

*Project Title:*

**Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) Proposal for  
Focus Area 2: Regional Ocean Partnership Development & Governance Support  
under the NOAA Regional Ocean Partnership Funding Program (ROPFP) – FY2013  
Funding Competition (Revised June 20, 2013)**

*Fiduciary Agent Contact Info:*

**Mary Munson, Secretary  
Coastal States Stewardship Foundation  
444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 638, Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: 202-508-3860; Fax: 202-508-3843; Email: [mmunson@coastalstates.org](mailto:mmunson@coastalstates.org)**

*Principal Investigator Contact Info:*

**Gwynne Schultz, Senior Coastal and Ocean Policy Advisor  
Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
580 Taylor Avenue, E-2, Annapolis, MD 21401  
Phone: 410-260-7835; Fax: 410-260-8739; Email: [gschultz@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:gschultz@dnr.state.md.us)**

*Project Duration:*

**Year 1: October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014  
Year 2: October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015**

*Funding Type:*

**Cooperative Agreement**

*Funding Request Amount:*

**Year 1: \$190,000  
Year 2: \$190,000**



## Project Summary

**MARCO Proposal For  
ROPFP FY 2013 Focus Area 2 (ROP Development & Governance Support)  
(Revised June 20, 2013)**

*Fiduciary Agent* Coastal States Stewardship Foundation (CSSF)

*Principal Investigator:* Gwynne Schultz, MARCO Management Board Chair and Senior Coastal and Ocean Policy Advisor, Maryland Department of Natural Resources 580 Taylor Avenue, E-2, Annapolis, MD 21401 Phone: 410-260-7835; Fax: 410-260-8739 Email: [gschultz@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:gschultz@dnr.state.md.us)

*Other Investigators:* MARCO Management Board Members:  
Gregory Capobianco, New York Department of State  
Martin Rosen, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
Sarah W. Cooksey, Delaware Coastal Programs  
Laura McKay, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

### *Brief Project Summary:*

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) was formed by the Governors of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia in 2009 to facilitate better coordination in the region, and to advance shared regional priorities related to the ocean. Over the past year, a combination of Regional Ocean Partnership Funding Program (ROPFP) and other funding has allowed MARCO to make notable progress in advancing its regional priorities. MARCO also recognizes that ongoing investments are needed to provide adequate administration and operational support, implement comprehensive communications plans, advance outreach and stakeholder engagement, and support actions to address the Mid-Atlantic's most critical ocean issues.

Continued support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) ROPFP will improve regional ocean governance efforts in the Mid-Atlantic by increasing MARCO's staff support and dedicating the resources needed to pursue MARCO's regional priorities.

ROPFP funding will support MARCO in the following ways:

- Continue to advance priority projects in ocean planning, offshore renewable energy, habitat protection, climate change adaptation, and water quality enhancement.
  - Convene meetings with the MARCO States, Federal agencies, and other regional partners to improve collaboration and planning across the region.
  - Provide dedicated staff capacity and technical expertise to advance regional priorities.
  - Implement a newly developed MARCO communications work plan, which outlines communications goals and strategies to increase awareness of MARCO and its regional priorities.
  - Build upon previous stakeholder engagement efforts with recreational and commercial fishing, shipping and ports, and other key stakeholder groups.

*Partners:* MARCO Management Board; Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body; the National Ocean Council; Federal agencies interested in ocean management; and coastal and ocean stakeholders

*Funding Schedule:* October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014: \$190,000  
October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015: \$190,000

## **Cooperative Agreement Project Description**

MARCO Proposal for ROPFP FY 2013 Focus Area 2 (Revised June 20, 2013)

### **I. Goal and Objectives:**

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) was formed by the Governors of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia in 2009 to facilitate better coordination, leverage resources, and pursue shared regional priorities related to the ocean. Continued support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Regional Ocean Partnership Funding Program (ROPFP) will improve regional ocean governance efforts in the Mid-Atlantic by increasing MARCO's administrative and operational capacity, and provide dedicated resources to further advance regional priorities. MARCO requests FY 2013 and FY 2014 funding to:

- 1) Manage and implement regional activities to address MARCO's priorities;
- 2) Increase collaboration and planning across the Mid-Atlantic;
- 3) Sustain and secure dedicated MARCO personnel;
- 4) Implement and refine a communications work plan; and
- 5) Develop and implement an enhanced stakeholder engagement strategy.

