

## **MSP Management Practices**

Based on Oct. 13 and Nov. 2 Webinars Co-hosted by [GSAA](#) & [WOC](#)  
Finalized December 3, 2015

During 2014 and 2015, the World Ocean Council (WOC) and the Governors' South Atlantic Alliance (GSAA) co-hosted a series of outreach events for marine industry stakeholders in the South Atlantic region. A GSAA Coast and Ocean Portal Webinar was held in August 2014, an Industry Forum in September 2014, and a second Industry Forum in April 2015 to discuss ocean planning in the region with industry stakeholders.

Goals for the South Atlantic MSP Simulation Exercise<sup>1</sup> were to identify potential management practices for ocean planning that can be used in the South Atlantic region with a focus on:

1. Streamlined responses/permitting processes
2. Data and information needs
3. Communications pathways with industry

The following practices emerged as potential management practices from the perspective of industry and agency representatives who work closely with industry stakeholders. While each participant had opportunities to contribute to the development of this report and may agree with certain elements of the content herein, their participation should not be interpreted as an endorsement of every item discussed below.

- 1. Work with stakeholders and partners to determine the process, research, data and technological needs to establish a shared vision for the future of the region's marine economy and marine environment.**
  - 1.1 Conduct necessary research and outreach to create a diverse and inclusive stakeholder group as partners.
  - 1.2 Determine the appropriate planning mechanism for the region.
  - 1.3 If using MSP, define it and clarify the goals.
  - 1.4 Establish the context and authority for planning before starting a process.
  - 1.5 Utilize existing policies or process mechanisms where they exist. Before utilizing existing mechanisms or creating new processes or policies, ensure legal authority and user group buy-in exists. This allows for more reliability and legal certainty in the process.
  
- 2. Identify costs and determine availability of financial support for MSP.**
  - 2.1 Conduct a thorough assessment of costs including research and data gathering and analysis, plan preparation, coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and staff time.
  - 2.2 Consider innovative financial mechanisms including public-private partnerships.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to this link for instructions to participants and full scenario details:  
<http://files.ctctcdn.com/e7868fa3401/0805cf33-f82f-450d-830b-55157a1adab9.pdf>.

**3. Establish an organized stakeholder participation process that reduces duplication and allows various times and levels of engagement for stakeholders as partners.**

- 3.1 In setting up the “who, when and how” for stakeholder engagement, existing opportunities to engage the industry should be used such as existing industry meetings or existing professional meetings in which the industry generally attends.
- 3.2 Stakeholder engagement should allow for individual meetings whenever possible. The process can run more efficiently and smoothly when one agency facilitates meetings with other permitting agencies.
- 3.3 Industries often rely on associations to monitor planning and regulatory activities, but where there may be specific regulatory impacts, individual companies need the opportunity to be represented “at the table.”

**4. Create information sharing pathways from agencies to stakeholders/partners and vice versa.**

- 4.1 Create opportunities to share relevant scientific studies among stakeholders and partners. For example, in the South Atlantic, a number of transmission studies have been completed for wind energy sites to determine where to connect to the grid and where to draw transmission lines to the site.
- 4.2 Organize the process for MSP and any related data or information so that it is readily available online. Use existing mechanisms whenever possible. Cite the sources of data to allow for validation and quality assurance.
- 4.3 Plan for ways to actively publicize engagement opportunities and encourage engagement from diverse stakeholders in the planning process.

**5. Provide better understanding, mapping and monitoring of ocean ecosystem resources, processes and conditions, as well as economic and human use patterns and opportunities.**

- 5.1 In terms of data needs, gather and consider biological/ecological factors, physical environmental features, distribution of existing and potential future human uses, economic data for all human uses and natural resources, and environmental services, as available.
- 5.2 Identify partners in both the public and private sectors that can lend existing resources to provide better understanding, mapping and monitoring of ocean ecosystem resources, processes and conditions. To the degree that there are private sector partners, ensure that a balance of ocean-using interests are represented.
- 5.3 In the South Atlantic, the GSAA portal can be used as a conduit to help oversee collection of data and information of all existing and future uses. The GSAA Coast and Ocean Portal has the capability to simulate scenarios and support advanced planning with the industry. However, funding gaps currently limit this capacity.
- 5.4 Recognize and acknowledge the vulnerabilities in data. For example, the commercial vessel density data in the Portal was the most recent available data at the time it was uploaded.

