



# **Pacific Islands Regional Planning Body**

## **Framework and Implementation Plan for Coordinated Ocean Planning**

May 30, 2014

## **ABSTRACT**

This document presents the framework for the Pacific Islands Regional Planning Body (PI RPB) and implementation plan for ensuring that coastal and ocean planning is better coordinated and more transparent than it has been in the past. The PI RPB's overarching goal is to develop a coastal and marine spatial (CMS) plan for its region. The framework articulates the overall structure of the PI RPB and its work. It includes the vision of the PI RPB, mission, timeframe, objectives, key characteristics of the PI RPB, and how stakeholders will be engaged. The implementation plan describes the activities that will be undertaken to achieve the goal of the PI RPB. Whereas the framework provides the CMS Plan's objectives, the implementation plan elucidates those objectives and their associated outcomes, as well as actions and tasks that must be accomplished to meet them. A timeframe is included for each action.

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## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Executive Order (E.O.) 13547 (July 22, 2010), *Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes*, established a national structure to coordinate federal and state activities in the Nation's coastal and marine areas, and provide communication between agencies and the commercial and recreational users of those areas. In the E.O., the President adopted the Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force as the National Ocean Policy (NOP). Included in this structure was a National Ocean Council (NOC) and nine Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs). One task given to the NOC and RPBs was to develop coastal and marine spatial (CMS) plans that "build upon and improve existing Federal, State, tribal, local, and regional decision-making and planning processes." The E.O. identified the Pacific Islands (American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam, and Hawaii) as one of the nine planning regions. The Pacific Islands (PI) RPB has the responsibility for developing the CMS plan for the Pacific Islands.

The NOC describes a coastal and marine spatial (CMS) plan as a document that can "provide information about specific issues, resources, or areas of interest to better inform existing management measures...or can describe future desired conditions." The CMS plan for the Pacific Islands will articulate a process by which planning can occur in the coastal and marine environment of federal, state, and territorial waters that will endeavor to reduce use conflicts, facilitate compatible uses, and preserve critical ecosystem services to meet economic, environmental, security, and social objectives (Final Recommendations, 2011). Currently, various agencies' permitting processes tend to utilize a limited range of management tools and outcomes and perhaps, more importantly, they are under-coordinated. This situation does not represent the integrated, comprehensive approach to planning required of 21<sup>st</sup> century coastal and marine management.

Regional ocean planning does not change existing authorities or create new mandates and bureaucracy; rather, it aims to improve the effectiveness and impact of current agency responsibilities. It can achieve these ends by facilitating a better coordinated and responsive Federal presence, providing for increased relevant communication between State/Territory and Federal agencies, and creating opportunities for coastal and ocean interests to share information and coordinate their activities. The vision, therefore, of the PI RPB is a coordinated, integrated ocean planning process through which agencies and stakeholders can work together to manage for the future of the Pacific Islands' coasts and oceans.

This document describes the framework for the PI RPB and details an implementation plan for ensuring that coastal and ocean planning is better coordinated and more transparent than it has been in the past. The framework is the overall structure of the PI RPB and how it accomplishes its work. It includes the RPB charter, its vision and mission statements, operational timeframe, objective statements, and the key characteristics of the PI RPB. The implementation plan, in contrast, contains details about the actions and tasks necessary to achieve the PI RPB's goal and objectives. It also describes the intended outcomes that will be realized from its activities and provides information about the anticipate timeframes associated with them.

## **FRAMEWORK**

### **History of the Pacific Islands RPB**

The PI RPB was officially established in April 2013 and members held an inaugural meeting in July 2013. It has since held two teleconferences (November 2013, April 2014) and another in-person meeting (Guam; May 2014). During the course of these meetings, the PI RPB developed and adopted its Charter, and drafted its stakeholder engagement plan. The Charter includes the PI RPB's mission, guiding principles, member agencies' commitments to participate, goal, and objectives, as well as its organizational structure, meeting frequency, decision making, and dispute resolution. During the May 2014 meeting, members also reviewed and refined this Framework and Implementation Plan.

