

# Regional Platforms: Enabling greater efficiency at lower cost

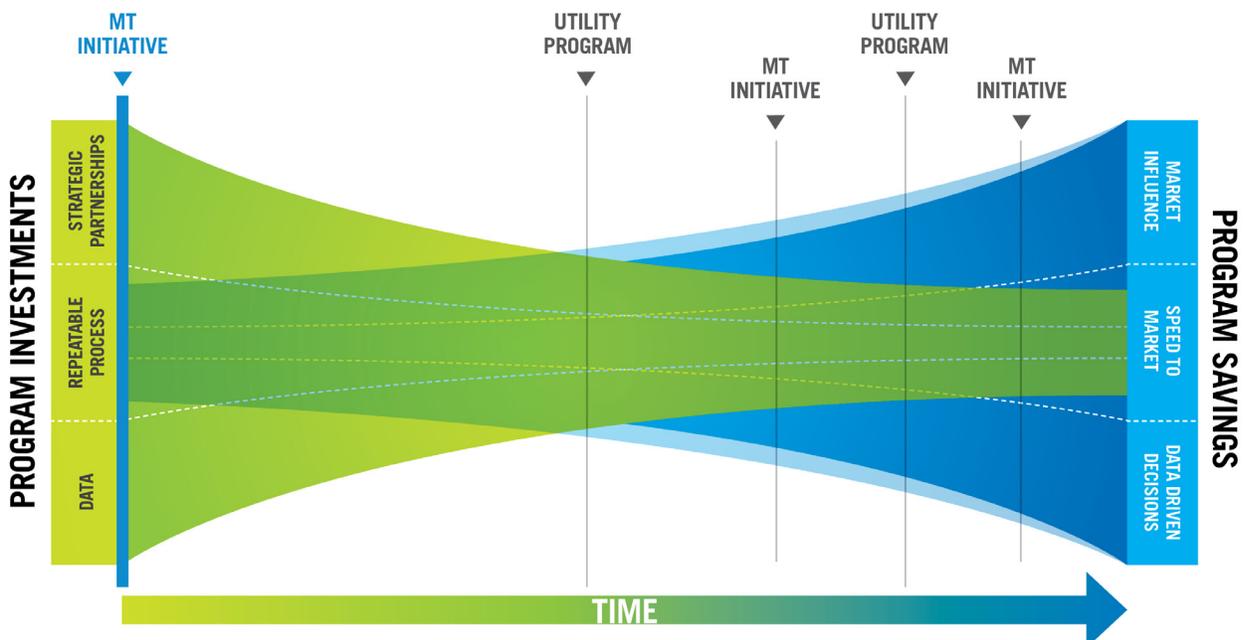
Advancing energy efficiency in the Northwest is a coordinated effort among a multitude of utilities and other energy efficiency organizations. Today, energy efficiency programs face increasing complexity and a rapidly changing marketplace. Many new efficiency opportunities and program strategies rely on entities that cross utility or state boundaries, or are outside the region, such as national corporations and global suppliers. These shifts create even more need for regional coordination and leverage, in order to maximize cost-effective, long-term energy efficiency opportunities in key strategic markets.

**Developing regional platforms is key to delivering these long-term results.** Platforms are critical infrastructure to engage key market partners, enable greater volume of efficient products, and expand regional data collection and analytics. Platforms create efficiencies and provide an essential foundation that any local or regional program can take advantage of, at a lower risk and cost than if done on their own. That shared ownership enables these platforms to provide increased savings at decreased cost, benefiting the entire region.

As illustrated below, over time, platforms enable greater market influence and energy savings at an overall lower cost to the region. As more initiatives and programs are able to use and expand the components of the platform, investment decreases relative to increasing benefits. **Strategic partnerships** lead to greater market influence, **repeatable processes** lead to greater speed to market for products, and more **data** enables data analytics and market intelligence to better focus our investments. Whether it's accessing sales data for a particular product category, using an existing contract with a supplier instead of generating a new one, or making a "warm" versus a cold call to a distributor, programs across the region can tap into any of these larger benefits.

## REGIONAL PLATFORMS

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## *The Value of Platforms in Transforming Markets*

Regional Platforms are delivering value today, and showing their potential to expand and support other regional and local programs.

The **Retail Platform** launched in 2016 to support the region's Retail Product Portfolio initiative. To date, the platform has resulted in deeper relationships with strategic national retailers and extra-regional partners, provides access to full category sales data, and has given the region greater influence on the ENERGY STAR specification process. For retailers, the platform significantly reduces their internal costs associated with administration of efficiency programs by creating a consistent process for sharing data and transferring incentive payments.

For the region, the investment in the platform can be further leveraged by adding other programs, such as the region's Super-Efficient Dryers initiative, that will benefit from national retail distribution, full category sales data, and more stringent ENERGY STAR specifications. Additionally, as the platform continues to develop the region will realize dollar savings from sharing set-up and maintenance costs as more organizations participate.

Concurrently, the **Lighting Platform**, established via the region's Reduced Wattage Lamp Replacement initiative, can be leveraged by the region's midstream and downstream programs for existing distributor relationships, established agreements and processes, and data access and analysis.

As an example, using the platform's dashboard and portal, utility program managers can access timely, granular data on linear lamp sales that are specific to their service territory. We will also be exploring the use of upstream incentive strategies to complement mid- and downstream programs, with the aim of boosting program performance. As we collectively expand mid and upstream incentives, we will have an opportunity to expand data collection beyond linear lamps, building an even more powerful data resource for the region.

## *Looking forward*

We are just beginning to actualize the benefits of regional platforms. Moving forward, the improved alignment and coordination offered by these platforms will result in more energy savings at an overall lower cost, and establishes a regional model for greater collaboration and efficiency that we can build upon well into the future.

For more information, or to explore how your organization or utility can identify opportunities to leverage these platforms, please contact **Emily Moore, Senior Manager, Strategic Markets at NEEA** at [emoore@neea.org](mailto:emoore@neea.org) or 503-688-5422.