

## **GUIDANCE FOR MEASURING COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE FOR SECTION 312 EVALUATIONS**

NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) and state coastal management programs (CMPs) are involved in an effort to establish individual CMP-specific performance metrics to be used in CZMA Section 312 evaluations. Section 312 evaluations are meant to review progress of CMP-specific program implementation and to better understand and evaluate the CMP's unique context, local relevance, and performance as a partner with other state programs, local governments, and organizations. Specific targets and measures provide an additional source of data to help inform the overall evaluation of a program for a specific timeframe. These targets and measures also provide a quantitative reference for each program about how well it is meeting the goals and objectives it has identified as important to the program. The metrics can facilitate programmatic discussion about the appropriateness of goals and objectives and can be useful in demonstrating program progress to partners, state agencies, a Governor's office, and the public.

### 1. Identification of Goals and Objectives

Each coastal management program will identify goals and objectives that are appropriate for developing performance measures and numerical targets for Section 312 evaluation periods. The source of the goals and objectives can be one or a combination of:

- 1) a CMP's strategic plan;
- 2) a CMP lead agency's strategic or management plan as it relates to the CMP;
- 3) the Coastal Zone Management Act Performance Measurement System (CZMAPMS);
- 4) a CMP's most recent Section 309 assessment and strategies; or
- 5) metrics developed by the CMP specifically for this project.

OCRM is requesting that each coastal management program identify three (3) objectives from which to derive performance measures. It is acceptable to use one goal with three objectives, two separate goals with a combination of three objectives, or three separate goals with one objective for each, so long as three measures, each with an associated target, can be established. The goals and objectives should reflect important priorities to a coastal management program or help to highlight its unique identity, because the corresponding measures will be used during a Section 312 evaluation to illustrate an individual coastal management program's progress.

### 2. Establishment of Measures and Numerical Targets

Each coastal management program will establish three performance measures, each with an associated target, that relate to the identified goals and objectives. A quantitative target covers a period of five years. That time period generally corresponds to the time period of an evaluation.

### 3. Approval of Goals, Objectives, Measures and Targets

CPD's funding guidance for FY 11 will include a requirement that each program include language in a new or existing task that indicates that the state will identify goals, objectives, performance measures, and numerical targets to be used for Section 312 evaluations. Each coastal management program will work with its OCRM Coastal Programs Division (CPD) specialist to select goals and objectives and establish the associated measures and targets. An evaluator from the OCRM National Policy and Evaluation Division (NPED) will collaborate with each specialist and coastal management program and provide input as needed throughout the process. During this first round of establishing measures and targets, all evaluators will meet and consult with one another frequently to ensure that the input we provide is consistent. We anticipate that this collaborative process will result in mutual acceptance and approval of the measures and targets. If there is any disagreement, the NPED Chief will become involved. The selected goals, objectives, measures, and targets are included in the annual cooperative agreement application for FY12, indicating OCRM agreement and approval.

### 4. Tracking and Reporting Progress

CPD's funding guidance for FY 12 will include a requirement for data collection and reporting on progress toward meeting identified targets. Performance measurement data collection will begin July – October 2012, depending upon the start date of a program's cooperative agreement award. Reporting on progress will begin December 2012 – April 2013, depending upon a coastal management program's due date for submittal of the first semi-annual performance report for that cooperative agreement award. Coastal management program staff will be responsible for reporting on progress in the cooperative agreement semi-annual performance reports. CPD specialists will be responsible for tracking progress.

NPED evaluators will not be involved in tracking or reviewing progress except at the time of a coastal management program's evaluation.

### 5. Use during a Section 312 Evaluation

Targets, and progress toward them, will be one element for review during the Section 312 evaluation. The qualitative and quantitative information OCRM has traditionally gained during pre-site visit review of materials and through meetings, discussions, and phone calls during and after the site visit is extremely valuable and will continue to be used to inform the findings. Establishing performance measures and targets is an effort to include an additional quantitative data point in evaluations, an additional reference to inform program review and discussion, and to provide greater accountability.

All coastal management programs will begin collecting performance measurement data at approximately the same time. However, all CMPs will not be scheduled for an evaluation five years from that time. For many CMPs, an evaluation will occur at a time that does not correspond with the end of the five-year data collection. Whenever a coastal management

program's evaluation is scheduled, the evaluation team will consider the status of the measures and targets as they exist at that time.

If a coastal management program does not meet a particular target, that does not mean the CMP will be found 'not in compliance' or require that sanctions be imposed. If a target is not met, reasons and context will be discussed during an evaluation, considering whether unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances occurred, whether the target was unrealistic, or whether it should be revised or replaced with one that is better aligned with the CMP goal and objective (see Changes to Metrics, below). The evaluation findings will reflect that, and a recommendation could be included as a result of the situation.

One coastal management program's progress will not be compared with any other CMP. A coastal management program's targets and its progress toward meeting those targets are unique to the CMP, making it irrelevant for comparative purposes.

## 6. Changes to Metrics

The National Policy and Evaluation Division hopes that data can be collected for the full five years, even if at the end of five years it is apparent that the measure wasn't entirely appropriate or that the target was unrealistic. There may, however, be circumstances in which a coastal management program (in consultation with CPD) proposes to modify a performance measure or target prior to the five year time horizon. For example, if the specific CZMAPMS goals and objectives on which the measures and targets are based were deleted or significantly changed; if the CMP strategic plan goals and objectives on which the measures and targets are based were deleted or significantly changed; or if it was no longer possible to collect any data at all, then NPED, CPD, and the coastal management program would work to identify a new measure and target. During an evaluation we would still look at the original measure and target and also at the status of the new measure and target. No one should propose to change the target during the five year period just because it looks like it cannot be met. As described above, if a target isn't met, then the evaluation would review reasons, context, unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances, whether it was unrealistic, etc.