

*Note to the reader: The MidA RPB welcomes public input on this draft outline. Comments may be provided verbally at the May 20-21, 2014 MidA RPB meeting or in writing to the MidA RPB via email at [boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov](mailto:boemmidatlanticrpb@boem.gov) by 5:00pm ET July 15, 2014.*

# Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Stakeholder Engagement Strategy Draft Outline

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## Overview

As the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB) becomes involved in more activities (e.g., development of a work plan, further development of the Data Portal, a regional ocean assessment, etc.) it is critical to have a comprehensive strategy that defines, develops and ties together the full range of stakeholder engagement and outreach efforts being conducted in support of regional ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic. A stakeholder engagement strategy will include the current public sessions (webinar, state based meetings, etc.), as well as future engagement efforts, and make it clear what the RPB want to achieve through purposeful, two-way, continuous stakeholder engagement. To date, the MidA RPB has successfully provided regular updates and received input from self-identified stakeholders. There has not yet been a systematic, thorough assessment of stakeholders that the MidA RPB needs to engage with, the key issues to discuss, or a comprehensive approach to engaging them. A Stakeholder Engagement Strategy would integrate across the efforts of the entire RPB, of individual RPB members and their organizations, of stakeholders supporting ocean planning (e.g., Mid-Atlantic Data Portal team), and other stakeholders.

The purpose of this document is to outline a process for moving forward with the development of a Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (Stakeholder Engagement Strategy). This document provides: (a) background on MidA RPB stakeholder engagement discussions to date; (b) assumptions underlying a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy for the Mid-Atlantic; (c) a proposed process for creating such a document; (d) goals, objectives, and outcomes for moving forward; and (e) proposed next steps.

Once the MidA RPB decides that this is the path forward, the next step would be to complete an analysis of regional ocean stakeholders, including those who have a high stake or interest in how the Mid-Atlantic ocean waters are used (see Table 1). After a thorough assessment is completed, the next step would be to describe possible avenues of engagement (including who could be responsible for the engagement and how). Once these options are clearly defined, the MidA RPB can decide what resources it has and should devote to engagement. This will include obtaining commitments from MidA RPB members to pursue specific engagement strategies

(e.g., NOAA agrees to host a meeting with commercial fishing interests, U.S. Coast Guard agrees to have a session at an upcoming navigation meeting, etc.).

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## Background

- Stakeholder engagement was discussed during the April 2013 Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Workshop. Significant recommendations from those discussions include:
  - *Ensuring Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement*, including allowing for groups to provide meaningful input to the MidA RPB at every step of the decision-making process.
  - *Engaging Stakeholders at the Right Level*, including having an advisory panel composed of self-identified interest group leaders to provide direct and continuous input to the MidA RPB.
  - *Capitalizing on Stakeholder Expertise*, including soliciting, reviewing, and applying data from all pertinent user groups.
- At the September 2013 meeting of the MidA RPB, a MidA RPB Stakeholder Workgroup noted that mechanisms had been created to disseminate and receive information between the RPB and stakeholders, but opportunities to have meaningful, back-and-forth conversations remain limited. It was stated that stakeholder discussions must move beyond structured public comment with time limits. Stakeholders recommended that the MidA RPB focus on improving conversations with stakeholders and including their input throughout the ocean planning process.
- At the same meeting, the Stakeholder Work Group presented possible mechanisms and tools for the RPB to undertake, including:
  - Improve capacity for communication between RPB and stakeholders.
  - Encourage and empower stakeholders to self-organize by sector and/or locale.
  - Develop effective processes to incorporate stakeholder input into RPB decision-making, including (1) the RPB should develop processes to incorporate stakeholder input into RPB decisions, and (2) decide if and how a formal stakeholder advisory committee should be developed to incorporate into the RPB's stakeholder engagement process, in light of Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) constraints. This led to the creation of MARCO's Stakeholder Liaison Committee (SLC), which held its inaugural meeting in March 2014.
- The Stakeholder Workgroup was disbanded when each RPB member was assigned responsibility to engage with stakeholders. Implementation of this RPB-wide approach requires an agreed to overarching engagement strategy to guide the efforts of individual MidA RPB members toward a successful regional approach.

