

CeNCOOS Governing Council Meeting – Summer 2025

Virtual

Wednesday, August 6 at 1:00-4:30pm

Overview: The meeting focused on navigating Federal funding uncertainties and strategic planning for their next 5-year proposal cycle (FY26-31). The Council established a process for developing the upcoming 5-year proposal considering significant time constraints.

Meeting objectives:

1. Review Current Federal Funding Landscape

- Provide updates on the status FY25 and FY26 NOAA appropriations, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding.

2. Strategic Plan refresh

- Summary of updates/changes. How has our messaging shifted?
- Next steps: GC review (Jul 30-Aug 13) then publish in Fall 2025.

3. Receive Advice on 5-year Planning: FY26–31 Proposal Development

- Review CeNCOOS Funding and Proposal Outcomes
- Receive any new information from IOOS Program Office about the FY26-31 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Reevaluate the proposal development process in light of funding uncertainty.
- Discuss the process for prioritizing among Tier 1 (priority tasks) and Tier 2 (additional needs) project proposals if funding is reduced.

Participants: Krisa Arzayus, Rhyan Grench, Jeff Payne, Henry Ruhl, Alex Harper, Kristen Yarincik, Laura Rogers-Bennett, Eric Bjorkstedt, Raphe Kudela, Lynn deWitt, John Largier, Justine Kimball, Jaime Jahncke, Andrew Devogelaere, Mary Miller, Rosa Laucci, Liz Whiteman, Francisco Chavez, Clarissa Anderson, Megan Medina, Gerhard Kuska

Agenda & Summaries

1:00 pm	Call to Order, Welcome and Agenda Overview - Eric Bjorkstedt, Henry Ruhl
Where we've been	
1:10 pm	<u>IOOS Program Updates</u> - Krisa Arzayus/Jeff Payne, IOOS Program Office

	<p>Summary: The IOOS Program Office has been navigating significant isatransitions with Jeff Payne serving as acting director while managing budget uncertainties and organizational changes.</p> <p>Key discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOOS received complete funding allocations and core-level funding for all regional associations, with infrastructure awards extended by two years • Successfully transitioned High Frequency Radar Network operations to NOAA management • Enhanced wave measurement capabilities through strategic partnerships and continued leadership in harmful algal bloom response efforts • Participated in Google Summer of Code with nine new projects and developed the Marine Life Data Network to ensure open access to marine biodiversity data • Next Notice of Funding Opportunity is currently under NOAA policy review
1:25 pm	<p><u>Federal Funding Landscape</u> - Kristen Yarincik, IOOS Association</p> <p>Summary: The IOOS Association has successfully navigated a challenging year marked by executive orders creating grant freezes and agency reorganizations, leveraging executive orders supporting maritime dominance and seafood competitiveness to advocate for ocean observing needs.</p> <p>Key discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive advocacy efforts including targeted partner letters, bipartisan Congressional outreach, and regional association engagement resulted in strong support with House and Senate marks • Achieved record-breaking advocacy success on their dear colleague letter and maintained strong Senate support with 28 signers • Secured full core funding for FY25 after overcoming hurdles including Commerce Secretary approval requirements for awards • House reauthorization bill passed the Natural Resources Committee unanimously, maintaining authorization for five years

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Senate reauthorization version includes additional provisions like funding floors for regional associations that will require reconciliation between chambers
1:40 pm	<p><u>CeNCOOS Program Office Update</u> - Henry Ruhl</p> <p>Summary: CeNCOOS has strengthened its team and systems while successfully navigating funding challenges, expanding observational capabilities through new technology developments and continuing core operations and information access.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expanded team with new hires including engagement specialist Ali Boutros and place-based management data specialist Julia Cheresh, while navigating funding uncertainty but is now improving due to advocacy efforts ● Received Infrastructure funding and is preparing for the upcoming NOFO cycle, with strategy discussions planned and likely submission deadlines in December-January ● Core observing systems continue operating including over 30 HF radar stations now assimilating into the West Coast Operational Ocean Forecast System, with forecasts available for shipboard navigation and upgraded glider data presentations ● New developments include the Trinidad Head Ocean Observing Node (THOON), enhanced BayCurrents app with wind and water level data, expanded ocean acidification portals with the MOCHA dataset, and an operations dashboard for system-wide monitoring ● Inflation Reduction Act ecosystem observations work continues with focus on biochemical sensing and marine life observing in collaboration with other Regional Associations, maintaining the core mission to improve ocean information access for everyone
2:00 pm	<p><u>Program review - Key findings</u>, Alex Harper/Eric Bjorkstedt</p>

