

GOVERNORS' SOUTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

BUSINESS PLAN



MAY 2014



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INTRODUCTION

This Business Plan sets out the operational structure and functions for the Governors' South Atlantic Alliance. It is intended that this Plan support the existing operations of the Alliance, while being flexible enough to accommodate the growth and evolution of the organization into the future. The broad policies in the Plan are intended to guide the Alliance in executing its regular organizational and financial management and communications; however, specific strategies for these areas have been further developed in separate plans following the release of the Business Plan. The Business Plan will be a living document, adapting to the needs of the Alliance and changing as directed by the Steering Group.

The Alliance mission continues to center on partnership and collaborative activities around regional priority issue areas. While the regular management functions (as laid out in this Plan) are necessarily led by the states with support from key federal agencies and partners, the programmatic activities of the Alliance will continue to be broadly collaborative and inclusive. The Governors' South Atlantic Alliance Action Plan and Implementation Plan guide these programmatic activities and can be reviewed at the Alliance website: www.southatlanticalliance.org.

ARTICLE I. DESCRIPTION

In 2009, the Governors of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida signed an [Agreement](#) establishing the Governors' South Atlantic Alliance (GSAA). The Alliance is led by the four states in partnership with three federal co-lead agencies (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Geological Survey/U.S. Department of Interior). The Alliance also partners with other federal agencies, academia, non-profits, private industry, regional organizations, and other partners. The Alliance supports both national and state-level ocean and coastal policy by coordinating federal, state and local entities to ensure the sustainability of the region's economic, cultural, and natural resources.

The GSAA Action Plan was released in December 2010 and described the four Priority Issue Areas that were identified by the Governors to be of mutual importance to the sustainability of the region's resources: Healthy Ecosystems, Working Waterfronts, Clean Coastal and Ocean Waters, and Disaster-Resilient Communities. The goals, objectives, actions and implementation steps for each of these priorities were further described in the GSAA Implementation Plan released in July 2011. Both documents are available online here:

- [Governors' South Atlantic Alliance Action Plan](#) (December 2010)
- [Governors' South Atlantic Alliance Implementation Plan](#) (July 2011)

A. Mission

The mission of the Governors' South Atlantic Alliance is to significantly increase regional collaboration among the South Atlantic states, with federal agency partners and other stakeholders, to sustain and enhance the environmental (coastal/marine), natural resources, economic, public safety, social, and national defense missions of the respective states and the South Atlantic region.

B. Goals

The goals of the Alliance are to:

- Provide an organizational structure and forum for collaboration, coordination, and a clearinghouse for information. This structure will foster cooperative activities and coastal and ocean decision-making that supports effective planning and ensures resource sustainability;
- Promote regional sustainability of resources that supports individual state requirements;
- Align regional decision-making resulting in mutual mission accomplishment;
- Enhance cooperative planning and leveraging of resources to produce multiple state and regional benefits;
- Preserve the historical, cultural, and social heritage of each state and the region;
- Integrate research, observation, monitoring and mapping of the South Atlantic region, leading to common and coordinated data and information to enhance science-based decision making;
- Increase awareness of challenges facing the South Atlantic region; and
- Integrate solutions that consider all systems requirements (i.e., ecosystems, economic systems, social systems, and national defense systems) at state, federal, and local levels.

C. Stakeholders

The mission of the Alliance is relevant to anyone with an interest in the ocean and coastal environment in the South Atlantic region. The general public, private sector, state and federal agencies, academia, regional management organizations, non-profit organizations, and elected officials all benefit from plans and policies, developed with broad input, that guide ocean and coastal usage, protection and sustainability, prioritize issue areas of concern, and help to harmonize competing demands on the region's natural resources. They also benefit from agency force-multipliers such as leveraged funding and staffing through better situational awareness and coordination of effort. With its focused activities and outreach, the framework and organization of the Alliance provides a variety of forums for ongoing discussion and opportunities to voice concerns from the various stakeholders. The Alliance Action Plan seeks to enhance collaboration, networking, and partnerships to foster shared learning and research to protect valuable natural resources while balancing well-considered economic development.

