

Final Evaluation Findings

Guam Coastal Management Program

October 2016 to May 2023

December 2023



Office for Coastal Management
National Ocean Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
United States Department of Commerce

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Summary of Findings

The Coastal Zone Management Act requires the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office for Coastal Management to conduct periodic evaluations of the performance of states and territories with federally approved coastal management programs. This evaluation examined the operation and management of the Guam Coastal Management Program by the Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans for the period from October 2016 to May 2023. The evaluation focused on two target areas: program administration, and territorial planning initiatives.

The findings in this evaluation document will be considered by the NOAA Office for Coastal Management in making future financial award decisions concerning the coastal program. The evaluation came to the following conclusions.

Program Administration

Accomplishment: The Guam Coastal Management Program has recently improved its management of grants by improving tracking and reporting practices, and including all staff in the preparation of the fiscal year 2023 cooperative agreement to better anticipate procurement needs and broaden their understanding of the program's mission.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends the Guam Coastal Management Program build off recent hiring successes by seeking or developing fellowship or internship opportunities to fill staffing gaps, while also continuing to use selection criteria (selective factors) when writing new position descriptions to fill new or remaining vacancies.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends the Guam Coastal Management Program offer staff training opportunities suited to their responsibilities, build in functional redundancies across the staff, and create opportunities to improve communication within the program, especially as it relates to expectations for cooperative agreement tasks.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends ongoing grants training for personnel tasked with managing the awards received from NOAA to increase administrative efficiency and reduce post-award actions.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends that the Guam Coastal Management Program follow all available guidance to identify evaluation metrics that are relevant to the program's latest Section 309 strategy and will be carried out through the tasks included in subsequent cooperative agreement awards. The program could also work with its site liaison to ensure that its proposed metrics adhere to the guidance. Additionally, the program should ensure sufficient staffing for grants management so that consistent and accurate reporting in the Coastal Zone Management Act's Performance Measures Database is completed to track program effectiveness over time.

Territorial Planning Initiatives

Accomplishment: The Guam Coastal Management Program has forged strong partnerships with a number of federal and territorial agencies and constituents during the evaluation period. Since 2016, the program has made a concerted effort to improve communication and collaboration with its networked partners and professional organizations involved with the broader planning community in Guam and has established a leadership role by organizing and convening the first Assembly of Planners Symposium in 2016, and has continued to convene these meetings in subsequent years.

Accomplishment: Under the strong leadership by Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans and the Guam Coastal Management Program, a number of planning activities have gained momentum, including the long-awaited Comprehensive Land Use Plan (i.e., Guahan 2050 Sustainability Plan), Guam Forest System Plan, and the Seashore Reserve Plan.

Accomplishment: The Guam Coastal Management Program updated the *Guidebook to Development Requirements on Guam* in June 2020, and has already made an additional update in 2022 to promote efficient permit processes. This guidebook is a comprehensive source of information for development-related permitting on Guam intended to assist permittees with identifying and working with the appropriate partner agencies of the Guam Coastal Management Program.

Accomplishment: The Guam Coastal Management Program has leveraged the GIS maps from the NextGen 911 system to update land use information and better understand land ownership across the territory. Guam's Bureau of Statistics and Plans and the coastal program have dedicated resources to updating the GIS maps of the territory and they are sought after by partners of the networked program.

Based on the evaluation of the target areas described above, the Office for Coastal Management concludes that the Government of Guam is implementing and enforcing its federally approved coastal program, adhering to the terms of the federal financial assistance awards, and addressing the coastal management needs identified in Section 303(2)(A) through (K) of the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Program Review Procedures

The NOAA Office for Coastal Management evaluated the Guam Coastal Management Program in fiscal year 2016. The evaluation team consisted of Ralph Cantral, evaluation team lead; Marie Auyong, site liaison; Susie Holst Rice, evaluation co-lead; and Jean Tanimoto, Pacific regional director, all from the NOAA Office for Coastal Management; and Kathleen Leyden, manager of the Maine Coastal Management Program. The support of the Guam Coastal Management Program staff was crucial in conducting the evaluation, and their support is most gratefully acknowledged.

NOAA sent a notification of the scheduled evaluation to Lola Leon Guerrero, acting director, Bureau of Statistics and Plans, on October 28, 2022, and published a notice of “Intent to Evaluate” in the *Federal Register* on March 13, 2023. The Guam Coastal Program posted a notice of the public meeting and opportunity to comment in the *Guam Daily Post* on May 2, 2023.

