

TERMS OF REFERENCE
of the
INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON OCEAN PARTNERSHIPS TASK FORCE ON
OCEAN EXPLORATION AND UNDERSEA RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

A. Official Designation

The Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (SOST) Interagency Working Group on Ocean Partnerships (IWG-OP) hereby establishes the Task Force on Ocean Exploration and Undersea Research Technology and Infrastructure (TFORT). TFORT complies with the directives of Public Law 111-11, Title XII-Oceans, Subtitle A-Ocean Exploration, Part I-Exploration, Section 12004 (33 USC 3404).

B. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the TFORT is to advise, assist, and make recommendations to the IWG-OP on policies, procedures, plans and activities related to ocean exploration and undersea research technology and infrastructure. The TFORT will develop and implement a strategy which addresses five tasks to support federally-funded ocean exploration and research programs:

1. to facilitate transfer of mission-tested¹, new or innovative use of exploration and undersea research technology;
2. to improve availability of communications infrastructure, including satellite and underwater data transmission capabilities;
3. to develop an integrated, workable, and comprehensive data management information processing system that will make information on unique features and significant ecosystem discoveries available for research and management purposes;
4. to conduct public outreach activities that improve the public understanding of ocean science, resources, and processes, in conjunction with relevant programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies; and
5. to develop strategic goals and priorities to guide TFORT for the next 5 years and update them on an annual basis

The TFORT will

- Coordinate and provide the results of these activities to the IWG-OP for reporting bimonthly to the SOST, and to all SOST agencies, including, but not limited to, the national ocean exploration program and the national undersea research program identified

¹ Technology proven through successful operations, equivalent to the Department of Defense / NASA Technology Readiness Level nine (9)

in PL 111-11 Title XII-Part 1 and Part II, to ensure an effective interface between sponsors and managers responsible for new exploration and undersea research technology and resource managers at the federal, state, and local levels;

- Collaborate with other working groups of the SOST, the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainability, the Ocean Resource Management-Interagency Policy Committee (ORM-IPC), and other relevant Federal interagency entities to ensure new exploration and undersea research technology management and investments are based on the best input from the widest possible number of stakeholders;
- Prioritize its activities based on input from TFORT members and through its private sector interface. Precedence will be placed on mission-tested technologies where the pace, scope or efficiency of ocean exploration and undersea research and/or operations will be significantly increased or will provide for leap-ahead earth-system-scale knowledge gain or perspective;
- Identify the items in annual agency budgets that support these activities, and coordinate such efforts that leverage expertise and enhance participating agency missions;
- Develop five-year goals and priorities to implement the TFORT strategy and update them on an annual basis;
- Report their independent activities, decisions and products to the full IWG-OP for discussion and comment (by electronic means, if necessary, for timeliness).

C. Membership

Membership consists of all IWG-OP member agencies and other *ex officio* members, including but not limited to, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the United States Geological Survey, the Department of the Navy, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. The University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS), National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) subcommittees, and other Federal organizations will be invited to participate as appropriate. All TFORT members will be Federal officials. Contractors under non-disclosure agreements may be utilized as needed but will not serve as members.

Two Co-Chairs shall be identified by the TFORT and approved by the IWG-OP Co-Chairs. In the event that the TFORT does not identify two Co-Chairs, the IWG-OP Co-Chairs will appoint them. TFORT Co-Chairs will be selected on a rotating basis for a 2-year term, renewable. The Co-Chairs' agencies will provide an additional representative to serve as a TFORT member.

D. Private Sector Interface

Individuals or representatives of outside entities who are non-governmental, academic, industry and other experts will be identified and be invited to TFORT meetings to openly discuss topics identified by the Federal membership, primarily focusing on Task 1 of Section B. Such participants will include individuals with knowledge, expertise and/or resources suitable for

discussing transfer of mission-tested technologies to ocean exploration and research application as a criterion.

The TFORT may solicit and receive *ad-hoc* advice from representatives of other non-Federal entities, including but not limited to the UNOLS, the NOAA Ocean Exploration Advisory Board (OEAB), and the Ocean Research Advisory Panel (ORAP) in a manner consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Input from non-Federal individuals at TFORT meetings will be in the form of presentations made to TFORT. Non-Federal individuals will not participate in TFORT deliberations or voting.

The expenses of meeting logistics and secretarial support and (subject to Invitational Travel Statute) the travel of the members of the private sector groups will be borne by NOAA.

E. Termination Date

Unless renewed by the Co-Chairs of the IWG-OP prior to its expiration, the TFORT shall terminate no later than Dec 31, 2017.

F. Determination

We hereby determine that the formation of the Task Force on Ocean Exploration and Undersea Research Technology and Infrastructure is in the public interest in connection with the performance and duties imposed on the Executive Branch by law, and that such duties can best be performed through the advice and counsel of such a group.

Approved:



Craig N. McLean
(Co-Chair, IWG-OP)

23 NOV 2012

Date



Dr. Rodney E. Cluck
(Co-Chair, IWG-OP)

Date