ARTICLE II. ORGANIZATION

The GSAA's organizational framework complements and integrates existing state, regional, and federal coastal and ocean ecosystem management programs. The Alliance supports a partnership-driven process that prioritizes consensus-based decision-making and respects individual state policy-making requirements and federal mandates.

The formulation of future direction, actions, implementation steps and the means to achieve them are the ultimate organizational goals. Each level of the organization is built to support the others, and is based around membership, roles, and decision-making processes as described below. The Alliance's structure is multi-layered and is comprised of an Executive Group, a Steering Group, an Executive Planning Team, and Issue Area Technical Teams.

A. Organization

1. Executive Group

- a. *Membership*: The Governors of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.
- b. *Role*: The Governors provide strategic vision and guidance to the Alliance Steering Group for developing and implementing plans of action. The Governors use interstate executive ties to keep Alliance activities connected with other state, regional, and national activities in a complementary manner. The Governors may send a designee to Executive Group meetings.

2. Steering Group

- a. *Membership*: Each Governor appoints representatives to the Alliance Steering Group. The Steering Group representatives are heads of departments or other senior state officials who oversee actions within their respective states that are relevant to the success of the Alliance. Those representatives serve until such time as the Governor of their respective states makes a new appointment. The chair of the Steering Group rotates among the four member states for one (1) year terms, with the option of a second year with agreement from all states.
- b. *Role*: The Alliance Steering Group directs the implementation of the Governors' strategic vision and guidance. They guide the activities of the Alliance, budget and fiscal policies, and development and tracking of the Action Plan and Implementation Plan. The Steering Group has the authority to eliminate, establish, or modify priority issue areas and teams, as well as committees, working groups, or other entities to further Alliance goals.
- c. *Decision-making Process*: The Steering Group and Federal Co-Chairs will meet at least semi-annually to address Alliance business. Governor-appointed representatives or their duly appointed proxies from all four (4) states constitute a

quorum. The Steering Group strives to make decisions by consensus; however, should a decision be required where consensus cannot be reached, the Steering Group will decide on a voting procedure.

d. *Federal Co-Chairs*

- i. *Membership*: One (1) representative from each of three Federal agencies as identified by the White House Council on Environmental Quality – the U.S. Department of Interior U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Federal Co-Chairs are selected by the heads of each agency and are senior federal officials who oversee national or regional actions within their department that are relevant to the success of the Alliance. The Federal Co-Chairs may select a lead from among their membership.
- ii. *Role*: The Federal Co-Chairs collaborate with the Steering Group and advise on coordinating an innovative and integrated federal response to the priority issues identified by the Alliance. They identify appropriate experts to engage at every level of the Alliance and ensure their representatives have the required technical and financial resources to support Alliance activities. The Federal Co-Chairs also elevate Alliance needs and issues to the Administration.

3. Executive Planning Team

The Executive Planning Team (EPT) is the management team for the Alliance. It serves as the principal venue to support, review, communicate, coordinate, and integrate the activities of the Issue Area Technical Teams consistent with the Steering Group's priorities. The EPT also facilitates internal and external communication, develops and recommends Alliance policies and processes, and brings resources that support Alliance activities. The EPT consists of a Leadership Arm, a Federal Agencies Arm, and a Partners Arm.