#### *Objective 1) Manage and implement regional activities to address MARCO's priorities*

MARCO Action Teams (offshore habitat, climate change, ocean planning, water quality, and offshore renewable energy) and various workgroups have increased intergovernmental coordination and pursued specific activities that address shared regional priorities. Examples include: 1) completing an analysis of federal consistency authorities that can be applied to influence siting, permitting, construction, operation and/or decommissioning of offshore wind energy facilities and related transmission activities; 2) using participatory GIS (PGIS) to gather recreational uses data for the Mid-Atlantic Coast; and 3) providing input on research priorities for ocean planning, climate change adaptation, habitat conservation, and offshore renewable energy in the region.

This proposal requests funding to build on existing momentum and continue to 1) engage Federal agency representatives in collaborative planning, 2) identify and prioritize strategic actions to advance regional priorities, and 3) build on existing projects and implement new and critical activities.

MARCO has identified a number of critical projects that cannot be implemented without additional resources. The Climate Change Action Team held a workshop in December 2012 where experts from all five MARCO States and Federal agencies generated a preliminary list of the most critical climate change and sea level rise adaptation activities to be addressed in the Mid-Atlantic region. MARCO requests funding to further refine these activities and support associated projects. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy and the devastation it wrought on the Mid-Atlantic region, MARCO and the Climate Change Action Team will help assess the region's vulnerability to climate change (including sea level rise), and enhance the region's ability to prepare, respond, and adapt to inundation and associated impacts on critical infrastructure, coastal habitats, and coastal communities. MARCO Management Board (Board) members have been integral to their states' Superstorm Sandy recovery efforts. It has become apparent there is a region-

wide need for better information and data; improved storm and climate change planning; and refinement of storm and seal level rise preparedness. Superstorm Sandy made it clear there is a need to work collaboratively across the Mid-Atlantic region to increase hazard resiliency, and MARCO is pursuing opportunities to make unique contributions to this effort.

The MARCO Ocean Planning Action Team builds capacity for effective ocean planning in the region – largely through development of the *MARCO Ocean Data Portal*. MARCO led the development of the Portal and has been a major force in advancing regional ocean planning process in the Mid-Atlantic. MARCO serves as the Portal Project's Steering Committee, and works closely with the Ocean Data Portal Team (led by Monmouth University, Rutgers University, The Nature Conservancy and Ecotrust). MARCO also supports an array of portal-related activities, including a Recreational Boater Survey and PGIS workshops. MARCO held quarterly conference calls to identify data gaps and fill those gaps to ensure the Portal is a robust tool for ocean planning and will continue to support the Ocean Data Portal Team's efforts to enhance science and data.

The Mid-Atlantic RPB became an official body on April 4, 2013. Leading up to the designation of the RPB, MARCO organized and orchestrated engagement with Federal representatives to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body (RPB), Tribal representatives, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) representatives, and others to initiate discussions and planning on shared regional ocean priorities. The Board members also serve on the RPB in a variety of capacities (RPB State Co-Lead, state RPB representative, proxy, or workgroup member); creating a direct link to, and continuity of, MARCO's past and present accomplishments in ocean planning. MARCO has developed tools and established relationships with ocean stakeholders, providing the RPB with a good starting point for continued outreach and data tool development. MARCO Board members are also co-championing RPB workgroup activities, including (1) operations/administrative procedures, (2) identifying the scope and regional objectives, and (3) stakeholder engagement.

MARCO will continue to work closely with the RPB to leverage intellectual and fiscal investments, offer technical expertise and stakeholder engagement support, and advocate for the states' shared priorities in the ocean planning process. MARCO engagement and support will be critical to allow the Mid-Atlantic RPB to move forward with ocean planning in the region.

