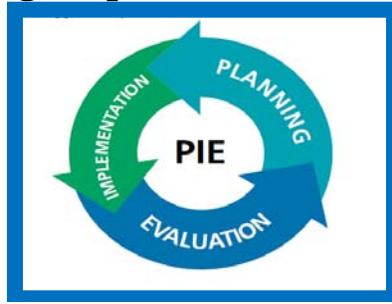


Sea Grant's Planning, Implementation and Evaluation System



About Sea Grant

A partnership between universities and the federal government's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Sea Grant College Program directs federal resources to pressing problems in local communities. For more than 40 years, the National Sea Grant College program has worked to create and maintain a healthy coastal environment and economy. The Sea Grant network includes more than 30 programs based at top universities in every coastal and Great Lakes state, Puerto Rico, and Guam. The programs of the Sea Grant network work together to help citizens understand, conserve, and better utilize America's coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes resources. By drawing on the experience of more than 3,000 scientists, engineers, public outreach experts, educators, and students from more than 300 institutions, Sea Grant is able to make an impact at local and state levels, and serve as a powerful national force for change.

Sea Grant invests in high-priority research, addressing issues such as population growth and development in coastal communities; preparation and response to hurricanes, coastal storms, and tsunamis; understanding our interactions with the marine environment; fish and shellfish farming; seafood safety; and, fisheries management. The results of this research are shared with the public through Sea Grant's integrated outreach program, which brings together the collective expertise of on-the-ground extension agents, educators, and communications specialists. The goal is to ensure that vital research results are shared with those who need it most and in ways that are timely, relevant, and meaningful.

The National Sea Grant College Program has developed a five-year strategic plan (2009-2013), in conjunction with an enhanced Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation system. Both the plan and the new evaluation model respond to recommendations made by the National Research Council (NRC) and align to NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan (NGSP) and to the new Strategy, Execution and Evaluation (SEE) process.

Background on Sea Grant's Review Process

In 1994, the NRC reviewed the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP). In its *Review of the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program* report, the NRC recommended several actions, including systematic, periodic reviews of each Sea Grant program. In response to the NRC, NSGCP developed a program review and evaluation process to which the Sea Grant programs were reviewed by an external Program Assessment Team every four years since in 1998.

The National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002 (P.L. 107-299) directed NOAA to contract with the NRC a second time to review the evaluation process and make recommendations to improve its effectiveness.

The resulting NRC report, *Evaluation of the Sea Grant Review Process* (2006), included a total of 24 recommendations in the following categories: strategic planning; evaluation; periodic assessment and performance criteria; program assessment teams and site visits; and, improving program cohesion, coordination, and oversight. A new, integrated model for strategic planning, implementation and evaluation was developed based on the recommendations of the NRC. The integrated planning and evaluation system outlined here is also consistent with needs articulated by Congress, the Office of Management and Budget

(OMB), and NOAA. It extends NOAA’s Strategy Execution and Evaluation (SEE) process to the program level and ensures that Sea Grant’s activities will support NOAA’s mission as well as meets local, state, and regional needs.

An Integrated Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PIE) System

The NSGCP places a premium on careful planning and rigorous evaluation at both the state program level and the national level to ensure that the program has both localized and broader impacts. Better integration of planning, implementation, and evaluation activities will maximize Sea Grant’s efficiency and effectiveness at both levels and make the best use of limited resources.

The PIE system begins with rigorous strategic planning at both the national and state levels that lasts two years. The plans are then implemented with coordinated and collaborative research, outreach and education activities at the state level for four years. Once the activities are completed, there is an evaluation of the success of those efforts in meeting the objectives set forth in the strategic/implementation plans. The complete cycle, including planning, implementation, and evaluation will take eight years to complete (Fig. 1).



Sections I, II, and III, below, describe each component of the integrated PIE system—Planning, Implementation and Evaluation. Section IV describes how Sea Grant’s PIE system aligns to NOAA’s SEE process, including the NOAA’s NGSP.

