

Final Evaluation Findings

Guam Coastal Management Program

March 2007 to September 2016

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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 March 2007 to September 2016. The evaluation focused on three target areas: Program Direction, Program Administration, and Topical Focus Areas.

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 Direction

Accomplishment: The coastal program has played a key role in the review of development activities throughout Guam and coordinated the interagency review of federal consistency activities throughout Guam.

Accomplishment: The outreach and GIS efforts of the Guam Coastal Management Program provide useful products and tools for the people of Guam.

Recommendation: The coastal program should work with a variety of partners to develop a strategic plan for the program. This effort should identify a clear vision and mission for the program, and should focus on where the program might serve a useful role, whether in supporting existing resource planning and management activities throughout Guam or in undertaking new challenges.

Recommendation: The coastal program should convene pre-application meetings and monthly project review meetings and identify other issue areas where the program might coordinate or convene stakeholders and resource management agencies.

Recommendation: The coastal program should study whether it has the capacity to add value to a number of activities by providing direct technical and administrative assistance. If necessary, Guam Coastal Management Program staff members should seek and receive training to address high-priority issues.

Recommendation: The Bureau of Statistics and Plans should identify ways to increase the technical capacity of the program. Aligning the activities of the coastal program with the coral program may present a partial solution. Tapping capabilities in other agencies by developing joint working groups with shared responsibilities may offer additional capacity.

Program Administration

Recommendation: The Bureau of Statistics and Plans should create job descriptions that are specifically related to coastal resource management to eliminate the need for special award conditions related to hiring.

Recommendation: The Bureau of Statistics and Plans should work with the NOAA Office for Coastal Management to identify tools, trainings, and assistance that might help the Guam Coastal Management Program address many of the inefficiencies in the current program management processes.

Necessary Action: By April 30, 2018, the Bureau of Statistics and Plans must establish a job description that gives the program manager supervisory authority over the entire staff.

Necessary Action: The Bureau of Statistics and Plans must work with the NOAA Office for Coastal Management to identify tools, trainings, and assistance to establish competencies in key coastal management issue areas. A training plan must be submitted by January 31, 2018.

Necessary Action: The Bureau of Statistics and Plans must submit data related to the approved performance metrics for fiscal years 2014 through 2016 to the Office for Coastal Management by January 31, 2018. If the Bureau submits this data prior to the release of the final evaluation findings—no less than 30 days from the receipt of the draft findings—the office will remove this necessary action. If data related to the approved performance measures are not available by the deadline, the Bureau of Statistics must work with the Office for Coastal Management to revise the 312 performance metrics relying on available data consistent with Guam Coastal Management Program priorities.

Topical Focus Areas

Recommendation: The coastal program should consider taking on the role of better coordinating the development and implementation of land use regulations within the priority watersheds. If deemed appropriate by the governor and implementing resource agencies, the coastal program could take a lead role in establishing a better legal framework, stronger guidelines for habitat and watershed protection, or another key leadership role. A similar approach could be used to ensure that climate adaptation and resilience planning are focal points for both planning and project review.

Recommendation: The coastal program should provide leadership and adequate staffing to the Land Use Master Plan and the Capital Improvements Plan to ensure that coastal issues such as watershed management, sea level rise, and coastal resilience receive needed attention.

Based on the evaluation of all three target areas described above, the Office for Coastal Management concludes that the Government of Guam is minimally 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; Adrienne Loerzel, site liaison; Joelle Gore, chief of the Stewardship Division; Kristina Kekuewa, Pacific regional director; and Stephanie Bennett, program analyst, all from the NOAA Office for Coastal Management; and Kevin Claridge, director of the Florida Coastal Office. 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 William M. Castro, director, Bureau of Statistics and Plans, on March 3, 2016, and published a notice of “Intent to Evaluate” in the *Federal Register* on August 22, 2016. The Guam Coastal Program posted a notice of the public meeting and opportunity to comment in the *Pacific Daily News* on September 9, 2016.