- 5.5 Investment in the Portal should match its intended use. Identify resources for training, access, and publicizing the availability of the Portal as a tool, the data included, etc.
- 5.6 To help address and resolve any data gaps in the Portal, survey existing and foreseeable future user group sectors to conduct updated user assessments. This will help to determine what data is most relevant to include in the Portal and the planning processes.

## **6. Define and analyze future conditions and assess existing response capacities related to natural disasters.**

- 6.1 Consider possible alternative futures for the region in the next 10-20 years, incorporating foreseeable future uses that may not exist today. Some industries plan 1 – 2 decades ahead and can contribute valuable perspectives to these future considerations.
- 6.2 Following a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, the scope of the event must be taken into account before planning efforts move forward. Work with emergency responders and stakeholders to determine when planning can resume with sufficient stakeholder engagement.
- 6.3 For areas regularly subjected to natural disasters (such as the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico), working vulnerability assessments into MSP can assist in post-disaster recovery. For example, a plan could help indicate if there would be a need for infrastructure rebuilding; i.e., managers can look at what infrastructure might be more vulnerable and the potential implications.
- 6.4 Consider the use of MSP for a more efficient post-disaster recovery including:
  - Identification of appropriate experts;
  - Cooperation of agencies and stakeholders/partners to understand issues when the interests of multiple states are involved;
  - Advanced planning for rebuilding coastal infrastructure such as information on conditions, weaknesses (accounting for national security issues), gaps in information, and prioritizing areas for rebuilding;
  - Advanced planning for ecological/environmental impacts; and,
  - Advanced planning to prioritize response and recovery efforts with limited resources.
- 6.5 Conduct an assessment of existing processes; i.e., review how managers and users managed post-disaster recovery. This can show what exists today, what works, and lessons learned. In doing so, analyze existing coordination processes (e.g. among FEMA/DHS, states, etc.), and in partnership with federal, state, and private sector interests, determine whether there is a need for and consensus on potential areas for improvement.

## **7. Identify areas for improved efficiencies.**

- 7.1 Create a better understanding and working relationship among users, businesses, stakeholders, partners and management agencies.

- 7.2 Ensure existing networks are used effectively and efficiently. For example, in a state of emergency, coordinated networks and defined procedures kick in. Such connections among agencies can be particularly useful and there is potential for a regional group or representative to tap into that network.
- 7.3 Work with regulated entities to identify any areas for improvement and potential solutions, recognizing that solutions are often as simple as better communication. Explore how the information that is coordinated among agencies can be shared efficiently with businesses as well.
- 7.4 Government agencies should address internal disconnects to prevent duplication of processes or conflicting procedures or policies. For example, within the Army Corps of Engineers, it is vital that the regulatory side be in contact with the civil works side for decisions regarding laying cables near operations or ports and channels. Creating internal efficiencies contributes to more streamlined decision-making.
- 7.5 Clarifying the agency application and approval process is critical to developing trust with stakeholder groups and ensuring efficiency for users and managers. For example, the process of licensing new renewable energy sites among several agencies remains unclear.
- 7.6 The planning for lease sites and transmission line placement can be better coordinated. Typically, the placement of offshore energy leases and the placement of related onshore activities are planned and permitted sequentially, with lease sites being decided first. This effort must be consistent with applicable legal authorities and avoid the introduction of new regulatory burdens.
- 7.7 NOAA and other federal agencies offer consultations and “technical assistance” to individual permit applicants early in the application process. This can also include assistance in engaging other agencies involved in the permitting process. Georgia’s Coastal Resources Division is exploring the possibility of providing similar assistance for both state and federal processes.
- 7.8 Related to wind energy, there is a difference between the Department of Energy’s and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management’s approaches to state wind energy task forces that can be better coordinated.

## **8. Identify convening bodies and relevant partnerships.**

- 8.1 For issues that impact more than one state, GSAA could act as a convening body to ensure cooperation and create efficiencies. The GSAA could leverage resources to produce a more comprehensive effort at a reduced expense, such as expanding mapping activities to include all states.
- 8.2 Avoid overlap given the great number of activities and processes that are ongoing. Getting people on the same page to whatever extent possible is important.

## **9. Provide a clear, shared vision for the future of a marine area with logical goals and specific, measurable objectives.**

- 9.1 Ensure goals and measurable objectives avoid conflicts with applicable authorities and do not introduce new regulatory burdens.