

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
NORTHEAST REGIONAL OCEAN COUNCIL SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-xxxx**

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) is a State and Federal partnership with the goal of engaging in regional protection and balanced use of ocean and coastal resources. NROC's activities support the intent of the [Coastal Zone Management Act](#), 16 U.S.C 1451 *et seq.* NROC's membership includes New England coastal state agencies and federal agencies, whose representatives bring varied expertise to work on these issues in many capacities. A social network analysis will serve to identify the network of people working on NROC's key issues, both within and outside of the organization. NROC members will be queried regarding their communications on NROC issues and value derived from membership. The resulting information can be used to evaluate the efficiency of the network, where gaps may exist, and additional partnerships that would benefit the Council's work.

This is a request for a new collection of information.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

The information collected in this survey will be used by the Northeast Regional Ocean Council to better understand the communication patterns of its members and assess interactions with other regional organizations. NROC will use the results of the survey to inform an outreach and communication strategy and develop strategic partnerships with other regional organizations.

The survey questions are designed to evaluate social links with respect to a variety of issue areas relating to work within the organization. This survey will identify connections, or a lack thereof, between individuals working on similar issues. Additionally, questions are designed to assess interactions based on communications to share information [on those issues] with individuals and organizations outside of the immediate NROC network. These question aim to evaluate potential connections of value that are not presently part of the functioning network, but may be useful for future partnerships.

As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the information gathered has utility. NOAA Ocean Service will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Although the information collected is not

expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications. Should NOAA Ocean Service decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

The survey will be administered via a Web-based survey instrument. Mail will not be the primary means of surveying, as it adds expense and can require more time for collection and analysis of results. Invitations with a link to the survey will be sent to NROC members. The survey will be set up for electronic submission and there will also be a fillable, printable version. Upon request, respondents will be mailed a paper version of the survey to complete and return in a postage paid envelope.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

A social network analysis (SNA) allows for the development of a social structure to view relations of individuals or organizations which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency. No other existing similar information collections within this population were found.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

NA.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

The Center's first operating principle is to be "customer driven." Without regular input from the coastal resource management community, the Center would risk investing in projects and services that have little relevance to the coastal resource management community's needs or that are delivered in formats not usable by the customer.

This survey is a directly stated need by the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC). NROC does not have the expertise to conduct this analysis internally. Without this assistance, the analysis will not take place, and without this new information, NROC will be neglected of much needed technical assistance to restructure working groups and build time and collaborative efficiencies of work teams and subgroups. Increased efficiency is of mutual value to NOAA due to agency involvement within this group. The survey results and subsequent social network analysis will enable the Center to be more versed and skilled in providing this tool as a technical assistance service area to customers and partners.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

NA.

8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice published on March 1, 2010 (75 FR 9158) solicited public comments. No comments were received.

Center personnel trained in survey research and design, along with MRAG Americas, Inc. created the survey instrument. Literature and websites dedicated to the planning and development of social network analyses were consulted.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No plans exist for payments or gifts to survey respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The survey results are intended for internal use as a potential restructuring tool and respondent information will not be made public; however, there is no assurance of confidentiality.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

NA.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

The one-time burden estimate for the survey is 7 hours and 30 minutes (8 hours). This reflects 45 responses with an average completion time of 10 minutes, including the time for reviewing instructions and gathering the requested information.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).

Responding to the survey requires no recordkeeping/reporting costs.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

This information collection effort is supported through external contract services for data collection and analysis and in-house staff time. The total estimated cost is \$7,846 (i.e., contract services, in-house staff time, supplies). Estimates presented below represent the costs for this approval.

Annualized Cost to Federal Government	Labor	\$Cost
Supplies		\$100.
Printing		\$100.
Data management and database development		\$3,000.
Project staff (ZP4)	100 hrs @ \$38.46/hr	3,846.
Administrative staff support	20 hrs @ 20.00/hr	\$400.
Cover design, layout & editing	10 hrs @ 40.00/hr	\$400.
TOTAL		\$7,846.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

This is a new program.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

Survey results will not be publicly available.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

NA.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

NA.