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11 September 2009

Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, and
NOAA Administrator
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW, Rm 5810
Washington, DC 20230

Ms. Eileen Sobeck
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW, MIB-3156
Washington, DC 20240

re: (1) recommendations by **Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee**
(2) new leadership and membership of the Committee

Dear Under Secretary Lubchenco and Deputy Assistant Secretary Sobeck:

On behalf of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC), it is my pleasure to submit for your consideration our recommendations for evaluating the National System of Marine Protected Areas (attached). Evaluation is an essential component of adaptive management, which will result in improved effectiveness and increased progress toward the achievement of National System goals and objectives. These recommendations were passed unanimously by the MPA FAC at our recent meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, on 9-11 September 2009. We acknowledge the generous assistance of Dr. John Parks of The Nature Conservancy in developing these recommendations.

At our recent meeting we also elected new and excellent officers:

- Chair Mr. Eugenio (Geño) Piñeiro-Soler, Chair of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council,
- Vice-Chair Ms. Lori Arguelles, Vice President for Media and Policy Strategy at SeaWeb, and
- Parliamentarian Mr. Victor (Vic) Mastone, Director and Chief Archeologist at the Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources.


Our new leadership requests a face-to-face meeting with Dr. Lubchenco sometime during Chair Piñeiro-Soler's upcoming visit to Washington DC October 14-30 (Vice Chair Arguelles is based in DC).

Given that half the members of the MPA FAC have now reached their term limits, including myself, we also request timely appointment of new members to ensure continuity of the Committee's work.

Personally, it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve on the MPA FAC, a group of extraordinarily dedicated ocean experts who have, time and again, proven their capacity to find common ground in addressing challenging issues regarding the National System of MPAs. Our record of unanimous recommendations demonstrates that a broad spectrum of ocean interests can work together effectively for the common good.

The new MPA FAC looks forward to your response to our recommendations, and to continuing our work with the Departments of Commerce and the Interior to help ensure that the National System of MPAs effectively serves both present and future generations of Americans. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Hixon
Helen Thompson Professor of Marine Conservation Biology, and
Outgoing Chair, Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee

attachments

cc:

Lauren Wenzel, Designated Federal Official, National Marine Protected Areas Center
Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler, Chair, Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
Lori Arguelles, Vice-Chair, Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee

**Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009**

**EVALUATING THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF
MARINE PROTECTED AREAS:
CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANNING TOOL**

The Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (hereafter, Committee) has developed the attached planning tool to assist NOAA and the Department of the Interior (DOI) in evaluating the National System of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This tool is built from the *Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America* (hereafter, Framework). Evaluation is an essential component of adaptive management¹, which will result in improved effectiveness and increased progress toward the achievement of National System goals and objectives.

Background on the Planning Tool

In November 2008, the Committee adopted its first set of broad recommendations on the evaluation of the National System of MPAs. This paper builds on those recommendations, and provides more detailed evaluation guidance for the National System. Evaluation of MPA networks and systems is a new field and the United States has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership through the evaluation of the National System.

The evaluation of the National System will be an iterative process that will become more comprehensive as key information and capabilities are developed. The evaluation is intended to assess the success of implementation of the National System by measuring performance, and to understand the reasons for the measured performance. Effective implementation will maximize the likelihood of fully achieving the benefits of the National System of MPAs. Therefore, the Committee adopted the benefits described in the Framework (page 9) as the ultimate measure of successful implementation of the National System. The attached Evaluation Planning Tool is thus structured around the goals and benefits described in the Framework.

The attached Evaluation Planning Tool provides an analytical framework for the ongoing evaluation of the National System of MPAs. This tool is based on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) framework, entitled *Evaluating Effectiveness: A Framework for Assessing the Management of Protected Areas* (Hockings et al. 2000). The IUCN framework (see Attachment 1) was used as an organizing principle for *How Is Your MPA Doing? A Guidebook for Natural and Social Indicators for Evaluating Marine Protected Area Management Effectiveness* (Pomeroy et al. 2004), and has been used to guide several state and national protected areas planning and evaluation efforts.

