

# **Site Review Team Procedures Manual**

## **(March 2010)**

### **I. Site Review Team Composition and Role**

Once every four years, a site review team (SRT) will visit each Sea Grant Program. The SRT will review and discuss broad issues related to: 1) Program Management and Organization; 2) Stakeholder Engagement; and 3) Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities. These three categories encompass Sea Grant's regulations listed under *15CFR918.3: Eligibility, qualifications and responsibility of the Sea Grant College Program*. The SRT will then produce a site visit report. The report will be transmitted to the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and to the Sea Grant Program. The SRT will not be responsible for rating the Program on any of these three areas, but will report findings from the site visit as outlined in this manual.

#### **SRT Composition**

Each SRT will be chaired by the Federal Program Officer (FPO), co-chaired by a member of the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (Advisory Board), and include a Sea Grant Director as a review team member. The SRT co-chair will be selected by the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) Director in consultation with the Chair of the National Sea Grant Advisory Board. The FPO will then work with the SRT co-chair to select two additional external members, who may include:

- Representatives of appropriate commercial and industrial entities;
- Directors of institutes, centers, and laboratories;
- Leaders of state and federal resource agencies and programs (including NOAA);
- Senior officials of other academic institutions;
- Directors of cooperative extension programs or experiment stations;
- National Sea Grant Advisory Board members; and
- Recognized practitioners in appropriate fields (research, extension, education, communications, etc.).

Working with the co-chair, the FPO should consider including an external member of the SRT to come from the program's region (as long as there are no conflicts of interest). Prior to their final appointment, the potential non-Sea Grant SRT members will be reviewed by the Sea Grant Program to assure there are no conflicts-of-interest. The SRT may also include non-participating observers (such as other Federal Program Officers from the NSGO).

#### **Role of the SRT Chair**

The duties and responsibilities of the SRT Chair are as follows:

- A. Working with the co-chair, select and recruit SRT members.
- B. Serve as primary spokesman for the SRT, communicating on the team's behalf to the Sea Grant Program, NSGO, officials of Sea Grant institutions, constituent organizations, and the general public.
- C. Plan the site visit. Consulting with the co-chair and the Director of the Sea Grant Program being reviewed:
  1. Develop the overall management of the site visit;
  2. Formulate an agenda appropriate for the visit; and
  3. Approve the public notice of the site visit, drafted and issued by the Program Director.

- D. Brief the SRT concerning the conduct of the visit, and supervise the conduct of the SRT during the review.
- E. Lead the preparation of draft findings and recommendations.
- F. Together with the co-chair, conduct the exit interview with the Program Director and appropriate university officials.
- G. Oversee the preparation, review, and issuance of the final SRT Report.

## **II. Public Notice of Site Visit**

A minimum of thirty days prior to the site visit, the Director of the State Sea Grant Program under review shall draft and issue a public notice that the Program will be reviewed on [X dates] by a SRT convened by the Director of the NSGCP. The notice will invite such persons to email comments on the management aspect of the Program or its work at least one week before the site visit date. Comments should be sent to [oar.sg.feedback@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.sg.feedback@noaa.gov).

## **III. The Site Visit Structure**

Sea Grant's regulations describe the characteristics and responsibilities of Sea Grant Institutional and College Programs. The SRT will be particularly interested in those aspects that fit within three broad categories:

- Program Management and Organization (leadership, organization, program team approach, and support),
- Stakeholder Engagement (relevance, advisory services and relationships), and
- Collaborative Network Activities (coordinated planning and cooperative work with other Sea Grant programs and other local, state and federal agencies/organizations).

During the site visit, the SRT will meet with the Sea Grant Program's management team, advisory committees, university administration, stakeholders and others as determined by the Sea Grant Program Director being reviewed.

Programs are encouraged to provide the SRT with an overview of the state Sea Grant Program at the start of the site visit. Following this introduction, the SRT will receive information largely from presentations and structured or unstructured discussions in a relatively informal setting.

### **The Site Visit Schedule**

The site visit should be designed to be completed over a two-day period (e.g., Tuesday/Wednesday), with the first day and a half dedicated to assessing the Program. The last half day is devoted to drafting the site visit report and briefing the program management team and appropriate university officials on the team's conclusions and recommendations.