### **Vision and Mission**

The vision of the PI RPB is a coordinated, integrated ocean planning process through which agencies and stakeholders can work together to determine the future of the Pacific Islands coasts and oceans. Its mission is to plan, coordinate, and realize the responsibilities described in the NOP through the creation of a coastal and marine spatial plan that meets economic, environmental, security, and social objectives, as well as the conservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources for the benefit of the region, its indigenous people, and the nation.

### **Guiding Principles**

Guiding principles are high level elements that provide the foundation for the ocean planning effort. They should be referred to when developing objectives and actions to address the goal and its objectives. The following are the Guiding Principles of the PI RPB:

1. Promote cultural traditions, values, and practices of the Pacific Islands as a means of managing natural resources and fostering opportunities for participation;
2. Promote an ecosystem approach in the management of natural resources, including minimizing impacts on habitat, ecosystem processes, and species;
3. Promote environmentally responsible use of natural resources to provide long-term economic growth and stability;
4. Promote the safe, secure, and productive access and use of coastal and ocean areas;
5. Support quality research and obtain the most complete scientific information and indigenous peoples' ecological knowledge to assess and manage natural and cultural resources;
6. Promote education and outreach that fosters good stewardship and broad public participation;
7. Promote regional and international cooperation to manage natural resources;
8. Encourage development and use of technologies to effectively manage and monitor natural resources;
9. Incorporate responses to climate change into plans and decisions;
10. Encourage data sharing to increase efficiency and resolve conflict;
11. Support risk-informed decisions that consider long-term implications; and
12. Promote compatible and discourage incompatible uses of coastal and ocean areas that support the needs of the local population, region, and nation.

## **Goal and Objectives**

The goal of the PI RPB is to further the National Ocean Policy through the creation of a coastal and marine spatial planning process that will provide the best available, publicly accessible information about the conditions and uses of the coastal and marine ecosystems; involve stakeholders to ensure that local, regional, and cultural priorities and rights are reflected; and enable effective, holistic, and integrated intergovernmental decision-making regarding productive uses. These three objectives feed into a fourth objective of promoting healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems that ensure community benefits. Integrated decision-making regarding productive uses can support compatibility, access, commerce, and security in the coastal and marine environment.

## **Pacific Islands RPB Structure**

The PI RPB has 17 members. The members consist of eight Federal members and nine non-federal members, including a member from the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (WPFMC) and two members each from American Samoa, CNMI, Guam, and Hawaii. The Federal members represent the following agencies: U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Commerce (DOC), Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of the Interior (DOI), the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and Department of Transportation (DOT). Federal agencies are responsible for selecting their participants; the non-federal members are selected by their governor to represent their territory or state. In the case of the WPFMC, Council members select their PI RPB representative. All members are government employees so that the PI RPB complies with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

A federal and non-federal co-lead, together with an executive secretary, comprise the PI RPB Executive Secretariat. The Executive Secretariat is tasked with leading the PI RPB through development of a coastal and marine spatial plan by 2018, including supporting actions such as development of a data portal.

Committees and working groups will be established as needed to address specific issues or perform specific tasks. They will typically be responsive to an action or task detailed in the Implementation Plan of this document.

## **Meetings**

All PI RPB meetings are public. PI RPB members have committed to one in-person meeting annually that will be rotated throughout the three territories and Hawaii. Teleconference meetings will be held as needed. A quorum is necessary to hold a meeting, which is at least half of the non-federal and half the federal members present. Decisions are made through consensus.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

The PI RPB has a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) that details the frequency with which the PI RPB will engage stakeholders, how engagement will occur, why stakeholders will be engaged, the RPB's target audience, and how stakeholders can engage the RPB and its process. The SEP can be found on the PI RPB website.

Participation by stakeholders ensures a full understanding of the range of interests and interactions of ocean user groups, which contributes greatly to the planning process. The PI RPB is dedicated to developing a CMS plan that reflects input and participation from interested organizations and individuals, and this commitment is reflected in three of its guiding principles. The PI RPB committed to promoting cultural traditions, values, and practices of the Pacific Islands in natural resource management and foster opportunities for participation; supporting quality research and obtaining the most complete scientific information and traditional ecological knowledge to assess and manage natural resources; and promoting education and outreach that fosters good stewardship and broad public participation.