The evaluation process included a review of relevant documents and a survey of stakeholders, which helped identify two target areas for the evaluation: program administration and territorial planning initiatives. A site visit was also conducted, and the evaluation team held meetings with staff members and group discussions with stakeholders and program staff members about the target areas. In addition, a public meeting was held on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the Hagat Mayor’s Office Building, 393 Route 2, Hagat, Guam 96915, to provide an opportunity for members of the public to express their opinions about the implementation of the coastal program.

Stakeholders and members of the public were given the opportunity to provide written comments via email or U.S. mail through Friday, May 19, 2023. The Office for Coastal Management then developed draft evaluation findings, which were provided to the coastal program for review, and the coastal program’s comments were considered in drafting the final evaluation findings.

Final evaluation findings for all coastal programs highlight the coastal program’s accomplishments in the target areas and include two types of findings that may require action by the program:

Necessary Actions address programmatic requirements of the implementing regulations of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) and of the state coastal program approved by NOAA. These must be carried out by the dates specified. Failure to address necessary actions may result in a future finding of non-adherence and the invoking of interim sanctions, as specified in CZMA §312(c).

Recommendations are actions that the office believes would improve the program, but which are not mandatory. The state is expected to have considered the recommendations by the time of the next evaluation or by the dates specified.

Evaluation Findings

The Guam Coastal Management Program is a networked program that is administered by the Bureau of Statistics and Plans in the Office of the Governor. The evaluation target areas identified through interviews and a stakeholder survey were program administration and territorial planning initiatives. Program administration is a common topic for Section 312 evaluations and was selected because the Guam Coastal Program has had ongoing administrative challenges, specifically around grants management and training needs to build staff capacity. Over the evaluation period the coastal program has emerged as a leader in a number of planning activities in the territory and convenes planning-related meetings and events that span multiple local and federal agencies. This shows the coastal program has responded to a recommendation from the prior 312 evaluation and dedicated its limited resources to these important efforts to shape future development on Guam.

Following the evaluation site visit in May 2023, Typhoon Mawar, a strong category 4 storm, tracked just North of Guam and was the strongest storm to affect Guam since Typhoon Pongsona in 2002. President Biden declared Guam a major disaster area on May 27, enabling the distribution of federal funds for recovery efforts. The Guam Coastal Program's offices at the Governor's Complex at Adelup sustained limited damage and by early July the facilities were back in use. Luckily, the storm did not present additional challenges specifically related to the program management and territorial planning target areas of this evaluation.

Program Administration

Program administration covers a number of topics, including but not limited to staffing (which encompasses both hiring and ongoing professional development and training of existing staff), grants management, and procurement. Staff turnover was noted as a challenge in the findings from the last 312 evaluation for Guam's Coastal Program, and since 2017 there has been additional turnover of program staff; however, we heard from Bureau of Statistics and Plans human resources that currently "the program is moving in the right direction." As of the time of the evaluation site visit, eight of the nine program staff positions were filled using classified positions, where selective criteria were used during the hiring process to target applicants with the right skills for the positions advertised. Additionally, in April 2023 there was a 22 percent pay raise for most Government of Guam positions, which may make them more desirable and improve retention in the future.

Developing a strong team is important for resource management to encourage a longer tenure of staff and retain institutional knowledge. Current coastal program leadership has made an effort to select candidates who are qualified for their positions, but additional capacity is still needed. Based on numerous discussions with program staff and partners, the evaluation team heard that the coastal program would benefit from additional technical expertise, such as a biologist, wetland specialist, and/or engineer to review project applications and federal consistency determinations. Legal assistance for the coastal program would help with

procurement and environmental issues. A discussion between the program and the Guam Attorney General's office may identify avenues to meet natural resource legal needs of the program. The evaluation team also heard that the GIS technician position has turned over repeatedly, possibly due to limited professional development opportunities, and there may be utility in creating a mid-level GIS position, especially with the ongoing efforts to update the maps of land ownership and the utilization of these maps by the island's emergency response programs.

Opportunities may exist to fill some capacity needs through partnerships with the University of Guam, which has strong biology and environmental sciences programs and a growing Sea Grant program that achieved institutional status from NOAA in July 2022. Cultivating students' interests in applying their knowledge to resource management could help foster a local applicant pool for the coastal program. The program has proposed initiating an internship program in its latest cooperative agreement, which may provide a homegrown pipeline of talent. There are additional partnership opportunities with the Guam Coral Reef Initiative, which has historically been operated out of the Bureau of Statistics and Plans, but has recently moved to Guam's Department of Agriculture. Maintaining this relationship and leveraging any shared interests, especially related to the nonpoint source program and watershed management efforts in the territory, would be advantageous for future collaborations.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends the Guam Coastal Management Program build off recent hiring successes by seeking or developing fellowship or internship opportunities to fill staffing gaps, while also continuing to use selection criteria (selective factors) when writing new position descriptions to fill new or remaining vacancies.