a. Leadership Arm

- i. *Membership*: Each Steering Group Member may appoint one (1) representative to the EPT Leadership Arm. The Leadership Arm representatives are deputy heads of departments or other senior state officials who oversee actions within their respective states that are relevant to the success of the Alliance. The Chair of the Leadership Arm and the full EPT is from the same state as the Steering Group Chair. The Chairs of the Federal Agencies Arm and the Partners Arm serve as members of the Leadership Arm.
- ii. *Role*: The Leadership Arm interacts directly with the Steering Group and Federal Co-Chairs and is responsible for implementing decisions that align with their priorities and making recommendations for their endorsement. The Leadership Arm leads the communication, coordination, and integration of the full EPT and identifies issues and internal and external influences that can affect the Alliance organization. The Leadership Arm is the final decision-making body of the EPT.
- iii. *Decision-making Process*: The Leadership Arm will meet at least monthly to address Alliance business. The Leadership Arm strives to make decisions by consensus; however, should a decision be required where consensus cannot be reached, representatives from all four (4) states constitute a quorum. Regardless of the number of representatives appointed by the Steering Group members, each state has one (1) vote on all matters coming before the EPT Leadership Arm. Partners advise, but do not vote.

b. Federal Agencies Arm

- i. **Membership:** Each Federal Co-Chair appoints one (1) representative to the EPT Federal Arm from their agency. The chair of the Federal Arm is from the same agency as the lead Federal Co-Chair. Additional representatives may be appointed to the Federal Arm by senior leadership in other federal agencies, with the agreement of the Federal Co-Chairs and the Steering Group, provided they meet the following criteria:
 - The agency must have a mandate or mission focus on ocean/coastal/marine resources, research, education, outreach, assessment, management, prediction, use, and/or decision-making.
 - The agency's territorial responsibilities should span or include the Alliance's geographical reach (NC, SC, GA, and FL).
 - The agency representative must be able to make decisions and commitments on behalf of the agency that the individual is representing.
 - The agency representative must be able to actively participate by committing time and effort to GSAA without the expectation of financial support for travel or time.
 - ii. **Role:** The EPT Federal Agencies Arm advises and collaborates with the EPT Leadership Arm on coordinating an innovative and integrated federal response to the priority issues identified by the Alliance. They monitor and coordinate the activities of federal representatives on the Issue Area Technical Teams, review Alliance policies and processes, facilitate internal and external communication, and support the Federal Co-Chairs.
- c. Partners Arm
- i. **Membership:** The EPT Partners Arm consists of representatives appointed by senior leadership in non-profit organizations, private industry, academia, or other partners with the agreement of the Steering Group, provided they meet the following criteria:
 - The organization must have as its primary mandate or mission a focus on ocean/coastal/marine resources, research, education, outreach, assessment, management, prediction, use, and/or decision-making.
 - The organization's territorial responsibilities should span or include the Alliance's geographical reach (NC, SC, GA, FL); that is, it must be a regional entity or be representative of the South Atlantic region.
 - The partner representative must be able to make decisions and commitments on behalf of the organization that the individual is representing.
 - The partner representative must be able to actively participate by committing time and effort to GSAA without the expectation of financial support for travel or time.

The representatives may select a chair from among their members.
 - ii. **Role:** The EPT Partners Arm advises and collaborates with the EPT Leadership Arm on identifying opportunities, soliciting action, and integrating solutions that address the priority issues identified by the Alliance. The Partners Arm representatives identify appropriate experts from their organizations to participate in the Issue Area Technical Teams and ensure their representatives have the required technical and financial resources to support Alliance activities. They monitor and coordinate the activities of partner representatives on the Issue Area Technical Teams, review Alliance policies and processes, facilitate internal and external communication, and identify expertise from other non-governmental organizations where required.

