

Meeting Material | January 21-22, 2015 Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body Meeting

Memorandum to: Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (MidA RPB)

From: MidA RPB Co-Leads

Date: January 14, 2015

Subject: Summary of MidA RPB decisions to be made at January 21-22, 2015 meeting and overview of proposed RPB workflows

This memorandum offers several points of clarification and administrative considerations from the MidA RPB Co-Leads for the RPB's consideration in preparation for the January 21-22, 2015 meeting in New York, New York, including:

- Clarification about the meeting materials and relationship among them
 - Description of the decisions the RPB is being asked to make at the January meeting
 - Recommendations for next steps regarding RPB work plan development and workflows in 2015
 - Proposed timeline for development of the regional ocean action plan (OAP) in 2015-2016.
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Materials in preparation for and decisions to be made at the upcoming January 21-22, 2015 MidA RPB meeting

A package of meeting materials was released to the public on Monday, January 12, 2015 including several documents that have been developed by internal RPB workgroups for the full RPB's consideration, discussion, and in one case, approval. Important information related to several of these documents is described below, including the document description, key decision and/or discussion points, corresponding agenda session(s), and relationship to other materials in the package.

Document 1: *Proposed Approach to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan*

- **Purpose:** This document proposes an approach to the OAP for RPB deliberation and decision-making at the January meeting. This approach was developed by incorporating public input and combining into one approach the favored components of various OAP options offered for public review in October-November 2014 in the [Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan Options](#) document. Appended to this document is a draft illustrative OAP outline that will also be discussed at the RPB meeting, although a decision is not being sought at this time. This draft outline will be modified by the RPB over time as work proceeds and the RPB learns more about the Mid-Atlantic ocean ecosystem, ocean uses, and various tools available for planning.

- **Decision point at the meeting:** After presentation and any discussion needed in Day 1, the RPB will be asked to approve the *Proposed Approach to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan* during the 9:15 am session on Day 2 of the meeting. The RPB will be asked to comment on to the Appendix draft outline, but not approve it. Next steps following the approval of the OAP approach will be discussed during the afternoon on Day 2.
- **Agenda session(s):** This document will be discussed by the RPB during three sessions at the January meeting:
 - 11:00 am – 12:00 pm on Day 1 (Presentation and discussion: *Proposed Approach to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan*)
 - 1:45 pm – 2:15 pm on Day 1 (Continue discussion: *Proposed Approach to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan*)
 - 9:15 am – 10:00 am on Day 2 (Discussion, reflection on comments received, and approval of *Proposed Approach to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan*)
- **Relationship to other documents:** Each of the other meeting materials will support components of the OAP. After approving an approach to developing the OAP, the RPB will be well positioned to take further steps to develop various sections of the OAP.

Document 2: Regional Ocean Assessment outline, template, and example sections

- **Purpose:** This document provides a history of the activities to date of an internal RPB workgroup, a draft outline of the ROA, and three examples of sections of the ROA drafted by Federal agencies for RPB discussion and consideration.
- **Discussion point at the meeting:** It is not anticipated that the RPB will make any formal decisions about the ROA at the January meeting, but rather will use the time dedicated to this topic to signal comfort with or suggest refinements to the ROA outline and example sections, and provide the ROA workgroup with important information and feedback needed to continue its work.
- **Agenda session(s):** This document will be discussed by the RPB during three sessions at the January meeting:
 - 3:45 pm – 4:15 pm on Day 1 (Presentation and discussion: Regional Ocean Assessment outline, template, and example actions)
 - 10:00 am – 10:30 am on Day 2 (Discussion, reflection on comments received, and refinement of Regional Ocean Assessment outline, template, and example sections)
 - 2:45 pm – 3:45 pm on Day 2: Discussion of next steps for RPB workflows
- **Relationship to other documents:** The finished ROA will be a resource to inform the RPB on a range of topics related to the region, and will be a supporting document to the OAP.