I. Planning

National Strategic/Implementation Plans (every four years): Every four years, the NSGCP develops a new national strategic plan. Sea Grant’s national plan is done in concert with the development of strategic plans for the state programs in order to ensure that the state strategic plans reflect national priorities. Likewise, stakeholder input collected for state Sea Grant planning efforts is included with other relevant local and regional plans to inform the national planning process. NOAA’s strategic plan provides the national framework for Sea Grant’s planning effort together with other national plans. Sea Grant’s national plan identifies a limited set of priorities that helps NOAA to achieve its strategic outcomes and serves as the foci for Sea Grant’s next four-year implementation cycle.

Individual Sea Grant Program Plans (every four years): The national plan serves as the basis for the states to complete the development of their four-year strategic plans. The state plans include metrics and performance measures that align with and support national measures and metrics for the national priority areas. Since each state has its own unique set of local and regional stakeholders, partners and priorities, the individual program plans will not necessarily address all of the national priority areas; and, the plans may include additional emphases as appropriate. State plans are developed with the federal program officer and reviewed and approved by the NSGO, in consultation with the Advisory Board. Sea Grant programs use their

plans to guide and inform requests for proposals. In addition, these plans are used as the basis for subsequent program evaluation. With the understanding that these plans are living documents, programs may make changes to their plans, subject to approval by the federal program officer, so the changes are documented for eventual evaluation purposes.

II. Implementation

Sea Grant programs consider the local, regional, and national priorities identified during the planning process as they implement their research, outreach and education activities. Each program retains the authority to implement its program as it sees fit in order to achieve optimal results.

The PIE system and subsequent changes to program implementation make it easier for programs to plan and act on a regional and national scale. For instance, project competitions, omnibus grant applications and awards will be synchronized to facilitate collaborative efforts among programs. There is a common format for annual reports so that accomplishments of individual projects and state programs can more easily be synthesized into national impacts.

III. Evaluation

Sea Grant's program evaluation process shows how its research, outreach and education capabilities have local, regional and national impacts. Program evaluation also provides the opportunity to discover means by which the state programs, and in turn the National Program, can improve. The performance of state programs is evaluated according to the priorities set forth in the national plan and the individual state plans, and programs are held accountable for meeting the metrics and performance measures established in those plans. Evaluation is a continual process, both internal and external, and involves all facets of the Sea Grant network. Programs are evaluated in four general areas: 1) on their approach to management; 2) on the scope and success of their engagement with stakeholders; 3) on their ability to collaborate with NOAA and other Sea Grant programs; and, 4) on the impact their program has on society from both an environmental and a socio-economic perspective. Evaluation is based on the metrics and performance measures established in the national plan and reflected in their state plans. The process is also intended to recognize that unplanned or rapid-response activities may also have significant impact.

The Office of Management and Budget, the Advisory Board and other entities have recommended that the Sea Grant programs be recertified on a reasonable and regular schedule. The PIE system serves as the recertification process for the programs.

Annual Reports/Self-Evaluation: Annual reports are used by programs to evaluate progress against their strategic plans, national performance measures, and metrics over a one-year period. These reports are also used by the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and programs to track and report progress. The individual programs' progress in meeting goals set forth in their plans and in producing accomplishments relative to those goals contributes to the Sea Grant network's progress toward meeting national goals set forth in the national strategic and implementation plan.

Site Visits (every four years, beginning in FY2010): Once every four years, a review team visits each Sea Grant program. The review teams are chaired by the NSGO program officer and co-chaired by a member of the Advisory Board with a Sea Grant Director as a review team member. Additional members of the teams may be drawn from the Advisory Board and/or outside experts as needed. The review team meets with the program management team, advisory committees, and university administration to review and discuss broad issues related to three of the four evaluation components: 1) program management and organization, 2) stakeholder engagement, and 3) collaborative network activities. The team is provided with a limited and focused set of briefing materials. The team prepares a site visit report with findings, suggestions and recommendations to improve the Sea Grant program's performance but is not be responsible for rating the program.