4. Issue Area Technical Teams

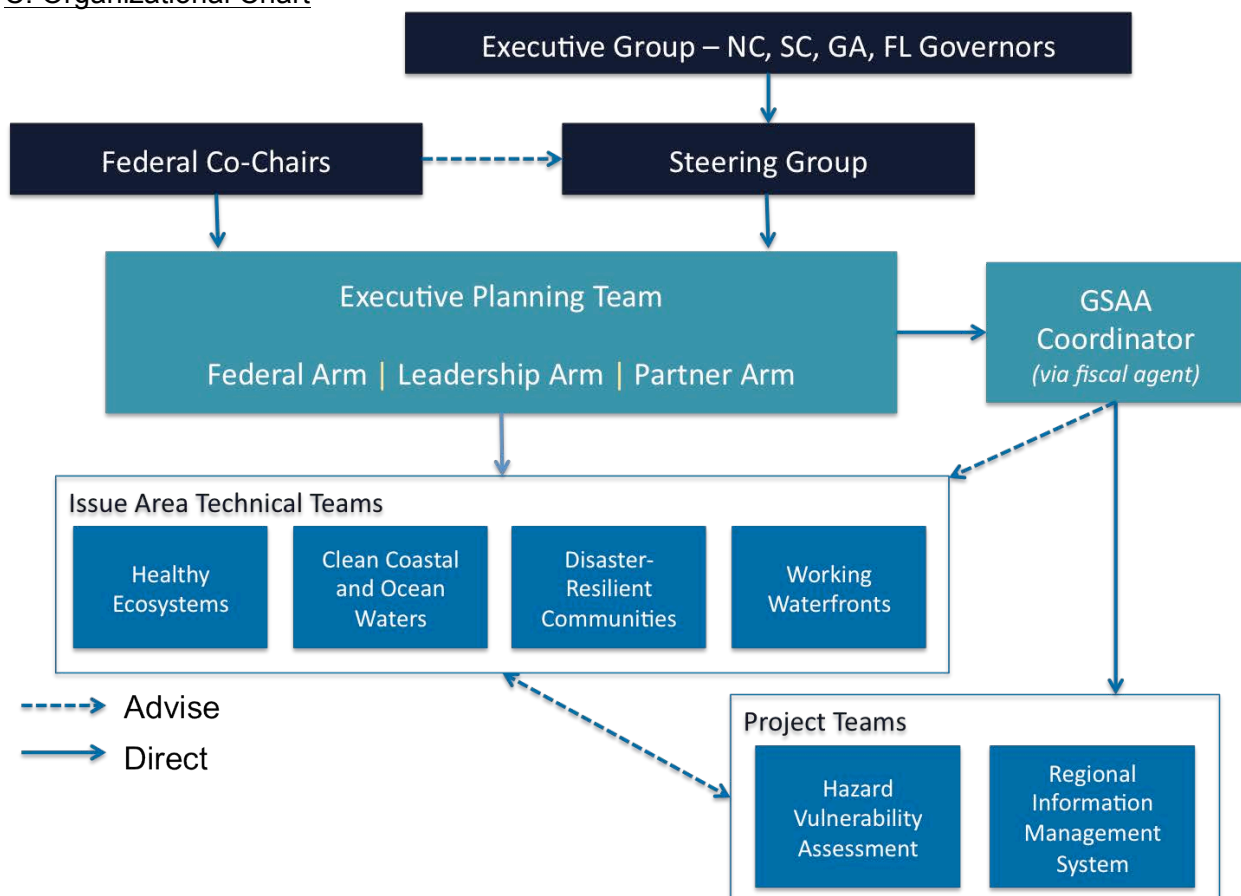
Issue Area Technical Teams (IATTs) are established by the Steering Group to address each of the Alliance’s priority issue areas. Currently, there are four teams: Healthy Ecosystems, Working Waterfronts, Clean Coastal and Ocean Waters, and Disaster-Resilient Communities. The total number of teams is dependent on need, and IATTs may be eliminated, established, or modified upon the direction of the Steering Group.