The IUCN framework illustrates how evaluation can be incorporated within a comprehensive cycle of protected area planning, management, and adaptation. It includes six components of

¹ "Adaptive management" in a general sense is defined in the Framework as "a systematic process for continually improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of operational programs" (p.49).

management effectiveness: context, planning, inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. The Committee's Evaluation Planning Tool is organized according to these six components (column headings). They are:

- Context – Why are we focused on this benefit? What is the source or authority that directs us to consider it?
- Planning – How are we going to get there?
- Inputs – What do we need?
- Process – How will we go about it?
- Outputs – What did we do and what products or services were produced?
- Outcome – What did we achieve?

The Committee recognizes that components of the evaluation will occur over time. Progress will depend upon a variety of factors, including funding, management capacity, and other available resources for evaluation. Management is influenced by contextual issues; in the case of a protected area by its significance and uniqueness, as well as the threats and opportunities that it faces over time. Evaluation must therefore look at all aspects of the management cycle, including the context within which management takes place. The results of evaluation can be fed back into different parts of the management cycle. The process of conducting a protected area evaluation is dynamic. Steps in the process (planning, inputs, process) are not always linear and may be repeated at different times during the evaluation. The delivery of protected area objectives – i.e., outputs and outcomes – may not occur until the medium or long term.

The tool is also organized according to the three elements related to the benefits of an effective national system: biophysical, social, cultural and economic, and governance (row headings). The Committee recognizes the inter-connectedness of the biophysical, socio-economic, and governance elements, yet has provided these headings to assist evaluation planners in identifying the types of measurements that will be needed.

Informing Adaptive Management

Evaluation is a powerful tool for informing an adaptive management process that can respond to unanticipated impacts, changes outside the scope of the national system, and lessons learned on MPA and system effectiveness. Monitoring is an essential requirement for evaluation and should occur throughout the evaluation process. The outputs of the evaluation process will generate new information that should be accessible to managers and partners for adaptive management (e.g., via a comprehensive database).

Adaptive management is defined in the Framework as "a systematic process for continually improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of operational programs" (p.49). The adaptive management framework involves first thinking about the situation, collecting information, and developing a specific assumption about how a given management action will achieve a desired outcome. The action is implemented and the actual results are monitored to determine how they compare to the ones predicted by the assumptions. The key is to develop an understanding of not only which actions work and which do not, but also to understand why, and what they cost. Adaptation is about systematically using the results

of the monitoring to improve the action. If the action did not achieve the expected results, it is because the assumptions were wrong, the actions were poorly executed, the conditions at the site had changed, the monitoring was faulty, or some combination of these problems. Adaptation involves changing the assumptions and the actions to respond to new information obtained through the monitoring efforts.

Recommendations: Coordinating the Evaluation

The Committee recommends that NOAA and DOI adopt this Evaluation Planning Tool, with refinements as needed, to guide the evaluation of the National System of Marine Protected Areas. The process component of the tool describes different aspects of the evaluation for the National System. This information will need to be coordinated as part of an overall evaluation of the National System. The Committee also recommends that evaluation be integrated with program planning and management, be conducted at the regional and national levels, and be implemented through a partnership between the MPA Center and partner MPA programs in the National System.

References:

Hocking, M., Stolton, S., and Dudley, N. (2000) *Evaluating Effectiveness: A Framework for Assessing the Management of Protected Areas*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. X + 121 pp.

Pomeroy, R.S., Parks, J.E., and Watson, L.M. (2004) *How Is Your MPA Doing? A Guidebook of Natural and Social Indicators For Evaluating Marine Protected Area Management Effectiveness*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. XVI + 216 pp. (source of Attachment 1 -- see next page)