As mentioned in the 2017 findings, there is an ongoing need for training of coastal program staff. In addition to providing professional development opportunities, we heard staff interest in creating more redundancy of skill sets within the program so that when someone is out of the office, another staff member will be able to carry out the work. This will ensure continuity of operations for the program and should enhance efficiency as well. The evaluation team heard that the recent cooperative agreement proposal was reviewed by all staff, and based on their response it was a welcome opportunity to engage early on in the process and understand their role in the activities proposed. The evaluation team was encouraged by this step to take a team approach and hopes this continues into the future.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends the Guam Coastal Management Program offer staff training opportunities suited to their responsibilities, build in functional redundancies across the staff, and create opportunities to improve communication within the program, especially as it relates to expectations for cooperative agreement tasks.

Over the past few years, the backlog of open NOAA awards to the coastal program has been reduced. The fiscal year 2018 and fiscal year 2019 awards have been closed out, and as of the site visit the fiscal year 2020 award was scheduled to close in June 2023, leaving only the fiscal year 2021 and fiscal year 2022 awards open, and the fiscal year 2023 proposal submitted.

Within the past year, there has been notable progress in managing the grants received from NOAA, and this progress is in part due to the development of a tracking spreadsheet shared among staff to track all expenditures. The tracking spreadsheet has proved critical in financial reconciliations. The task of keeping track of the separate awards is important because it demonstrates that the program is utilizing grant funds appropriately.

Accomplishment: The Guam Coastal Management Program has recently improved its management of grants by improving tracking and reporting practices, and including all staff in the preparation of the fiscal year 2023 cooperative agreement to better anticipate procurement needs and broaden their understanding of the program's mission.

Despite the recent improvements mentioned above, grants management continues to be a challenge for the coastal program, and there were awards during the evaluation period for which tasks were not completed and considerable amounts of federal funds needed to be returned. Additionally, the person responsible for developing the tracking spreadsheet left the program shortly after the evaluation site visit, which highlights the importance of functional redundancy within the program. The program must make sure that there is staff dedicated to ensuring the awards are tracked and the funds are spent down to reduce the likelihood of any unspent funds being returned to the U.S. Treasury.

The Bureau of Statistics and Plans currently manages 41 federal grants, indicating that significant resources are being managed across the broader office. Ongoing grants management training is recommended to ensure staff have continued opportunities to learn and grow their administrative skill sets. Because of new and projected Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act awards, this is an important time to increase grant administrative proficiency to ensure compliance with their respective rules. With the increased workload on NOAA's grants office due to the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the coastal program should increase proficiency for administering grants so that post-award actions are reduced.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends ongoing grants training for personnel tasked with managing the awards received from NOAA to increase administrative efficiency and reduce post-award actions.

In 2012 each coastal management program was asked to identify three metrics to report on for Section 312 evaluations that linked to their program's focus areas and would allow them to communicate progress on these areas over time. Reporting on these metrics should show that the program is fundamentally following the work laid out in its Section 309 strategy through the tasks in its cooperative agreements and track the effectiveness of that body of work.

The findings from the last 312 evaluation of the Guam Coastal Program included a necessary action because the program had not provided data for its chosen evaluation metrics. The reporting for their 312 metrics during this evaluation period shows this area still needs

attention. The evaluation metrics chosen by the Guam Coastal Program for the 2018-2023 time frame were as follows:

Metric 1 – Coastal Hazards

From 2018 to 2023, three (3) a) state-level policies and plans completed; b) local-level policies and plans completed; c) projects completed at the state level; and d) projects completed at the local level to reduce future damage from coastal hazards with assistance from Coastal Zone Management funding or staff.

Metric 2 – Coastal Development and Community Development

From 2018 to 2023, two (2) coastal communities have developed or updated polluted runoff management ordinances, policies, and plans with assistance from Coastal Zone Management funding or staff.

Metric 3 – Public Access

From 2018 to 2023, 20 training events related to public access will be offered by the Coastal Zone Management Program.