- a. *Membership*: The IATTs may have up to a maximum of fifteen (15) permanent members. Permanent members include state, federal, and partner members with technical expertise in the priority area that engage in most areas of the team’s activities and are eligible for travel support through the GSAA. The IATT members may also invite temporary knowledge-based state, federal agency, and partner representatives to accomplish specific actions or objectives. Permanent members of the IATT will select a lead from among the state representatives.
- b. *Role*: Issue Area Technical Teams develop and implement issue area goals, objectives, strategies and schedules to produce solutions (products) of mutual use and multiple benefits within their priority issue area. The IATTs identify and recommend to the EPT future Action Items and Implementation Steps. IATTs may initiate the formation of, and oversee the work of, Working Groups to assist them when specifically called for by the Alliance Action Plan or Alliance Implementation Plan.
- c. *EPT Liaison*: The EPT Leadership Arm will identify one (1) EPT Liaison for each IATT. The Liaisons will be members of the EPT that advise the IATTs regarding goals and objectives of the Action Plan and facilitate communication between the EPT and the IATTs. If EPT Liaisons are not already part of the EPT Leadership Arm, they should participate in Leadership Arm calls as non-voting members in order to provide effective communication to the IATTs.

B. Decision-Making Authorities

	Executive Group	Steering Group	Executive Planning Team	Coordinator / Director	Issue Area Technical Teams
Administration	Identify appropriate leadership to delegate administration	Direct administrative policies and actions	Review and authorize administrative policies and actions	Develop and recommend administrative policies and actions	Self-organized, guided by administrative policies
Resources	Commit state resources	Make recommendations to Executive Group	Review and authorize fiscal policies and budget	Develop and recommend fiscal policies and budget	Execute budget and provide input on budget requirements
Programmatic Activities	Provide vision and regional and national connections	Direct programmatic activities in alignment with vision	Review and authorize programmatic activities and guide implementation	Coordinate programmatic activities and guide implementation	Develop and implement specific programmatic activities

C. Organizational Chart



ARTICLE III. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

For the Alliance to be effective and efficient in meeting its mission and goals, an Alliance staff must be retained and standard management policies must be established.

A. Administration

1. A Governors' South Atlantic Alliance office will be established to manage the day to day business of the Alliance and will interact with internal and external interests; have outreach and research coordinator capabilities; provide administrative support; and conduct the fiduciary obligations of the organization including financial reporting, payroll, grant preparation and submission, grant receipt and management, and contract management. Full time equivalency of the positions can be determined based on need and resource availability, both human and fiscal. Functions can be delivered by contract.
2. The office and functional requirements described above may be provided through a stand-alone operation fully staffed by employees of the Alliance, by contracted employees, or operating under the auspices of a fiscal agent. Any employee or contractor of the Alliance or its fiscal agent will be subject to annual review of progress toward objectives by the EPT Leadership Arm.
3. *Fiscal Agent*: Should a Fiscal Agent be chosen to administer the Alliance, the Chair of the Steering Group, with consent of the Steering Group, may enter into a formal agreement with a Fiscal Agent to provide services for a specified period of time that will not exceed 24

months, and that can be renewed. The Fiscal Agent may be contracted to act as an administrative point of contact, conduct the administrative business of the organization, prepare and submit grant proposals, receive and administer any grant/foundation/private funding, employ staff to assist in administrative functions on behalf of the Alliance, or provide other administrative services as deemed necessary by the Steering Group or Executive Planning Team.

4. *Alliance Coordinator/Director*: The day-to-day business of the Alliance will be directed by the Alliance Coordinator/Director, who is employed by and directly accountable to the EPT Leadership Arm. The Coordinator/Director manages the operational and programmatic affairs of the Alliance on behalf of the Steering Group and EPT Leadership Arm. Duties include, but are not limited to, coordination of Alliance activities, grant writing and management including preparing requests for proposals and reviewing applications, and coordination, outreach and representation of the Alliance to stakeholders, sponsors, and collaborators, staff organization and administration, and fiscal management.

B. Management Policies

1. Fiduciary Responsibilities

- a. The EPT Leadership Arm is responsible for setting sound fiscal policies for the Alliance. All decisions regarding budget, revenue, expenses, and investments will be approved by the EPT Leadership Arm, and when deemed necessary, the Steering Group, unless specifically delegated to the Coordinator/Director and/or the Fiscal Agent. The Steering Group may reserve the right to make specific fiscal decisions/policies.
- b. Supervision of Alliance accounts, receipts, and other expenditures will be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. At each regularly scheduled Steering Group meeting, the Coordinator/Director and/or the Fiscal Agent will make a report of the Alliance's financial affairs.