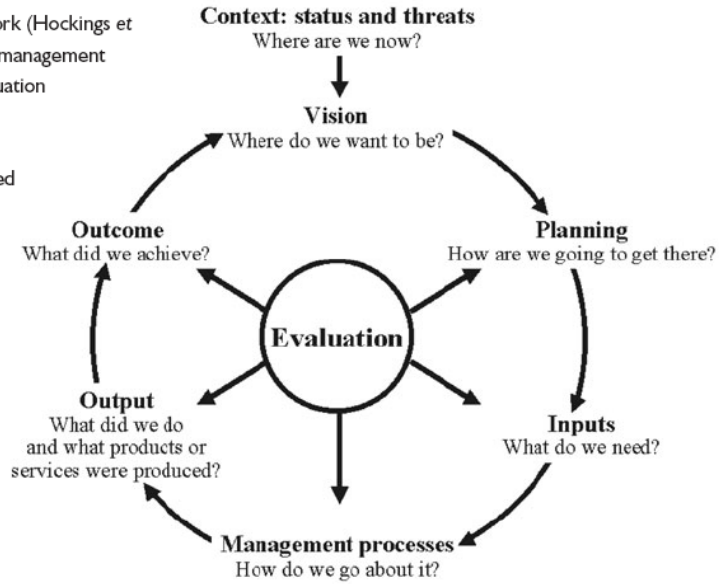
Attachment 1:

Box 3

THE IUCN MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS FRAMEWORK

The IUCN management effectiveness framework (Hockings et al., 2000) presents an iterative protected area management cycle of design, management, monitoring, evaluation and adaptation.

Through this process, managers are empowered with the ability to diagnose and adaptively improve their management actions. To begin the evaluation process in this management cycle three sets of simple questions must be answered:



1. In terms of the design of the protected area:

What is the *context* in which the protected area is designated?

What is the desired result and how will *planning* enable its achievement?

2. In terms of how appropriate are the management system and process:

What *inputs* are required to designate the protected area?

What is the *process* used to go about defining it?

3. In terms of the achievement of desired objectives:

What activities were undertaken and what were the *outputs* (products) of this?

What *outcomes* (impacts) were achieved based on the outputs and their application?

These questions identify six categories of potential indicators for measuring management effectiveness:

- Context indicators
- Planning indicators
- Input indicators
- Process indicators
- Output indicators
- Outcome indicators

Using this general framework allows protected area managers to customize a set of appropriate indicators to

be used on relevant scales. It serves as a foundation from which to further investigate a specific category of indicators (e.g. outcomes) or to determine which indicators are most appropriate based on the use of a specific protected area tool. The framework provides a common language and an important structure from which to improve protected area learning, efficacy and achievement. As a tool for designing an evaluation approach – rather than providing a specific set of indicators and methodologies to measure them – it helps to explain variations in the context, available resources, evaluative purpose and specific management objectives across protected areas.



To learn more about how the indicators in this guidebook relate to the IUCN management effectiveness framework, go to <http://effectiveMPA.noaa.gov/guidebook/IUCNframework.html>

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS EVALUATION PLANNING TOOL

Benefits of the National System (p. 9)	Context <i>Why focus on this benefit?</i>	Planning <i>How are we going to get there?</i>	Inputs <i>What do we need?</i>	Process <i>How do we go about it?</i>	Outputs <i>What did we do? What products & services were produced?</i>	Outcome <i>What did we achieve?</i>	Vision (National System Goal Supported) <i>Where do we want to be?</i> (Framework p. 15)
BIOPHYSICAL ELEMENTS							
Representativeness	Called for in Executive Order 13158 and National System Framework. Component of resilience (MPA FAC, 4/09).	Develop/adopt classification system for ecosystems, habitats and cultural heritage resources to assess representativeness. Develop gap analysis process that addresses representativeness of existing and potential MPAs, including criteria for representativeness and for establishing conservation targets in regional planning processes.	Comprehensive assessment of ecosystem types, habitats, and cultural heritage resources.	Targeted National System nomination process to increase representativeness within the National System. Conduct gap analysis to identify current protection of representative ecosystem types, habitats, and cultural heritage resources. Conduct regional planning processes to identify place-based priorities, targets and gaps, and potential MPA solutions. MPA designation processes informed by gap analyses at appropriate scales.	All ecosystem or habitat types represented in National System. All geographic regions represented in National System. All levels of government represented in National System. All temporal periods, cultural affiliations and traditional practices represented on a regional basis in the National System. Regional maps of place-based conservation priorities.	Ensure that the diverse characteristics of the natural and social environment of the nation's seas are conserved for future generations. A National System of MPAs that is representative of all ecosystems or habitat types of all the nation's marine regions, which includes the Great Lakes.	Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage
Connectivity	Called for in Executive Order 13158 and National System	Identify factors to be used to measure and evaluate connectivity. Develop appropriate	Knowledge of species habitat requirements, life stages, dispersal and migration patterns.	Targeted National System nomination process to enhance MPA connectivity within the National	List of existing MPA networks. MPA networks designed.	Establishment of networks of MPAs that are ecologically or culturally	Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS EVALUATION PLANNING TOOL