Performance Review Panel (every four years, beginning in FY2012): Every four years, following the completion of all Sea Grant program site visits, a Performance Review Panel (PRP) conducts a retrospective evaluation of the impact of the programs relative to their four-year strategic plans. The PRP evaluates the programs' overall impact on society from both an environmental and a socio-economic perspective. Annual reports, combined with a brief four-year summary document prepared by the programs, provides the basis for the review. The PRP is composed of approximately 25 members with some of the members drawn from the Advisory Board and the remainder drawn from senior-level academia, government, and industry.

Annual National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) Review (beginning in FY2010): The NSGO meets each year to discuss the progress of each state program relative to its plan, and to identify potential areas for improvement. Once every four years the NSGO review is expanded to include a performance evaluation and rating of all programs based upon the PRP and site visit reports. State programs have the opportunity to submit a memorandum to the NSGO responding to findings in both the site visit and PRP reports, which is also used as part of the NSGO review.

Recertification: The four-year reviews constitute a recertification process. A successful review results in recertification of a state program. If a program receives an unsuccessful rating, the program is placed on a probationary period for at least two years. During the fall review of the second probationary year, the NSGO assesses the program's progress in addressing the issues that led to the unsuccessful rating based on the appeal issued by the state Sea Grant program in question. If the program has made satisfactory progress, the program is allowed to continue on probation for the remaining two years. If the program then receives a successful rating during the next four-year review, the program is recertified. However, if progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory after two years, or if a program receives a second consecutive unsuccessful rating during the four-year review, the program is referred to the Advisory Board for possible decertification.

National "State of Sea Grant Program" Review (once every two years, beginning in 2010): Once every four years, the Advisory Board provides a review of the "State of the Sea Grant Program." This review assesses the progress of the Sea Grant College Program in addressing the priority areas highlighted in the national plan, analogous to the manner in which state programs are evaluated in addressing their respective plans. This review relies extensively on information collected from state program reports and reviews, and gives an analysis that helps inform the subsequent national strategic planning process. This national program review is central to the PIE system and provides an assessment of the overall performance of the entire Sea Grant College Program, including the National Sea Grant Office, in achieving its local, regional, and national objectives while supporting NOAA's mission.

IV. Aligning PIE to NOAA's Strategy, Execution, and Evaluation (SEE) Process

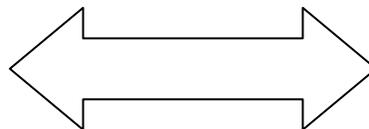
On an annual basis, Sea Grant programs report on their contribution and their anticipated contribution towards national Sea Grant performance measures, metrics and goals. This information aligns to NOAA's NGSP, Annual Guidance Memorandum (AGM), and to NOAA Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) measures. By aggregating information up to the national level, Sea Grant is able to use this information for NOAA, Department of Commerce (DOC) and OMB reporting/evaluation purposes. Within NOAA's current system, Sea Grant uses this information to:

- Develop Sea Grant's portion of the Annual Operating Plan (AOP);
- Contribute to NOAA's GPRA measures and NOAA's Balanced Scorecard; and
- Develop Sea Grant budget narratives

Sea Grant's alignment to NOAA's NGSP and to the AGM can be found in Appendix A.

