



NOAA
FISHERIES

Alaska Region 2022-2027 Strategic Plan



Message from the Alaska Regional Administrator

A strategic plan can tell you a lot about an organization. It typically describes the mission and vision, and paints a broad picture of the major activities and goals. This strategic plan for NOAA Fisheries' Alaska Region takes a different approach. It begins with our shared values and how those support our mission and vision, and it traces how we turned to our staff, partners, and stakeholders to clarify the outcomes we want to achieve and the things we need to improve to help us get there. Thus, rather than giving an overview of all our priorities within major program areas and support functions, our strategic plan focuses on who we serve, the products and services they need, and the most impactful ways we can refine our internal processes, leverage our people, and apply our financial resources to deliver better results.



Alaska produces more than half the seafood caught in U.S. waters, contributing more than \$7 billion to the national economy and supporting our nation's food security. Its marine mammals and habitats contribute to healthy ecosystems and support a robust tourism industry as well as vital subsistence uses by Alaska Natives. NOAA Fisheries is entrusted with the sustainable management of these resources under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and other laws. We fulfill that mission in close partnership with many other entities. Together, we all face unprecedented challenges in supporting fishing communities, traditional ways of life, and ecosystems that are experiencing dramatic effects from climate change. Now more than ever, we need to collaborate to sustain marine resources and adapt to meet the challenges ahead.

Our 2022-2027 Strategic Plan reflects how NOAA Fisheries' Alaska Region is moving forward to serve Alaska and the nation. It aligns with [The U.S. Department of Commerce 2022–2026 Strategic Plan](#), [NOAA's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#), [NOAA Fisheries' 2019-2022 National Strategic Plan](#), and [NOAA Fisheries' Alaska Geographic Strategic Plan 2020-2023](#). Thank you to everyone within our organization and externally who has helped us bring our priorities into focus. I'll continue to welcome your help and ideas as we implement this plan over the next several years.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Kurland".

Jon Kurland
Regional Administrator

Introduction

This Strategic Plan for the Alaska Regional Office (AKR) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) identifies our vision and maps out a strategy to focus our energy and resources on areas of emphasis and improvement over the next five years (2022 through 2027).

Our continued success as an organization is challenged by the need to be more adaptable, illustrated by the impacts of climate change, changes in our workforce, shifts in budget priorities, and the evolving needs of our stakeholders. The broad purpose of our Strategic Plan is to envision our future as an organization and identify steps to realize that future that are **intentional and proactive**. This plan serves as an aid to help AKR leadership make decisions on where and when to place resources to improve our ability to achieve our desired outcomes.



Figure 1. Our shared values are essential and enduring principles that are embedded in the culture of our organization. They are guiding principles for all the work we do as an organization and how we interact and work together.

AKR Values in Action

How the AKR Strategic Plan came to be is evidence of how our organization functions. Our shared values are essential and enduring concepts that are embedded in the culture of our organization. These are our guiding principles for all the work we do as an organization and how we interact and work together. This Strategic Planning process has further rooted us as an organization in the values that matter most to us (Figure 1).

- Our goal is to make the Strategic Plan a transparent process with **open communication** that enables our staff, partners, and stakeholders to understand our priorities for improvement. AKR is developing processes to enable a transparent, priority-based approach to allocate and reallocate staff and discretionary budget over time.
- The Strategic Plan has been created using input and feedback from our employees: How we **collaborate** and share information with and grow with our employees is critically important. AKR has incorporated staff knowledge and know-how, in the context of [objective-specific measures and initiatives design](#). We strive to become a highly effective organization with talented, engaged, and motivated employees excelling in reaching our vision. We have capitalized on our employees' strengths and positioned the AKR for enhanced performance and a workforce engaged in designing our future together.
- The Strategic Plan has been created using feedback from our stakeholders and partners: Our success as an organization is built on **respect** and **accountability**. Through this process we have opened ourselves up

to honest feedback and opinions from outside the organization. This feedback has been instrumental in creating a realistic view of where we are now and where we want to grow and become better.

- Our Senior Leadership Team has prioritized this strategic planning process working together to set high standards for conducting our work with **integrity**. This Strategic Plan represents our sincere approach for organizational improvements and exhibits our commitment to positive change.

As with any organizational change and plan to charge ahead into the future, it all begins with the mission and a vision.



Our Mission: Our mission at NOAA Fisheries Alaska Regional Office is the science-based stewardship of Alaska's marine resources and their habitats in the Gulf of Alaska, eastern Bering Sea, and Arctic oceans.

Our Vision: By 2027, AKR will lead the nation in effective stewardship of living marine resources as we adapt to the challenges of the future. We will be the model for efficient delivery, exemplary service, empowerment of our people, and operational excellence.

Developing the Strategic Plan

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to identify important areas for improvement based on external and internal feedback and convert these areas into expectations for performance and accomplishment. It directs how we will change and improve as an organization, and work together with partners and stakeholders who rely on NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region to sustain living marine resources, habitats, and ecosystems.

