

Guidance for Developing the 2018-2021 Sea Grant State Program Strategic Plans

Introduction: This guidance sets out the criteria and timeline for the development, review and approval of the Sea Grant State Program Strategic Plans for 2018-2021.

Contents:

Overview & Background

Criteria for State Program Plan

Flexibility in State Program Plan Development

Approval of State Program Plan by NSGO

Evaluation and Reporting Requirements

Attachments:

- Draft outline of the 2018-2021 National Sea Grant Network Strategic Plan including Definitions of strategic planning terms
- Updated Planning Schedule
- National Performance Measures and Metrics Definitions

Overview and Background

Every four years, the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) develops the National Sea Grant Network Strategic Plan (the Network Plan). A Network Plan Steering Committee was appointed by the acting NSGCP Director, in consultation with the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (NSGAB) and the Sea Grant Association (SGA). The Steering committee is comprised of representatives from the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO), SGA, NSGAB and Network Advisory Committee. The Steering Committee is charged with providing guidance to the NSGO with respect to the development of the Network Plan which includes defining the scope and objectives of the planning process, reviewing relevant source material, providing progress updates and presenting the draft strategic plan to the NSGCP Director.

The National Ocean Policy, DOC's and NOAA's strategic plans, NOAA's Five-Year Research Plan and other relevant national plans provide a broad set of potential priorities for consideration in developing the Network Plan. Responses from the SGA stakeholder survey and the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) exercises provided valuable input throughout the development of the Network Plan and when setting the priorities.

The process to develop the Network Plan is iterative and integrative. The process includes the analysis of input received from the state programs and network partners, as well as the integration of national priorities identified in documents noted above. In preparation for developing the 2018-2021 Network Plan, the Sea Grant network was surveyed regarding proposed priorities for 2018-2021 based on their stakeholder input. The survey responses and draft outline of Network Plan were reviewed by the Steering Committee. The survey responses and other resources listed in the previous paragraph provided a basis to develop a draft outline

of the Network Plan. The draft outline of the Network Plan sets the framework from which the State Programs are expected to shape their strategic plans.

Requested action: The Directors are asked to review the attached draft outline of Network Plan and provide their recommendations to Peg.Brady@noaa.gov and Laura.Early@noaa.gov by **14 September 2016**. Comments can be provided in emails and/or track changes in the draft outline. The Directors' recommendations will be valuable in order to provide contextual details and clarity as we further refine the Network Plan. Comments and recommendations will be gathered and reviewed by the Steering Committee. Based on these initial comments, a revised draft will be distributed by **5 October 2016** (prior to 2016 Sea Grant Week) in preparation for a Sea Grant Week 2016 panel session that is scheduled for Wednesday, October 12th @ 10:30-noon. There will be additional opportunities to review and comment on the Network Plan following Sea Grant Week. The final Network Plan is expected to be approved no later than **31 December 2016**.

Criteria for State Program Plan

The 2018-2021 Network Plan is intended to serve as the framework for the State Programs to develop their strategic plans. At a minimum, the State Program plans are expected to align to the Network Plan and national performance measures. This iterative and integrative process is intended to allow for planning and execution at all levels; local, regional, and national. The State Program plans guide and inform the requests for proposals (RFPs) and all other, research, outreach and education activities. In addition, the program plans are used as the basis for evaluation. State Program plans are expected to be developed through an inclusive stakeholder process and in collaboration with the assigned Federal Program Officer.

Based on the input received with respect to the national focus areas for 2018-2021, the Steering Committee recommended retaining the four focus areas. Therefore, with the concurrence of the NSGCP Director, the focus areas for the 2018-2021 National Sea Grant Network Strategic Plan are:

- Healthy Coastal Ecosystems
- Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Resilient Communities and Economies
- Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development

Requested action: State Programs will be expected to submit an initial draft State Program plan to their program officers no later than **Monday, 7 November 2016**. All State Programs are expected to advance and support some or all of the national network focus areas and national performance measures in their final State Program Plan.

The state programs' initial draft (in word document format) is recommended to include the following:

- Outline of the Program's planning process

- Program's Vision
- Program's Mission
- Core Values
- Cross cutting principles – *Partnerships, Organization excellence, Diversity & Inclusion,*
- National Focus Areas (noted above) that the program intends to support
- Goals for each of the National Focus Areas
- Outcomes
- Note: Performance measures and milestones are not required in the initial drafts.

The initial draft program plans will be reviewed by each program officer. Program officers will provide their written comments to the program directors no later than two weeks from the receipt of the initial draft plan.

Concurrently the 2018-2021 Network Plan will be undergoing final review and revisions with the aim of completing and approving the final Network Plan by **31 December 2016**. The final Network Plan will include a set of national performance measures that each state program is expected to align with in their respective plans. Every state is required to report their performance on these national performance measures. Each State Program has the flexibility to include performance measures unique to their program and situation.

Requested action: The final drafts of the 2018-2021 State Program Strategic Plans are to be submitted to your program officer no later than **Wednesday, 8 February 2017**. The final drafts are expected to include performance measures and milestones, as well as responses to NSGO program officer's comments. The final review and approval will be completed in a timely manner with the aim of approving the State Program plans by **Wednesday, 1 March 2017**. NSGCP Director will provide final approval of each plan.

Note: *In the event of an unforeseen event and/or obstacle preventing a state program from meeting these deadlines, the Program Director should contact their program officer in writing outlining the challenges and provide a plan of action for completing the state program plan in a timely manner. In each case the cause and plan of action will require the NSGO Director's review and approval.*

Flexibility in State Program Plan

State Programs are not expected to contribute to every national focus area, goal, outcome and/or performance measure. State Programs may have goals, outcomes and performance measures that are outside the scope of the Network Plan.

The State Program plans are living documents; programs may make changes to their plans to address significant emerging or unexpected issues (e.g., Hurricane Sandy, Deepwater Horizon, Fukushima debris field, etc.). The NSGO program officer must be notified of and approve any plan changes.

31 August 2016

Approval of Program Strategic Plans by NSGO

Each State Program Strategic Plan will be reviewed by the NSGO to ensure the plans:

- ✓ Align with the national network plan.
- ✓ Is forward looking.
- ✓ Build off of the current state strategic plan.
- ✓ Include the national performance measures.

Evaluation and Reporting Requirements

State Programs are required to report on national performance measures and any state program performance measures. Sea Grant's program evaluation and annual reporting processes are designed to promote the greatest benefit for the federal and state investment. The National Sea Grant website contains more resources on evaluation and reporting requirements and will be revised and updated through time. Information concerning the evaluation and reporting processes can be found [here](#).

The NSGO understands the importance of detailing and clarifying the Planning, Implementation and Evaluation (PIE) process that will be used for the future PIE process. These details will be made available as soon as possible, once the report of the PIE-2 Committee is officially transmitted to the NSGO from the NSGAB and after discussion with the Sea Grant directors and the SGA leadership. We will strive to have this policy in place before 31 December 2016.