## Assumptions and Considerations

### Assumptions

*(Factors that will influence the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy)*

- Resources are limited for both the RPB and stakeholders, so the RPB needs to be as deliberate and focused as possible in pursuing stakeholder engagement activities.
- To take advantage of existing opportunities, it is critical for the MidA RPB to have an organized and coherent approach, with coordinated messaging, that fit into the overall RPB timeline and that meets stakeholders' expectations.
- Opportunities and expectations for engagement will increase as the RPB moves forward with processes and products (e.g., engaging scientific and technical experts in developing the regional ocean assessment).
- There are numerous stakeholder engagement efforts underway in support of regional ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic. These disparate efforts should be woven together into a cohesive, unified effort (e.g., SLC, Mid-Atlantic Data Portal, MidA RPB constant contact list, individual sector-based efforts such as bi-monthly Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meetings).
- Stakeholders differ in their needs and preferred level of engagement. At a minimum, the RPB wants to inform interested Mid-Atlantic stakeholders about what the MidA RPB is and what is being done to advance ocean planning (See Table 2, the 'Explore/Inform' column). For some sectors or issues, the RPB might need to actively solicit input from key stakeholders and make transparent decisions based upon their input (See Table 2, the 'Consult' column).

### Considerations

- Provide as many opportunities as possible for frequent, meaningful, transparent, inclusive, and robust stakeholder engagement throughout the MidA RPB ocean planning process, including with those most impacted (or potentially impacted) by the planning process and with underserved communities<sup>1</sup>.
- Gain a better understanding of the past, current, and anticipated human uses and influences on the planning area, and expectations, interests, and requirements for the future.
- Obtain significant and diverse stakeholder and public input to insure all concerns and ideas are considered in the deliberations of the MidA RPB.
- Have stakeholders understand and support the actions of the MidA RPB.
- Enhance stakeholder understanding, guidance, and validation of key products being developed for the Mid-Atlantic ocean planning process (e.g., charter, work plan, etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> National Ocean Council's *Marine Planning Handbook*, found at:

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/final\\_marine\\_planning\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/final_marine_planning_handbook.pdf).

## Stakeholder Engagement Process

- Step 1: Clarify engagement goals and objectives, including timeframes. (Why do we want to engage stakeholders? To what end? What role do we envision them having in the overall ocean planning process? Will that role shift over time?)
- Step 2: Identify and analyze stakeholders. (Who are the primary individuals and groups that will be affected by the decisions made by the RPB? What stake/interest do they have in the process? See Table 1.)
- Step 3: Decide upon level of engagement for stakeholder groups. (e.g., explore/inform? consult? decide? implement? See Table 2.)
- Step 4: Identify specific activities or strategies that could be used for stakeholder groups to achieve the desired level of engagement, as well as key messages.
- Step 5: Identify entities and resources available to support stakeholder engagement. (e.g., Federal agencies, state agencies, Data Portal team, sector specific groups, pre-established gatherings, etc.)
- Step 6: Consider risks associated with specific activities/strategies.
- Step 7: Develop an engagement plan that covers the range of entities and activities/strategies available for stakeholder engagement, including RPB work products.
- Step 8: Implement specific activities and/or strategies.
- Step 9: Evaluate effectiveness of implementation, and make necessary adjustments to plan.

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## Proposed Stakeholder Engagement Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes

In light of the background information, assumptions and suggested process, the following section introduces potential stakeholder engagement goals, objectives, and outcomes for MidA RPB consideration.

### Proposed Goal

*(Statement of general direction or intent, and high-level desired outcomes)*

- A proposed MidA RPB Stakeholder Engagement goal: To provide Mid-Atlantic stakeholders with meaningful opportunities for engagement with the RPB and input throughout the regional ocean planning process in the Mid-Atlantic.