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	<p>Framework.</p> <p>Component of resilience (MPA FAC, 4/09).</p>	<p>size and spacing guidelines for different geographic scales (e.g., cross-shelf, long-shelf).</p> <p>Develop gap analysis process that addresses connectivity of existing and potential MPAs within the context of an ecosystem approach to management.</p>	<p>Comprehensive assessment of factors (e.g., larval dispersal and adult movement for species of interest).</p>	<p>System.</p> <p>Conduct gap analysis to identify connectivity among habitats, and cultural/historical resources.</p> <p>MPA designation processes informed by gap analyses at appropriate scales.</p>	<p>Measure of National System connectivity.</p>	<p>connected at appropriate scales to address conservation objectives within the National System.</p>	<p>Production</p>
Replication	<p>Called for in National System Framework.</p> <p>Component of resilience (MPA FAC, 4/09).</p>	<p>Identify ecological and cultural features to be considered for replication.</p> <p>Identify the appropriate scale (e.g., regional, national) where replication should be considered.</p> <p>Identify factors, including risk factors, to be used to measure and evaluate replication.</p> <p>Develop/adopt classification system</p>	<p>Knowledge of species, habitats and ecological processes that naturally occur in the given geographic areas.</p> <p>Knowledge of cultural heritage resources in given geographic areas.</p> <p>Information on location and quality of biological and cultural heritage resources for which replication is sought.</p> <p>Information on potential risks to biological and cultural</p>	<p>Targeted National System nomination process to enhance replication of resource protection within the National System.</p> <p>Identify existing replication of MPAs.</p> <p>Conduct gap analysis to identify sites for replication to protect key ecological and cultural features.</p> <p>MPA designation processes informed</p>	<p>List of key ecological and cultural features to be replicated.</p> <p>Measure of replication within the National System at the appropriate scale (e.g., regional, national).</p>	<p>Sufficient replication of key ecological and cultural features to foster greater resilience within the National System in the face of harmful impacts.</p>	<p>Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production</p>

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS EVALUATION PLANNING TOOL

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		<p>for ecosystems, habitats and cultural heritage resources (see representativeness).</p> <p>Develop gap analysis process that addresses replication of key biological and cultural heritage resources.</p>	<p>heritage resources of the National System.</p>	<p>by regional gap analyses</p>			
Viability	<p>Called for in National System Framework (ecological viability and cultural integrity).</p> <p>Component of resilience (MPA FAC, 4/09).</p> <p>[Note: Viability for cultural properties may be in-situ preservation or appropriate recovery.]</p>	<p>Identify ecological and cultural features to be assessed for viability.</p> <p>Identify the appropriate scale (e.g., regional, national) where viability should be assessed.</p> <p>Identify factors, including risk factors (e.g. uniqueness, fragility, human impacts) to be used to assess viability.</p> <p>Develop gap analysis process that addresses viability / adequacy of existing and potential</p>	<p>Assessment of natural and cultural resources protected by existing MPAs, those that would benefit from additional MPAs, and threats to those resources.</p> <p>Knowledge of size, protection, and other factors (e.g., shape, location, site characteristics) sufficient to ensure both ecological viability and integrity of cultural heritage resources.</p>	<p>Targeted National System nomination process to maximize inclusion of sites to enhance viability within the National System.</p> <p>Conduct gap analysis to help inform appropriate size, shape, and other characteristics of areas to protect species, habitats, ecological processes and cultural heritage resources.</p> <p>MPA designation processes informed</p>	<p>Measure of viability of ecological and cultural features.</p>	<p>The National System contains self-sustaining geographically dispersed component sites of sufficient extent to ensure population persistence, including cultural properties, through natural cycles of variation.</p>	<p>Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production</p>

