

Section Four: A Framework for Communicating Priorities

A. Emergent Themes

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To achieve this, the states need to influence the research and data community's priority setting, funding patterns and decision-making processes. As requested by CSO, this strategy must "determine the most effective methods to communicate the priorities and disseminate the reports and white papers to assure broad as well as targeted distribution to key individuals and organizations that are in the best position to act on the priority recommendations."

B. Pathways for Information Transfer and Dialogue

The Outreach Strategy and Implementation Plan is driven by the nature of the information to be presented, the characteristics of the target audience, and the types of desired outcomes. Based upon the primary audiences and priorities identified in preceding sections, CSO is well advised to focus on four pathways for information transfer and dialogue:

- 1. Within the state coastal management community:** Mechanisms must be in place to facilitate information-sharing and technology transfer within and among the state coastal manager community as well as among other public sector managers (federal, regional, local) with coastal stewardship responsibilities.
- 2. Between coastal managers and the scientific community:** Coastal managers must have ready access to baseline data and applied research. Similarly, members of the scientific community (in multiple disciplines) must be aware of, and responsive to current issues and research priorities. Of relevance here are federal agency scientists as well as those in academia and other sectors of the scientific community.
- 3. Between coastal managers and legislators/ policy makers:** Coastal managers need to be responsive to legislative priorities, policy directives and budgetary realities while, at the same time, provide information and advice that will help shape laws, policies and budgets.
- 4. Within the larger stakeholder community:** Highlighting the scientific basis for coastal decisions is a critically important function when addressing issues where emotion and special interest considerations can overwhelm objectivity and fact finding exercises. Mechanisms are needed to ensure ongoing science-based dialogue with stakeholder groups (e.g., business/ industry, property owners, resource user groups.)

C. Outreach Vehicles

Relevant vehicles to reach out to target audiences can be grouped into four broad categories:

- 1. Electronic media:** Internet- based communications vehicles can be highly effective, low cost mechanisms for targeted information dissemination, acquisition and dialogue within the broader coastal management community. These vehicles include web sites with science and technology transfer features; search engines; moderated discussion forums to receive input/ advice; targeted listservs (e.g., for science/ technology announcements, report releases, public review requests, press releases); and links to other relevant coastal management web sites. Electronic media options also include television/ radio Public Service Announcements as well as programming/ interview opportunities.
- 2. Print media:** Conventional “hard copy” communications remain an effective vehicle for outreach, and can include general and targeted mailings of newsletters, publications, peer reviewed journals, editorials, speakers’ bureau directories, and general announcements.
- 3. Personal/ small group communication:** This outreach mechanism entails highly targeted small group or “one-on-one” settings designed to present a message/ recommendation tailored to a very specific audience. Included in this category are Congressional/ legislative visits, presentations to agency/ organization leadership, meetings with editorial boards, participation in science/ technology workshops, meetings with a specific sector of the stakeholder community, and small group seminars with invited scientific experts, among others.
- 4. Targeted, large scale communication:** This category pertains to larger group settings where coastal research, science and technology information can be exchanged in a collegial, interactive forum. Professional association meetings, as well as associated communications vehicles (e.g., committees, web sites, professional journals) are relevant here, as are issue- specific meetings (of any geographic scale) where management, scientific and policy making communities- as well as stakeholders- are present.

Table 1 presents a summary matrix assessing the comparative relevance/ value (i.e., high, medium, low) of each of these four outreach vehicles in light of the four communication pathways.

Table 1 – Communication Pathways and Outreach Vehicles- An Assessment

COMMUNICA- TION PATHWAYS	OUTREACH VEHICLE			
	Electronic Media	Print Media	Personal/Small Group Communication	Targeted, Large Scale Communication
1) Within the State Coastal Management Community	H – Agency / association websites are particularly valuable, as are listservs, discussion forums and search engines.	M – Peer reviewed journals and “trade” publications have value for technology transfer, case studies, and updates.	H – Small scale meetings are ideal for information sharing- among practitioners and scientific community.	M – Professional association meetings/ issue-specific conferences have value for information exchange.
2) Between Coastal Managers and the Scientific Community	M – On-line resources benefit managers/scientific community, but “passive” nature of outreach has limitations.	M – Traditional outreach method has continuing value, particularly regarding applied research results and case studies.	H – Optimal setting for technology transfer, application – oriented dialogue and building relationships.	M – Can be effective in multi-disciplinary conference setting where management and scientific communities interact.
3) Between Coastal Managers and Legislators / Policymakers	L – Typically effective only if followed by personal communication. Generally not an effective mechanism for dialogue.	M – Policy positions and “official” correspondence can be effective. General mailings / newsletters are of limited value.	H – Optimal approach: one-on-one relationship is highly effective in information exchange and prompting action.	L – Some effectiveness if selected forum (e.g., public meeting) generates media attention.
4) Within the Larger Stakeholder Community	H – Effective means to “customize” message for various audiences while minimizing cost and time requirements.	H – Targeted “mass mailing” is effective vehicle, particularly in reaching stakeholders lacking Internet access.	L – Can be effective if stakeholder group leadership and outreach forums are carefully targeted.	H – Presentations at large public meetings can be highly effective if stakeholders groups are strategically targeted.