### **The Exit Interview**

Prior to leaving, the SRT will conduct an exit interview with the Program Director and appropriate university officials to summarize the draft report. The SRT may choose to first brief the Program Director and other staff members, and then brief the university officials.

### **The Site Visit Report**

The draft report produced before the end of the site visit will form the basis for the final site visit report. The FPO is responsible for finalizing the site visit report. The final site visit report will have a section highlighting findings, recommendations, and suggestions as well as any activities the SRT has identified as "best management practices." A *recommendation* is a formally prescribed course of action for which the Sea Grant Program is accountable. The Sea Grant

Program is expected to respond to each recommendation, explaining how it *has* implemented, how it *plans* to implement, or why it *chooses not* to implement each course of action. A *suggestion* is an idea that is presented for consideration. The Sea Grant Program is not accountable for responding to suggestions, but is encouraged to consider implementing those deemed useful and appropriate by program leadership. The best management practices identified by the SRT will be shared with other Sea Grant Programs.

The SRT report will not include a rating for the Program. The report will be finalized and sent to the National Sea Grant College Program Director and to the state Program Director within 45 days of the review.

### **The Program Response**

Once the Program receives the site visit report, they have the option to implement any recommended changes and/or may submit a written response to the NSGCP Director up to three weeks prior to the NSGO Annual Review.

### **Subsequent Rating by NSGO**

The NSGO will review the findings, recommendations and suggestions included in the site visit report, and the subsequent response of the Program, if any. The NSGCP Director, in consultation with NSGO, will deem the Program to be either *Successful* or *Unsuccessful* based on the aspects of a program's management and organization, stakeholder engagement and collaborative network activities. Any program rated as *Unsuccessful* will be given a clear explanation for the rating and will be required to work with their FPO to develop a corrective action plan.

A program whose management is rated as *Unsuccessful* will be placed on probationary status and will not be eligible for merit funding. Once the problems have been addressed, programs may submit an appeal to change their rating during the next NSGO Annual Review.

## **IV. Site Visit Review Criteria**

This section lists the Site Visit Review criteria, which are the same as those found in Sea Grant's regulations, and includes a list of questions the SRT may ask the programs.

### **Program Management and Organization**

- **Leadership.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must have created the management organization to carry on a viable and productive Sea Grant Program, and must have the backing of its administration at a sufficiently high level to fulfill its multidisciplinary and multifaceted mandate.
- **Programmed team approach.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must have a programmed team approach to the solution of ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes problems which includes relevant, high quality, multidisciplinary research with associated educational and advisory services capable of producing identifiable results.
- **Support.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must have the ability to obtain matching funds from non-Federal sources, such as state legislatures, university management, state agencies, business, and industry. A diversity of matching fund sources is encouraged as a sign of program vitality and the ability to meet the Sea Grant requirement that funds for the general programs be matched with at least one non-Federal dollar for every two Federal dollars.

## Questions the SRT may consider

- Is the Program an intellectual and practical leader in ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes science, engineering, education, and advisory service in its state and region?
- Has the Program created the necessary management organization to carry on a viable and productive Sea Grant Program, and does the Program have backing of its administration at a sufficiently high level to fulfill its multidisciplinary and multifaceted mandate?
- Does the Program have a programmed team approach to solving ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes problems, which includes relevant, high quality, multidisciplinary research with associated educational and advisory services capable of producing identifiable results?
- Does the Program have the ability to obtain matching funds from non-Federal sources, such as state legislatures, university management, state agencies, business, and industry?
- Does the Program demonstrate the ability to continue the pursuit of excellence and sustain the following?
  - (i) leadership in ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes activities including coordinated planning and cooperative work with local, state, regional, and Federal agencies, other Sea Grant Programs, and non-Sea Grant universities;
  - (ii) effective management framework and application of institutional resources to the achievement of Sea Grant objectives;
  - (iii) long-term plans for research, education, training, and advisory services consistent with Sea Grant goals and objectives;
  - (iv) furtherance of the Sea Grant concept and the full development of its potential within the institution and the state;
  - (v) adequate and stable matching financial support for the Program from non-Federal sources; and
  - (vi) effective system to control the quality of its Sea Grant Programs
- Did the Program implement recommendations from the previous review?
- Does the program input usable information into the National Information Management System (NIMS) in a timely manner?
- Are publications sent to the library on a regular basis (several times per year)? Does the number of publications at the library match the number in NIMS?
- Is the Director sufficiently engaged with the Program?
- Is the host university sufficiently engaged with the Program?
- Is there an active advisory board?
- Does the advisory board contribute to the strategic plan?
- How much contact do advisory board members have with constituents of the Program?
- How often does the advisory board meet?
- How much opportunity exists for new membership (turnover)?
- Does the Program use its 4-year plan to guide its management and decision-making?
- Do RFPs reflect the objectives in the 4-year plan? Are RFPs effectively circulated to units of other institutions with relevant expertise?
- Is there ongoing interaction between the Sea Grant Program and representatives of other relevant research and education institutions within the state?
- Is there an overall balance of research, extension, and education within the Program and are the Program's functional areas integrated?
- Is the Program transparent (as to what gets funded)?
- Are peer reviews adequate and well designed with clearly identified criteria?
- Are results of funded projects appropriately measured and assessed?
- Are the Program's practices or projects promising and worth sharing?