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS EVALUATION PLANNING TOOL

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		MPAs.		by regional gap analyses. MPA and marine resource programs assess management effectiveness as part of National System viability analysis.			
SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ELEMENTS							
Tourism and Recreation	Called for in National System Framework.	Identify tourism and recreational uses to be assessed. Develop methodology to identify and assess potential conflicts and impacts of different uses and levels of use. Analyze carrying capacity for tourism and recreation activities.	Comprehensive information on ocean tourism and recreational uses in National System of MPAs (e.g., whale watching, diving, fishing). Information on compatibility and potential impacts of different uses and levels of use with objectives of the National System. Monetary value of tourism associated with MPAs.	Conduct tourism and recreational use analyses, including engagement with users, to provide spatial information at appropriate scales on intensity, conflicts, impacts and trends.	Measure of tourism and recreational use of National System MPAs. Inventory of tourism and recreational opportunities provided by National System MPAs.	Maintain or enhance opportunity for tourism and visitation of some MPAs, consistent with conservation goals and objectives, as well as an increase in visitation and enjoyment of areas system-wide, providing for uses such as recreational fishing, diving, whale watching, and swimming.	Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS EVALUATION PLANNING TOOL

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Sustained Fisheries	<p>Called for in National System Framework.</p> <p>Stock viability is a component of resilience (MPA FAC 4/09).</p>	<p>Identify which fishery resources would and would not benefit from MPAs as a management measure.</p> <p>Identify the appropriate scale (e.g., regional, national) where sustainable production should be assessed.</p> <p>Identify biological and socio-economic factors to be used to assess sustainable production.</p>	<p>Stock assessments.</p> <p>Information on how sustainable production MPAs contribute to fisheries stocks (e.g., spillover, protection of spawning areas, recovery areas); how habitat conservation contributes to sustainable production.</p> <p>Information on levels and spatial patterns of effort for fishery resources protected by sustainable production MPAs.</p> <p>Existing NMFS performance measures: 1) Number of Fish Stock Sustainability Index (FSSI) stocks not subject to overfishing. 2) Number of fish stocks for which overfishing has ended.</p> <p>Performance measures of state/ territorial fisheries agencies.</p>	<p>Target National System nomination process to address sustainable production objectives.</p> <p>Conduct gap analysis to help MPA managing entities identify potential sustainable production MPAs needed to achieve National System goals.</p> <p>Coordinate with Fishery Management Council and state, territorial, tribal and regional authorities with authority for sustainable production MPA designation processes.</p> <p>MPA designation processes informed by regional gap analyses.</p>	<p>List of fishery resources that benefit from MPAs as a management measure.</p> <p>Measure of the contribution of the National System to sustainable production as a result of species recovery, spillover and seeding effects, habitat protection, conservation of old-growth age structure and genetic diversity, establishment of reference sites to examine the regional effects of fishing, and better information on access opportunities.</p>	<p>Maintain or enhance fishing opportunities for subsistence, commercial and recreational fishermen consistent with conservation goals and objectives.</p>	Sustainable production

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS EVALUATION PLANNING TOOL

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			Monetary value of fisheries associated with sustainable production MPAs. Information on subsistence and tribal uses of fisheries associated with sustainable production MPAs, including tribal treaty rights, commercial, subsistence and cultural uses.				
Community Benefits and Economic Viability	Called for in National System Framework.	Identify factors for describing/assessing community identity, activities and economic viability, and cultural heritage relative to National System MPAs, recognizing that communities are dynamic. Identify communities that affect and are affected by National System MPAs.	Information on how communities/cultures affect and are affected by National System MPAs. Information on subsistence and tribal uses associated with National System MPAs, including tribal treaty rights, commercial, subsistence and cultural uses. Information on	Collaborate with MPA partners, experts and others to conduct assessment of National System impacts on associated communities. Collaborate and coordinate with tribes in geographic areas associated with National System MPAs.	List of factors used to describe/assess community identity, activities and economic viability, and cultural heritage relative to National System MPAs. Inventory of communities associated with National System MPAs. Assessment of	Help maintain or enhance community identity, cultural heritage (areas of cultural importance and practices), and economic viability of communities associated with National System MPAs.	Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS EVALUATION PLANNING TOOL