Appendix A: Sea Grant’s Strategic Plan alignment with NOAA’s NGSP and AGM (2011-17)

NOAA NGSP Goal/Enterprise	NOAA NGSP Objective	NOAA AGM Priorities	Sea Grant Focus Areas/Cross-cutting Goals
S&T Enterprise; Engagement Enterprise; Resilient Coastal Communities & Economies	Holistic Understanding; Resilient Coastal Communities	Strengthening Science; Promote resiliency and adaptation to climate change and ocean acidification	Hazard Resiliency in Coastal Communities
S&T Enterprise; Engagement Enterprise; Healthy Oceans	Holistic Understanding; Sustainable Fisheries and Safe Seafood	Strengthen science; Eliminate overfishing, rebuild fish stocks, conserve habitat and foster sustainable aquaculture; Implementing the National Ocean Policy	Safe and Sustainable Seafood Supply
S&T Enterprise; Engagement Enterprise; Healthy Oceans	Holistic Understanding; Resilient Coastal Communities	Strengthening Science; Promote ecosystem-based management	Healthy Coastal Ecosystems
S&T Enterprise; Engagement Enterprise Resilient Coastal Communities & Economies	Holistic Understanding; Resilient Coastal Communities	Strengthening Science Promote resiliency	Sustainable Coastal Development
S&T Enterprise	Holistic Understanding	Strengthening Science	Sound Scientific Research
Engagement Enterprise	An engaged & educated public; Integrated services meeting the evolving demands of regional stakeholders	All AGM Priorities	Informed, Scientifically Literate Public; Inclusive Decision Making
Organization & Administration	Diverse & evolving capabilities in NOAA's Workforce	Continuously improve internal business operations and services	Well-trained Workforce



This table shows how NOAA Sea Grant's Focus Areas/Cross-cutting Goals link to NOAA's NGSP and AGM priorities.
 (Example: How Sea Grant's Hazard Resiliency Focus Area (measures/milestones) align within NOAA.)

NOAA NGSP Goal/Enterprise	NOAA NGSP Objective	NOAA AGM Priorities	Sea Grant Focus Areas/Cross-cutting Goals	GPRA/BSC/DOC Priority	Sea Grant Performance Measures/Milestones		NOAA Report
S&T Enterprise Engagement Enterprise Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies	Holistic Understanding Resilient Coastal Communities	Strengthening Science Promote resiliency and adaptation to climate change and ocean acidification	Hazard Resiliency in Coastal Communities	GPRA	Number of coastal communities that have adopted or implemented hazard resiliency practices to prepare for and respond to/minimize coastal hazardous events	100	AOP; Budget Narrative
				GPRA	Number of coastal communities that have received resiliency training/technical assistance to prepare for and respond to/minimize coastal hazardous events	500	FOR GPRA reporting purposes
				GPRA	Number of regions provided with information/training in best practices to prepare for and respond to climate change	8	AOP
				DOC priority (6, 14, & 18)	Economic (market and non-market) benefits derived from Sea Grant activities	\$110M; 630 businesses created/retained; 3500 jobs created/retained	AOP; Budget Narrative
				BSC	Number of peer-reviewed publications	172	AOP; BSC
S&T Enterprise; Engagement Enterprise; Healthy Oceans	Holistic Understanding; Sustainable Fisheries and Safe Seafood	Strengthen science; Eliminate overfishing, rebuild fish stocks, conserve habitat and foster sustainable aquaculture; Implementing the National Ocean Policy	Safe and Sustainable Seafood Supply				
S&T Enterprise; Engagement Enterprise; Healthy Oceans	Holistic Understanding; Resilient Coastal	Strengthening Science; Promote ecosystem-based management	Healthy Coastal Ecosystems				
S&T Enterprise; Engagement Enterprise Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies	Holistic Understanding; Resilient Coastal Communities	Strengthening Science Promote resiliency	Sustainable Coastal Development				
S&T Enterprise	Holistic Understanding	Strengthening Science	Sound Scientific Research				
Engagement Enterprise	An engaged and educated public; Integrated services meeting the evolving demands of regional stakeholders	All AGM Priorities	Informed, Scientifically Literate Public; Inclusive Decision Making				
Organization & Administration	Diverse & evolving capabilities in NOAA's Workforce	Continuously improve internal business operations and services	Well-trained Workforce				