

## Public Health Informatics Profile Toolkit



## Section IV:

# Acting on the Results

Once you have completed your assessment and created a report that provides a comprehensive, consolidated view of the various information systems, informatics needs, and opportunities within your defined project scope, you can use the report to inform your planning for next steps.

## Using the results to support planning

Begin by going back to your original purposes for conducting the assessment. What were you seeking to learn? Did you get the information you needed to answer those questions? Did you learn things beyond that? What new questions arose? What themes, common issues and ideas for improvement emerged from your interviews and data collection? Do natural collaborations among programs suggest themselves based on shared goals or challenges?

- ✓ **1. Collaborate within your agency.**  
Identify natural partners and collaborators within your agency based on common ideas or ideas for improving processes.
- ✓ **2. Take small steps first.**  
Identify small steps that can be accomplished incrementally, even if the overall goal seems daunting.
- ✓ **3. Tackle challenges together.**  
Identify a suitable model for making decisions jointly and sharing responsibility. Consider whether a formal or informal governance model would work best for you, at least initially.

- ✓ **4. Involve your IT department.**

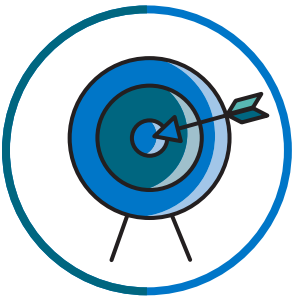
If your jurisdiction has a centralized IT department, identify how it could support your efforts. They may also have requirements which you would need to adhere to in implementing your plan. You may need to emphasize that informatics generally, and this informatics profile in particular, is more about program information needs and priorities than about information technology per se.

- ✓ **5. Translate results into goals and plans.**

The results will need to be translated into priorities, goals and activities that can be incorporated into plans and perhaps budgets across the agency. Otherwise, its impact will be minimal.

## Acting on the assessment information

The whole purpose of collecting all the information you've gathered is to support informed decision making and action. Here, too, barriers, including project fatigue and new priorities, can interfere with this critical step. Other barriers you may need to address can include a lack of interest or perceived influence of key decision-makers, competing priorities for projects and resources, turf issues, and lack of buy-in or support for the recommendations in the report.



When an assessment is conducted agency-wide, it can be especially challenging to think of where to start with the recommendations. Sometimes it will even require a change in the environment before the findings in your report will take notice.

- ✔ **1. Use compelling recommendations.**  
Whenever possible, keep recommendations clear and concrete. If necessary, prioritize them in order of most importance.
- ✔ **2. Articulate how the results will be turned into action.**  
Identify how the results can be translated into recommendations and priorities that can be incorporated into agency or program plans and budgets in a coordinated way.

- ✔ **3. Test out various communication options.**  
Explore a wide array of approaches in communicating your message and keeping people engaged (see Section I).
- ✔ **4. Repeat your message, but change your delivery.**  
Repetition is important. Sometimes it takes people hearing a message multiple times and in different ways before the message will begin to sink in. As a result, seek additional ways to deliver your message, whether it be through formal communications (e.g., reports, memos or presentations) or information communications (e.g., conversations).