

Strategic Action Plan Outline Fact Sheet

Overview

As part of President Obama's charge for Federal agencies to implement the *National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes*, the National Ocean Council is responsible for developing strategic action plans to achieve nine priority objectives that address some of the most pressing challenges these resources face.

What is a Strategic Action Plan?

The nine priority objectives provide a bridge between the National Ocean Policy and action on the ground and in the water. Strategic action plans will identify specific and measurable near-term, mid-term, and long-term actions, with appropriate milestones, performance measures, and outcomes that Federal agencies will take to meet each priority objective. Each plan will explicitly identify key lead and participating agencies; gaps and needs in science and technology; potential resource requirements; ways to conduct activities more efficiently; and steps for integrating or coordinating current and out-year budgets. Collectively, the strategic action plans will constitute the implementation strategy for the National Ocean Policy. By having a unifying National Ocean Policy that clearly articulates our priorities and addresses them through the development of strategic action plans, the Federal government can more effectively ensure that the limited Federal resources we have are targeted and deliver demonstrable outcomes and results, such as predictability for users, more efficient and coordinated decision making, and improved sharing of data and technology.

Who is Developing the Strategic Action Plans?

Under the direction of the National Ocean Council, experts from the Council's 27 Federal agencies and offices are drafting the strategic action plans with a heavy emphasis on obtaining input from National, regional, and local stakeholders and the public. The Council's two Interagency Policy Committees (IPCs)-the Ocean Resource Management IPC and the Ocean Science and Technology IPC - are overseeing the development of the strategic action plans. The IPCs coordinate activities for all plan preparation and review draft and final products prior to submission to the Council. Through this process we are bringing together experience and authorities in science, natural resource management, economic development, infrastructure planning, public health, and social services as well as essential knowledge from the individuals who live and work along our Nation's coasts.

What are Strategic Action Plan Content Outlines?

As a first step in developing strategic action plans, the NOC writing teams have developed what we call 'content outlines' for each plan. The purpose of the outlines is to provide an initial view as to how Federal agencies might address the priority objectives as described in the National Ocean Policy. They are preliminary documents that constitute an important but interim step toward completion of the strategic action plans. The outlines, by design, do not and are not intended to

provide all of the details that will be provided in the plans. Nor is there necessarily the same level of specificity across all outlines. The outlines serve as an early and valuable point in the plan development process for focusing public and stakeholder input. The outlines were informed by the comments received during our initial scoping period that closed on April 29.

Each outline presents, in bulleted form, potential actions to address its priority objective. They briefly describe the reason for taking the action, expected outcomes and milestones, gaps and needs in science and technology, and the timeframe for completing the action. They also provide an overview of the priority objective the strategic action plan will address, and the greater context for the plan in implementing the National Ocean Policy.

In developing the outlines - and ultimately the full plans - the writing teams were operating under certain parameters that guided their discussions. Each plan is to have approximately six actions that are focused on Federal efforts. The actions are to be succinct, feasible activities based on measurable and achievable outcomes within the milestones and timeframe indicated. They are to be consistent with the President's management and budget goals, especially in consideration of the current budget climate in which little to no new resources likely will be available in the near- to mid-term. In that light, the actions are intended to focus on eliminating redundancy, encouraging efficiency, and evaluating and prioritizing ongoing and new activities. Options for long-term activities requiring additional resources will be considered as plans are developed in the out-years. Overall the strategic action plans should be adaptive to allow for modification and addition of new actions based on new information or changing conditions. The plans and their implementation would be assessed and reviewed annually by the National Ocean Council and modified as needed based on the success or failure of the agreed upon actions.

We Want to Hear From You

You have the opportunity to review these outlines and provide input during the June 2 to July 2 public comment period. To submit your comments please visit:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oceans/sap>

We welcome your general input, and also pose the following questions within the context of the nine national priorities:

- What changes on the water, to the coasts, or in the Great Lakes would make the biggest difference for you and how would you like to see these reflected in the strategic action plans?
- Do the actions address your community's needs or key concerns? If not, what areas should be considered for inclusion?
- How can the Federal government be a more effective partner to help make these changes?

Comments received will be provided to the IPCs and the writing teams for consideration as they develop the full draft strategic action plans. Draft plans are expected to be released for public review in the fall. Final plans are expected to be completed in early 2012.