2. Internal Communications

- a. The Coordinator/Director is responsible for ensuring timely and broad dissemination of information within the Alliance. The Coordinator/Director will establish clear pathways for communication among the various components of the Alliance, particularly between the EPT and the IATTs and funded project teams.
- b. All members of the Alliance are responsible for prompt responses to requests for information, updates, or advice. Where possible, Alliance members are expected to raise internal and external issues of relevance to the Alliance to the Coordinator/Director and Alliance leadership to inform decision-making.

3. Contingencies

- a. *Withdrawing*: The Alliance is established for the mutual gain of the states, federal agencies, and other partners and participation in any activity under this Alliance is voluntary. States, federal agencies, or other partners may indicate withdrawal from the Alliance in writing to the Steering Group at any time. If a member state withdraws, the remaining members of the Steering Group will determine if the Alliance will realign the GSAA Action Plan and confirm its commitment to continue, or dissolve the Alliance in accordance with this Business Plan.
- b. *Dissolution*: In the event that the Alliance dissolves, all monies, materials and supplies owned by the Alliance shall be donated to not-for-profit organizations as determined by the Steering Group. Any unobligated federal funding will be returned to the granting agency in accordance with their regulations.

ARTICLE IV. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

The GSAA recognizes the importance of clear and focused external communications and outreach to its many stakeholders, sponsors, and collaborators. Effective outreach is critical to achieving the mission of the Alliance and to the Alliance's long-term sustainability. This Business Plan identifies some guiding policies for the Alliance's external communications and outreach, and a detailed GSAA Communications Plan was developed to identify the strategic goals of the Alliance's external communications.

A. Brand Use

1. The Coordinator/Director will be responsible for developing and maintaining the GSAA brand, to include its visual representation (logo) and name ("Governors' South Atlantic Alliance" and "GSAA"). Any changes to the brand must be approved by the Executive Planning Team.
2. Alliance members and PIs funded by the Alliance may use the brand at their discretion to publicize work done by or on behalf of the Alliance, or for the purposes of outreach and education. Use of the brand for any other purpose must be approved by the Coordinator/Director.
3. All other entities must submit a formal request to the Coordinator/Director for use of the GSAA brand. The Coordinator/Director must approve all requests for external entities to use the GSAA brand, and when deemed necessary, may request EPT Leadership Arm approval.

B. Website and Social Media Presence

1. At the direction of the EPT Leadership Arm, the Coordinator/Director may establish an official GSAA website and social media presence. The Coordinator/Director will ensure that the Alliance's online presence is updated regularly, includes appropriate materials, and is representative of the Alliance's mission, goals, and Action Plan.
2. At the Coordinator/Director's discretion, the Alliance's online presence may include information from external entities that is relevant to the Alliance and its stakeholders.

C. Media Engagement

1. The Coordinator/Director will manage the overall media engagement strategy for the Alliance, as approved by the EPT Leadership Arm. The EPT Leadership Arm will be made aware of any requests for interviews or other media engagement activities conducted by the Coordinator/Director. All Alliance press releases must be approved by the EPT Leadership Arm, and when deemed necessary, the Steering Group.
2. Any member of the Steering Group, EPT, and IATTs is authorized to speak on behalf of the Alliance to the media, including print, radio, or television, on the specific subject of their portfolio of work in the Alliance. Alliance members should notify, in advance if possible, the Coordinator/Director of the interview. Comments to or discussion with the media in any area outside of the member's portfolio of work is not authorized as representing the Alliance unless specifically approved by the EPT Leadership Arm.

