective:** Identify and develop specific strategies for promoting key components of resilience

**Action/Project:** Facilitate community workshops on earthquake preparedness.

**Benchmark:** Over 20 people coming to each workshops held.

**Target:** 20 people attending per workshop

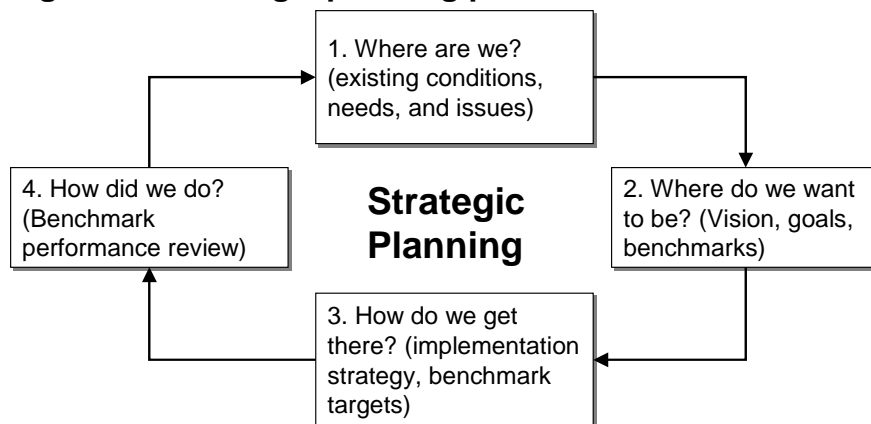
**Data source:** Attendance records.

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 2009-2014 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 and viability was the desired outcome. An intermediate outcome could be increasing earthquake awareness through forums and outreach.

Outputs are the building blocks that achieve outcomes. Continuing with our awareness example, outputs might include: conducting X workshops; 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. CPW believes this process could be used by CREW. 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 address.)
- II. If possible, identify the payoffs from achieving this goal in terms of the top-level outcomes identified in the Strategic Plan.
- III. 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?
- IV. 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.

- V. 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
- VI. Summarize what it will take to achieve the goal and what different levels of effort can be expected to achieve.
- VII. 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.