Document 3: *Proposed process, criteria, and examples of potential interjurisdictional coordination actions*

- **Purpose:** This document presents the concept of interjurisdictional coordination (IJC) as a cornerstone of the OAP. It recommends a series of decision steps for identifying IJC actions, offers potential criteria for making those decisions, and provides representative examples of potential IJC opportunities, specific geographic areas, and actions. The examples are organized to be consistent with the four categories of opportunities contained in the *Proposed Approach to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan*, and are meant to be illustrative of the types of IJC actions that could be pursued through interagency discussions.
- **Discussion point at the meeting:** This document is intended to stimulate discussion at the meeting about a proposed process and set of criteria to identify the kinds of IJC actions that would be articulated in the OAP. The RPB will also consider the draft examples offered, how potential data and analysis needs and next steps could support interjurisdictional coordination, and share ideas about interjurisdictional coordination opportunities. The RPB is not being asked to make formal decisions about this document at the January meeting.
- **Agenda session(s):** The RPB will discuss IJC during one session at the January meeting:
 - 1:15 pm to 2:45 pm on Day 2 (Interjurisdictional coordination opportunities and next steps)
- **Relationship to other documents:** IJC actions would be a central element of the OAP if the *Proposed Approach to the Regional Ocean Action Plan* is approved.

Document 4: *Additional analyses and decision support tools*

- **Purpose:** This document describes some of the types of additional analyses the RPB could consider pursuing to better understand the interactions between and among ocean uses and resources in the Mid-Atlantic, serve as a bridge between the ROA and OAP, and provide the RPB with the information it needs to determine meaningful IJC actions to improve management of ecological resources and economic activities.
- **Discussion point at the meeting:** This document is intended to stimulate discussion at the meeting and in the longer-term about information the RPB may need and analyses that could be undertaken to meet those needs. The document will also supplement presentations during a panel on this topic. The RPB will provide a general sense of direction and input about potential analyses, but will not make formal decisions about this document at the January meeting.
- **Agenda session(s):** The information included in this document is relevant to the following agenda sessions:
 - 10:45 am to 12:15 pm on Day 2 (Panel: Data and analysis tools to support ocean planning going forward)

- 1:15 pm to 2:45 pm on Day 2 (Interjurisdictional coordination opportunities and next steps)
 - **Relationship to other documents:** The types of analyses included in this document would provide information to support the data and analysis section in the draft OAP outline that is presented in the Appendix of the *Proposed Approach to the Regional Ocean Action Plan*. The results of these types of analysis could inform the identification of IJC opportunities, specific geographic areas, and IJC actions.
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MidA RPB work plan development and proposed RPB workflows

Work Plan

Following the decision on the *Proposed Approach to the Regional Ocean Action Plan* at the January meeting, the RPB will develop a work plan in early 2015 that will guide the development of the OAP throughout 2015 and 2016. This work plan will provide more details on steps necessary to develop an OAP over the next two years. The four proposed workflows are:

1. Region-wide IJC actions – *would be taken on by the current IJC workgroup with expanded membership*
2. Specific geographic areas for IJC action – *would be taken on by the current OAP workgroup (with a modified mission)*
3. Regional Ocean Assessment – *would be continued by the current ROA workgroup*
4. Stakeholder engagement – *would be continued by the current Stakeholder Engagement workgroup*

The work plan will include descriptions of each workflow, a timeline showing the steps and timing for activities in each workflow, proposed RPB meetings and key decision points, and additional detail on stakeholder engagement opportunities. A first iteration work plan will be completed in early 2015 and will be updated periodically based on RPB discussions and decision-making.

Workflows in 2015-2016

The four proposed workflows are outlined below, across which RPB members, alternates, and staff would develop different sections of the OAP. RPB Co-Leads would continue to connect and coordinate among the workflows to ensure a coherent OAP is being developed..

This suite of workflows and associated activities will evolve as the RPB begins to develop the OAP. Some workflows will be ongoing (e.g. ROA) while others will be launched in 2015 (e.g., specific geographic areas for IJC action). Some aspects of the plan (e.g., a monitoring strategy and process for plan updates) will need to be launched in the near future. The proposed timeline at the end of this memo addresses the steps and timing across all four proposed workflows, in addition to overarching efforts (i.e., development and refinement of the work

plan, development of the OAP, and in-person RPB meetings). This timeline will be refined as the work plan is developed and periodically updated.