### Proposed Objectives

*(Statements of desired outcomes/observable behavioral change that represent achievement of a goal)*

1. To identify, assess, and engage key stakeholders in regional ocean planning in the Mid-Atlantic (See Table 1 for assessment approaches), including:

- Inform and seek input on how to engage stakeholders throughout the MidA RPB process; and
  - Help MidA RPB members and stakeholders understand the opportunities and tools for engagement and avail themselves of these opportunities.
2. To strengthen mutual and shared understanding about relevant problems and opportunities for the Mid-Atlantic Ocean, including:
    - Inform and equip MidA RPB members with the messages and tools to effectively communicate with stakeholders;
    - Inform stakeholders about ocean planning activities, timelines, and the MidA RPB's role;
    - Ensure that MidA RPB members receive comments and provide effective feedback to stakeholders on the comments they submitted; and
    - To the extent possible, incorporate stakeholders' comments into documents/actions.
  3. To build the knowledge, skills, and understanding of regional ocean planning.
  4. To capitalize on previous related efforts (e.g., state ocean planning activities).

## Proposes Outcomes

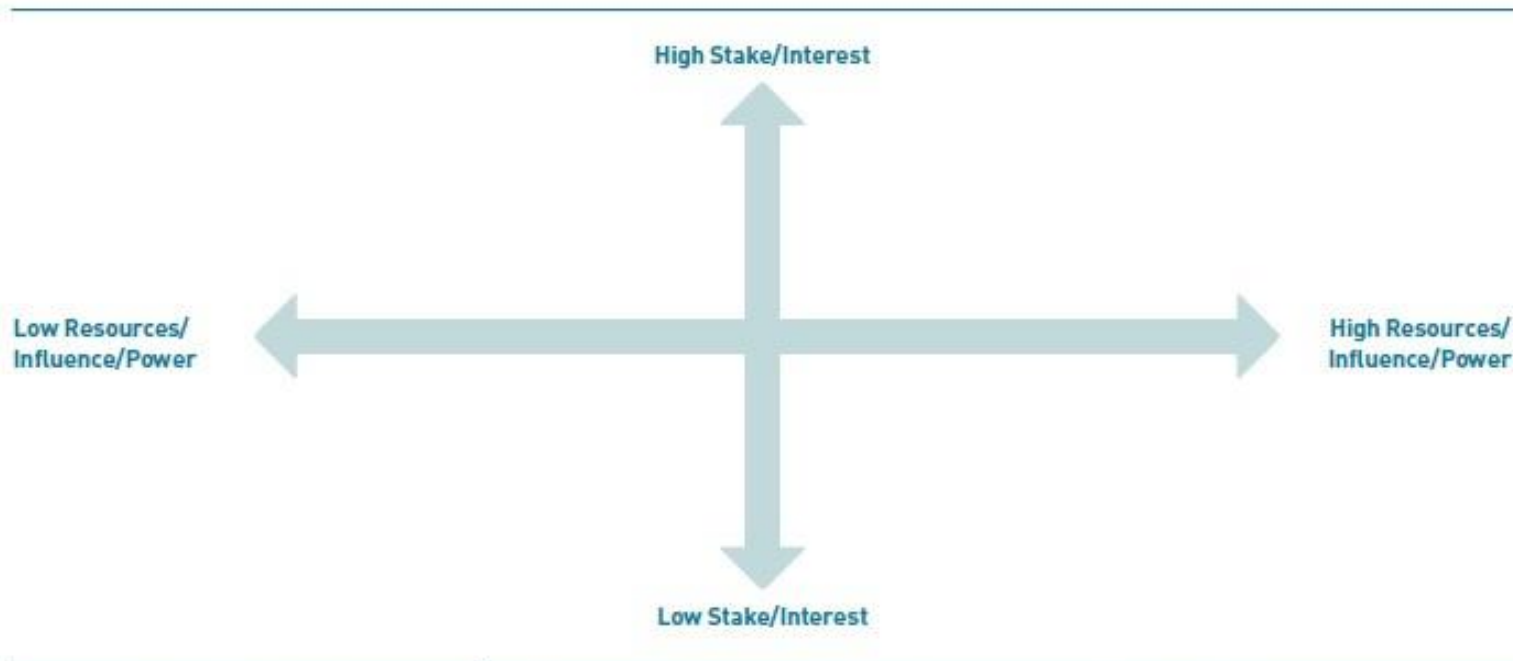
*(See Table 2: Spectrum of Stakeholder and Public Involvement and Influence in CMSP)*