Tracking annual contributions to these metrics continues to be a challenge for the Guam Coastal Program. The information provided to NOAA's Coastal Zone Performance Measures System differs from the information provided by the program in response to an information request after the evaluation site visit. There is a clear need for the program to read and use the guidance provided for reporting on its evaluation metrics. There is also a clear need for recognizing the strategic alignment of the requirements of the program including its Section 309 strategies, activities contained in cooperative agreements, and deliverables reported to NOAA, so that staff can demonstrate a coherent, focused program that is making measurable progress over time. Additionally, in their response, the administrator of the coastal program stated that inadequate staff capacity for grants administration was the main challenge to properly reporting this information. A pattern is developing with regard to the evaluation metrics, and the territory is expected to have carried out the following recommendation by the time of the next evaluation; otherwise, the following recommendation may be elevated to a necessary action.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends that the Guam Coastal Management Program follow all available guidance to identify evaluation metrics that are relevant to the program's latest Section 309 strategy and will be carried out through the tasks included in subsequent cooperative agreement awards. The program could also work with its site liaison to ensure that its proposed metrics adhere to the guidance. Additionally, the program should ensure sufficient staffing for grants management so that consistent and accurate reporting in the Coastal Zone Management Act's Performance Measures Database is completed to track program effectiveness over time.

Territorial Planning Initiatives

Between the international tourism industry and military buildup activities in the territory, Guam is experiencing immense development pressure. There are a number of planning efforts underway in the territory and Guam's Coastal Program has emerged as a leader across several of these initiatives over the review period. Additionally, since the last evaluation, the coastal program's offices were moved back to the Adelup Governor's Complex, increasing the visibility of the program within the government and with partners. Through the coastal program's work as a convenor and collaborator, strong partnerships with a number of federal and territorial agencies and local mayors have been developed or re-established as various planning initiatives gather steam. As such, the coastal program is now playing an integral role in forming long-awaited plans to guide future development in Guam.

In 2016 the Guam Coastal Program held the first Assembly of Planners, which brought together agencies and practitioners involved in broader planning activities within the territory. In doing so, the coastal program established a territorial leadership role in planning activities. Since 2016, these assemblies have built a network of public and private partnerships and reaffirmed the need for proactive planning in the territory, including an update to the 1974 comprehensive land use plan. Once passed via the legislative process, the comprehensive plan will enable enforceable policies to ensure development abides by applicable rules and regulations. Guam's Coastal Program has been engaged in getting the process underway to develop the Guahan 2050 Sustainability Plan, which is intended to replace the out-of-date comprehensive plan. The approach for Guahan 2050 focuses on sustainability goals within the following topics: economy, environment, infrastructure, governance, and socio-cultural interests. The planning timeline is 18 months, and the planning process will be accomplished by a team, including the coastal program whose role will be to synthesize existing data and ensure that its implementation is integrated across Guam by engaging with the villages early in the process.

Another important planning endeavor for the territory is the Guam Forest System Plan. In 2012, the Guam Forest Legacy Act was signed into law and the Guam Forest System Plan will provide the authority for activities and uses of the lands included in the plan. The coastal program's involvement is crucial to completing the plan by assisting with contracting out GIS services, improving the inventory and database of government-owned land in Guam, and identifying ownership and titles for the parcels within the plan in coordination with the Guam Department of Land Management and the Chamorro Land Trust. Partners from the Guam Department of Agriculture have shared very positive feedback about the work done by the coastal program and noted that the coastal program is a reliable partner. Coastal program staff have been writing portions of the plan and participated in a summit in 2021 with the Department of Agriculture to confirm the desire to protect land for beneficial use and ecosystem function, and develop the plan which is expected to be completed soon. The recent momentum on this effort was expected to inform the Governor's Land Summit which was held in July 2023—20 years after the first Governor's Land Summit was held in 2003.

During the review period, the Guam Coastal Program spearheaded activities to develop the Guam Seashore Reserve Plan. This plan aims to work with other territorial agencies and local organizations to protect and preserve the seashore reserve, which was established under the Guam Territorial Seashore Protection Act of 1974. A coastal management fellow supported by NOAA's Office for Coastal Management was matched with the Guam Coastal Program and started the process for developing this plan. Extensive background research was done in 2020, and numerous partners were engaged to compile the relevant legislation and understand the state of the reserve. Currently, the Guam Coastal Program is funding a fishery management plan for Guam, and the fisheries regulations from that plan could be incorporated into the Seashore Reserve Plan. Cultural and historical information has also been gathered to inform the plan. This data and information will provide the best understanding of where to develop the coastline of Guam so that impacts to the marine environment can be anticipated and minimized.

Accomplishment: The Guam Coastal Management Program has forged strong partnerships with a number of federal and territorial agencies and constituents during the evaluation period. Since 2016, the program has made a concerted effort to improve communication and collaboration with its networked partners and professional organizations involved with the broader planning community in Guam and has established a leadership role by organizing and convening the first Assembly of Planners Symposium in 2016, and has continued to convene these meetings in subsequent years.

Accomplishment: Under the strong leadership by Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans and the Guam Coastal Management Program, a number of planning activities have gained momentum, including the long-awaited Comprehensive Land Use Plan (i.e., Guahan 2050 Sustainability Plan), Guam Forest System Plan, and the Seashore Reserve Plan.