D. Affiliations

1. The Alliance may establish official affiliations with organizations that are not member agencies or partners to achieve the Alliance's mission, goals, and Action Plan. Affiliations

must not create a conflict of interest, real or perceived, in accordance with this Business Plan.

2. The EPT Leadership may approve the formation of an official affiliation. Intergovernmental affiliations must be approved by the Steering Group.

E. Providing Sponsorships and Endorsements

1. The Alliance may sponsor or endorse the activities of external organizations that align with the Alliance's mission, goals and Action Plan. Sponsorships and endorsements must not create a conflict of interest, real or perceived, in accordance with this Business Plan.
2. Endorsements may be made at the discretion of the Coordinator/Director, to include publicizing or promoting the activities of an external organization and allowing the use of the GSAA brand. Sponsorships, which involve direct support through resources (people, time, money, and equipment), must be approved by the Coordinator/Director, and by the EPT Leadership Arm when over \$1,000 in value.

ARTICLE V. GRANTS AND RESEARCH FUNDING

Receiving and awarding grants is a critical function of the Alliance administration and vital to the success of the Alliance in meeting its goals. The Alliance will strive to produce and support the highest quality collaborative projects, resulting in mutual benefits for research institutions, Alliance partners, individual states, and the South Atlantic region as a whole.

A. Identifying and Responding to Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

1. The Alliance may apply for and accept grants from the United States Government, other public bodies and private sources by unanimous vote of the EPT Leadership Arm, and may administer and expend same. None of these grants or contracts, regardless of value, shall be accepted unless the EPT Leadership Arm affirmatively determines and records that it is appropriate to be received by the Alliance, the proposed work addresses Alliance priorities as identified in the Action and Implementation Plans or fosters the formulation and implementation of Alliance policy, and does not create conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Policies and decisions regarding the submission, acceptance, and distribution of grants and subawards involving non-competitive or private funding may require consultation with the Steering Group.
2. There are three basic mechanisms by which the Alliance may respond to RFP opportunities:
 - a. *Alliance-wide Proposals*: The Alliance, through its Coordinator/Director, may solicit expressions of interest (e.g., letters of intent; preproposals, etc) from possible participants in the preparation of any Alliance-wide proposal. The Coordinator/Director and/or the Fiscal Agent, with EPT Leadership Arm approval, must submit to the funding body all applications on behalf of the Alliance. Any funds received as a result of the successful funding of these proposals must be accepted and administered by the Alliance or the Fiscal Agent.
 - b. *Topic-specific Proposals*: Any member of the Alliance may submit for approval a proposal to the EPT Leadership Arm in response to topic-specific RFPs and, if approved, the Coordinator/Director may identify a Grant Writing Working Group to assist in development of an application. The Coordinator/Director and/or the Fiscal Agent, with EPT Leadership Arm approval, must submit to the funding body all applications on behalf of the Alliance. Any funds received as a result of the successful funding of these proposals must be accepted and administered by the Alliance or the Fiscal Agent.

- c. *Proposals by External Entities*: The EPT Leadership Arm may receive for review proposals from organizations in the region to conduct work that would benefit the Alliance and/or meet the goals of the Alliance's Action and/or Implementation Plans, and may endorse such proposals if they do. Funds received as a result of the successful funding of these proposals would be accepted and administered by the submitting organization.
3. No member of the Alliance may commit Alliance resources towards the development, application, or execution of a grant proposal without express approval by the EPT Leadership Arm. External organizations that receive grant funding and wish to use Alliance resources, such as engaging the IATTs, may submit a request for Partnership or Affiliation in accordance with this Business Plan.