#### *Objective 2) Increase collaboration and planning across the Mid-Atlantic*

Improving collaboration and coordinated planning across the region is critical to the development and operation of MARCO. MARCO holds Board meetings three times per year, where MARCO Board members and staff, Action Team leaders, State staff, and key partners (e.g., Federal agency and Tribal representatives, ROP funding recipients, MAFMC representatives) undertake strategic discussions about current and future activities. These in-person meetings allow MARCO to address critical policy issues related to regional priorities, improves coordination and collaboration with key partners, and facilitates the exchange of information and expertise.

The MARCO Program Manager and/or Management Board also need to attend relevant national and regional conferences to raise public awareness, interest in, and visibility of

MARCO; while building, reaffirming, and strengthening partnerships (e.g. MAFMC meetings, national regional ocean governance and ocean planning workshops, etc.).

*Objective 3) Sustain and secure dedicated MARCO personnel*

The MARCO Management Board is comprised of designated state coastal management leads and Senior Policy Advisors from the five Mid-Atlantic States. The Board develops policies and oversees implementation of MARCO's regional priorities. To meet the demands of their individual state programs and this regional effort, the Board relies on dedicated MARCO staff and contractors, funded via the ROPFP and other leveraged resources, as well as in-kind staff and technical support.

MARCO strategically selected a combination of staff and contractors to meet its operational and administrative, programmatic, project management, and communications needs. The current team includes one full-time staff member and part-time contractors to support a range of essential MARCO activities. ROPFP funding will sustain MARCO's current staffing and support an administrative position.

Adequate staff support will:

- Increase the achievement of MARCO outcomes;
- Remove the burden from the Board to perform daily operational tasks;
- Improve communications with target audiences;
- Help to launch an enhanced stakeholder engagement effort;
- Strengthen MARCO's coordination and collaboration with Federal, Tribal, Regional, and State partners; and
- Support activities to advance MARCO's regional priorities as well as the National Ocean Policy (NOP) priorities.

Increasing MARCO's staff capacity will also support efforts of MARCO and individual states to advance regional ocean planning efforts, including participation in the Mid-Atlantic RPB.

For additional details on the specific tasks of staff and contractual support, please see section *v. Approach*.

*Objective 4) Implement and refine the MARCO Communications Work Plan*

An important role for MARCO is to connect with diverse audiences and to provide a collective regional voice. Individual states already have strong relationships with their constituents, but addressing the emerging issues of ocean planning, offshore renewable energy, and climate change requires reaching out to new audiences. Additional capacity is needed to engage and maintain relationships with the new target audiences.

In late 2012, MARCO hired a part-time team to address communications needs and provide much-needed staff support. The communications team designed a comprehensive communications work plan to assist and guide how MARCO communicates with partners and stakeholders, elevates regional awareness of MARCO, and promotes its regional priorities. The work plan outlines communications goals and provides direction for implementing tailored strategies and tools that meet the needs of MARCO and target audiences, and maximize limited resources. The communications

team is also working with the Board to help define MARCO's brand (i.e., logo, design, etc.), establish consistent MARCO messaging, and create MARCO print materials.

The communications team will begin to implement elements of the work plan in 2013; ROPFP funding through 2015 will sustain MARCO's communications efforts and ensure the work plan is carried out and further refined, as needed.

*Objective 5) Develop a stakeholder engagement strategy and guide implementation*

MARCO will lead the development of an enhanced regional stakeholder engagement strategy that builds on prior engagement efforts in the region, and is guided by MARCO's existing Data Portal engagement strategy and the communications work plan. The engagement strategy, coupled with MARCO's oversight will guide a team of regional partners to implement the various stakeholder participation activities. With continued funding from NOAA, and the support of dedicated MARCO personnel and regional partners, MARCO looks to develop an inclusive, effective, and sustainable stakeholder engagement strategy. MARCO is also proposing to serve a critical liaison role between regional stakeholders and the Mid-Atlantic RPB.

