

Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan (OAP) Draft Outline

(1) Introduction

- History (MARCO, NOP, RPB)
 - NOC context (NOC guidance and process)
 - Planning process (summary of process and key steps; link to Charter, other)
 - Regional overview (drawing from ROA white paper)
 - Summary discussion of goals and objectives (link to Framework)
 - Brief description of Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal (and link to the portal)
 - Overview of OAP (description of how OAP is organized)
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(2) Mid-Atlantic Ocean Conditions and Key Issues

This chapter would include regional characterization of conditions and key issues, using information from the Human Uses Synthesis, Ecological Data Synthesis, and Regional Ocean Assessment (ROA), and other sources. This chapter would be comprised of sections organized by the goals and objectives (as articulated in the [Framework](#)), that: 1) generally characterize conditions and issues related to each objective; 2) present a relevant map(s); and 3) identify key issues for interjurisdictional coordination (IJC).

Note: The intent is to maximize use of data synthesis and assessment products by providing very concise summary information here and then link to relevant full documents in the Appendix or elsewhere as appropriate.

Goal 1: Healthy ocean ecosystem

- Objective 1: Discovering, understanding, protecting, and restoring the ocean ecosystem AND Objective 2: Accounting for ocean ecosystem changes and increased risks.
 - Marine life distribution and abundance
 - Other marine ecosystem components
 - Ecologically rich areas
 - Other discussion/products related to ecosystem-based management and/or ecosystem change
- Objective 3: Valuing traditional knowledge

Goal 2: Sustainable ocean uses

Objectives:

1. National security

2. Ocean energy
3. Commercial and recreational fishing
4. Ocean aquaculture
5. Maritime commerce and navigation
6. Offshore sand management
7. Recreation
8. Tribal uses
9. Undersea infrastructure

(3) Interjurisdictional coordination actions

In this chapter, the OAP describes collaborative actions that will be taken to address the goals and objectives (as articulated in the [Framework](#)). It describes how the RPB (through internal agency discussion, workgroup and full RPB discussion, and application of working criteria) has identified certain interjurisdictional coordination (IJC) actions to include in this first OAP, and then details those IJC actions. The specific IJC actions typically will have multiple components that have immediate, near-, and longer-term implementation schedules. Some of these will be addressed through procedural actions (e.g., project review coordination) and the use of data and information (e.g., use of data portal to inform regulatory or other actions that could affect stakeholders). Since ocean planning is intended to be an iterative process, actions may be refined and new ones developed over time.

For each Framework objective, the RPB will define actions and sub-actions in varying levels of detail as determined appropriate by the RPB and its member entities. Where deemed appropriate by the RPB, actions could be described in the OAP under the following categories:

- Description of the action¹
- Output/outcome
- Responsible entities and key partners
- Sub-actions/steps and milestones (including immediate, near-, and longer-term components)
- Stakeholder input
- Geographic dimension
- Resources
- Research and science needs related to this action

Topics that would be addressed in this section of the OAP in varying levels of detail that link directly to specific Framework objectives:

- Valuing traditional knowledge and Tribal uses

¹ Commitments to undertake actions will reflect a determination that it is feasible to do so, based on consideration by RPB champions of that action and collaborating RPB entities.

- Healthy ocean ecosystems
- Wind energy
- Offshore sand management
- Commercial and recreational fishing
- National security
- Navigation and commerce
- Ocean aquaculture
- Non-consumptive recreation
- Critical undersea infrastructure

In addition, the OAP would identify IJC actions on the following cross-cutting topics²:

- Ongoing intergovernmental communication and coordination³
- Maintaining a data repository (the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal)⁴

At the end of this chapter would be a reference to the following documents, which would appear in appendices to the OAP and are intended to help the reader find/navigate the actions:

- Summary of actions organized by immediate, near-, and longer-term components
- Comprehensive matrix of goals, objectives, and actions

(4) Plan implementation

This chapter would have descriptions of how entities will engage with the OAP and use it to guide and inform their actions under existing authorities, including implementation mechanisms and processes (in detail or summary form) with reference to further content in Appendices. This may include:

- Best practices for agency coordination and use of data
- Agency guidance, including:
 - Technical guidance (on use of specific data)⁵
 - Implementation guidance (how agencies will use the OAP)⁶
- Administration (technical revisions, scheduled review and updating, other)
- Performance monitoring/metrics
- Data Portal-specific information (including how it should be used in implementation)

² The RPB may decide to add IJC actions related to the Coastal Zone Management Act as well.

³ This action is not related to a specific objective, but it fundamentally supports the achievement of all objectives.

⁴ This action is not related to a specific objective, but it fundamentally supports the achievement of all objectives.

⁵ Under development by NMFS and USFWS for marine animals in association with development of MDAT products.

⁶ Under development at NOC/agency general counsel; both MidA and NE RPBs have provided comments to the NOC draft guidance that touches on this. The RPB will engage in review of guidance documents as the NOC and agency GCs develop drafts and provide for comment.

(5) Science and Research Plan

A compilation of data, research, and science needs identified under Chapter 3 and as determined necessary/appropriate to update and advance the OAP broadly (per ROA, other), including needs associated with:

- On-going updates to OAP data synthesis products
- Studies and research
- Continuing evaluation or and engagement around ecosystem-based management

Description of relevant federal agency programs and processes for coordination/integration on science and research.

Appendices

- Charter
- Framework
- Full technical materials as appropriate
 - ROA
 - Human Use
 - Ecological Synthesis
 - Other
- Implementation Guidance
- Agency commitments (“decision document” formal mechanisms that commit entities to specific actions)⁷
- Stakeholder engagement report/continuing engagement plan
- Summaries of actions (organized by timeframe and/or in matrix format)
- Other

⁷ Agency commitment will be developed in a process parallel to, but on a somewhat later schedule than, the implementation guidance, as the commitment will be keyed to specific actions and planning processes currently being developed by the RPB. We anticipate that additional guidance on the nature and detail for agency commitments will be developed through the NOC and agency general counsel and provided to the RPB for review and discussion.