## Stakeholder Engagement

- **Extension/Advisory services.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must have a strong program through which information, techniques, and research results from any reliable

source, domestic or international, may be communicated to and utilized by user communities. In addition to the educational and information dissemination role, the advisory service program must aid in the identification and communication of user communities' research and educational needs.

- **Relevance.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must be relevant to local, state, regional, or National opportunities and problems in the ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes environment. Important factors in evaluating relevance are the need for marine resource emphasis and the extent to which capabilities have been developed to be responsive to that need.
- **Relationships.** The Sea Grant College Program under review must have close ties with Federal agencies, state agencies and administrations, local authorities, business and industry, and other educational institutions. These ties are: (i) To ensure the relevance of its programmed activities, (ii) to give assistance to the broadest possible audience, (iii) to involve a broad pool of talent in providing this assistance (including universities and other administrative entities outside the Sea Grant College), and (iv) to assist others in developing research and management competence. The extent and quality of an institution's relationships are critical factors in evaluating the institutional/college program.

### **Questions the SRT may consider**

- Does the Program have a system by which information, techniques and research results from any reliable source, domestic or international, are communicated to, and utilized by, user communities?
- In addition to the educational and information dissemination role, does extension help in the identification and communication of user communities' research and educational needs?
- Is the Program relevant to local, State, regional, or National opportunities and problems in the ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes environment?
- Does the Program have close ties with Federal agencies, State agencies and administrations, local authorities, business and industry, and other educational institutions? Do these ties:
  - (i) ensure the relevance of its programmed activities,
  - (ii) give assistance to the broadest possible audience,
  - (iii) involve a broad pool of talent in providing assistance, and
  - (iv) assist others in developing research and management competence?
- Is there coordination/cooperation with other Federal, State and local agencies in the state/region/nation?
- How has the Program chosen and developed partnerships?
  - How many and what quality of partnerships exist (including those with other NOAA programs)?
  - How many, if any, new partnerships have been formed?
- Are appropriate stakeholders informed of Program results?
- Do stakeholders support the Program?
- Is the Program a trusted and immediate point of contact for information on ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes issues?

### **Collaborative Network Activities**

- **Collaboration.** Provide leadership in ocean/coast/watershed/Great Lakes activities including coordinated planning and cooperative work with local, state, regional, and Federal agencies, other Sea Grant Programs, and non-Sea Grant universities.

### **Questions the SRT may consider**

- Does the Program contribute to the cohesiveness of the Sea Grant network?

- Is there effective communication and collaboration between the Program and other Sea Grant Programs and with the National Sea Grant Office?
- Does the Program participate or lead activities that support the overall network?
- Does the Program lead or participate in regional activities? National? Does this participation make effective use of Sea Grant network capabilities?
- Does the Program support/assist other NOAA programs? Other Federal programs?