The evaluation process included a review of relevant documents and a survey of stakeholders, which helped identify three target areas for the evaluation: program direction, program administration, and topical focus areas. 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, September 28, 2016, at 5:30 p.m. at the Sinajana Community Center, 178 Chalan Guma Yu’os, Sinajana, Guam, 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 Wednesday, October 5, 2016. No written comments were received from the public or interested parties. 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 recommendations that are of two types:

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 (Coastal 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 Direction, Topical Focus Areas, and Program Administration. Program Direction was intended to look at what types of activities are best suited to the program. Topical Focus Areas was intended to examine what topics most need to be addressed by the program (e.g., subjects not already being addressed by other agencies or entities). Program Administration was intended to examine how the office is placed within the Government of Guam, how it is structured, and how it is managed. As the evaluation progressed through the initial discussions and site visit, these categories were very difficult to keep separate. These findings and recommendations may not correspond precisely with the three original focus areas.

Program Direction

Accomplishment: The coastal program has played a key role in the review of development activities throughout Guam and coordinated the interagency review of federal activities for consistency with the approved Guam Coastal Management Program.

The Guam Coastal Program has continued to provide value to natural resource management efforts by improving knowledge and enhancing awareness in the coastal communities of Guam. The types of activities supported or conducted by the coastal program range from Kika Club, a summer camp experience for youth, to the International Coastal Cleanup, in coordination with local and international organizations. One of the newest endeavors has been the creation of an Assembly of Planners to provide an opportunity for professionals to learn more about the latest developments in the coastal management field.

The program has continued to support the development of tools to help local property owners, village mayors, and developers more fully understand which areas are most suitable for development. The office has maintained a strong geographic information system (GIS) that has served the Office of the Governor as well as the other agencies. The program has developed a mobile application to provide information that identifies key resource areas as well as areas with potential for hazards, such as sea level rise and coastal inundation. This mobile application has proven especially useful to the land development and real estate communities. At current staffing levels, the GIS component of the Guam Coastal Management Program has a limited

capacity to serve a larger audience. These services could expand as staffing and resources permit.

Accomplishment: The outreach and GIS efforts of the Guam Coastal Management Program provide useful products and tools for the people of Guam.

In 2014, the coastal program was charged with implementing the Imagine Guam project created by executive order of Governor Eddie Calvo in September of that year. Imagine Guam is a strategic planning initiative that was created to provide guidance to the territory for the next 50 years. This effort resulted in a strategic plan called Guam 2065. Guam 2065 was adopted by executive order in March 2016 and the coastal program administrator is serving as the secretariat for the next phase of the project.

The second phase of Guam 2065 is to develop eight plans that will focus on services specifically provided by the Government of Guam. These plans include the Guam Land Use Master Plan, Capital Improvements Plan, and six other plans creating strategies to address the Guam tax code, government modernization, social stabilization, workforce rehabilitation, career paths, and education. Governor Calvo, by appointing the coastal program administrator as executive secretary to the Guam 2065 planning effort, has put the coastal program in a central position to help chart a path for the future of the territory.

Similar opportunities for leadership were also identified, since a clear thread that ran through the discussions with stakeholders was the need for the coastal program to coordinate and facilitate the community of natural resource managers. A convening role was identified as essential to a number of interagency initiatives, such as

- Facilitating monthly or quarterly meetings of the natural resource agencies;
- Facilitating planning processes with local mayors to develop local initiatives to address coastal program priorities;
- Conducting in-person meetings to discuss federal consistency applications; and
- Facilitating Land Use Master Plan revision (existing plan is more than 40 years old).

By focusing on these types of leadership activities, the coastal program may provide a greater level of service to the government and citizens of Guam.

Recommendation: The coastal program should convene pre-application meetings and monthly project review meetings, and identify other issue areas where the program might coordinate or convene stakeholders and resource management agencies.

The specific skills of the coastal program staff, although somewhat limited, might be used to assist ongoing and future Government of Guam initiatives or projects. The provision of direct assistance to other agencies or projects could add great value. Stakeholders from the other Guam resource agencies concurred with this approach. Such activities might include

- Mapping of military easements and assets for the master plan;

- Identifying CZMA tools and impacts and communicating the importance to partners;
- Providing training to the Guam Land Use Commission, municipal councils, and other partners on available tools; and
- Conducting Coastal Zone 101 briefings for local leaders.

Recommendation: The coastal program should study whether it has the capacity to add value to a number of activities by providing direct technical and administrative assistance. As necessary, Guam Coastal Management Program staff members should seek and receive training to address high priority issues.

Coastal program staff members as well as representatives of the other resource management agencies described a lack of technical expertise to effectively review projects. They stated that this lack of expertise was especially noticeable in the area of biological science. This was also a finding in the 2007 evaluation findings. The coral program, also a part of the Bureau of Statistics and Plans has a staff with significant biological expertise. The coral program could provide a wealth of information to assist in decision-making, including providing biological information for application review committee and federal consistency reviews. The coastal program could provide a number of benefits to the coral program, such as regulatory coordination and mapping of complex watershed issues that affect the coral reefs.