Stakeholders include the public, academics, business leaders, fishermen, community members, recreational users of the coast and ocean, researchers, and many more. These people and groups will be engaged in the discussion, evaluation, and application of information. It is also anticipated that non-governmental individuals will be engaged in projects and efforts supporting the PI RPB, including committees and working groups.

Stakeholder engagement will be a routine component of RPB meetings, workshops, conferences, listening sessions, non-RPB-hosted meetings, committees, and working groups. Meeting notice will occur at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Efforts will be made to ensure meetings and other gatherings will occur throughout the territories and state. Listening sessions will be held in areas that otherwise may not have opportunities to provide input due to their remote location, such as outlying villages in American Samoa.

### **Summary**

The PI RPB was created to enhance ocean planning in the Pacific Islands through better coordination and increased transparency. The framework by which the PI RPB will operate was detailed above, including the RPB structure, meeting frequencies, stakeholder engagement, and the goal with objectives. To fulfill the objectives, an implementation plan follows that describes the actions, tasks, and their associated timeframes.

## MULTI-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### **Introduction**

The following implementation plan describes how the Pacific Islands RPB will proceed with achieving the goal and objectives its members have established. This includes development of a data portal, development of a coastal and marine spatial plan, and ensuring that stakeholders are included throughout the process. The implementation plan is segmented by the four objectives and details the outcome(s), actions and tasks, and anticipated timeframe of each. Progress towards achieving these objectives will be examined on a yearly basis, and the implementation plan will be updated every three years. This first implementation plan includes timeframes from 2014-2016.

The following are definitions of terms in this document:

**Goal:** Statement of intent. High-level statement of the outcome the PI RPB hopes to achieve.

**Objective:** Statement that describes how a goal can be achieved. It is measurable and attainable.

**Outcome:** Statement of results that identify the intended product of each objective.

**Action:** A specific task necessary to complete an objective.

**Task:** Activity necessary to complete an action.

### **Pacific Islands RPB Goal**

The goal of the Pacific Islands Regional Planning Body is to further the National Ocean Policy through the development of a regional coastal and marine spatial plan that will, now and in the future, accomplish the following:

1. Provide the best available and publicly accessible information on the condition and uses occurring within coastal and marine ecosystems.
2. Promote healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems and community benefits.
3. Involve stakeholders and reflect local, regional and cultural priorities and rights.
4. Enable effective, holistic and integrated intergovernmental decision-making regarding productive uses that supports compatibility, access, commerce, and security in the coastal and marine environment.

Note: the Pacific Islands RPB Charter lists *achieving healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems and community benefits* second. However, since this objective is also an end result of accomplishing the other three objectives, we address it fourth in the following section.

### **Objective 1: Best available and publicly accessible information**

The first objective is to provide the best available and publicly accessible information on the condition and uses occurring within coastal and marine ecosystems.

#### **Process Outcomes:**

- 1) An informed suite of agency and non-agency stakeholders who are better prepared to participate in coordinated coastal and ocean planning in the Region.
- 2) Transparent scientific and management processes.

#### **Primary Products:**

- 1) RPB website is regularly updated.



2) A comprehensive and user-friendly public data portal.

**Action 1-1:** Identify the desired use and condition categories about which the website and data portal will provide information.

**Activity timeframe:** June – September 2014

**Action 1-2:** Determine whether any of the desired categories should be eliminated from consideration due to a lack of data streams or other issues, such as data confidentiality or poor data representation.

**Activity timeframe:** September 2014 – March 2015

**Task:** Develop working groups that can identify necessary data.

**Action 1-3:** Groundtruth the results of Actions 1-1 and 1-2 with appropriate stakeholder groups, to include investigation of current and predicted future uses.

**Activity timeframe:** March 2015 – September 2015

**Tasks:**

- Present to and solicit feedback from stakeholder groups and communities
- Email the RPB listserv as well as other dissemination points, such as State, Fishery Management Council, and NOAA listserves
- Invite feedback via the RPB website and social and print media

**Action 1-4:** Develop a data portal and website products.

**Activity timeframe:** January 2015 – November 2015

**Action 1-5:** Populate RPB website and data portal with information developed via Actions 1-1 through 1-3.

**Activity timeframe:** September 2015 – ongoing

**Objective 2: Stakeholder involvement, priorities, and rights**

The second objective is to involve stakeholders and reflect local, regional, and cultural priorities and rights in the development of the CMS Plan. Whereas the purpose of Objective 1 is to provide information to stakeholders so that they are equipped to understand regional ocean planning issues, the purpose of this objective is meaningful participation by stakeholders and operating in such a way that reflects the unique cultural attributes of the Pacific Islands region.