Overall, the leadership at the Bureau of Statistics and Plans and the work of the coastal program have served to "unstick" a number of planning initiatives that had grown stagnant. Completing these plans and shepherding them through the legislative process will be important achievements that will guide future development within the territory. Looking ahead, as planning shifts to implementation, the role of the coastal program will likely evolve, and proactive thinking about how the role of the program may change is worth consideration. For instance, as the Seashore Reserve Plan comes to completion there may be an important role for the bureau and the coastal program to provide leadership for the Guam Seashore Protection Commission. During the evaluation site visit meetings with partners, the evaluation team heard suggestions that the Seashore Protection Commission should be moved to the Bureau of Statistics and Plans due to the efforts of the coastal program to elevate the planning process. Currently, the same appointees to the Guam Land Use Commission also serve on the Seashore Protection Commission, but there is a desire by partners to see the coastal program serving in this role. As such, there is an opportunity for the program to explore whether such a move would be feasible or advantageous for the Bureau of Statistics and Plans and beneficial to the territory.

All major developments in Guam must be reviewed by the Application Review Committee, which consists of representatives of several agencies in the territory, including the Bureau of Statistics and Plans. Serving on the committee will continue to be an important role for the Bureau of Statistics and Plans going forward, and we heard from partners that the position statements provided to the bureau by the coastal program are helpful when there is an issue with a permit submitted for review. In 2020 and again in 2022, the coastal program updated the “Guidebook to Development Requirements on Guam” to provide a comprehensive source of information so that permittees can work with the right agencies while they develop their permit applications. By facilitating permit applicants’ engagement with the appropriate entities early on in the process, the guidebook enables permit application packages submitted to the Application Review Committee to be more complete and make for a smoother review. This improved efficiency should make the permit application and review process easier for all involved.

Accomplishment: The Guam Coastal Management Program updated the *Guidebook to Development Requirements on Guam* in June 2020, and has already made an additional update in 2022 to promote efficient permit processes. This guidebook is a comprehensive source of information for development-related permitting on Guam intended to assist permittees with identifying and working with the appropriate partner agencies of the Guam Coastal Management Program.

An ongoing challenge for the coastal program will be to ensure that the Application Review Committee duties of the program are staffed appropriately to ensure that this responsibility can be performed adequately. Without a biologist on staff, the continued collaboration with the Coral Reef Initiative must be fostered to leverage their biologists when needed for reviews. As previously mentioned, the coastal program and the Coral Reef Initiative have recently worked together to develop watershed plans. It is essential that the programs continue to work together to achieve mutual goals now that the Coral Reef Initiative responsibilities have been moved from the Bureau of Statistics and Plans to the Guam Department of Agriculture. In discussions with the evaluation team, a representative from the Department of Agriculture stated that engagement with the Coral Reef Initiative is important for informing restoration activities in watersheds as changes on land impact the coral reef ecosystems downstream.

To better position the territory to take action related to watershed issues, the coastal program proactively engaged with and leveraged the technical capacity of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to support local agencies and improve outcomes for the public. As a result, several recent efforts have been completed during the review period, including 1) a comprehensive flood study for Guam, 2) characterizations for the watersheds across Guam, which provide plans and recommended actions to address issues at specific sites, and 3) the Guam Shoreline Atlas. Each of these are new resources to provide shoreline managers in Guam with baseline information and tools for future planning efforts. Concurrently, there has been a revival of the Watershed Planning Committee on Guam, which is jointly led by the Guam Environmental Protection Agency and the coastal program. Given all of these new resources and momentum for implementing watershed management activities in the territory, as well as the

unprecedented opportunity to access funding from the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the coastal program may want to consider leveraging the good relationship with the Guam Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Guam Coral Reef Initiative, and other partners to apply for and conduct implementation activities in priority watersheds in the territory.

In addition to the activities already discussed, the coastal program has accomplished a number of items that are important to successful planning and implementation of the program. The recent program changes, which were approved in early 2023, will serve to allow for future implementation that encompasses the full scope of the amended program. The coastal program has also been providing greater attention to federal consistency, and since 2020 the coastal program has held annual federal consistency workshops at the Assembly of Planners Symposium. One of the greatest contributions of the program is the recent improvements to the availability of GIS maps for Guam, since these updated maps are essential information for a number of local entities to effectively perform their work. From assisting the Chamorro Land Trust with digitizing its files, to working with the Department of Land Management to better understand land ownership across the territory, these accessible, updated maps serve the community and are shared with the partner agencies of the networked coastal program and beyond. It will be important that these maps be maintained and updated going forward.

