

**Northeast Regional Ocean Council  
Ocean Planning Committee  
Best Practices Work Group  
Terms of Reference**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the NROC Ocean Planning Committee (OPC) Best Practices Work Group is to develop specific recommendations and frameworks for improving stakeholder engagement, agency and interjurisdictional coordination, the use of data and information, and pre-application practices in existing regulatory and management processes.

**Responsibilities**

The Best Practices Work Group will have the following responsibilities:

1. Identify potential best practices by reviewing agency guidance, stakeholder comments, the Northeast Ocean Plan, and other documents, and through engaging government and non-government representatives.
2. Develop a set of potential best practices, including specific mechanisms and frameworks for implementing those practices.
3. Communicate, educate and advise on the use of best practices.
4. Track and report on the use of best practices.

**Core Work Group Membership**

Membership will be derived from the organizations that participate in the Ocean Planning Committee, and will include a range of management and regulatory expertise necessary to inform the responsibilities listed above. The work group will be co-chaired by at least one state and one federal representative, with the potential to include additional chairs from other OPC member organizations. Members will be asked to participate in 2-4 virtual meetings per year and provide information and support the development and review of materials in the interim. Members may also be asked to participate on an as-needed basis in other ocean planning events, such as workshops and NROC OPC meetings.

**Ad-hoc Subgroups**

The work group will determine the need for separate sub-groups to focus on different aspects of best practices. For example, different expertise may be required to inform the development of best practices for the use of data in decisions than best practices for stakeholder engagement. Subgroups may include individuals from a range of organizations, including but not limited to OPC organizations, universities, industry, and other non-governmental organizations. At least one sub-group, chaired by an OPC member, will be formed to provide stakeholder information and perspectives on potential best practices.