Interjurisdictional Coordination: Region-wide and geographic specific workflows

IJC actions will be identified by the RPB and will become key components of the OAP. The IJC actions will be grounded in the goals and objectives of the Framework and will foster better coordination, improve leveraging of resources, and inform management decisions that benefit ocean users and ecosystem health through improved implementation of existing mandates and authorities. Please see the *Draft process, criteria, and examples of potential interjurisdictional coordination actions* document for further information on this workflow. IJC discussions in the coming months would be divided into two parallel and closely related tracks: (1) region-wide IJC opportunities and specific associated actions and (2) identifying specific geographic areas and associated IJC actions in those areas that demonstrate progress on the region-wide opportunities.

Workflow 1: Region-wide IJC actions

The RPB would identify an initial limited number of region-wide IJC actions by considering four basic categories of opportunities: (1) identifying research needs; (2) informing and improving management decisions; (3) improving information for environmental and regulatory review; and (4) leveraging resources.

Potential activities for this workflow include:

- Identification of criteria for RPB selection of region-wide IJC opportunities and actions and discussion of draft examples.
- Discussion of IJC opportunities and potential actions through agency-by-agency and interagency discussions. Agency discussions would be started in the first quarter of 2015 and continue throughout OAP development (and potentially beyond).
- Identification of draft region-wide IJC opportunities and actions, including engagement with the stakeholder communities/groups with a potential interest in those draft IJC opportunities and actions.
- RPB selection of preliminary IJC opportunities and actions as a result of stakeholder input and RPB deliberation.
- Discussions with regulators and managers about specific improvements (efficiencies, opportunities for coordination, etc.) that fall within their jurisdictions.
- RPB approval of region-wide IJC opportunities and actions as a result of discussions with regulators and managers and public comment (at an RPB business meeting).
- Continued discussion with regulators and managers about changes in business practices needed to realize the actions in practice.
- Stakeholder engagement and communication of potential changes in business practices to interested stakeholder communities/groups.

- Development of language to include in the OAP describing IJC actions and changes in agency-specific and interagency business practices and agreements, in terms both regulators and interested communities will understand.
- Development of protocols, Memoranda of Agreement, Memoranda of Understanding, or other commitments to implement best practices identified through interagency discussions and informed by input from interested communities (which may continue to be finalized after the OAP is agreed to and certified in 2016).

Workflow 2: Specific geographic areas for IJC action

The RPB would identify an initial limited number of specific geographic areas that would benefit from enhanced information and IJC actions to improve decision making. Beyond characterizing the individual topics in the ROA, additional analyses may be needed to better understand the interactions among uses and resources in the Mid-Atlantic, support the identification of specific geographic areas on which to focus certain IJC actions, and more accurately understand the region's ecological and economic resources.

Potential activities for this workflow include:

- Exploration of the types of analyses that could be performed, consideration of the range of methods for conducting those analyses (e.g., methodology for identifying areas of ecological importance, assessing the Mid-Atlantic marine economy, and/or identifying other important characteristics of the Mid-Atlantic ocean), and identification of resources (e.g., costs, time, other considerations) for conducting such analyses.
- Analyses and associated products (in some cases potentially by a neutral third party) with input from stakeholders.
- Integration of analysis results with the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal (to the extent possible) to ensure results are publically accessible and transparent, and potential integration of results with the ROA.
- Identification of potential specific geographic areas and IJC actions to take within those areas.
- Specific discussions with agencies about potential changes in business practices to realize IJC actions for specific geographic areas.
- Stakeholder engagement and communication of potential geographic areas and potential coordination actions to interested stakeholder communities/groups.
- RPB approval of IJC actions for specific geographic areas and development of language to include in the OAP describing changes in agency-specific and interagency business practices and agreements, in terms both regulators and managers and interested communities will understand.
- Development of protocols, Memoranda of Agreement, Memoranda of Understanding, or other commitments to implement best practices identified through interagency discussions and informed by input from interested stakeholder communities/groups (which may continue to be finalized after the OAP is agreed to and certified in 2016).

Workflow 3: Regional Ocean Assessment (ROA)

The ROA is an effort that RPB member entities are undertaking to characterize the resources, uses, and the ocean environment in the Mid-Atlantic building upon the goals and objectives established in the *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Framework*.

Potential activities for this workflow include:

- Finalization of the ROA outline based on discussions at the January RPB meeting.
- Population of the remaining sections of the ROA per RPB guidance, potentially with assistance from a science editor to help manage the information and ensure consistent content and language among sections.
- Opportunities for public and scientific review of a completed draft ROA.
- Discussion and RPB decision about the interface between the ROA, Mid-Atlantic Data Portal, and additional analyses being conducted.
- Finalization of the first iteration ROA, and plan for making updates and enhancements over time.

