

**RESOLUTION TO COORDINATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
REGIONAL COASTAL OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEMS AS  
AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE U.S. IOOS**

*Adopted March 30, 2004 by representatives of IOOS Regional Associations*

**Whereas** the Congress and the National Ocean Research Leadership Council have made development of a sustained integrated ocean and coastal observing system (IOOS) a high priority; and

**Whereas** the Congress has directed that the IOOS include the development of “integrated regional systems” as vital components of a national system; and

**Whereas** the NORLC has charged the OceanUS Office to draft and update annually an implementation plan for an integrated ocean observing system; and

**Whereas** user requirements for data and information on coastal marine and estuarine systems differ from region to region; and

**Whereas** it is in the vital interests of the nation for regional coastal ocean observing systems to develop in response to user requirements in a consistent and orderly manner in order to ensure efficient and timely access to data and information nationwide and satisfy the far-ranging user needs across the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System; and

**Whereas** the U.S. IOOS is a national effort requiring partnerships of federal and non-federal institutions and joint funding, and recognizing that the OceanUS Office is an expression of the IOOS at the federal level, it is essential that regional interests be represented by an independent, non-federal body; and

**Therefore**, the undersigned Signatories hereby resolve to work together to establish Regional Associations that meet a specified set of common criteria and a National Federation of Regional Associations to represent Regional Associations at the federal level and coordinate the development of regional coastal ocean observing systems nationwide that conform to IOOS design principles.

**A. PURPOSE**

- a. To collaborate with OceanUS in the formulation of criteria and procedures for certifying regional groups as Regional Association that are eligible for funding to design, implement, operate and improve sustained regional coastal ocean observing systems as a part of the U.S. IOOS.
- b. To recommend procedures and a timeline with milestones for the establishment of the National Federation of Regional Associations.

c. To recommend the format and content of the annual reports by regional groups that are to be submitted to OceanUS in May of each year.

## **B. DEFINITIONS**

a. Regional Associations (RAs) design, operate and improve regional coastal ocean observing systems (RCOOSs). RAs

- represent the interests of those that use, depend on, study and manage coastal environments and their resources in a region;
- are legal entities that provide for a fiscal agent with final responsibility for acceptance and expenditure of funds according to the rules of grantors of the funds, insurability, and the ability to enter into enforceable contracts;
- are partnerships or consortia of data providers and users from state and federal agencies, private industry, non-governmental institutions and academia.
- provide the means by which these bodies and the public at large benefit from and contribute to the development and sustained operation of an integrated ocean observing system for the open ocean and the nation's estuaries, Great Lakes, and EEZ.
- ensure continued and routine flow of data and information and the evolution of RCOOSs that adapt to the needs of the user groups and the timely incorporation of new technologies and understanding based on these needs.

b. Regional Coastal Ocean Observing Systems are designed, implemented, operated and improved by RAs to provide data, information and products on marine and estuarine systems deemed necessary to the users in a common manner and according to sound scientific practice. RCOOSs link the needs of users to measurements through a managed, interactive flow of data and information among three subsystems:

- measurements and data transmission,
- data management and communications, and
- data analysis and modeling.

RCOOSs consist of the infrastructure and expertise required for each of these subsystems.

c. The National Federation of Regional Associations represents the interests of Regional Associations and their members at the federal level and fosters the development of regional observing systems that conform to IOOS design principles. .

d. The Interim Organizing Committee is an *ad hoc* committee established to:

- Draft Terms of Reference, a Charter, and By-Laws of the NFRA;
- Recommend categories of and requirements for membership in the NFRA;
- Work with ORAP to recommend a process for certifying RAs and other important topics as they arise;
- Implement procedures for the establishment of the NFRA; and
- Function as an interim NFRA until a formal body has been established.

### **C. SIGNATORY QUALIFICATIONS**

Workshop participants have extensive knowledge and experience in coastal ocean observing activities and use and depend on, manage or study coastal marine and estuarine systems. Participants were drawn from the private sector, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academia. The Signatories to this Resolution are committed to the establishment of a national network of Regional Associations and the National Federation of Regional Associations as an integral part of IOOS.

### **D. IMPLEMENTATION**

The Signatories resolve to:

- Collaborate to establish, and participate in, Regional Associations, the National Federation of Regional Associations, and an interim Organizing Committee that foster national coordination and build capacity nationally;
- Develop governance structures for Regional Associations and the NFRA;
- Develop products that serve regional as well as multi-regional and national needs;
- Participate in the formulation and implementation of national standards and protocols for QA/QC and effective data management;
- Contribute to the design and implementation of an integrated DMAC subsystem that provides rapid, free and open access to non-commercial and non-proprietary data, metadata and related information.
- Foster improved public awareness, involvement and education.

### **E. RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY**

Nothing herein shall be construed in any way as limiting the authority of individual Signatories in carrying out their respective responsibilities.