Informed by the Mid-Atlantic region's highest priority issue areas identified in the *Mid-Atlantic Governors' Agreement on Ocean Conservation*, MARCO will develop a strategy that identifies the regional needs and key stakeholder groups, defines engagement goals and methods, and outlines roles and responsibilities for implementation. Working with partners, MARCO will put forth a process framework that includes multiple methods of engagement (e.g., attend MARCO meetings, provide comments, participate in public events, etc.). Engagement opportunities will be tailored to target audiences and reflect the diverse interests and needs of stakeholders. Focused on increasing regional capacity and building awareness, the strategy will be designed to support a two-way dialogue between MARCO and regional stakeholder groups, including but not limited to, Federal, Tribal, Regional, State and local entities, as well as maritime industry, commercial and recreational fishing, energy, business, recreation, academic, and non-governmental interests. MARCO will develop a cohesive approach to regional stakeholder engagement that, in turn, will lead to coordinated and systematic implementation.

Once completed, the strategy will act as a guide for how and when stakeholder groups are involved with regional ocean planning efforts and engaged in MARCO activities. MARCO intends to launch the enhanced stakeholder engagement strategy, and then work closely with partners who will drive the implementation and execution of the strategy (e.g., host stakeholder outreach events, convey communications materials, etc.). MARCO will oversee implementation and help to coordinate engagement activities, including but not limited to PGIS workshops, MARCO Ocean Data Portal trainings and events, and RPB activities, as appropriate.

**II. *Background:***

The ocean waters of the Mid-Atlantic are experiencing a new generation of challenges. To successfully address these challenges, the Mid-Atlantic Governors committed to a regional approach and created MARCO to focus on four regional priorities:

- 1) Protect important habitat and sensitive and unique offshore areas;

- 2) Support the sustainable development of offshore renewable energy;
- 3) Prepare the region's coastal communities for the impacts of climate change on ocean and coastal resources; and
- 4) Promote improvement in the region's coastal water quality.

MARCO is the only existing organization dedicated to comprehensively representing the Mid-Atlantic coastal states and their collective ocean management issues. Each MARCO State has devoted significant resources to establish and help support this regional entity. Until recently, MARCO functioned and implemented its initial action items using limited in-kind staff resources and funding. In 2011, MARCO was awarded a Cooperative Agreement through the NOAA FY 2011 ROPFP (award NA12NOS4730011) and received the funding in December 2011; in October 2012, MARCO was subsequently awarded a Cooperative Agreement through the NOAA FY 2012 ROPFP (award NA12NOS4730184). MARCO activities have been further supported by ROPFP awards to Monmouth University and its partners for their development and continued advancement of the *MARCO Ocean Data Portal*.

In the last several months, MARCO has shown significant progress because of the ROPFP funding. Following is a brief sample of the outcomes achieved as a result of awarded funding:

- MARCO supported the launch of an enhanced *MARCO Ocean Data Portal* – an interactive mapping tool that enable users to visualize and analyze ocean resources and human use information such as fishing grounds, recreational areas, shipping lanes, habitat areas, and energy sites, among others.
- MARCO hosted the Climate Change Action Team workshop to discuss climate change adaptation issues for the Mid-Atlantic region and identify specific opportunities for moving forward.
- MARCO hired a Program Manager to coordinate the activities of the Board and interact with Federal partners on regional ocean planning.
- MARCO executed a contract to develop a communications work plan and improve internal and external communications.
- MARCO began planning and developing materials for a major workshop to engage stakeholders in regional ocean planning efforts in the Mid-Atlantic, in April of 2013.
- MARCO organized discussions and met with Federal, Tribal, Regional, and State representatives to plan for the Mid-Atlantic RPB and its activities.
- MARCO leveraged Mid-Atlantic investments to acquire additional funding, build and maintain intergovernmental and stakeholder relationships, and share information and knowledge across the region.

The Mid-Atlantic region is the most populous region in the Nation and the pressures on coastal and ocean resources are increasing on a daily basis. Given the magnitude of the challenges confronting the Mid-Atlantic region, MARCO requires continued Federal support to MARCO's priorities, which compliments and strongly supports NOAA and NOP priorities. NOAA resources enable state-designated MARCO Management Board members to actively participate in MARCO activities and overcome severe restrictions in state budgets.

