

# Final Council Monitoring and Assessment Workgroup 2023-2024 Annual Work Plan

## 1. Purpose

Following the RESTORE Council-approved [Council Monitoring and Adaptive Management Guidelines](#), the Council Monitoring and Assessment Work Group (CMAWG) will continue to support the RESTORE Council in meeting its Comprehensive Plan (2022) commitments to monitoring and adaptive management (MAM) and the use of Best Available Science. This group will continue to encourage compatibility of monitoring and data management procedures and serve as a forum for the Council to collectively address MAM topics relevant to multiple Council member agencies. The group will continue to be available to support the individual Council member agencies, upon request, in meeting their MAM responsibilities. The CMAWG will continue to provide recommendations to the Council regarding MAM commitments, procedures, and guidelines.

This document represents the CMAWG's annual work plan for 2023-2024 and provides a description of the work group composition, priority and ongoing tasks, requested funding, and level of effort for the year.

## 2. Work Group Composition

The CMAWG consists of one primary and one alternate representative from each Council member (five states; six federal agencies). Council member agencies may also provide additional representatives to serve on topic-specific subgroups (restoration type monitoring standards, data management, etc.).

## 3. 2023-2024 Directives

### 3.1. Priority Tasks

The RESTORE Council will direct all activities of the CMAWG. The following activities are recommended for July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024:

- 1) Bring activities to completion for Task 1 of the [FY22-23 workplan](#). Task 1 aims to evaluate potential approaches for the Council to assess its progress toward meeting its Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives, by identifying barriers and strategies to address beyond project scale monitoring and assessment. Findings and recommendations will be presented on and discussed with the CMAWG.
- 2) Building on findings and recommendations from Task 1, discuss opportunities to use existing RESTORE data and leverage other existing information to support the Council's efforts to assess its progress toward its Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives.

- 3) Examine potential mechanisms for sharing new information gained from implementing and monitoring restoration projects, particularly among Council member organizations and their partners. Opportunities for the Council to enhance the benefits of its work by organizing “information-sharing” sessions will be considered. Such activities would also help the Council fulfill its commitment to utilizing adaptive management processes, as set out in the Comprehensive Plan (2022).
- 4) Develop a draft FY24-25 CMAWG Workplan.

### **3.2. Ongoing tasks**

- 1) Assist Council member agencies, as requested, in meeting their MAM responsibilities.
- 2) Continue to assess Council MAM priorities and guidance and make recommendations to the Steering Committee, as needed.
- 3) Continue to provide feedback as needed on Council-funded science and monitoring tools (e.g., the [Gulf Coast Monitoring and Assessment Portal](#), streamflow tools such as the [RESTORE Data Visualization Tool](#), and the [Strategic Conservation Assessment](#) tool suite), and how such tools may be useful to Council members.
- 4) Continue external coordination on MAM topics, such as:
  - a) Engaging with other restoration and science programs in the Gulf of Mexico (e.g., NRDA Cross-TIG MAM, GOMA).
  - b) Developing processes and mechanisms to engage with programs and/or additional subject matter experts, as needed.
- 5) Obtain feedback from Council member agencies on the use of MAM products and guidance. This includes:
  - a) Assessing the need for and potentially carrying out updates to the Observational Data Plan Guidance and templates.

## **4. Requested Funding**

### **4.1. Total Request**

Funding for CMAWG member participation and travel costs will be covered by individual Council member’s Comprehensive Planning Support (CPS) funds and covers approximately July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024. All CPS awards extend through summer of 2024 (specific end dates vary). Annual workplans for CPS awards should include funding needed to cover these activities.

### **4.2. Level of Effort**

Per Council Monitoring and Adaptive Management Guidelines, Council staff will provide the coordination and facilitation of CMAWG activities and work products. Details regarding CMAWG member level(s) of effort are provided below.

#### **4.2.1. All CMAWG Members**

- Participation in conference calls approximately every four weeks (1.5 hours), plus time for meeting preparation, to review draft work products, provide Council feedback, and resolve comments as needed to prepare workgroup products for the RESTORE Council.
- Travel to and participation in up to two in-person meetings (in total for the year) for more detailed discussions of guidance documents, and other topics.
- Provide input on Council MAM activities such as dataset availability, data aggregation approaches, and reporting options. Review and provide feedback on CMAWG work materials and draft MAM products.
- Support external MAM coordination.

#### **4.2.2. Co-chairs (Federal and State)**

- Participation in calls with Council staff approximately every two weeks to assist Council staff in identifying Council MAM needs and next steps, plan meetings, and establish work group processes.
- Assist Council staff as needed in producing initial drafts of documents for review by the CMAWG.
- Coordinate with Council staff, and CMAWG co-chairs to finalize meeting and call agendas, schedule of deliverables, and timing of products to be created by the CMAWG.
- (State co-chair) Represent the five Gulf states and coordinate with them to voice respective State concerns, needs, and viewpoints (including providing early State input to the development of work group interim products).
- (Federal co-chair) Represent the six federal Council member agencies and coordinate with them to voice respective Federal concerns, needs, and viewpoints (including providing early Federal input to the development of work group interim products).