

Steering Committee Recommendation for Next Steps on Indicators

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For RPB Action on: January 24, 2018

Background:

Over the past year, the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) has been working with an HOE 5 Indicators Steering Committee to develop options for an RPB Healthy Ocean Indicators effort. The CBI team conducted extensive desk research on existing indicators programs, conducted a series of industry specific outreach webinars, and hosted a stakeholder workshop. In September 2017, the CBI team submitted their final report to the HOE 5 Indicators Steering Committee. Based on their participation in the CBI project and the final report, the Steering Committee would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Transition into a formal RPB work group:

The HOE 5 Indicators Steering Committee was initiated to guide the CBI contract team through their project. Given the significant forward progress and momentum on this action, the Steering Committee would like to form a RPB Work Group for this action.

There is significant recognition that this work group will work with other work groups where alignment exists (e.g., shifting species, ERAs, ocean acidification, marine debris, Portal Team). Solicit additional RPB members for the work group and reconfirm current Steering Committee members. Identify Federal co-lead for the work group.

2. Public and RPB as target audiences for indicator effort:

The indicator effort's audience should be defined as the general public, but with the additional capacity to be used by RPB entities as a management tool. This option would result in an indicators dashboard that has some information to appeal to the general public, but would also require significant attention to communicating technical details that are important to RPB entities and their existing authorities.

3. Multi-level reporting dashboard to target audience:

To speak to these two different audiences, it is recommended that the dashboard include multiple levels of information and therefore could be more complex. To alleviate some of this complication, references and links to other websites could be used to point more technical audiences to where more information and other efforts to synthesize data can be found. Furthermore, any summary indicator stories should remain neutral and not value laden so as to speak to a broad public audience.

4. Location for the indicator dashboard:

The Steering Committee recommends that the indicators effort live on the MARCO Ocean Data Portal under a new tab and provide links to various other platforms (e.g., the MARCO website, the RPB website, the Regional Ocean Assessment webpage). It will be critical to secure sustained funding for the Portal to maintain this and RPB entity management roles in the dashboard. Funds are needed to develop and integrate the dashboard on the MARCO Ocean Data Portal.

In the interest of efficiency, the indicators work group will consider how the indicators work integrates with and/or advances the Regional Ocean Assessment (ROA).

5. Theme and Issue framework for the indicator effort:

The Steering Committee recommends that the issues and indicators to be tracked through the indicators effort fall under 1 of 3 framework themes: Living Ocean, Ocean Conditions, and Human Footprint. This framework is an issues-based approach that allows for communications about distinctions and interconnections between the three themes. The table below depicts issues to be explored further under each theme. Note that inclusion of issues does not assume that indicators are currently available to be appropriately used in this indicator effort. This framework indicates which issues will be further explored for indicator availability. Furthermore, the Steering Committee acknowledges that as indicators are developed for these issues, some might need to be relocated or co-located under different themes.

LIVING OCEAN	OCEAN CONDITIONS	HUMAN FOOTPRINT
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biodiversity, including functional diversity 2. Habitat diversity 3. Protected species 4. Deep sea corals 5. Shifts in species, habitats, community structure 6. Distribution/abundance of indicator species (e.g., economically-commercially and recreationally- valuable species, menhaden, seabird community, North Atlantic right whale) 7. Productivity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical conditions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sea surface and bottom temperature b. Dissolved oxygen c. Acidification d. Sea level 2. Patterns and cycles <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. El Niño/La Niña b. North Atlantic Oscillation 3. Water quality <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Nutrients and estuarine plumes b. Regional beach and shellfish closures c. Harmful algal blooms d. EPA Coastal Water Quality Index, adapted to ocean data 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marine debris 2. Water quality <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coastal discharges b. Contaminants 3. Sound 4. Ocean uses and socioeconomics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fixed structures b. Socioeconomics c. Vessel traffic (e.g., size, quantity, and number of trips)

6. Next Steps:

Pending RPB consideration and response to the above recommendations, the Steering Committee will develop a work plan that reflects on the following next steps in developing an indicators effort:

- Solicit additional RPB members for the work group and reconfirm current Steering Committee members;
- Identify Federal co-lead for the work group;
- Determine/Decide on specific indicators within each theme and issue;
- Develop a dashboard pilot;
- Draft data agreements and maintenance plans for each indicator; and
- Develop draft products for each indicator.