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			economic activities and viability.		National System impacts on associated communities related to community identity, activities and economic viability, and cultural heritage. Measure of economic viability of communities associated with National System MPAs.		
Planning for Ocean Uses	Called for in National System Framework. Called for in Presidential memo on ocean governance and marine spatial planning (June 2009).	Identify ocean uses to be assessed. Develop methodology to identify and assess potential conflicts and impacts of different uses and levels of use.	Comprehensive information on ocean uses. Information on ocean uses within National System MPAs. Information on compatibility and potential impacts of different uses and levels of use with objectives of the National System.	Conduct ocean use analyses, including engagement with ocean users, to provide spatial information at appropriate scales on ocean uses, intensity, conflicts, impacts and trends.	Comprehensive information on ocean uses. Measure of National System MPA contribution to regional and sub-regional marine spatial plans.	Improved ocean conservation through adaptive management programs and a more predictable regulatory environment for ocean users.	Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS EVALUATION PLANNING TOOL

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Support Marine Conservation	<p>Called for in National System Framework.</p> <p>Foundational principle in Executive Order 13158.</p> <p>In accordance with state, territorial and federal natural resource laws, and consistent with tribal conservation objectives.</p>	<p>Establish a baseline of current levels of support for the National System of MPAs as a component of ocean conservation.</p> <p>Develop methodology to identify and assess managing entity, stakeholder, and public knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions including factors influencing them.</p> <p>Identify and assess investment in National System MPAs.</p>	<p>Data on public knowledge, attitudes and perceptions related to National System MPAs and their role in ocean and coastal conservation.</p> <p>Data on federal, state and tribal marine conservation objectives, and level of investment (budgets & personnel) in National System MPAs.</p> <p>Data on funding from non-governmental partners and volunteer time.</p>	<p>Conduct analysis of public knowledge, attitudes and perceptions related to National System MPAs and their role in ocean and coastal conservation (e.g., through consultation, surveys, etc.).</p> <p>Assess level of investment by managing entities at National System MPAs.</p> <p>Assess non-governmental funding and volunteer time.</p> <p>Tribal consultation regarding MPAs consistent with tribal conservation objectives.</p>	<p>Measures of support for National System MPA (e.g., budgets, volunteer hours, etc.).</p> <p>Periodic report on detailing National System support measures and plans.</p>	<p>National System member sites enjoy enhanced stature, including support for investment, within their managing entities and their local communities, as well as nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production</p>
Effective and Efficient Outreach	<p>Called for in National System Framework.</p>	<p>Identify National System MPA programs with outreach and engagement efforts.</p> <p>Develop plan,</p>	<p>Information on feedback from audiences targeted and reached through outreach efforts by National System MPAs.</p>	<p>Establish National System outreach work group to coordinate and measure outreach and engagement</p>	<p>Inventory of outreach and engagement efforts of National System MPA programs, including target</p>	<p>Coordinated effort has increased recognition and visibility of National System</p>	<p>Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production</p>

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009
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		<p>including goals and objectives, to coordinate National System MPA outreach and engagement on common messages.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to leverage resources and improve efficiency.</p>		efforts.	<p>audiences (who), issues (what) and strategies (how).</p> <p>Measure of National System outreach effectiveness and efficiency.</p> <p>Coordinated National System outreach and engagement program.</p>	<p>MPAs, and enhanced interactive engagement with the public.</p> <p>Increased public awareness and understanding of the importance of marine resources and conservation efforts.</p>	
Educational Opportunities	Called for in National System Framework.	<p>Identify National System MPA programs with education efforts.</p> <p>Develop plan, including goals and objectives, to coordinate educational opportunities.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to leverage resources.</p>	<p>Information on education efforts of National System MPA programs, including target audiences (who), issues (what) and strategies (how).</p> <p>Information on feedback from audiences targeted and reached through education efforts by National System MPAs.</p>	Establish National System education work group, including marine educators, to coordinate and measure education efforts.	<p>Inventory of education efforts of National System MPA programs, including target audiences (who), issues (what) and strategies (how).</p> <p>Measure of National System educational effectiveness.</p> <p>Coordinated National System education program.</p>	Enhanced understanding and knowledge of natural and cultural heritage, and sustainable fisheries.	Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
11 September 2009
NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS EVALUATION PLANNING TOOL

