**Steering Committee Conference Call: December 20, 2016**

**Participants**

Heather Breeze (DFO), Adria Elskus (USGS), Jim Latimer (EPA), Matt Liebman (EPA), Peter Murdoch (USGS), Susan Russell-Robinson (Science Advisor), and Christine Tilburg (GOMC)

**1. Environmental Information Use and Influence Project (EIUI)**

Christine Tilburg opened the call with a reminder about the Environmental Information Use and Influence project led by Bertrum MacDonald and Peter Wells. She stated that Peter and Bertrum would like ESIP to provide questions of interest for ESIP. They would then use these questions to create an appropriate project for a graduate student. Christine combined the questions from November’s Steering Committee call with some separate questions derived from a face to face meeting with Peter Wells. Susan Russell-Robinson also added a question during the December call. The questions are listed below in no particular order:

1. Are there specific fact sheets that are doing better and why might that be?
2. Is the Indicator Reporting Tool accessed more than the Monitoring Map? Why might that be the case?
3. Are there specific communication tools that could be put in place before ESIP 2.0’s ecosystem service indicators are announced?
4. What management decisions in the GOM region have been influenced by ESIP products?
5. How can ESIP improve its products to influence GOM management?
6. How have ESIP products been used to make GOM management decisions?
7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of ESIP products in relation to how the products are used?
8. What users are working with the Indicator Reporting Tool?
9. What barriers are encountered by users who wish to work with the Indicator Reporting Tool and/or Monitoring Map?
10. Can more detailed pictures of ESIP’s products be developed?
11. How do people find out about ESIP and its products?

The group discussed what types of students usually work on the EIUI project. Heather Breeze shared her knowledge about previous EIUI projects. She stated that most of the students are housed in Dalhousie’s School of Information. They often have bachelor degrees in science, liberal arts, or communications. Christine agreed to send Bertrum and Peter the questions. ***(Action to be taken: Send Bertrum MacDonald and Peter Wells the ESIP questions in mid-January).***

**2. Funding**

Individuals on the call brainstormed potential funding avenues. At the current rate of ½ the Program Manager’s rate Christine will run out of funds late May of early June. Jim mentioned that people have been working on finding funds with no luck. Susan asked Christine what her normal rate (plus overhead) equals. Christine estimated $2890 plus overhead for ½ time.

Peter Murdoch stated that he has tried to find funds through USGS but the timing was less than ideal as the Sandy money is ending and people are anxious about the new administration coming in. However, Peter thought the original ask was really high. He suggested that the original proposal be revised and sent to Mike Tupper. Susan stated that since ESIP is an ongoing project that USGS has put funds towards before, the funding team should pitch it as project funded under the continuing resolution and not new work. She also cautioned that previous funds have focused on deliverables (i.e. ESIP was a grant through USGS, and grants pay for products, not people’s time). It was suggested that Jim, Peter, and Kathryn Parlee get together on a call and strategize an approach for a smaller amount. ***(Action needed: Call to discuss revise original proposal between Jim, Kathryn, and Peter).*** Peter also thought ESIP should try to get some face to face time with Mike Tupper when he is in the Northeast.

Susan also asked Adria Elskus about potential connections between ESIP 2.0 and Fish and Wildlife. The group discussed returning to Jed Wright to talk about ESIP interactions with LCCs. Peter stated that NALCC has recently been discussing changing their strategy. He felt that ESIP could be included as part of the new strategy, particularly as USFWS may be moving towards using decision support tools as a way to get science into the hands of managers. ***(Action needed: Christine, Jim, Peter, and Kathryn call to discuss potential interactions with LLC projects).***

Susan also asked what was going on with EPA and the funding for the Integrated Sentinel Monitoring Network. Matt stated that they have written a full proposal to build the network and support office staff; the proposal has now reached the second round.

**3. Proposed January – June 2017 call dates**

Christine has suggested the following dates for upcoming Steering Committee calls. Please note that the March date has changed as Adria was not able to participate during the original date.

January 24, 2017 10 AM ET

February 28, 2017 10 AM ET

**March 21, 2017 10 AM ET**

April 25, 2017 10 AM ET

May 30, 2017 10 AM ET

June 27, 2017 10 AM ET

**4. Report back from December Working Group and Council meetings**

Kathryn wasn’t available for the ESIP call but Heather Breeze stated that Kathryn presented information on ESIP and focused on getting the project for additional sites based on Susan’s gift going. Heather also stated that the Working Group discussed participants efforts with private organizations and has decided to write a guidance document. The question arose because of ESIP’s efforts to work with Irving on ICUC sites. Christine and Jim thought a guidance document could be very helpful.

**Next Steering Committee call January 24, 2017 at 10:00 AM ET**