## **V. Site Visit Materials**

### **Background Materials (Provided by the NSGO)**

The NSGO will provide the following background materials to the SRT at least four weeks prior to the site visit:

1. Most recent site review report
2. Sea Grant Program's response to the last site review report
3. Sea Grant Program's most recent annual report (program introduction (if available), metrics and impacts)
4. Other material deemed to be relevant by the SRT chair

### **Program Briefing Book Materials (Provided by the Sea Grant Program)**

The Sea Grant Program will provide the SRT with a limited and focused set of briefing materials and an agenda at least four weeks prior to the site visit. The briefing materials should include the Program's four-year plan (strategic/implementation plan) and a program site visit briefing book no longer than 20 pages. The briefing book should include a description of the Program Management and Organization (including leadership, organization, programmed team approach, and support), Stakeholder Engagement (including relevance, extension/advisory services, and relationships) and a description of the Program's Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities. At a minimum, the following list of items must be included for each broad category in the briefing book:

#### **A. Program Management and Organization**

##### **Leadership**

- Management Team composition and brief description of their responsibilities
- Percentage time Director and staff devote to SG (FTEs)
- Advisory Boards membership and function (expertise, meeting schedule, recommendations)
- Setting of the Program within the university or consortium organization and reporting structure (organization chart)

##### **Recruiting Talent**

- Brief description of the process used to develop RFP priorities
- Brief description of the review process including composition of review panels
- Number of pre-proposals and full proposals submitted, and institutions represented / institutions available in state
- New vs. continuing projects and Principle Investigators
- Recruitment of PI's/institutions
- Success in national competitions
- Regional/Multi-program projects

##### **Funding**

- Distribution of funds (research, extension, education, communications, program development, administration)
- Leveraged funding (funding that is managed by, or within the direct influence of, the Sea Grant Program) from partners (NOAA, other Federal, State, and local)
- National Strategic Investments

**Stakeholder Engagement**

- Leadership by staff on boards and committees
- Partnerships
- List of important stakeholders and how the Program involves its stakeholders

**B. Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities**

List of activities/projects the Program is collaborating on with other Sea Grant or NOAA partners

**C. Program changes resulting from previous review**

**Appendix A**  
**Site review team's**  
**Review of the**  
**XXXXX Sea Grant College Program**  
Dates of Review

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**Chair, Federal Program Officer**

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**Date**

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**Co-Chair, National Sea Grant Advisory Board Member**

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**Date**



# INTRODUCTION

The Site review team (SRT) review of the xxxx Sea Grant (XSG) Program took place from *enter SRT visit dates*.

The SRT members included:

Name (Chair, NSGO Program Officer) Affiliation City, State	Name (Co-Chair, Advisory Board Member) Affiliation City, State
Name Affiliation City, State	Name Affiliation City, State

Prior to the beginning of the SRT visit, and in conformance with National Sea Grant Office and College Program guidelines, the xxxx Sea Grant issued a public notice of the upcoming SRT visit by inviting interested parties to send written comments to the SRT Chair. The public notice was distributed by means of xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. The SRT Chair received xxx letters in response to the public notice. *(Characterize the letters e.g., “Most of the letters were highly supportive of the xxxx Program. A few letters raised issues, which were either covered in the course of the review or were deemed to be minor in consequence.”)*

The SRT review took place *(describe the SRT location venues: campuses, site visit locations, etc.)*

During the review, the SRT met with *(brief description, e.g.. identify stakeholders, university administrators, researchers, management staff, etc.)*. The SRT also benefited from poster sessions *(e.g.. name specific topics, or with researchers, extension staff, and graduate students)*.

The report of the SRT follows the guidelines of the Site Review Team Procedures Manual. The SRT reviewed and discussed broad issues related to the xxxx Sea Grant Program’s: 1) Organization and Management of the Program; 2) Stakeholder Engagement; and 3) Collaborative Network Activities. Within each of these areas, the SRT report presents the findings and recommendations of the SRT.

## I. ORGANIZING AND MANAGING THE PROGRAM

**Based on the criteria descriptions and considered questions, in this section, please explain how the Program addresses each of the following:**

- Leadership
- Organization
- Programmed team approach
- Support

## II. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

**Based on the criteria descriptions and the considered questions, in this section, please explain how the Program addresses each of the following:**

- Extension/Advisory Service

- Relevance
- Relationships

### **III. COLLABORATIVE NETWORK/NOAA ACTIVITIES**

### **IV. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS and SUGGESTIONS**

NOTE: The SRT may not have any recommendations or suggestions.

#### Findings

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#### Recommendations (items the Program must consider)

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#### Suggestions (ideas the Program may want to consider)

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### **V. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

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### **SRT AGENDA**