MARCO States will continue to provide staff and funding support towards MARCO's development, but the level of resources is not sufficient to meet the challenge of regional ocean governance, particularly in the formative years of implementing the NOP. Resource constraints affect all of the objectives and activities proposed herein. The requested funding will support all aspects of MARCO's regional ocean governance efforts and allow the Board to focus on policy development and implementing actions that address regional priorities.

### **III. *Partnerships:***

The Coastal States Stewardship Foundation (CSSF) serves as the fiduciary agent for MARCO under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). MARCO and CSSF share similar ocean priorities for the region and both were formed to advance coastal and ocean management. MARCO has entered into a partnership with CSSF to serve as the fiduciary agent for this project; MARCO and CSSF collaboration is guided by an MOU that was signed on February 21, 2012 (see Appendix E). The MOU describes specific roles and responsibilities, and identifies the critical expertise that CSSF brings to support MARCO. CSSF is responsible for all activities articulated in the grant, and will work closely with MARCO to ensure that all activities are completed within the requisite timeframe.

MARCO also works closely with NOAA, and with many other partners and stakeholder groups through the MARCO Action Teams, workgroups, and the Ocean Data Portal Team. MARCO Action Teams create strategic partnerships with subject-area experts from an array of state offices and departments, federal agencies, and academic institutions; these collaborative efforts help increase MARCO's internal capacity and leverages knowledge and expertise. MARCO works closely with the Ocean Data Portal Team by serving as the Portal Project's Steering Committee, providing guidance on projects and priorities, and supporting an array of activities. The Ocean Data Portal Team expands MARCO's stakeholder outreach, data collection opportunities, and tool development to support ocean planning in the region.

MARCO is pursuing stronger partnerships with Federal agencies interested in ocean management, MAFMC, Mid-Atlantic Regional Association for Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (MARACOOS), the National Ocean Council, and other similar organizations to leverage resources that can support MARCO activities. With the assistance of NOAA, MARCO developed and manages a collaborative SharePoint site that all MARCO project collaborators have access to and provides a central online space to share information and materials. MARCO will also continue to coordinate across all levels of government to support implementation of the priorities identified in the National Ocean Policy, including regional ocean planning and the Mid-Atlantic RPB.

### **IV. *Audience:***

MARCO's target audiences include the Mid-Atlantic States, MARCO partners (e.g. Federal agencies and Tribal nations, regional fishery management organizations, NGOs, academia), and other key regional stakeholder groups (recreational and commercial fishers, ports and maritime industries, renewable energy interests, recreational ocean users, tourism industries, and the general public). The activities presented in this proposal are intended to increase target audience engagement in MARCO activities, and to keep them better informed of MARCO's regional priorities, progress, and products.

v. **Approach:**

The following section describes the overall strategy, basic work plan, and assessment methodology to be used to accomplish the objectives listed in this proposal.

*Implementation of Regional Activities*

Project implementation is an ongoing activity that will be accomplished through state in-kind support, contractual assistance, and through support of Action Team meetings and/or workshops. A status update will be included in the grant's semi-annual progress reports and a final report will be provided at the end of the grant period.

*Increase Collaboration and Planning across MARCO*

MARCO conducts Management Board meetings where members of the Board, Action Team leaders, State staff, and key partners, come together to discuss advancing the shared priorities of the region and policy issues related to these efforts, and plan for future activities. Continuing to support these Management Board meetings (e.g., travel expenses, meeting space and supplies, facilitators and/or contractors to support the meetings) through FY 2014 and beyond is critical to the development and operation of MARCO. The Management Board meetings rotate between host states and the results of the meeting include meeting notes, meeting summaries with action items, and documentation of policies and overarching MARCO direction and actions to move forward on regional priorities.