- Short-term for all stakeholders:
  - Improve shared understanding of issues, process, perspectives, etc.
  - Identify and understand common concerns (i.e., those shared by multiple stakeholders)
  - Identify information needs
  - Build relationships and trust
- Mid-term for key stakeholder groups:
  - Obtain comments on draft planning products
  - Solicit suggestions for approaches/solutions
  - Address priority concerns, issues, and topics as identified by the MidA RPB and its stakeholders in a transparent and trusted way
  - Discuss planning options
  - Form a community of ocean planners and stakeholders
- Long-term for some stakeholders groups:
  - Consensus-based agreements among the RPB, informed by meaningful engagement and input from stakeholders

Table 1

# Stakeholder Analysis Template

Give some thought to the stake or interest your stakeholders have in project outcomes. Then think about the level of resources, influence or power your stakeholders can access to support (or oppose) the project. Map each of your stakeholders on the chart below, locating them in the quadrant that best reflects their stake and resources.



<p>The location of your stakeholders on the chart suggests the level of engagement appropriate:</p> <p>High Stake/Low Resources – Consult - Involve                  High Stake/High Resources – Collaborate - Empower                  Low Stake/Low Resources – Inform - Consult                  Low Stake/High Resources – Inform</p>	<p>These are suggestions only and you should think carefully about your stakeholders and their unique situation before deciding on an appropriate level of engagement.</p> <p>Be aware that your level of engagement may change rapidly as your project progresses. This is particularly the case for stakeholders in the Low Stake/High Resources segment as they can have considerable influence if their interest increases. For example, this group may include media or funding bodies.</p>
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Table 2

**Spectrum of Stakeholder and Public Involvement and Influence in CMSP**

	Explore/Inform	Consult	Decide	Implement
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved shared understanding of issues, process, perspectives, etc.</li> <li>Lists of concerns</li> <li>Information needs identified</li> <li>Build Relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments on draft planning products</li> <li>Suggestions for approaches</li> <li>Priority concerns, issues and topics</li> <li>Discussion of options</li> <li>Formation of a community of CMS planners and stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consensus-based agreements among the RPB, and with stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-party agreements to create and implement regional CMS plans</li> </ul>
Parties Involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Planning Bodies (Federal Agencies, States, Tribes, other groups)</li> <li>Stakeholder Advisory Group</li> <li>Interest Groups and stakeholders</li> <li>Public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Planning Bodies (Federal Agencies, States, Tribes, other groups)</li> <li>Stakeholder Advisory Group</li> <li>Sub-regional stakeholder meetings</li> <li>Interest Groups</li> <li>Public</li> <li>Scientists, Subject Matter Experts</li> <li>Resource management bodies such as Fishery Mgt Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Planning Bodies (Agencies, Tribes, other groups)</li> <li>Existing State, Federal, and Tribal Authorities</li> <li>Stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Planning Bodies (States, Tribes)</li> <li>Implementing Agencies</li> <li>Stakeholder Advisory Group</li> <li>Federal agencies</li> <li>Fishery Management Councils</li> </ul>
Tools/Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Websites</li> <li>Educational Materials</li> <li>Focus Groups</li> <li>Conferences</li> <li>Open houses</li> <li>Dialogues</li> <li>Forums</li> <li>Listening sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Workshops</li> <li>Visioning sessions</li> <li>Public Hearings</li> <li>Deliberative Dialogues</li> <li>Comment Forms</li> <li>Surveys</li> <li>Public meetings</li> <li>Roundtable discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated Meetings</li> <li>Consensus meetings</li> <li>Mediated negotiations and dispute resolution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative Planning processes</li> <li>Partnerships for Action</li> <li>Adaptive Management Teams</li> <li>Implementation Committees</li> </ul>
Use When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early in projects when issues are under development</li> <li>Throughout the process, beginning in scoping phase, when broad education and support are needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When broad input is helpful</li> <li>Throughout the project lifecycle</li> <li>To test proposals from the planning process and solicit public and stakeholder ideas</li> <li>To gather data and information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To create regional CMS plans, or other regional decisions made by RPB or Implementing Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a need for meaningful partnerships to make and implement decisions</li> <li>Creating and implementing CMS plans</li> </ul>