API RP 1185 is a flexible and scalable framework, but what does that mean? Let's look at:

Asking, Listening and Responding to Stakeholders

This implementation guidance brief focuses on asking, listening and responding to stakeholders. In addition, tools and techniques are highlighted. When looking at the RP, asking and listening are the basis for one clause, tools and techniques are in another, and responding to stakeholders is in another one again. Baseline information (see implementation guidance brief on sharing information (7.0)), media, family and friends, and community events are some ways people may hear about pipelines in their area. This information may **invoke understanding, frustration or curiosity**, followed by the need to ask questions.

As questions are asked, operators should acknowledge and understand the question and, if not, seek clarity. Next, it is essential to answer questions promptly. If some requested information is confidential, the operator should work with the requesting stakeholder to understand their needs and provide alternative information to meet those needs. If you don't know the answer or cannot share an answer due to confidentiality, be honest; never leave people hanging. Always close the question-answer loop. Documenting the question-answer loop is beneficial for consistency in the organization's responses and knowing that the loop was closed. **Making it simple for stakeholders to ask, be heard, and receive a response can go a long way in establishing healthy relationships.**

The above paragraph generally describes a high-level, good practice process. Each operator shall establish a process for what works for them. However, processes within an operator may vary depending on the context and/or community.

Here are some opportunities operators can use to gather questions from stakeholders:

- Baseline information. Operators' contact information may be provided through baseline information. If so, stakeholders may be provided an email and/or phone number.
- API RP1162. If an operator is present in a community, members of the community

Shall: As used in a standard, "shall" denotes a minimum requirement in order to conform to the standard.

Should: As used in a standard, "should" denotes a recommendation or that which is advised but not required in order to conform to the standard.

8.3 Asking and Listening

The operator <u>shall</u> establish a process for seeking input from stakeholders.

Operators <u>shall</u> also have a process for receiving stakeholders' observations, concerns, and requests for information about a pipeline.

Operators <u>shall</u> also seek information on changes around the pipeline.

Stakeholders <u>should</u> be able to access operator personnel through established channels.

Operators <u>shall</u> provide readily accessible contact information.

Operators <u>should</u> describe what actions they have taken or will take.

8.4 Tools and Techniques

When asking and listening, operators <u>should</u> build on the principles of accessibility, respect, reciprocity, inclusiveness, and transparency.

may receive information based on RP1162 requirements. This may also include an email and/or phone number.

- Town halls and community meetings. Comment cards may be used, or stakeholders may ask questions verbally.
- Direct contacts. Reach out directly to known key stakeholders, like public officials, and ask if they have any questions.
- A company's website. An opportunity to ask questions will likely appear on the 'Contact Us' form.
- Open houses and workshops. There are several ways to gather questions, such as conversations, sticky notes, and dot voting.
- Mailers. Provide an email, phone number, or postage-paid envelope with an opportunity for questions.
- Advisory groups. These groups are intentionally established, so questions will likely be verbal.
- Events. Participating in community events encourages face-to-face interaction.
- Surveys. Consider ending a survey: "Is there anything further you would like to share or ask?"
- Websites. You may want to hyperlink to a specific email address and provide a contact phone number.
- Radio or TV interviews. This allows for questions where answers are broadcast in real-time.
- Storytelling. Consider this when engaging Tribal Nations.

Those are just a few examples of engagement techniques and how to incorporate questions. **Inclusion should be considered to reach a diverse audience better.**

When selecting techniques that allow stakeholders to ask questions, be aware and respectful of cultural backgrounds, language, the environment, and economic

8.4 Continued

environmental justice issues.

The operator should ask stakeholders what they think will be the most effective means of engaging and sharing information.

Operators should share their perspectives with stakeholders on their successes in using different information-sharing approaches.

The operator's process should include multiple platforms to engage with stakeholders.

While it is important to have multiple channels for access, the sharing should be two-way, starting with acknowledgment of receipt of information. And even with multiple platforms, the operator should identify those instances where verbal and face-to-face communication will benefit the engagement.

The operator shall be respectful of cultural needs, including the confidentiality of locations.

On Tribal lands, this shall entail consultation with Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

The operator should consider seeking assistance in cultural understanding and training from Tribes and communities.

differences. Consultation with Tribal Historic Preservation Offices may guide the operator with ideas on techniques with Tribal Nations.

With questions coming in, the process should include how best to capture/log questions, who's best to answer the question in your process, and the time to answer the questions. If contact information is provided for the person/group asking a question(s), consider a personalized response, not a generalized one. If the questions are real-time, like in conversations, storytelling or on the radio, the process should support honesty in **saying,** "I don't know. I'll get back to you." Consider an escalation step in the process to address when a stakeholder is unhappy with an answer to their question.

All questions should be treated fairly and respectfully, and a timely response

should be provided.

Mining the questions for themes may lead to creating frequently asked questions (FAQ) documents and factsheets. Updating the website may result from some of the questions and answers. Some of the information may be used in future opportunities for discussion.

8.8 Minimum Program Documents

Operators <u>shall</u> maintain the following:

- Documented process describing opportunities to seek information.
- A clear policy or process regarding the identification of confidential, security-sensitive, and proprietary information.
- A process that describes how requests from different avenues are received, routed, and responded to.
- Documented tracking mechanism.

Documentation is important in an engagement program.

At a minimum, document the process of gathering and answering questions. This may include language on confidentiality, which may be captured in a separate document. Stakeholder information should align with data privacy laws, and company confidential information should align with internal policies. The actual questions and responses should also be documented, and a tracking mechanism should be implemented to ensure the loop for each question is closed.

8.4 continued

The operator <u>shall</u> prepare personnel to engage with Tribal Nations and those potentially impacted by environmental justice issues.

Operators <u>should</u> also consider developing partnerships on a one-to-one or small-group.

8.5 Responding to Stakeholders

The operator <u>shall</u> have a process to address stakeholders' requests using stakeholder information.

The operator's process <u>shall</u> define how stakeholder requests that come into the organization through other channels will be routed to established channels to develop a response and criteria or guidance for timely responses.

All forms of requests <u>should</u> be treated fairly and respectfully for a timely response.

The operator <u>should</u> respond with a sense of urgency where needed.

The operator <u>should</u> provide an estimate of time to respond to requests.

The operator <u>should</u> use established contacts and channels to track and provide periodic updates.

If operators do not have pertinent information that a stakeholder is seeking, they <u>should</u> use their knowledge and contacts to direct the stakeholder to other known sources of information.