Workflow 4: Stakeholder Engagement

As the RPB moves forward with selection of region-wide issues and specific geographic areas for IJC commitments and ROA development, stakeholder engagement will be crucial to the success of the outputs that are developed and implemented. To date, the Mid-Atlantic regional planning process has used communication approaches and comment opportunities to engage stakeholders, including periodic electronic updates on RPB activities, opportunities for public comment on draft documents through various mechanisms, and public listening sessions throughout the region to gather in-person feedback. These types of activities will continue to be used as the RPB moves forward with OAP development.

In addition to utilizing traditional communications channels to update and seek input from stakeholders about RPB activities, meetings, and decisions, the RPB will seek to engage stakeholders on the specific activities of each of its constituent workflows. To accomplish this, the RPB will seek to more effectively deploy existing federal, state, tribal, and MAFMC communication networks and outreach opportunities. In addition, MARCO, which is a key RPB partner supporting stakeholder engagement, is contemplating that its Stakeholder Liaison Committee, which was formed in March 2014 to support Mid-Atlantic regional ocean planning, could provide targeted engagement opportunities to support activities related to OAP development in the coming months. These opportunities could include sector-specific meetings, multi-sector workshops, and webinars. The RPB will continue to work with MARCO and the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal team to determine the specific steps in a stakeholder engagement workflow.

Potential topics around which to engage stakeholders in 2015-2016 include, among others:

- Identification of areas of ecological and economic importance to inform RPB decision making.
 - Sector-specific perspectives and considerations related to region-wide or geographically-specific IJC discussions.
 - Further development and refinement of the ROA.
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Pulling it all together: timeline for OAP development

Once an approach to the OAP is approved at the January 21-22, 2015 MidA RPB meeting, the workflows detailed in this document would constitute the main body of work for the RPB in 2015, with some potential shifts in workflow design over time based on progress. In early 2016, additional elements (e.g., frequency of plan updates and monitoring strategy) will need to be developed and the outcomes of all workflows brought together in a first draft OAP. The OAP will then be refined, finalized and approved by the RPB, and sent to the National Ocean Council for certification by the end of 2016. Stakeholder engagement will be a key activity at each step in the process.

The process of developing the various components of the OAP will be guided by and documented in the evolving work plan that will be revised throughout 2015 and 2016 to reflect RPB decisions and workflow progress (in conjunction with RPB meetings and public engagement opportunities as needed). A preliminary proposed timeline for RPB meetings and work plan updates is detailed below, which may be subject to change based on workflow progress, RPB member institution and staff capacity, and other considerations.

TIMELINE	2015*				2016*			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Region-wide IJC actions	Develop criteria; Conduct agency discussions; develop draft region-wide opportunities and actions	Stakeholder engagement on draft IJC opportunities and actions; discussions with regulators	Approval of region-wide opportunities and actions	Discuss agency specific and interagency changes in business practices. Stakeholder engagement on potential changes.	Develop and approve language for OAP and communicate with stakeholders	Development of protocols, MOAs, and MOUs (may extend beyond 2016)		
2. Specific geographic areas for IJC action	Exploration of analyses and resources	Analyses conducted; stakeholder engagement on specific geographic areas	Approval of specific geographic areas	Discuss agency specific and interagency changes in business practices. Stakeholder engagement on potential changes.	Develop language for OAP and communicate with stakeholders	Development of protocols, MOAs, and MOUs (may extend beyond 2016)		
3. ROA	Finalize outline and approach to sections	Populate remaining ROA sections. Provide complete draft for RPB member entity review.	Provide complete draft for public and scientific review.	Discuss and determine interface between ROA, portal, and additional analyses	Finalize first iteration ROA and strategy for updates over time.			
4. Stakeholder Engagement	Opportunities for stakeholder engagement will occur throughout the above workflows							
OAP and work plan development	Approve OAP approach and develop work plan		Update work plan		Draft OAP language for public and RPB review	Refine draft and approve OAP	Release final OAP and submit for NOC certification	
RPB meetings	RPB Meeting (Jan in NYC)		RPB Meeting		RPB Meeting		RPB Meeting	

* Quarters 1-4 above refer to calendar years starting running January through December (not Federal fiscal years)