	<p>Summary: An overview from CeNCOOS's December program review, highlighting the organization's net positive progress with identified strengths including leadership within the broader IOOS community was provided.</p> <p>Key summary points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis identified weaknesses around communication, trade-offs, and risks of overextension that could compromise foundational capabilities, emphasizing the need for deeper consideration of role, mission, and constituents to ensure efficient service delivery • Key strategic questions emerged around CeNCOOS's primary role (observing versus serving data versus technology development), target audiences, expansion priorities, gap analysis, and managing trade-offs between new initiatives and core functions • Refresh focus on protecting core operations, reinforcing relevant IRA/BIL buildout elements, developing gap-filling strategies, and preparing for future observation technologies while being mindful of not overextending without sufficient resources • Recommendations include emphasizing engagement and product development to maximize current capabilities, developing strategies for key gaps like HFR expansion, integrating new data streams judiciously.
2:10pm	Time for reflection - All
2:20 pm	Break
CeNCOOS Strategic Plan (2025-30) Update	
2:30 pm	<p><u>Revised Strategic Plan - What's changed</u> - Alex Harper</p> <p>Summary: CeNCOOS has strategically shifted its messaging and outreach approach to align with new priorities around seafood competitiveness, maritime dominance and more while balancing state and regional priorities. CeNCOOS's contributions to commerce, navigation, and safety through high-quality data provision, were also emphasized as strengths that meet evolving priorities. The organization has targeted engagement with ports,</p>

	<p>navy, and National Weather Service partnerships, and more. Clarifying our contributions to agricultural goods movement, drought predictions, and weather forecasting particularly remain important. CeNCOOS's core values and program activities remain unchanged, though future five-year awards may reflect some shifts in time allocation and priorities around ocean intelligence, maritime dominance, and enhanced stakeholder requirements documentation.</p>
2:45 pm	<p>Discussion - All</p> <p>The main strategic plan discussion points included:</p> <p><u>1. Balancing Messaging vs. Core Values</u></p> <p>The central tension throughout the discussion was how to evolve language while maintaining CeNCOOS's foundational values. This included moving from vague language such as "information solutions" to plain speak "observations, data, and information," and concerns about over-correcting away from environmental language that resonates with California stakeholders.</p> <p><u>2. "Return to Core" Strategy</u></p> <p>The refresh emphasizes CeNCOOS's backbone observing system capabilities, moving observations to the top of their core capabilities list and focusing on foundational activities like HFR, gliders, and coastal networks. This represents both strategic maturation and adaptation to federal priorities around commerce, navigation, and safety.</p> <p><u>3. Engagement Strategy Shifts</u></p> <p>Discussion of new outreach approaches including targeted engagement with ports, Navy contacts, weather service partnerships, and emphasis on messaging around contributions to drought predictions, maritime commerce, and agricultural goods movement - particularly targeting Republican members of Congress from California's interior.</p>

	<p><u>4. Strategic Plan Implementation Timeline</u></p> <p>The refresh process itself, described as initially intended to be "light touch" but becoming more substantive, with feedback collection from the governing council to inform the upcoming 5-year proposal development, ensuring alignment between strategic vision and operational plans for the next funding cycle.</p>
3:00 pm	Next steps for review
Where we're headed - 5-Year proposal development	
3:20 pm	<p>Review FY21-26 NOFO Process & Proposal Outcomes - Henry</p> <p>Summary: CeNCOOS's compressed timeline for developing their next 5-year proposal, emphasizing the need for efficiency due to being significantly behind their usual schedule compared to the previous cycle. Given the time constraints and lessons learned, the current approach will focus primarily on work with the Executive Council and subsystem inputs from PIs, maintaining a two-tier funding structure where Tier 1 represents largely flat funding for current core activities and Tier 2 includes potential new initiatives and recapitalization needs that have been long-identified.</p>
3:30 pm	<p>SCCOOS Approach - Clarissa Anderson MARACOOS Approach - Gerard Kuska</p> <p>Summary: Both SCCOOS and MARACOOS are also facing the difficult decision to forego their traditional open Expression of Interest (EOI) solicitation processes due to severe time constraints in the proposal development timeline. They plan to form a small internal group with staff and Executive Council members to review existing work and build a draft proposal, acknowledging this approach is limited in ability to diversify but seeing no alternative given the current scenario.</p>
3:50 pm	Open Discussion: Strategize for FY26–31 Proposal Development and Funding Scenario Planning

	<p>Summary: During the Open Discussion on FY26-31 Proposal Development and Funding Scenario Planning, CeNCOOS's Governing Council voted to establish a small leadership team consisting of the Executive Council plus Henry Ruhl (CeNCOOS Director) and Alex Harper (CeNCOOS Deputy Director) to develop the upcoming 5-year proposal directly. This necessarily streamlined approach was driven by practical constraints including tight timelines and the expectation. The motion was approved by the Governing Council with the understanding that while they would not conduct an open EOI initially, they retained flexibility to potentially do targeted solicitations if additional funding becomes available.</p>
INTERNAL BUSINESS	
4:15 pm	<p>Budget approvals Y5 Core funds and add-ons (1 Jul 2024 - 30 Jun 2025) Summary: Year 5 budget approved pending final sign-off by the Executive Committee.</p>
4:30 pm	<p>Next steps, adjourn Summary: The Governing Council will reconvene in October to review and sign-off on the 5-year proposal approach.</p>

Relevant reading:

E.O. on [Restoring America's Maritime Dominance](#)

E.O. on [Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness](#)

[Draft OPC Strat Plan \(2026-30\)](#)

CeNCOOS Strategic Plan 2025-30