



## GCOOS BOD Telecon Notes

13 February 2025

**Welcome:** Board Chair Dr. Kim Yates welcomed everyone and thanked Emily Hall and Rafael Ramos for agreeing to serve as GCOOS election officers. The board voted unanimously to adopt the agenda

**Strategic Plan Review Process:** The GCOOS Executive Committee created a process for the SP review that was emailed to BOD members. Each member was assigned two sections to review. These can be considered placeholders for now. If anyone is uncomfortable with their assignment, they need to let Kim know by COB Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. The schedule and time commitments for reviewers are ambitious. The deadlines are to keep the process moving forward but Kim will amend to say the dates are tentative. The purpose of the review is to determine if/how well goals outlined in the current SP were met and summarize challenges, then use the information to update the SP in the second part of the year. Templates have been created to streamline the review process and detailed steps provided to expedite and make the task less onerous. The process document will be updated to reflect changes discussed during today's call. Progress report templates were sent to PIs last week. The first deadline is for PIs and BOD task teams to send completed templates to Kim by Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. An interim check-in for reviewers is set for March 21<sup>st</sup> and reviews are due Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. Once reviews are received, they will be compiled and sent to all BOD members by April 18<sup>th</sup>. An in-person panel will be scheduled to discuss results of the SP review, synthesize results and use to shape the next SP. The original idea was for the BOD to meet at the GOMA All Hands meeting in May, but many have conflicts and will not be attending. A poll will be sent to determine if/when an alternate in-person meeting date is needed. One reason for the timeline is to engage stakeholders and invite some to present at the spring meeting. If we can resolve issues with gaps, challenges and needs, we can incorporate into the new SP.

**Scope of the Review:** The goal is not to review individual projects but to assess whether GCOOS is on track to meet current SP goals. What activities did we say we were going to do? Did we meet the goal? What were the challenges? Did we identify solutions? Are we still looking for solutions? Are the existing focus areas and cross-cutting themes still relevant? Does the mission statement need to be modified? Do we need a vision statement? Is the document format ok? Do we have the right level of detail? Are short summary statements needed for any of the sections? Are the outcomes, deliverables and metrics within the GCOOS mission and ability to achieve, measure and track? Does success rely on an external partner's ability to do the work? The plan is to review the 2020-2025 SP between now and the end of May and use the information to develop the 2026-2030 plan.

**Discussion:** There is concern that the review timeline is very ambitious and that the first progress report in March might not be doable for some. BOD members should let Kim and Jorge know if additional time is needed to meet the March review timeline. The goal is to have the SP done before the next in-person members meeting. The SP is used to guide the organization as a whole, not just federally-funded projects. Antonietta asked if we are envisioning a major overhaul or just minor tweaks to the existing SP. Kim thinks it is a solid plan as is and that a complete overhaul won't be necessary. It will be a group vision. An in-person meeting in May would be helpful. Kim will keep the early deadlines and add

asterisks to indicate these are subject to change due to many unknown factors. Brian agreed it makes sense to move forward but remain flexible as we get greater clarity on stakeholder needs. People suggested that having a review package by March 18<sup>th</sup> is too soon but that meeting around May to assess the situation would be good. More clarity in the coming weeks by NOS and NOAA will be helpful. Brian reiterated that a quantifiable plan with clear benchmarks is needed. Should the document be broken into two parts? Part 1 could be tackled now—review what we said we were going to do over the past five years and determine if we met the mark; Part 2—the second phase is Where do we go next? Pat likes this idea because it is a lighter lift that makes the current deadline more realistic. There was widespread agreement to first tackle the review then wait a couple months to see how best to proceed.

**Summary:** Indicate in the review process document that all deadlines are tentative. Initially only focus on reviewing the past five years—specifically, what did we accomplish relative to what we said we’d do. Identify the challenges—both those that were overcome and those still pending. Do not include next steps beyond the review for now. Brian said the modified plan makes more sense. If a BOD member can’t get to their assigned section by the deadline, let Kim know.

**Discussion of Individual Review Assignments:** All Board members present gave a thumbs-up on the two sections they were each assigned to review. If there are any issues and a review is not possible by the March deadline, Kim asked that she be notified by COB next Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. Also notify her to make name changes to assigned sections. Kim will make edits to the document assignments based on this input and resend to the team the following Monday (Feb 24<sup>th</sup>). Dave asked why there is a May deadline. It coincides with the GOMA in person meeting but that no longer seems like an option for the Board to meet in person. There are too many conflicts. The SAML meeting is 4-6 May and the Offshore Technology Conference is in Houston that same week.

There is a push to identify stakeholders and solicit input so they can be invited to speak at the virtual spring meeting. If we don’t meet in May, is a dedicated workshop at another time needed for the SP? How much time is needed to plan a meeting? At least several months are needed. An easy-access venue like an airport meeting space might be ideal. Kim suggests waiting until early April to see how much progress has been made with the reviews.

**Gulf of Mexico Name Change and Implications for GCOOS:** The official NOAA policy is to use Gulf of America for US territorial waters. International partners will continue to use Gulf of Mexico for non-US waters. There are fiscal and academic challenges—it will be costly to comply with the name change and it will affect communications when publishing in international, peer-reviewed literature. There are also potential challenges with international partnerships through programs like GCAN. IOOS is having a Town Hall meeting tomorrow and Jorge hopes to have guidance on what this all means for GCOOS. For now, we will consider using a “Do Business As (DBA)” approach until clarification is provided. Once guidelines are provided, in the absence of additional funding, a phased compliance approach will be needed to address all the changes. We also need to check if/how the name change affects our legal tort liability. The board agreed to implement a name change using a phased approach, if it becomes necessary, and to enable Jorge to respond quickly as guidance is provided by IOOS.

**New GCOOS Director of Operations:** Marcus Ogle introduced himself to the group and shared that he will be joining Jorge at the IOOS spring meeting.

A motion to adjourn was unanimously passed.