Accomplishment: The Guam Coastal Management Program has leveraged the GIS maps from the NextGen 911 system to update land use information and better understand land ownership across the territory. Guam's Bureau of Statistics and Plans and the coastal program have dedicated resources to updating the GIS maps of the territory and they are sought after by partners of the networked program.

Evaluation Metrics

Beginning in 2012, state coastal management programs began tracking their success in addressing three metrics specific to their programs. The evaluation metrics include a five-year target and provide a quantitative reference for each program about how well it is meeting the goals and objectives it has identified as important to the program. The Guam Coastal Management Program chose coastal hazards, coastal dependent uses and community development, and public access as metrics for the 2018-2023 time frame.

The Guam Coastal Program submitted incomplete annual tracking data for its selected evaluation metrics to the Coastal Zone Management Act's Performance Measures System database. The data that was submitted to the database wasn't always aligned with the measures they originally selected for the 2018-2023 period. Moreover, it is unclear whether the submission underwent internal review to ensure that the information was correct. Due to lack of information from the database, the evaluation team requested additional information after the May 2023 evaluation site visit. In this section, that information is provided below the actual data submitted to the database for each of the evaluation metrics. The data provided via the information request differs from the data provided previously via the database, and does not follow the guidance for reporting this type of data.

METRIC 1: Coastal Hazards

Goal: Input from community forums is incorporated into state-level policies or plans to increase resilience to coastal hazards island-wide.

Objective: Villages vulnerable to coastal hazards will be informed about coastal hazards and the resources available to plan for potential impacts of storm surge, sea level rise, and increased flooding by participating in hazards policy development and resiliency planning training events. Village input from eight community forums will be adopted in three state-level policies and plans.

Strategy: The Guam Coastal Management Program will collaborate with local and federal government partners such as the Office of Civil Defense/Guam Homeland Security, National Disaster Preparedness Training Center, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, NOAA National Weather Service, and FEMA to provide outreach and training-related events to inform communities on site-specific vulnerabilities to relevant coastal hazards. The Guam Coastal Management Program will facilitate the engagement process by soliciting and synthesizing community input at eight community meetings in order to develop priorities and propose policy updates. Each meeting will also include discussion on improving government coordination.

The coastal program's synthesis of community input from each event, including identification of vulnerabilities and proposed measures for increasing place-based resiliency will be

incorporated into policies and plans that the Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans plays a key role in developing, including the Southern Guam Development Master Plan and Guam Comprehensive Plan updates.

Measure: From 2018 to 2023, number of a) state-level policies and plans completed; b) local-level policies and plans completed; c) projects completed at the state level; and d) projects completed at the local level to reduce future damage from coastal hazards with assistance from Coastal Zone Management funding or staff.

Target: From 2018 to 2023, three (3) a) state-level policies and plans completed; b) local-level policies and plans completed; c) projects completed at the state level; and d) projects completed at the local level to reduce future damage from coastal hazards with assistance from Coastal Zone Management funding or staff.

Actuals from the CZMA Performance Measures System database:

Year 1 (2018-2019) – 0

Year 2 (2019-2020) – 0

Year 3 (2020-2021) – 0

Year 4 (2021-2022) – 0

Year 5 (2022-2023) – 1

Total (2018-2023) – 1

312 Metric Information provided by the Guam Coastal Program after evaluation site visit:

“Here is the list of Plans completed that [the Guam Coastal Program] led or was a critical partner from 2018-2023.

1. 2019 Guam State Hazard Mitigation Plan
2. Guam Coastal Atlas Project
3. 2020 Guam Comprehensive Flood Study
4. 2020 Site Specific Flood Mitigation Plan Umatac
5. 2020 Site Specific Flood Mitigation Plan Merizo
6. 2020 Site Specific Flood Mitigation Plan Namu River
7. 2020 Agat Bay Regional Shoreline Assessment
8. 2023 Flood Hazard Study, Barrigada, Guam

The correct number for metric 1 is eight (8).”

Discussion:

Based on the information provided by the coastal program after the site visit, there have been eight projects or plans completed during the evaluation period. All but one of these were completed in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a result of a letter of request from the director of the Bureau of Statistics and Plans, with the coastal program serving as a local sponsor or point of contact. The remaining item, the Guam State Hazard Mitigation Plan, was completed with staff support from the coastal program to elevate flood

and coastal erosion hazards and include those items in the plan.

