STEP 8: DEVELOP A BLUEPRINT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

WHAT: An implementation blueprint sets out detailed information to put the final CESP actions in place, including who will be responsible for each action, what the specific deliverables will be, and when they will be accomplished. It also incorporates conclusions from the finance strategy (Step 7) and the plan to do ongoing monitoring and evaluation (Step 9). The implementation blueprint will be integrated in the Final CESP Report and can also be used as a standalone document in the implementation phase.

WHY: Establishing a formal implementation blueprint is the key to realizing the vision, goals, and strategies, and turning the overall CESP into reality, as it:

- Articulates the resources, staff, and budget needed to sustain the CESP activities;
- Communicates expectations to local staff and to the community; and
- Provides a reference point for all parties to use in the implementation phase, to ensure that activities are moving in the right direction and achieving targets identified.

WHO: The Leadership Team will lead this activity, with facilitation by the Plan Manager, but implementation planning often requires additional data and support to be most effective. Input from stakeholders is important here so that responsibilities for plan actions are assigned to the appropriate departments and/or community groups and reasonable timelines are established. For a large CESP with many actions, have the Leadership Team appoint an Implementation Team and charge them with supporting the development of the plan and then implementing it. The Champion should sign off on the implementation blueprint, including the final prioritized actions, finance strategy (Step 7), and the plan to monitor and report on progress (Step 9).

HOW: To assure effective implementation of the CESP, the Leadership Team will need to:

- Develop a Blueprint
- Establish Operational Responsibilities
- Incorporate the CESP into Other Planning and Budgeting Efforts

WHEN: Once actions and funding sources have been identified, this step should take about 4-6 weeks for a more modest CESP, and 6-8 weeks for an extensive one. The most time-intensive part will be getting buy-in from relevant parties on implementation responsibilities, but stakeholder engagement throughout the earlier steps of the process can help ease this. The blueprint should be developed in parallel with the procedures for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on progress (Step 9).

Develop a Blueprint

An implementation blueprint identifies the prioritized actions and lays out a specific outline for getting them accomplished. The Leadership Team will head its development, with the Plan Manager facilitating the process. Input from stakeholders is important here so that responsibilities for plan actions are assigned to the appropriate departments and/or community groups and reasonable timelines are established.

The implementation blueprint does not need to be a complicated document. It will be most useful as a guide going forward if it is easy to read and follow, rather than a wordy narrative, but it should contain enough information to guide those responsible for its component parts. Consider using a visual format, like the Goals, Strategies, and Actions Planning Worksheet matrix, modified to suit your CESP.

CESP Timeline

	Month: 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Step 1	Form Leadership Team									
Step 2	Identify Stakeholders	Engage Stakeholders								
Step 3		Vision								
Step 4		Energy Profile								
Step 5				Goals and Strategies						
Step 6					Identify Actions					
Step 7				Identify Financing						
Step 8							Implementation Blueprint			
Step 9								Monitoring Plan		
Step 10				Scope and Develop Final CESP						Adopt & Publicize

Components of an effective implementation blueprint include:

- **Specific actions, tied to strategies and goals**: Update the **Goals, Strategies, and Actions Worksheet**, developed in Steps 5 and 6, with your final prioritized actions, including finance-related components. Be sure that action items are clear and specific, using directive, action-oriented language.
- **Deliverables and milestones**: Articulate specific deliverables for actions so that it is clear what success will look like, and, as appropriate, set interim milestones, such as first-year targets, to keep actions moving.

> **TIP**
>
> Break each strategy and action down into the smallest individual activities possible. If desired, add a "milestones" field to the Worksheet to identify specific steps necessary to complete an action. Articulating activities at this level will make them easier to assign, track, and accomplish.

- **Timeline** with simple and realistic schedules.
  - If a rough timeline was developed under Step 6 to see how actions will aggregate to achieve strategies and goals over time, start there. Develop it further, indicating the sequence of all actions and their expected duration.
  - As touched on briefly in Step 6, a staged approach for activities is often effective. Focus on what is fastest, easiest, less-expensive, and most-agreed-on – then build up to the harder and more-complex activities. Do a great job on these, and then use the publicity about the success and energy saved to motive support for the harder things. This can also help with funding – consider using a portion of the savings from a first round of activities to invest in the next round of savings, with the balance going back into city coffers and providing taxpayer savings.
- **Data-capturing needs and reporting requirements**: Articulate metrics that should be tracked and outline how and to whom they will be reported. This information can be included with action discussion or included as a complementary discussion. For example, consider including the metric that will be tracked in the actions plan (see Goals, Strategies, and Actions Planning Worksheet), with details about how these metrics will be tracked and reported in a complementary section (addressed further in Step 9, including Monitoring Plan Template).
- **Responsible party(ies):** Leads (individuals or organizations) should be identified for each action. This critical aspect of the plan is discussed in more detail below. Implementation partners can also be identified.

