

FAQs for Developing an Engagement Plan for a WHOI Sea Grant Research Project

What is outreach and engagement?

Outreach and engagement are terms that describe elements of communicating your research results to relevant interested parties that include communities, organizations, and individuals.

Who should you engage with?

Any individuals who use Massachusetts' coastal resources - interested parties could include K-12 students, parents and/or teachers, coastal managers, members of coastal industries or business owners, or the general public, among others.

What are the key elements of an engagement plan?

Engagement plans should provide detailed strategies for working with and communicating the results of your research to relevant interested parties. A well crafted engagement plan will ensure that your research results have a clear path for use by relevant communities in Massachusetts.

Are there resources available for helping me develop my engagement plan?

We **strongly encourage** all PIs to reach out to WHOI Sea Grant extension and education staff as you are developing your proposal. WHOI Sea Grant extension and education staff:

- are connected with coastal communities here in Massachusetts, and can provide insight and guidance into the specific needs of those communities.
- have expertise that is wide-ranging, and includes specialties in education, fisheries, aquaculture, coastal processes, floodplain management, water quality, fish passage, and coastal biogeochemistry, among other areas.
- are often involved in ongoing engagement work that may provide an appropriate venue for you to share the results of your research.
- can help you identify and connect with appropriate partners to share the results of your research.

Contact information for WHOI Sea Grant staff can be found at: <https://seagrants.whoi.edu/about/people/>

Some examples of current extension and outreach activities that Extension staff at WHOI Sea Grant are engaged in can be found at: <https://seagrants.whoi.edu/regional-topics/>

What should I be considering in developing my engagement plan?

As you are developing your proposal, consider the following questions:

- 1) What new knowledge/tool will result from your project?
- 2) Why is this knowledge/tool needed?
- 3) Who could use that knowledge (aside from other scientists) and what would they use it for (e.g. decision making, improving practices, increasing profitability, reducing risk, etc.)?
- 4) Do you have some information indicating that the knowledge resulting from your project is needed or desired by the intended end users?
- 5) What efforts would need to be made for the end users to apply that new knowledge/tool?
- 6) If end users were able to apply the new knowledge/tool that resulted from your work, would there be an improvement in social, economic or environmental conditions?

What are good examples of Sea Grant-relevant engagement?

Examples of engagement activities may include:

- Partnering with a state agency or industry that will be an end user of the research.
- Presenting the findings of your research to relevant industry or management organizations.

- Contribute to and/or lead teacher professional development workshops highlighting the findings of your work.
- Developing an engaging written or digital product that helps translate your findings for stakeholders.
- Developing decision-support tools to help the management community use the findings of your research.
- Development of MA-standards-based K-12 curricula around the findings of your work
- Inclusion of high school students in the research process, including those from underserved communities or populations.
- Engaging community members in the research aspects of your project.
- Designing an interactive exhibit based on your work for use at a science or visitor's center.