



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

WHOI Sea Grant's mission is to enhance the practical use and conservation of coastal and marine resources by developing and sharing science-based knowledge. Our research and outreach activities help us to connect with diverse communities of Massachusetts to build a sustainable economy and environment. Your engagement plan is a critical piece of this work.

### **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 relevant communities in Massachusetts to use or contribute directly to your research project.

### **Who should you engage with?**

Any individuals who are interested in Massachusetts' coastal resources, such as K-12 students, parents and/or teachers, coastal managers, members of coastal industries or business owners, homeowners or the general public, among others.

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

We strongly encourage all PIs to reach out to WHOI Sea Grant extension, education and communications staff as you are developing your proposal. WHOI Sea Grant extension, education, and communications 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://seagrant.whoi.edu/about/people/>.

### **What should I be considering in developing my engagement plan?**

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

- What new knowledge/tool will result from your project?
- Why is this knowledge/tool needed?
- 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.)?
- Do you have some information indicating that the knowledge resulting from your project is needed or desired by the intended end users?
- What efforts would need to be made for the end users to apply that new knowledge/tool?
- 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?
- Are there ways that interested parties could contribute directly to your research project?

### **What are good examples of engagement activities?**

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 or communities that supported or would benefit from learning about your research.
- Contributing to and/or leading teacher professional development workshops highlighting the findings of your work.
- Developing an engaging written or digital product that helps translate your findings for interested parties and communities.
- Developing decision-support tools to help the management community use the findings of your research.
- Developing MA-standards-based K-12 curricula around the findings of your work
- Including high school students in the research process, including those from marginalized 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.