B. GSAA Funded Institutions, Projects, and Principal Investigators

1. The Coordinator/Director and the Fiscal Agent, with concurrence of the EPT Leadership Arm, may enter into a formal agreement to provide funding to institutions or organizations to carry out projects on behalf of the Alliance with specific relevance to the priority issue areas identified in the GSAA Action Plan. The funded institutions or organizations may be selected through the expressions of interest described in Article V.A.2.a., or through another process deemed appropriate for the project by the EPT Leadership Arm. No sub-grant, contract, or sub-contract shall be awarded by the Alliance if it could create a conflict of interest, real or perceived, and/or would in any way imperil the proper formulation or implementation of Alliance policy.
2. Any projects conducted with funding from the Alliance will be promoted and distributed under the auspices of the Alliance, and any products, data, or other information and benefits derived from such funding are the assets of the Alliance. Publications, reports, presentations, and any other printed or electronic materials developed with project funds and intended for public distribution by and for the project will follow specific branding guidelines and copies will be furnished to the Coordinator/Director and Fiscal Agent.
3. The Principal Investigators (PIs) of any project funded by the Alliance are responsible for meeting reporting requirements as determined by the funding agency and the Coordinator/Director and/or Fiscal Agent. PIs will also attend and report at Alliance annual meetings, engage IATTs to ensure project alignment with their actions and objectives, and report progress at the request of the Steering Group or EPT throughout the course of the project.

ARTICLE VI. SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Careful and ethical solicitation and management of funds is an administrative priority for the Alliance. The Alliance seeks to identify, engage, and create mutual benefit for sponsors who are motivated to support the cooperative activities that result in balanced use and sustainability of South Atlantic ocean and coastal resources. This Business Plan identifies some guiding policies for the Alliance's fundraising activities, and a GSAA Development Plan was prepared following the release of this plan to identify strategic goals for the Alliance.

A. Fiscal Projections

1. A projected budget for an independent Alliance administration is included in **Appendix 1** (*omitted for public dissemination*). The projected administrative budget is \$483,000 per year. The programmatic budget is variable and dependent upon Action Plan priorities.

B. Accepting Sponsorships

1. Any organization that wishes to support the Alliance through a financial sponsorship may do so upon submission and approval of a proposal to the EPT Leadership Arm. Sponsorship may take the form of grants to the Alliance for specific programs or activities or unrestricted donations. Sponsorships must not create conflicts of interest, real or perceived, in accordance with this Business Plan.
2. The Coordinator/Director and/or Fiscal Agent are responsible for receiving and ensuring proper expenditure of sponsorships. All sponsorships will be made known to the general membership at Alliance Annual Meetings.

C. In-Kind Contributions

1. Any organization that wishes to support the Alliance through in-kind contributions may do so upon submission and approval of a proposal to the EPT Leadership Arm. In-kind contributions must be specifically relevant to the Alliance's mission, goals and Action Plan. The donor must value in-kind contributions and must appraise any contribution valued over \$5,000.
2. The Coordinator/Director and/or Fiscal Agent are responsible for receiving and ensuring proper attribution and use of in-kind contributions. All in-kind contributions will be accounted for in quarterly and annual fiscal reports.

D. Stewardship

1. The Coordinator/Director is responsible for privately acknowledging all donations and contributions to the Alliance, and with the Fiscal Agent, ensuring appropriate monitoring and reporting of donations and contributions in accordance with this Business Plan and generally accepted accounting principles.
2. The Steering Group, EPT and IATTs may be responsible for further acknowledging donations and contributions to the Alliance, both publicly and privately, as appropriate.

ARTICLE VII. ETHICS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A. Ethics

1. The Governors' South Atlantic Alliance and its members will strive in all areas of its operational and programmatic affairs to adhere to the highest ethical standards and promote the values of inclusiveness, accountability, and transparency.

B. Conflicts of Interest

1. *Duty to Disclose:* In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, every member of the Alliance, or potential member, partner, affiliate, sponsor, or collaborator, must disclose the existence of financial interest in Alliance activities for the individual or their employing organization.
2. *Recusal of Self:* Every member of the Alliance is prohibited from involvement in any decision or discussion in which the member believes he or she has or may have a conflict of interest, and is expected to recuse himself or herself from participation in the decision or discussion.