

**Criterion Example:**

**Transportation Agency For Monterey County  
California**

**Module:** Systems Planning for Regions (INVEST Version 1.2)

**Criterion:** [SPR-02 Integrated Planning: Natural Environment \(for Regions\)](#) (1-15 points)

**Lead Agency:** Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)

**Link:** <http://www.tamcmonterey.org/programs/environmental-review/>

**Sources:** <https://www.sustainablehighways.org/779/80/transportation-agency-for-monterey-county-evaluating-and-enhancing-sustainable-transportation.html>

**Description:** TAMC is the regional transportation planning agency for Monterey County, California, responsible for developing and updating a long-range vision of the regional transportation system. TAMC used the INVEST System Planning for Regions (SPR) module to review a broad spectrum of its planning efforts – including its 2014 Regional Transportation Plan – and evaluate how well-defined and comprehensive its sustainability efforts have been. INVEST 1.2 enabled TAMC to evaluate its progress in integrating ecological considerations into the transportation planning process. Overall, TAMC scored 10/15 for SPR-02 by developing goals and objectives for integrating transportation planning with natural resource planning, working collaboratively with natural resource and regulatory agencies, and integrating ecological planning into its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The agency did identify a few areas for improvement, and in the future plans to expand its habitat planning, develop sustainability-related ecological performance measures, and monitor progress towards long-term ecological goals.

**Scoring Details:**

**SPR-02.1: Develop and Adopt Goals and Objectives (2/2)**

- **SPR-02.1a: Develop Goals and Objectives (1/1)**
  - TAMC scored one point in this area for its development of goals and objectives that integrate regional transportation planning with applicable environmental plans, policies, and goals. Specifically, TAMC establishes goals in its RTP that work to protect Monterey County's natural environment. The RTP includes objectives to reduce county greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to levels that meet regional targets, conserve farmland, and minimize environmental impacts to sensitive local, state, and federal lands.

- **SPR-02.1b: Goals and Objectives Consistent with Environmental Plans, Policies, and Goals (1/1)**
  - TAMC achieved one point for this sub-criterion as its policy objectives for environmental stewardship align with local, regional, and state goals to integrate environmental considerations at all stages of planning. The policy objectives include conserving natural, cultural, and agricultural resources, reducing GHG emissions, and transforming the transportation system to be cleaner and more energy efficient.

#### **SPR-02.2: Engage Natural Resource and Regulatory Agencies ( 3/3)**

- **SPR-02.2a: Engage Natural Resource and Regulatory Agencies (2/2)**
  - TAMC scored full points in this area for its regular engagement with local and state natural resource and regulatory agencies. TAMC engages in quarterly meetings with staff at Caltrans and convenes project-specific interagency meetings to ensure positive project-delivery outcomes by addressing cross-jurisdictional issues and facilitating communication and coordination between multiple agencies.
- **SPR-02.2b: Utilize Institutional Mechanisms (1/1)**
  - TAMC earned one point in this area as it utilizes institutional mechanisms such as convening ad hoc and technical advisory committees to facilitate engagement with natural resource and regulatory agencies.

#### **SPR-02.3: Apply System or Landscape –Scale Evaluation Techniques (4/4)**

TAMC attained all available points for this sub-criterion for its integration of system and landscape-scale evaluation techniques using natural resource data. TAMC uses available natural resource data to (1) assess ecological conditions throughout the system, (2) identify opportunities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts of planned transportation projects to the natural environment, and (3) identify opportunities to support and enhance long-term ecological function through planned transportation investments. Recently, the agency used this approach in its Scenic Highway 68 Wildlife Study and Highway 68 Corridor Study to identify potential transportation planning improvements that might enhance ecological functions in the long-term.

#### **SPR-02.4: Demonstrate Sustainable Outcomes (1/6)**

- **SPR-02.4a: Integrate Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) with Environmental Plans, Policies, and Goals (1/1)**
  - TAMC scored one point for SPR-02.4a as its 2014 RTP integrates and includes environmental policies that support and enhance long-term ecological function.
- **SPR-02.4b: LRTP Includes Performance Measures for Long-Term Ecological Function (0/2)**
  - TAMC received zero points in this area as it does not include performance measures for long-term ecological function in its RTP.

- **SPR-02.4c: Monitor Progress and Demonstrate Sustainable Outcomes (0/3)**
  - TAMC also received zero points for this sub-criterion as the points for SPR-02.4 are cumulative. Since TAMC does not have performance measures in place (pertaining to SPR-02.4c), the agency cannot attain points for monitoring progress towards achieving sustainable outcomes.

**Sustainability Improvements:** TAMC is doing well in its integration of ecological considerations into its transportation planning process, scoring a 10/15 for this criterion. The agency plans to improve upon a couple of areas identified in the INVEST evaluation, including its lack of sustainability-related ecological performance measures and related monitoring of progress in meeting environmental goals and objectives.

To improve upon these areas, TAMC is working towards developing performance measures to assess ecological function in the region. Potential performance measures could address maintenance of ecosystem processes and functions, maintenance of habitat connectivity, programming of projects to improve and maintain aquatic ecosystems, and creation of contaminant and pollutant-free ecological systems.

Finally, TAMC determined that developing a regional Habitat Management Plan will help the agency identify priorities for habitat and ecosystem conservation.