- **Preliminary financing/funding plans**: The conclusions from Step 7 can be mapped to each specific action/strategy or may be included as a complementary discussion summarizing the portfolio of mechanisms and next steps.
- **Incentives to motivate actions**: Once the final CESP has been adopted, keeping the actions moving forward after the enthusiasm of the planning process is over can be a challenge.

Identify incentives now that will support implementation and incorporate these into the blueprint. For example:

- Use challenges between departments, businesses, or community sectors to drive participation and motivate action.
- Provide awards for successfully achieving action milestones.
- Allow departments that save energy to use associated cost savings to fund their next CESP project.

- Additional **optional** components:
  - How the CESP will be incorporated into other planning and budgeting efforts.
  - Preliminary marketing and engagement strategy (discussed further in Step 10).
  - Assessment of economic development potential and strategy.

Considerations for a **local government CESP**:

- Timelines are often fairly predictable – integrate actions and their milestones into planning and budget cycles.

Considerations for a **community-wide CESP**:

- Stakeholder engagement is key in the development of the implementation blueprint, as stakeholders will have information on actions and milestones, and input regarding resources available to carry out the actions.
- Timelines for a community-wide CESP are often longer than plans for government operations only, especially if the community-wide plan has a broad scope with regard to sectors.

After the Leadership Team has drafted the implementation blueprint and received input from stakeholders (including the Implementation Team, if applicable – see below), the Champion should review and sign off on it, including the prioritized actions, finance strategy (Step 7), and plan to monitor and report on progress (Step 9). The approved implementation blueprint will be incorporated in the Final CESP and should then be used as a standalone document in the implementation phase.

> **TIP**
> "Where most organizations fail, for all intents and purposes, is that they stop activities when the final draft is approved, rather than actually implementing and making it an ongoing part of City Sustainability efforts" – Scott Alisoglu, Sustainability Coordinator, Topeka, Kansas.

Establish Operational Responsibilities

Perhaps the most important part of the implementation blueprint is assignment of operational responsibilities to specific individuals/organizations for each action item. This puts individual tasks in the hands of the most-capable and appropriate person or organization, spreads the work load across resources, and creates a sense of ownership

and shared responsibility. It also ensures that resources are actually available – actions may need modification at this stage, depending upon the human resources available.

Be sure to choose appropriate leads for each action step – those staff members or community leaders with the ability and authority to make the work happen. There are a few general guidelines for selecting effective action leads that are often helpful.

- Assignments are frequently based on current activities, so look at who is doing similar work first. For a community-wide plan, match actions with volunteers/organizations whose mission will be furthered by the effort.
- After establishing initial ideas, ask for help in further identifying and/or narrowing down appropriate action step leads.
    - Assignments will depend on type of activity, so good sources for recommendations will be those individuals/organizations that helped scope out these parts of the plan, including stakeholders.
    - It is helpful if the parties making recommendations also have authority and resources to make assignments happen. For a local government plan, look to elected officials and department heads.
- Make sure that proposed leads have the appropriate authority to undertake actions.
- Engage people who have enthusiasm for the task, as it will increase likelihood of success.
- While for many elements of a community-wide plan, community members are the ones who will do the actual work, be sure to assign an appropriate government staff person to coordinate and/or monitor the action, to be sure that it is accomplished and synchronizes with other elements of the plan. This may be the Plan Manager or other lead for the Implementation Team, if established (see below).

For a large CESP with many actions, the Leadership Team may want to **establish an Implementation Team**, made up of the action lead individuals/organizations. The group can be managed by the Plan Manager or other local staff and charged with supporting the development of the blueprint and then implementing it. This gives action leads an opportunity to weigh in on the proposed implementation blueprint, including reasonable deliverables, timelines, and data needs. It will also provide the implementation step more coherence, visibility, recognition, and influence.

Incorporate the CESP into Other Planning and Budgeting Efforts

At this stage, the Leadership Team and Implementation Team (if established) should work with the Champion to discuss how to integrate the CESP into other planning efforts at the local government and community level. Parties should consider how the CESP will interact with the jurisdiction's master plan, land use plans, greenhouse gas reduction plans, economic development plans, and/or regional planning efforts. The CESP's progress will be more effective if coordinated with such efforts, and plan benefits will be more likely to be fully realized.

Be sure to also determine how to include plan activities as part of the annual budget development process. This will help assure timely financial support for CESP elements. The budget review process is also a useful annual opportunity to review progress and update plans (see Step 9) and to keep CESP activities visible.

Finally, discuss how the CESP will be included in the impact review for new government actions. This will help guarantee that impact on CESP activities and targets is taken into account in the development of any new local government policies or procedures, particularly those that effect sustainability and/or energy issues.

Consider including a summary of this approach in the blueprint and Final CESP, and make sure it is highlighted at the adoption phase for government officials.

Tools

Tool 5.1: Goals, Strategies, and Actions Planning Worksheet (revisited) (.docx)