Additionally, through the information provided to the CZMA Performance Measures System, the Guam Coastal Management Program also completed one local project titled “Cumulative and Secondary Impacts of Development on Stormwater Flow in Tumon Bay” that contributes towards the deliverables to reduce future damage from coastal hazards. The project was originally envisioned to create a permitting siting assistance tool. However, blueprints for the stormwater system in Guam do not exist, so the project evolved into the creation of a preliminary stormwater model and study that laid out tasks needed to create the original permitting assistance tool. If the program follows through on these tasks and on projects laid out in the study, there could be significant benefits for multiple agencies and the environment.

Overall, the target of three projects or plans to reduce future damage from coastal hazards was exceeded, and a total of nine items were delivered between 2018-2023. Leveraging the capacities of the Army Corps of Engineers has proven very effective for the territory and resulted in updated resources to assist future management activities to address watershed and flood issues in Guam.

METRIC 2: Coastal Dependent Uses and Community Development

Goal: Effective administration of coastal dependent uses and community development that encourages healthy ecosystems, resilient human communities, and vibrant economies.

Objective: Guam’s network partners and government officials will be more informed on the mandates and statutes of agencies in coordinating land use planning and polluted runoff management by participating in five training-related events. As a result of increased awareness among coordinating agencies from these events, two village pollution control ordinances will be updated.

Strategy: Engage communities, agencies, and lawmakers through training events specifically designed to result in updated village ordinances related to pollution control.

By means of the program’s existing planning functions, the Guam Coastal Management Program will strengthen its government coordination process through five workshops or trainings with government leaders, including village mayors and their municipal planning councils, the legislative body, the Guam Land Use Commission, and network partners in the federal and local governments to ensure responsible coastal-dependent uses and community development. The Guam Coastal Management Program will design workshops tailored to effectively reach specific regulatory and permitting agency officials responsible for administering pollution control ordinances. By reaching out to this audience, the coastal program will inspire government officials on the key role of pollution control in the land use planning and natural resource protection ordinances used while making decisions. The program will guide the integration of workshop and training outcomes into community

ordinance updates.

Measure: From 2018 to 2023, the number of coastal communities that developed or updated polluted runoff management ordinances, policies, and plans with assistance from Coastal Zone Management funding or staff.

Target: From 2018 to 2023, two (2) coastal communities have developed or updated polluted runoff management ordinances, policies, and plans with assistance from Coastal Zone Management funding or staff.

Actuals from the CZMA Performance Measures System database:

Year 1 (2018-2019) – 0

Year 2 (2019-2020) – 0

Year 3 (2020-2021) – 0

Year 4 (2021-2022) – 0

Year 5 (2022-2023) – 0

Total (2018-2023) – 0

312 metric information provided by the Guam Coastal Program after evaluation site visit:

“Here is the list for Metric 2 that was completed in which [the Guam Coastal Program] led or was a critical partner from 2018-2023.

1. 2021 Guam Storm Drainage Manual
2. 2022 Guam Watershed Plan

The correct number for Metric 2 is two (2)”

Discussion:

During this five-year time frame, the Guam Coastal Program did not provide any information for this metric in the CZMA Performance Measures System. However, based on the information received after the site visit, the evaluation team learned of two territory-wide deliverables that align with this metric to develop or update ordinances, policies, or plans regarding polluted runoff management. The territorial plans did not specify which coastal communities would adopt them and implement changes to their ordinances, policies, or plans to mitigate polluted runoff to coastal waters, and the coastal program should work to ensure that these resources are utilized and implemented at the community level where appropriate.

METRIC 3: Public Access

Goal: Improve public beach and shoreline access opportunities for the public

Objective: By 2023, Guam’s coastal users will be informed about the locations of public access points and rights to the beach/shoreline profile in Guam’s coastal zone.

Strategy: An informed public is an empowered public. The Guam Coastal Management Program, drawing from the Public Access Management Plan, will work in close coordination with the Guam Department of Land Management, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Public Works, Mayors Council, and other professionals to identify public access easements and obtain shoreline information that will be validated against the most current recorded Department of Land Management parcel layer. Information on agencies' authority and area of responsibility will be compiled as well. Geographical information will be made available to the public through an online map viewer or mobile application that serves as an interactive public access location guide, providing beachgoers an easier way to find public access points to Guam's beaches and shorelines. Bureau of Statistics and Plans' Guam Coastal Management Program will be tasked with keeping the information in the tool up-to-date.

