**PI-3 Barataria-Terrebonne NEP Program Office**

**OBJECTIVE(S)**

1. To provide administrative and logistical support to the Barataria-Terrebonne Management Conference (BTMC) by maintaining a Program Office with an active full-time staff.

**BACKGROUND**

This action would continue the operation of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program Office similar to the existing one. The office would be tasked with a number of responsibilities, all of which would directly relate to CCMP implementation. The first group of responsibilities would be the administrative duties necessary to conduct Management Conference meetings. Included would be the development of detailed agendas, notification of participants, preparation of meeting minutes, and follow-up on activities and duties assigned at the meetings.

Other major responsibilities are to assume the lead role in the development of Memoranda of Agreement (MOA’s) with various government agencies and others to implement CCMP actions and to assist the various responsible agencies with respect to implementation of specific Action Plans. The Program Office would be accountable to BTMC for CCMP implementation matters, but to the fiscal agency for Program administration and personnel concerns.

The current configuration of the Program Office has worked well. For the CCMP to be implemented it is recognized that there must be personnel assigned to accomplish the administrative and logistical work necessary to actually continue the implementation process and to support the ongoing BTMC. The Program Office will be responsible for the development and execution of numerous projects to gather scientific information, to educate the public about various issues, and to foster support from stakeholders. As Program Office responsibilities change over time, the size and configuration of the office should be changed to meet those responsibilities.

**DESCRIPTION**

The Program Office will provide personnel dedicated to working specifically on CCMP implementation. Without having this specifically dedicated staff, the likelihood of the BTMC continuing to function as it currently does and having the momentum to implement the CCMP could be jeopardized. By having staff in a Program Office, all of the stakeholders and the agencies responsible for CCMP would be assured that personnel would be available to assist with Action Plans and monitor progress with respect to CCMP implementation.

The Program Office would continue to operate with existing Louisiana State civil service positions under a fiscal agency and/or with detailed personnel from other agencies for as long as deemed necessary by the BTMC. As staffing and funding needs change in the future, the Program Office configuration could be altered.

**LEAD AGENCY OR ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING ACTION**

The BTMC is responsible for directing the work of the Program Office.

A State agency will act as the fiscal agency for Program administration and personnel concerns. This agency would be responsible for the necessary administrative support to continue the operations of the Program Office including providing staff positions, benefits, and assuring the State matching funds for any Federal grants which might be received to help fund the office. The current fiscal agent is the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium under the Louisiana Board of Regents.

In the future, the Program Office could be housed under other agencies as it has been in the past.

**TIMELINES AND/OR MILESTONES**

The Program Office will:

* coordinate four Management Conference (MC) meetings annually. Included would be the development of detailed agendas, notification of participants, preparation of meeting minutes, and follow-up on activities and duties assigned at the meetings.
* update the BTMC on program activities at each MC meeting.
* prepare an annual work plan to be approved by the BTMC
* implement specific Action Plans as assigned by the BTMC. This implementation may come for annual work plans and other partnering opportunities.
* assume the lead role in the development of Memoranda of Agreement (MOA’s) with various government agencies and others to implement CCMP actions and to assist the various responsible agencies with respect to implementation of specific Action Plans.
* provide personnel salaries, benefits, and work space dedicated to working specifically on CCMP implementation. The Program Office will work with the State agency which acts as the fiscal agent for administrative and personnel matters.
* maintain all equipment and State assets associated with the Program Office.

**POSSIBLE RANGE OF COSTS AND SOURCES OF FUNDING**

Costs will be associated with the level of effort that the BTMC deems necessary to accomplish above described activities. Costs will include personnel salary and fringe benefits, office space, equipment, operating services, supplies, and Action Plan project costs. These costs will vary based on implementation schedules.

The EPA provides annual funding each year to the NEP. The State is committed to providing a dollar for dollar match to the annual funding. BTEF may also be a source of funding for the Program Office. Outside grants may be used a source of funding for the Program Office.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

The monitoring strategies are intended to serve as mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of projects implemented under the action plans. These strategies should only be used as a guide, not as a requirement. It must be recognized that the monitoring strategies should not be expensive to implement and that, because all levels of government and much of the private sector currently have severe funding restraints. Performance measure include:

* Four Management Conference (MC) meetings annually.
* Quarterly updates to the BTMC on program activities at each MC meeting.
* Annual work plan to be approved by the BTMC and EPA.
* Various reports to EPA about Program activities
* Annual Report to EPA with personnel salaries, benefits, and work space dedicated to working specifically on CCMP implementation.
* Report to State annually on all equipment and state assets associated with the Program Office.
* Report to the State on Performance Indicators as required

**Possible Data Gathered**

* Agendas from BTMC meetings
* Presentations from BTMC meetings
* Annual work plan outputs
* EPA reports as required
* Annual reports to EPA
* Annual reports to State as directed

**Monitoring**

**Parties responsible** –BTNEP Program Office will be responsible for all reporting parameters

**Timetable for gathering data** – Annually, quarterly, and/or as requested by EPA, BTMC, and the State

**How data is shared** – All materials are shared through the web either on the BTNEP.org site or through EPA or State of Louisiana

**Possible data gaps-** The Program Office and/or the BTMC will regularly evaluate data to determine if there are any possible data gaps.

**If additional funding is needed** – Yes, as the Program Office evolves additional funding may be required.