



FY2010: Regional Integrated Ocean Observing System Development

NOAA continued a merit-based funding process in 2010 to enhance regional coastal ocean observing systems (RCOOS) and achieve three long-term outcomes: establishing coordinated regional observing and data management infrastructures, developing applications and products for regional stakeholders, and crafting regional and national data management and communications protocols. In addition, regional associations received planning grant awards designed to assist them in stakeholder engagement, education and outreach, and long-range planning activities.

GULF OF MEXICO REGION

The Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS) includes the coastal states from Florida to Texas.

Funding:

The FY 2010 RCOOS award to GCOOS is \$1,000,000. The 2010 Regional Association (RA) Planning Grant award to this region is \$399,960.

FY 2009 - \$573,085 RCOOS (2 awards), \$399,998 RA

FY 2008 - \$573,085 RCOOS (2 awards), \$399,986 RA

Point of Contact:

- *Ann Jochens* (ajochens@tamu.edu)
- www.gcoos.org

Regional Priorities and Objectives:

GCOOS is being developed as a sustained observing system that will provide data, information, and products on marine and estuarine systems of the Gulf to a wide range of users. The GCOOS RA, established in January 2005, is working to bring GCOOS to maturity to provide observations and products needed by users in this region for:

- Detecting and predicting climate variability and consequences;
- Preserving and restoring healthy marine ecosystems;
- Ensuring human health;
- Managing resources;
- Facilitating safe and efficient marine transportation;
- Enhancing national security, and;
- Predicting and mitigating against coastal hazards.

The goal of the RA support project is to maintain and strengthen the RA so it can build a comprehensive, sustained, operational GCOOS to meet the needs of many different stakeholders. The objectives are to:

- Maintain and further develop the infrastructure of the RA itself;
- Identify regional and local stakeholder needs and priorities;
- Identify and maintain an inventory of observations and products from the region;
- Identify gaps in observations and products needed to meet stakeholder needs;
- Select and prepare projects to fill gaps and to provide for enhancements to observing systems, products, and data management;
- Conduct activities to strengthen regional involvement with the evolution of and compliance with data management and communication plans of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS[®]), and;
- Coordinate and collaborate with other observing system entities.

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Based on inputs from the broad community of GCOOS stakeholders, five thematic areas, each with many associated issues, have been identified as priorities for building GCOOS. These priority themes are:

- Safe and efficient marine operations (e.g., marine transportation, recreational boating, and pollutant spill tracking);
- Mitigation of effects of coastal hazards (e.g., monitoring and forecasting of storm surge and inundation, impacts of hurricanes on communities and offshore industries, urban development impacts to ecosystems);
- Public health and safety (e.g., search and rescue; Harmful Algal Bloom detection, monitoring, and forecasting; monitoring hypoxia at regional and local levels; monitoring and predicting risks from rip currents or strong currents or waves);
- Healthy ecosystems and water quality (e.g., monitoring hypoxia, pollutant tracking capability, monitoring to maintain healthy ecosystems for fisheries), and;
- Gulf-wide ocean literacy and climate literacy (e.g., increasing public knowledge to improve decisions on recreational activities, hurricane evacuation, and urban development and flood zones, as well as to promote sustainable use of resources and protect life and property in the face of natural and human-induced threats).

The RA is also continuing work started in January 2008 to build a centralized regional data portal, to harmonize the data delivery systems of non-federal, voluntary data providers to the GCOOS, to develop an integrated data framework for data streams, quality assurance procedures, and data delivery in the region, and to provide public products needed by the broad community of stakeholders. The RA is standardizing elements of the near real-time marine data delivery systems of the data providers to maximize interoperability within the region, between regions, and with the national IOOS system and to facilitate the production of operational data and model products in support of the regional and national needs. The RA is developing an integrated data framework for data streams, quality assurance procedures, and data delivery. Objectives for this activity are to:

- Maintain and enhance the data portal, including the addition of new voluntary data providers, data types, and products;
 - Develop and refine a comprehensive data management system;
 - Build a pre-operational Regional Operations Center (ROC), and;
 - Develop educational resources for significant IOOS outreach efforts.
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NOAA IOOS Program Office Contacts:

Gabrielle Canonico (Gabrielle.Canonico@noaa.gov), Regional Coordination

Dave Easter (Dave.Easter@noaa.gov), Regional Coordination

Regina Evans (Regina.Evans@noaa.gov), Grants Administrator