In order to ensure information reaches the public, the Guam Coastal Management Program will conduct trainings to promote the online or mobile tool, demonstrate its utility, and explain its functions. It will provide the public with up-to-date publicly accessible shoreline access points that can be seen on a digital map, which are either owned or leased by the Government of Guam or the federal government and are intended to be used by the public to access the shoreline (excluding private or otherwise sensitive access points). Metadata of the shoreline access points will be viewed in this website/mobile app. The coastal program will also cover the local statutory requirements governing public access in order to better inform the public of their rights. Lastly, trainings relative to statutory rules and regulations concerning public access will be provided to the Government of Guam's regulatory agencies in order to promote the effective administration of public access. These trainings will be guided by components of the Guam Public Access Management Plan (Fiscal Year 2019), and will include 20 public access trainings to Guam communities. The trainings will target all 16 coastal villages and four government agencies.

Measure: From 2018 to 2023, number of training events related to public access offered by the Coastal Zone Management Program.

Target: From 2018 to 2023, 20 training events related to public access will be offered by the Coastal Zone Management Program.

Actuals from the CZMA Performance Measures System database:

Year 1 (2018-2019) – 0
 Year 2 (2019-2020) – 0
 Year 3 (2020-2021) – 1
 Year 4 (2021-2022) – 0
 Year 5 (2022-2023) – 0
Total (2018-2023) – 1

312 metric Information provided by the Guam Coastal Management Program after evaluation site visit:

“On March 18, 2022, [the Guam Coastal Program] published a Public Access Training Insert in

our Man, Land, and Sea publication which was distributed to 15,000 subscribers. This training module had baseline information to help people understand what is Ocean Shore Public Access as well as inform the public on the statute that protects public access. The key feature of the training module is a map of Guam showing the locations of public access points. A web viewer public access map was produced in which 297 unique visitors accessed the site in 2023.

The correct number for Metric 3 is 297.”

Discussion:

Information provided into the CZMA Performance Measures System shows that in 2020, the Guam Coastal Management Program included a presentation at the Assembly of Planners Symposium titled, “Barriers to Public Access,” with 72 participants attending from various agencies. After that presentation, a map of the access locations around Guam was released during the review period (<https://bsp.guam.gov/public-access/>), but any trainings to support its release did not occur until March 2022 when a follow-up informational insert was included in the *Man, Land and Sea* publication. This updated public access information appeared to have been accessed by only ~300 people, which is a small percentage of the population of Guam. There were no additional trainings provided to the coastal communities that would benefit from this information during the 2018-2023 period. The Covid-19 pandemic may have been a barrier to effectively communicating this new information during the five-year time frame for reporting on this metric, and the coastal program should consider trying to incorporate the updated public access information into future training opportunities, as appropriate.

Conclusion

For the reasons stated herein, I find that the Government of Guam is adhering to the programmatic requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act and its implementing regulations in the operation of its approved Guam Coastal Management Program.

These evaluation findings contain four recommendations. The recommendations must be considered before the next regularly scheduled program evaluation, but they are not mandatory at this time. Program recommendations that must be repeated in subsequent evaluations may be elevated to necessary actions.

This is a programmatic evaluation of the Guam Coastal Management Program that may have implications regarding the state's financial assistance awards. However, it does not make any judgment about or replace any financial audits.

Jeffrey L. Payne, PhD
Director
NOAA Office for Coastal Management

Date

Appendix A: Response to Written Comments

Mike Gawel

Mr. Gawel shared his appreciation for the work of the Guam coastal management program and its leadership. He commended their attention to coral health issues in the territory and regarded these efforts as “valuable” and a “strong aspect of the program.” He also shared his thoughts on future energy needs and sources in the Pacific region and suggested this topic may be an area for the Guam Coastal Management Program to direct attention to in the coming years.

NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management Response: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management thanks Mr. Gawel for his comments. As noted in these findings, the Office for Coastal Management concurs that the ongoing connection with Guam’s Coral Reef Initiative is important to maintain since decisions on land use can impact coral reef ecosystems in adjacent coastal waters. The Coral Reef Initiative’s recent move to the Department of Agriculture will necessitate proactive coordination on the part of both programs moving forward.

The Guahan 2050 Sustainability Plan is under development, and considerations of the energy industry may be included as the territory identifies sustainability goals and island development policies for the future. The coastal program is engaged in the Guahan 2050 planning process and will be responsible for reviewing any permit applications for facilities related to energy storage or overland transfer needs.

Whopoo

Comments received from “Whopoo” are primarily focused on submarine cables and their impacts to marine mammals. A number of references were provided that document such impacts. The concern is focused on additional submerged cables that would accompany proposed wind farms located off Guam.

NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management Response: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management thanks “Whopoo” for their comments. The purpose of this programmatic evaluation under Section 312 of the CZMA is to review and document that Guam is implementing its approved coastal management program. The evaluation is not intended to resolve specific disputes over local permitting decisions, or to collect evidence regarding specific actions taken, or to issue a finding about whether a governmental entity was correct or incorrect in specific project-related decisions.