Recommendation: The Bureau of Statistics and Plans should identify ways to increase the technical capacity of the coastal program. Aligning the activities of the coastal program with the coral program may provide a partial solution. Tapping capabilities in other agencies by developing joint working groups with shared responsibilities may offer additional capacity.

Program Administration

Since the last evaluation in 2007, the program has lost a number of staff positions, positions have been reclassified, and the majority of staff have turned over. Program leadership now faces the question of how to utilize the current staff to achieve the goals of the program. The evaluation team recognized that it would be more beneficial to identify ways for the program to move forward than to analyze how or why these changes occurred.

The functional roles of the coastal program staff include project review (Application Review Committee and federal consistency); geographic information systems; communications, education, and outreach; watershed management, and green infrastructure. The staff described these functions as currently addressed primarily by one person, and expressed an interest in working more on teams that would add different areas of expertise to address key issues.

One of the recommendations from the 2007 program evaluation was that the coastal program “should take all steps necessary to enhance staff capabilities and increase staffing levels to meet emerging demands.” Instead, the program has seen staffing cutbacks, lowering of

paygrades, and a number of retirements, creating vacant positions. Although retirements and staff shortages are common across the Government of Guam, it appears to be especially acute in the coastal program. Current staff members continue to search for ways to be effective under these constrained conditions.

Reprogramming of funds under annual cooperative agreements with NOAA has proven difficult due to the length of time involved with processing at both the Guam and NOAA Office for Coastal Management levels. The staff of the coastal program and representatives of other parts of the Bureau of Statistics and Plans expressed a desire to improve their knowledge and abilities, especially in the areas of grants management, procurement, and federal consistency. Thus, grants and procurement training is needed not only for the Guam Coastal Management Program staff members, but also for Bureau of Statistics and Plans procurement staff. Similarly, there is a need for additional knowledge of the federal consistency process both in Guam agencies and with federal partners.

Recommendation: The Bureau of Statistics and Plans should work with the NOAA Office for Coastal Management to identify tools, trainings, and assistance that might help the Guam Coastal Management Program address many of the inefficiencies in the current program management processes.

The NOAA Office for Coastal Management has been working for several years with the bureau to ensure that qualified individuals are hired to fill vacant positions. This is due primarily to the need for coastal program staff members to have knowledge, skills, and abilities specifically related to coastal resource management. Guam hiring guidelines provide minimum requirements for a set of generic job descriptions (such as planner) that may be used by a number of different agencies. Special award conditions on recent cooperative agreements with NOAA have required consultation with NOAA before filling federally funded positions. Unfortunately, hiring is made more difficult by the lack of specific knowledge of coastal issues as a hiring factor under Government of Guam guidelines. Creating more coastal management-specific position descriptions for the coastal program could eliminate some of the need for special award conditions and help to avoid costly delays.

Recommendation: The Bureau of Statistics and Plans should create job descriptions that are specifically related to coastal resource management to eliminate the need for special award conditions related to hiring.

At the time of the site visit, the salary grade of the Guam Coastal Management Program administrator position had been reduced to a level where other employees within the program are equal in pay grade and authority to the director. This disparity makes the supervision of all of the elements of the program more difficult. Changes to the Wage Act were responsible for the demotion of the program director's position and the promotion of the planner IV position. Bureau of Statistics and Plans leadership recognizes the problem with hierarchy in the program.

Necessary Action: By April 30, 2018, the Bureau of Statistics and Plans must establish a job description that gives the program manager supervisory authority over the entire coastal program staff.

Necessary Action: The Bureau of Statistics and Plans must work with the NOAA Office for Coastal Management to identify tools, trainings, and assistance to establish competence in key coastal management issue areas such as community resilience and natural resource protection. A training plan must be submitted to the Office for Coastal Management by January 31, 2018.

Beginning in 2012, 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. Guam chose the following metrics for tracking:

Metric 1 – Additional number of people participating in beach clean-ups, recycling projects, watershed protection activities, and coastal habitat protection activities annually.

Metric 2 – During the five-year reporting period, the number of villages that conduct at least one outreach project with the assistance of the coastal management program to raise awareness of coastal hazards.