**Process Outcomes:**

- 1) Meaningful participation by diverse interested parties and agencies in the ongoing activities of the PI RPB.
- 2) An operational ethos that reflects the unique socio-cultural attributes of the Pacific Islands region.

**Primary Products:**

- 1) An informed, responsive, and integrated RPB Secretariat.

**Action 2-1:** Engage stakeholders throughout the development of the plan.

**Activity timeframe:** July 2013 – July 2018

**Tasks:**

- Apprise stakeholders of ongoing RPB actions and activities via an email distribution list
- Host meetings with stakeholders to dialogue and receive in-person feedback and input
- Develop a comprehensive email distribution list that includes stakeholders and points of contacts for groups of stakeholders (i.e. the chairman of a boat club, not individual members) who can disseminate information and feedback requests
- Provide formal communication to partners such as the Hawaii Office of Planning, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, American Samoa Port Authority, etc.
- Maintain a calendar of meetings, activities, and events at which the Executive Secretariat can represent the PI RPB, such as MACZAC, WPFMC, boat club, and civic club meetings

**Action 2-2:** Identify and engage stakeholders that represent cultural groups, such as Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Office of Chamorro Affairs, Department of Samoan Affairs, Office of Carolinian Affairs, and Aha Moku councils.

**Activity timeframe:** June 2014 – September 2014

**Task:**

- Create a working group(s) of representatives from the cultural entities of the State and Territories to help engage communities and provide input to the RPB.

**Objective 3: Integrated intergovernmental decision-making**

The third objective is to enable effective, holistic and integrated intergovernmental decision-making regarding productive uses that supports compatibility, access, commerce, and security in the coastal and marine environment.

**Outcome:** Government agencies and bodies are informed of and participate as appropriate in planning processes and decisions that affect regional ocean governance.

**Action 3-1:** Develop mechanisms and channels of communication between the PI RPB Executive Secretariat and member agencies regarding ongoing and upcoming projects and initiatives.

**Activity timeframe:** October 2014 – July 2015

**Action 3-2:** Develop mechanisms and channels of communication between the PI RPB Executive Secretariat and non-member agencies regarding ongoing and upcoming projects and initiatives.

**Activity timeframe:** December 2015 – September 2015

**Action 3-3:** Develop resource materials to inform stakeholders about permitting processes and elements regarding common coastal and ocean projects and activities.

**Activity timeframe:** July 2015 – March 2016

**Task:**

- Identify current and future use activities which require permitting.

**Action 3-4:** Develop and maintain a section of the PI RPB website dedicated to information updates regarding ongoing and upcoming projects and initiatives.

**Activity timeframe:** July 2014 – ongoing

**Action 3-5:** Hold regular meetings of the PI RPB.

**Activity timeframe:** July 2013 – ongoing

**Action 3-6:** Annually identify issues that the PI RPB could assist with regarding conflicting uses or interagency conflicts.

**Activity timeframe:** 2015 – ongoing

**Objective 4: Promote healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems**

The fourth objective is to promote healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems that function to provide desired benefits to the communities.

**Outcome:** Through coordinated and collaborative planning efforts, maintain the ability of the region's ocean and coastal ecosystems to provide provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting ecosystem services.

**Action 4-1:** Provide resource materials regarding coastal and ocean use permits and permitting processes to stakeholders.

**Activity timeframe:** July 2016 – ongoing

**Action 4-2:** Annually identify issues that the PI RPB could assist with regarding stakeholder projects that may conflict with each other (non-agency to non-agency, non-agency to agency, or agency to agency) in the coastal and marine area, and interagency conflicts that potentially hinder promoting healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems.

**Activity timeframe:** 2015 – ongoing

**Action 4-3:** Develop a data portal that includes ecosystem dynamics, habitat areas of particular concern, and essential fish habitat.

**Activity timeframe:** January 2015 – November 2015