*Staff and Contractual Support*

MARCO hired a Program Manager in March 2012 with FY 2011 ROPFP funding; this position was renewed for another year with the support of the FY 2012 Cooperative Agreement with NOAA. Continuity of this position into FY 2014 and beyond is critical to the development and operation of MARCO. Specific tasks of the Program Manager include: organizing and facilitating MARCO projects and Management Board meetings; representing MARCO at regional and national forums; developing and implementing outreach and communications strategies; assisting with strategic planning; and coordinating with MARCO's Federal partners, especially for ocean planning. This added capacity enables MARCO to facilitate Federal, State, and stakeholder coordination on MARCO activities and NOP priorities.

MARCO also plans to hire a part-time Program Assistant in spring 2013 with FY 2012 Cooperative Agreement funding. The Program Assistant will provide administrative and operational support to the Board and Program Manager. Specific tasks include: arranging conference calls, meetings, and travel; attending and providing logistical support at meetings; handling general inquiries; composing correspondence; preparing contracts and proposals; and maintaining calendars. MARCO is requesting continued support for this position.

MARCO also intends to contract with communications specialists. Specific tasks of the communications specialists include: improving MARCO's internal and external communications; developing communication materials (fact sheets, frequently asked questions, presentations, etc.); developing and supporting web content; developing

social media and non-traditional communication approaches; providing media content, as needed; assisting in the development and implementation of consistent messaging for comprehensive stakeholder engagement; and reviewing, editing, and/or writing a variety of documents.

#### *Communications Work Plan*

Implementation of the MARCO communications work plan will consist of three primary phases: 1) execution of the work plan strategies and tools; 2) evaluation of strategies and tools; and 3) updates and refinements to strategies and tools.

MARCO anticipates communications strategies and tools outlined in the work plan will include development and circulation of print materials (fact sheets, frequently asked questions, brochures/postcards, etc.), electronic materials (e-newsletter, updates to website, email listserve, etc.), social media, and traditional media outlets. Other strategies will include building communications networks for sharing MARCO related materials (e.g., partner newsletters, in-person presentations, etc.). The communications specialists will collaborate with partners to increase MARCO's public profile and ensure consistent messaging, support MARCO-related public events, connect with regional stakeholder groups, and help promote MARCO projects and activities. Strategies and tools will be tailored for specific target audiences.

The communications specialists will request regular and ongoing feedback from target audiences on their experiences with MARCO communications. Additionally, an annual assessment of the communications work plan will be conducted. This may include soliciting input from the Board, regional partners and stakeholder groups, and/or consideration of updated information gathered via stakeholder engagement or shifts in MARCO priorities. Once each annual review is conducted, the communications specialists will update the communications work plan, as appropriate.

Samples of electronic and print materials, as well as an update on MARCO communications activities, will be provided in the final report submitted at the end of the grant period.

#### *Stakeholder Engagement Strategy*

The development of an enhanced stakeholder engagement strategy will be informed by lessons learned from prior engagement efforts in the region, and guided by MARCO's existing Data Portal engagement strategy and the communications work plan. The strategy will be developed in consultation with regional partners and with significant input from regional stakeholder groups. Furthermore, the strategy will build off of, and incorporate findings from, the *Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Planning Workshop* held in April 2013.

MARCO's ability to engage stakeholders, without additional resources and partnerships, is severely limited. Therefore, MARCO will work with regional partners that will support the implementation of MARCO's stakeholder engagement vision and strategy. During implementation, MARCO will help to develop materials and tools necessary to support engagement and MARCO will also help to coordinate and track engagement activities to ensure that various engagement activities are providing consistent, accurate information. Similar to the communications work plan, MARCO will conduct an annual review of the

stakeholder engagement strategy and various engagement activities carried out by partners. The strategy will be updated to reflect feedback from MARCO, regional partners and stakeholder groups, and to address assessment findings.

The MARCO stakeholder engagement strategy, as well as an update on MARCO engagement activities, will be provided in the final report submitted at the end of the grant period.

#### *Administrative and Operational Tasks*

MARCO will produce a number of documents throughout the grant period, including a highlights document at the end of the two-year grant period and periodic newsletters, project progress or interim reports, stakeholder engagement workshop materials, and summary reports. The Board and dedicated staff will produce a highlights document at the end of the grant period that details the progress of MARCO on its priority issue areas and report on general MARCO activity and important recent regional events. MARCO is also in the process of planning for and conducting stakeholder engagement workshops, as well as convening periodic Action Team conference calls and in-person meetings. MARCO and its dedicated staff will produce workshop materials and progress or summary reports as a result of conducting these workshops and meetings.

