

Frequently Asked Questions about the *Draft Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework*

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB) was established in 2013, pursuant to the *National Policy for Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes*, to develop and apply a planning process to the ocean and coastal waters off of the States of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Ocean planning provides a collaborative, data-based approach to ensuring sound management and protection of ocean resources and the many uses that depend on them. The MidA RPB comprises representatives from the above States as well as Federal agencies, Tribes, and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.¹

An important step in development of an ocean planning process that will meet the needs and interests of a broad range of stakeholders in the region is creation of a draft framework document to provide a blueprint for the process. The MidA RPB's *Draft Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework* (draft framework) serves as a starting point for public discussion. This document answers questions readers may have about the draft framework:

- Q1: What is the purpose of the *Draft Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework*?
- A1: The draft framework proposes guideposts for how the MidA RPB could move forward with ocean planning with a draft vision statement, draft principles, draft goals, draft objectives, and an initial geographic focus. The draft will be finalized only after public input has been received and considered.
- Q2: How can stakeholders comment on the draft framework?
- A2: The public may provide input on the draft framework by emailing their comments to MidAtlanticRPB@boem.gov until April 15, 2014. The MidA RPB will also conduct a public webinar and series of in-person public listening sessions and participate in stakeholder meetings throughout the region during early 2014 to present the draft framework and seek public input.
- Q3: What is the process for finalizing the draft framework?
- A3: The MidA RPB is seeking robust public input and comments through listening sessions, meetings, and written feedback on the draft framework, including suggested amendments and/or modifications. The MidA RPB will consider all

¹ See: <http://www.boem.gov/Environmental-Stewardship/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/index.aspx> for detailed MidA-RPB membership information.

public comments received and revise the draft framework as needed. The MidA RPB plans to discuss and approve the revised framework at its second in-person meeting in the Spring of 2014.

Q4: How will the final framework be used?

A4: The final framework will provide the blueprint for a more detailed, strategic MidA RPB work plan to be developed in 2014. The draft framework provides an important milestone for MidA RPB engagement with stakeholders and the public since it outlines the MidA RPB's initial thinking and makes a specific request for input on the MidA RPB's scope, direction, and planning priorities.

Q5: Under what circumstances will the MidA RPB amend the final framework?

A5: Once the framework is completed and serves as the starting point and reference for an ocean planning work plan, it will have served its purpose. Therefore, it is not expected that amendments will be needed. Subsequent MidA RPB discussions and stakeholder input will be factored into the work plan and any other ocean planning products that will guide MidA RPB efforts going forward. Those future products will provide the basis for refinement and any course corrections of the MidA RPB's ocean planning goals, process, and work plan.

Q6: What are the next steps for the MidA RPB after finalizing the framework?

A6: Once approved, the final framework will serve as the foundation for the development of a detailed work plan for the MidA RPB. It is anticipated that the work plan for developing an ocean planning process will include a description of the project goals and objectives, desired outcomes and outputs, primary and secondary tasks, assignments, any resources needed, and project schedule with milestones. In the transition toward developing a work plan, the MidA RPB may develop working groups to focus on specific objectives, activities, or ocean sectors.

Q7: Are other regions also developing frameworks?

A7: A number of other regions have established regional planning bodies to pursue ocean planning (e.g., the Northeast and the Caribbean). While the specific terminology and planning process varies from region to region, most have started with some type of framework or document that defines goals and objectives for their planning efforts.