

NOAA Annual Guidance Memorandum for FY 2011 - 2015

Each year, NOAA's planning processes provide an opportunity to assess our strategic direction, accommodate new trends and challenges within and outside NOAA, and adjust our corporate priorities to ensure progress toward our strategic goals. This year's Annual Guidance Memorandum (AGM) identifies the most urgent and compelling NOAA-wide programmatic and managerial priorities for fiscal years 2011–15, reflecting input from NOAA's stakeholders as well as our own assessment of external trends and drivers, mission requirements and program capabilities, and strategic imperatives facing each of NOAA's strategic Goal Teams and the organization as a whole. It recognizes that NOAA's vision and mission are global in scope and therefore require both domestic and international engagement to achieve NOAA's priorities.

External pressures to change are continuous, as societal demands for NOAA's capabilities continue to evolve, as the state of science and technology changes, and as NOAA's requirements are modified by Congress and the Administration. The most urgent and compelling of these external pressures include

- Awareness and acceptance of the scientific basis for climate change
- Expansion and complexity of requirements for ocean and coastal ecosystem management
- National priorities for ocean research
- Coastal community growth, vulnerability, and environmental impact
- High-impact events and improved operational forecasts
- Freshwater availability and managing droughts and floods
- Impacts to the US economy and the environment from increasing pressures on US transportation systems infrastructure
- Increasing requirements for globally integrated Earth observations
- Responding to regional stakeholder demands.

In light of these external pressures and the current set of capabilities on which NOAA relies to achieve its long-term strategic goals, NOAA's vision for the future is embodied within the following seven annual priorities

- Climate
- Oceans and Marine Life
- Coasts
- High-Impact Weather
- Water
- Transportation
- Infrastructure.

These annual priorities are derived from NOAA's long-term strategic Goals as shaped by recent trends and events in the agency's external environment. The Planning phase will be completed by Strategy Papers that present business cases for each of these seven priority areas, as well as by Strategic Portfolio Analyses, conducted by Goal Teams, that provide a scenario-based account of the comprehensive set of activities toward each strategic Goal.

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