To help maintain productivity, MARCO will require basic equipment and supplies for the duration of the award period. This includes continued service for a cellular phone/data plan for MARCO staff to be accessible to the Board and others; meeting supplies and audio/visual equipment rental such as flip charts, projectors, room rentals, document printing, and other necessary meeting materials; and hosting services for the MARCO website.

#### *Evaluating Success*

To monitor and improve the effectiveness of its program and priorities, MARCO will evaluate its performance by having quarterly conversations with two other ROPs, as well as potential other external reviewers, before the end of the grant period. This may include discussing the original goals and objectives of the grant and whether they were achieved, as well as determining MARCO's success in establishing, reaffirming, and strengthening partnerships and collaborations during the grant period. This evaluation platform will be a way for MARCO to independently look at its tasks and objectives, determine the extent to which the grant resources resulted in measurable benefits and accomplishments, and provide an opportunity to identify some efficiencies amongst the ROPs.

#### **vi. Benefits:**

The funding described in this proposal will support MARCO's advancement and improve coastal and ocean management in the region by:

- Increasing consistency across the Mid-Atlantic and generating momentum to ensure progress;
- Leveraging current investments to obtain additional funding, build and maintain relationships, and share information and knowledge across the region;

- Streamlining regulatory processes and collaborating across jurisdictional barriers, thus creating a cost-effective regional model for addressing ocean management issues;
- Expanding the administrative and operational capacities of MARCO and its member states with dedicated staff and support for project management, administration and communication;
- Providing a source of funding for travel, planning, communications, and stakeholder outreach to advance MARCO's visibility and influence in the region;
- Strengthening relationships and increasing communication with partners, stakeholders, and the public;
- Sustaining the long term implementation of MARCO action items that address the region's most-pressing ocean priorities; and
- Increasing ocean issue awareness on a regional scale.

**vii. *Milestone Schedule:***

Project implementation is an ongoing activity and will be accomplished through contractual assistance or through support of Action Team meetings and/or workshops. A status update will be included in the grant's semi-annual progress reports and a final report will be provided when the project is complete and/or at the end of the grant period.

MARCO's communications and stakeholder engagement activities will be ongoing throughout the grant period. Samples of electronic and print materials, a copy of the enhanced MARCO stakeholder engagement strategy, and an update on communications and engagement activities will be presented in the final report provided at the end of the grant period.

Management Board meetings will take place three times per year and will include the production of meeting notes, meeting summaries with action items, and agreement documentation on policies and overarching MARCO direction and actions.

The purchase of equipment and supplies and the production of documents (such as action team reports, stakeholder engagement workshop materials, and a highlights document) to support MARCO staff, Action Teams, and stakeholder engagement workshops will occur throughout the grant period.

The following table describes the timelines for the major tasks of this proposal. Shaded cells refer to activity on the task.

Milestone Schedule: Timelines for Major Tasks  Year 1:By Quarter Starting Oct 1, 2013 Year 2:By Quarter Starting Oct 1, 2014	Year 1				Year 2			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Project Implementation								
MARCO Management Board Meetings								
Staff Support								
Communications Work Plan								
Stakeholder Engagement Strategy								
Action Team Reports / Highlights Document								

#### VIII. **Project Budget:**

The attached budget information describes the proposed budget summary (see SF-424A form). The budget includes funding for: project implementation and enhanced stakeholder engagement activities; travel costs for Management Board members and key staff to attend Management Board meeting and relevant national and regional conferences; sustain and secure MARCO personnel (program manager, communications team, and program assistant); and basic equipment and supply costs.

See the *Budget Narrative Attachment Form* for detailed budget information.

#### IX. **Appendices**

- A. Detailed Budget Information (see *Budget Narrative Attachment Form*)
- B. Resumes
- C. NEPA Questions
- D. MARCO Letter Of Support
- E. MARCO & CSSF MOU