

GOVERNANCE OF THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

CaRA

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- Existing models of regional governance within the context of a still young Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) Regional Association

Gulf of Maine area:

- GoMOOS – nonprofit, open membership “organization of organizations” governed by a Board of Directors drawn from membership, including users of ocean observing data, providers of the data and related models, educational organizations, and technology companies.

Gulf of Maine Ocean Data Partnership

- A voluntary but formal partnership, formed by Memorandum of Understanding, of public and nonprofit organizations.
- The voluntary (nonbinding) nature of the organization allows state and federal governmental agencies that might otherwise feel constrained to join as active members.

Southeast Atlantic Coastal Ocean Observing System (SEACCOOS)

- A partnership of academic institutions, formed by Memorandum of Understanding. Similar legal (i.e., voluntary MOU) structure to the Gulf of Maine Ocean Data Partnership, but primary partners are academic institutions that produce ocean observations and develop models of the marine environment
- No user members, but an outreach committee and active web site geared toward users.

Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS)

- A nonprofit membership organization whose members are governmental, industrial/commercial, academic and NGO organizations, but whose Board of Directors consist of persons who are independent of the GLOS-RA, without interests in the services or products of the RA.
- Also includes a Systems Oversight Panel, drawn from members, that may include persons with interests in the services or products of the RA, and whose role is to review and endorse the organization's annual work plan.

Criteria for evaluating options for governance of a regional association

- Representation of the various players
- Ability to coordinate with the national backbone agencies
- Meet national program office (Ocean.US) criteria for certification
- Legal entity with bylaws, able to enter into contracts and with accountability
- Representative, including potential membership of the private sector, federal agencies, state and local agencies, research organizations, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations

Two options under consideration

- Not for Profit Corporation
- Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement

Not for Profit Corporation

Pros:

- Less bureaucratic contracting processes
- Simplifies processing of donations from corporate entities without going through university system
- More independence of action

Not for Profit corporation

Cons:

- Accounting reports to Dept of Treasury
- Formality of legal corporate and accounting procedures
- Insurance coverage requirements
- May present bureaucratic constraints for participation of certain public entities

Memorandum of Agreement

Pros:

- Under coverage (umbrella) of host universities and government institutions
- Use of infrastructure, office, personnel, equipment, etc.
- Host universities/agencies as principal contracting entities
- Less accounting/ legal costs
- Premised on voluntary participation

MOA

Cons:

- % (mordida or bite) of monies obtained to universities

- Thank you