

# 2018 PUBLIC POLICY FORUM



## POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Ocean science underpins our national and homeland security, economic prosperity, food safety, and public health. Understanding and sustainably using the water covering 71 percent of our Earth's surface requires substantial time, effort, and money. Leveraging partnerships can maximize expertise and resources to achieve more than could be accomplished alone. The opportunity for collaboration within the United States is vast: there are 16 federal agencies involved in ocean science, technology, or marine research; in excess of 600 businesses engaged in ocean observation and forecasting; more than 400 postsecondary institutions that provide ocean-related certificates or degrees; and over 45,000 nonprofits focused on ocean and coastal

activities. Greater understanding of complex ocean and coastal processes is critical to our everyday lives – partnerships should play an increasingly important role in this effort.

On March 7, 2018, the Consortium for Ocean Leadership convened a forum to address collaborative efforts (e.g., interagency partnering and coordination and public-private partnerships) as a tool to advance the ocean science and technology enterprise. ***Power of Partnerships: Advancing Ocean Science and Tech*** provided a platform to discuss the complexities of partnerships, understand the unique abilities various sectors bring to the table, and identify best practices and lessons learned.

### THE FORUM FEATURED DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS, INCLUDING:

**Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo** *(Guam-At-Large)*

**Senator Edward Markey** *(Massachusetts)*

**Senator Lisa Murkowski** *(Alaska)*

**Senator Bill Nelson** *(Florida)*

**Mr. Deerin Babb-Brott** *National Ocean Council*

**Dr. Tom Drake** *National Oceanographic Partnership Program, US Navy's Task Force Ocean*

**Dr. David Legler** *Integrated Ocean Observing Committee*

**Dr. Rick Murray** *Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology*

**Capt. Lindy Bunn** *Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

***Power of Partnerships*** presented a pair of leadership roundtables each coupled with an in-depth case study on two theme subtopics: public-private partnerships and interagency partnering and coordination. Building upon discussions between the speakers and audience, moderators identified best practices and recommendations for effective and efficient partnerships. The suggestions are specific, actionable items the community can implement immediately.

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## Maximizing Opportunities and Overcoming Challenges

Interagency and public-private partnerships can be facilitated and can be more successful in advancing ocean science and technology by taking the following actions.

### 1 Establish incentives to encourage partnership growth

- Re-examine academic culture to define rewards for partnership and intellectual property development through the promotion and tenure processes.
- Emphasize that facilitating emerging leaders (in addition to collaborating with established leaders) can foster credibility and reputation.

### 2 Streamline processes to ensure quick productivity

- Understand and communicate that industry often demands fast action, and delays can result in failed partnerships.
- Evaluate agency and academic acquisition protocols to determine opportunities for restructuring processes to expedite procedures and meet industry partner needs.

### 3 Increase data accessibility

- Establish data portals that require descriptors (e.g., quality of data and where it came from) and allow robust user filtering.
- Encourage all data of varying quality be recorded and stored with metadata to ensure the user can sort by their preferred quality requirements.

### 4 Think globally

- Foster opportunities for international partnerships to advance the nation as a global leader in ocean sciences research, technology, and training.

### 5 Leverage unique and complementary capabilities

- Build synergy around each partner's missions, goals, and expertise.



## Best Practices for Framing Partnerships

Successful and failed interagency and public-private partnerships provide a wealth of lessons. Experts identified the following best practices.

### 1 Communicate quickly, frequently, and honestly

- Be certain you can respond to partner requests, emails, or phone calls expeditiously.
- Regular partner conversations confirm focus, progress, and challenges.
- Not all partnerships are a good match. Be open to changes or to parting ways.

### 2 Define partner roles, responsibilities, and expectations

- Work through all large and small details upfront or when changes occur.
- Clearly define partner roles to reduce duplicity; decide on ownership of data, outcomes, or products; and use expectations as metrics for progress and success.

### 3 Respect the culture, goals, and expertise of each partner

- Take the time to understand each partner's goals.
- Prevent barriers by acknowledging collaborators' different priorities and valuable expertise they bring to the partnership.

### 4 Identify risks

- Decrease risk by starting partnerships small and expanding outcomes over time.
- Address concerns early and develop infrastructure to reduce risk adversity.

### 5 Ensure the right people are involved from the beginning

- Large agencies or organizations may require more than one representative to capture the breadth of the mission or scope of their portfolio.
- Money is essential. People with financial decision-making capabilities need to be included early. For long-term partnerships, sustained, reliable support and resources from each participant are paramount.

PARTICIPANTS  
INCLUDED **200+**  
REPRESENTATIVES  
FROM:

FEDERAL  
AGENCIES (30%)

NGOs (30%)

ACADEMIA (20%)

CONGRESS (10%)

INDUSTRY (10%)



## THE FORUM INCLUDED:

- Four members of Congress addressing federal ocean partnerships, including new legislation and past achievements
- Two leadership roundtables highlighting partnerships among federal agencies and between the public and private sectors addressing how collaborations advance ocean science and technology
- Two case studies providing a deep dive into how partnerships work inside and outside the federal government, underscoring what is needed for successful collaborations and methods to avoid unsuccessful outcomes



Forum video, pictures, and summary  
are available on our website:

[www.oceanleadership.org](http://www.oceanleadership.org)