Benefits of the National System (p. 9)	Context <i>Why focus on this benefit?</i>	Planning <i>How are we going to get there?</i>	Inputs <i>What do we need?</i>	Process <i>How do we go about it?</i>	Outputs <i>What did we do? What products & services were produced?</i>	Outcome <i>What did we achieve?</i>	Vision (National System Goal Supported) <i>Where do we want to be?</i> (Framework p. 15)
Research Opportunities	Called for in National System Framework.	Identify National System MPA programs with research efforts and other related marine research efforts. Develop plan to identify and prioritize research needs and gaps for the National System of MPAs. Identify opportunities to leverage resources.	Information on research projects or programs carried out in National System MPAs. Information on research needs to better manage the National System. Information on potential research partners/programs that would benefit from or contribute to the National System.	Establish research work group for the National System of MPAs to foster coordination of research efforts and identify collaboration opportunities. Promote National System MPAs as locations for research related to resource conservation.	Inventory of research efforts and prioritized needs relevant to the National System of MPAs.	Enhanced understanding of the dynamics of marine ecosystems and human interactions with them to inform adaptive management.	Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production
GOVERNANCE ELEMENTS							
Regional Coordination	Called for in National System Framework. Foundational principle in Executive Order 13158. In accordance with state, territorial and federal natural resource laws and policies, and	Identify regional priorities and definitions of National System objectives. Identify regional ocean governance arrangements and other key opportunities for regional engagement and coordination. Identify regional governance needs as	Information on regional ecosystems, habitats, and resources to define National System objectives at the regional scale. Comprehensive information on ocean uses at the regional scale. Information on regional ocean governance arrangements,	Cooperate with managing entities to identify / establish appropriate regional coordination mechanism(s) (e.g., regional MPA working group). Periodically review Framework with respect to regional priorities and definitions of National System	Priority National System conservation objectives at the regional scale. Establishment of regionally coordinated MPA systems with enhanced management capacity (including monitoring and enforcement efficiencies), improved science and	Enhanced regional and/or ecosystem-based approaches to MPA planning by creating opportunities for managing entities and stakeholders to look beyond their individual jurisdictions, mandates, and interests.	Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production

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	consistent with tribal conservation objectives.	they relate to the National System.	mandates, and priority conservation objectives.	objectives.	research, and effective outreach, engagement, and education.		
National Coordination	Called for in National System Framework and Executive Order 13158.	Identify national ocean trends, developments, priorities and legal obligations relevant to the National System of MPAs. Identify resource conservation issues and MPA planning and management that span regional boundaries. Identify national governance mechanisms that relate to the National System.	Identify key opportunities and impediments to national engagement and coordination on national ocean management and conservation issues. Information on resource conservation issues and MPA planning and management that span regional boundaries.	MPA Center will facilitate coordination at the national level and create a management committee.	Prioritized management issues that require national coordination. Mechanism for cooperation among the diverse entities across all levels of government with management authority for the different types of MPAs that comprise the National System. Cooperative efforts in planning, research and monitoring, sharing of equipment and personnel, enforcement efforts, and educational campaigns.	A nation-wide system of MPAs that addresses National MPA System goals and objectives through a regional approach.	Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production

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International Coordination	Called for in National System Framework and Executive Order 13158.	Identify priority international ocean trends, developments, priorities and legal obligations relevant to the National System of MPAs. Identify resource conservation issues and MPA planning and management that span international boundaries. Identify international governance mechanisms that relate to the National System.	Identify key opportunities for international engagement and coordination on national ocean management and conservation issues.	MPA Center will facilitate coordination at the international level in cooperation with the State Department and other agencies.	International policy coordination, collaborative activities, information capacity sharing, capacity building and technical assistance.	Improved linkages with, and technical assistance to, international MPA programs to enhance cooperative conservation across international boundaries.	Natural Heritage; Cultural Heritage; Sustainable Production

Note:

Most of the “Outcomes” in this Guidance are from the “Benefits” section of the *Framework for a National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America* (2008).