Metric 3 – During the five-year reporting period, the number of newly marked shoreline public access points established in every village in southern Guam.

The coastal program has not provided data associated with these metrics to NOAA.

Necessary Action: The Bureau of Statistics and Plans must submit data related to the approved performance metrics for fiscal years 2014 through 2016 to NOAA Office for Coastal Management by January 31, 2018. If the Bureau submits this data prior to the release of the final evaluation findings—no less than 30 days from the receipt of the draft findings—the office will remove this necessary action. If data related to the approved performance measures are not available by the deadline, the Bureau of Statistics must work with the Office for Coastal Management to revise the 312 performance metrics relying on available data consistent with Guam Coastal Management Program priorities.

Topical Focus Areas

The lack of a specific focus on topical issues creates a difficulty for the coastal program in reaching its full potential. Stakeholders identified watershed management as the number one issue for coastal management in Guam, and felt that the coastal program could play a more significant role in implementation of territorial efforts. Resilience to climate change impacts such as sea level rise also would fit well with the coastal program's role in leading the Guam 2065 efforts.

Watersheds

Much of the environmental restoration work on Guam has been focused on watersheds. The coastal program has attempted to identify a niche to participate in the watershed restoration and protection efforts that are coordinated under the auspices of the Division of Forestry and the coral reef program. During the current evaluation period, the gap that the coastal management program has filled is to provide bus services to bring volunteers to sites where reforestation efforts are focused.

Many of the stakeholders emphasized that the key to protecting the reefs is to focus a wide range of activities (removal of invasives, reforestation, and controlling land development) from different agencies on a single watershed. Others felt that the coastal program might have a more active role in this multi-agency approach by assisting with stormwater management issues and regulatory controls, since the result would be a demonstrable difference in the condition of the reefs.

Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Another potential area of focus for the Guam Coastal Management Program could be taking a leadership role in promoting resilience to sea level rise, climate change, and the changing environment. Governor Calvo expressed his concerns about climate change impacts on Pacific Islands. His concerns led to the governor's climate change action plan. A key role for the coastal program could be in using existing coastal program activities such as project review to help with the implementation of this plan.

Recommendation: The coastal program should consider taking on the role of better coordinating the development and implementation of land use regulations and stormwater management within priority watersheds. If deemed appropriate by the governor and implementing resource agencies, the coastal program could take a lead role in establishing a better legal framework, stronger guidelines for habitat and watershed protection, or another key leadership role. A similar approach could be used to ensure that climate adaptation and resilience planning are focal points for both planning and project review.

Updated Master Plans

Guam's Land Use Master Plan is more than 40 years old. It should be updated to incorporate many changes in statute, regulation, technology, and local conditions. The coastal program administrator has been working on high-level initiatives to address land use, capital improvements, Guam's tax code, social concerns, education, and workforce development. By focusing on these specific plans, the coastal program could be in a key position to create a lasting impact on both the watershed and climate resilience efforts.

Recommendation: The coastal program should provide leadership and adequate staffing to the Land Use Master Plan and the Capital Improvements Plan to ensure that coastal issues such as stormwater management, sea level rise, and coastal resilience receive needed attention.

Evaluation Metrics (Note: Data have not been received from the program.)

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.

Metric 1 – Additional number of people participating in beach clean-ups, recycling projects, watershed protection activities, and coastal habitat protection activities annually.

Goal:

Objective:

Strategy:

Performance Measure:

Target: An additional 150 people participate

Cumulative Data:

Discussion:

Metric 2 – During the five-year reporting period, the number of villages that conduct at least one outreach project with the assistance of the Guam Coastal Management Program to raise awareness of coastal hazards.

Goal:

Objective:

Strategy:

Performance Measure:

Target: Three villages conduct at least one outreach project

Cumulative Data:

Discussion:

Metric 3 – During the five-year reporting period, the number of newly marked shoreline public access points established in every village in southern Guam.

Goal:

Objective:

Strategy:

Performance Measure:

Target: Two newly marked public access points in every village.

Cumulative Data:

Discussion:

Conclusion

For the reasons stated herein, I find that the Government of Guam is minimally 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 three necessary actions and eight recommendations. The necessary actions must be responded to by the dates stated within this evaluation document. 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.

signed by Keelin S. Kuipers
Keelin S. Kuipers
Acting Deputy Director
NOAA Office for Coastal Management

on December 20, 2017
Date

Appendix A: Response to Written Comments

No written comments were received.