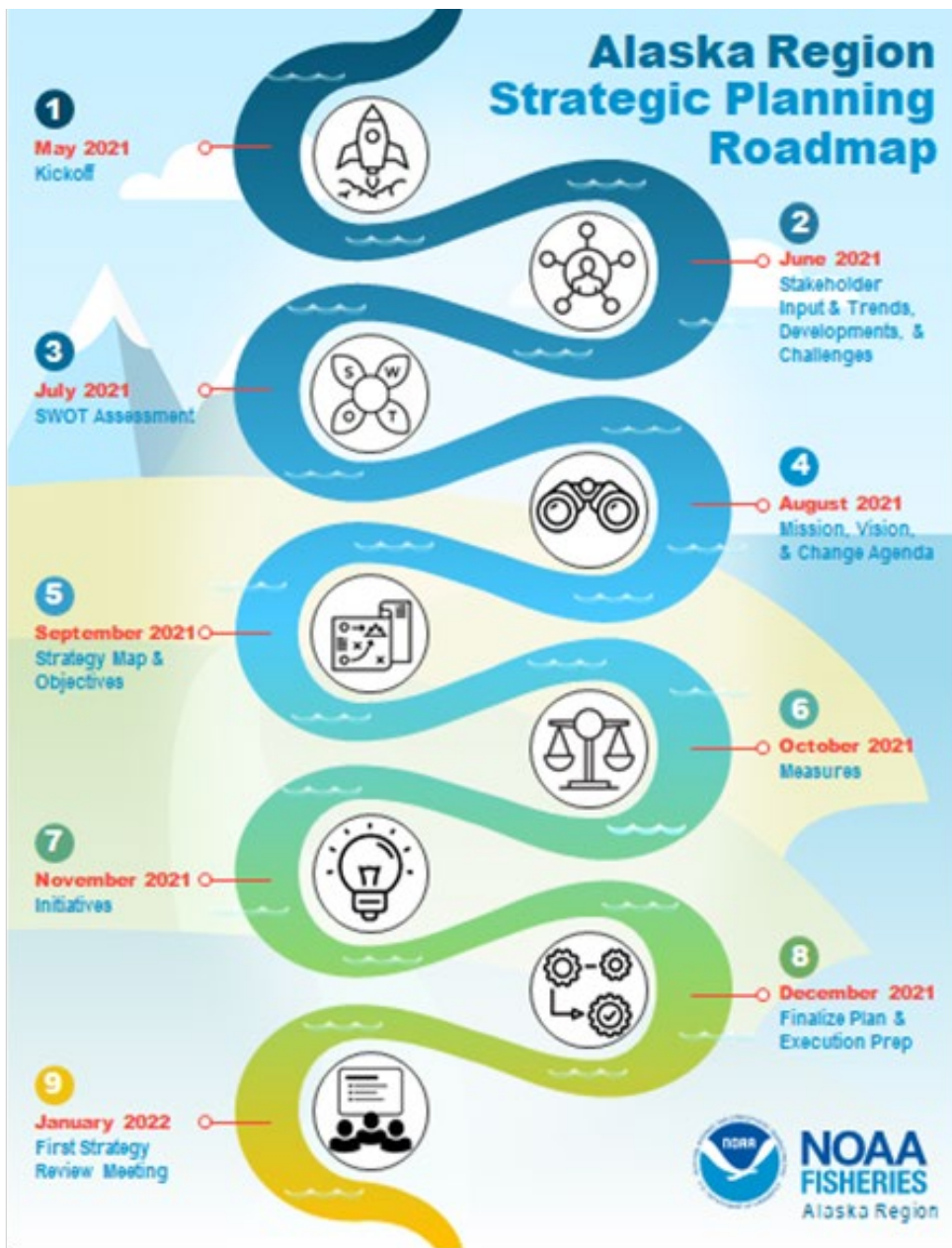


Figure 2. The AKR Strategic Planning Roadmap is a visual representation of the steps the AKR has undergone in the Strategic Planning process.

Strategic Planning Framework

We began developing the AKR Strategic Plan by highlighting our values of respect, open communication and accountability. We communicated this process to AKR staff with a roadmap that described our planning process (Figure 2).

We then spent time digging into our current state as an organization and gathering information from AKR staff and external partners and stakeholders to help us define the trends, developments, and challenges facing AKR. We collected this feedback by conducting **22 external interviews, reviewing 59 responses to a staff survey, and meeting with all 6 of our programs.**

This data was synthesized and formed the backbone of our Strategy Map (Figure 3).

Strategy Map and Perspectives

The AKR Strategy Map is a visual assembly of 22 strategic objectives within a framework designed to drive outcomes (Figure 3). The Strategy Map is organized along five perspectives: **Clients and Outcomes; Products and Services; Internal Processes; People;** and Financial Resources (Table 1). These perspectives work together, and represent components of our organizational system. Note that the Strategy Map does not depict everything AKR does. Our Strategy Map highlights specific components that need focused attention, energy, or resources to overcome our challenges and to reach our vision.

The top two perspectives of the Strategy Map and associated objectives are focused on outcomes:



The Clients and Outcomes perspective highlights the focused constituents in our strategy and their desired outcomes. These specific partners, clients, and stakeholders are targeted and their individual outcome statements are the focus based on the specific themes that we identified based on feedback.



The Products and Services perspective articulates both our outcome-oriented and customer-centric objectives. These do not represent all the products and services that we provide; they outline where we need to focus more attention in order to excel.

Three perspectives and the associated objectives of our Strategy Map are drivers for change:



The Internal Processes perspective highlights those business processes that need to be improved, changed, or created to address the gaps between our current state and future state. As in any organization, business processes require people and knowledge to operate effectively and these components of the strategy build from our strong focus on our people.



Our entire strategy relies on our People and this perspective and associated objectives focus on AKR's commitment to our employees and organizational excellence. This will ensure that we are a highly effective organization with talented, engaged, and motivated employees excelling in achieving our mission.



The foundation of our strategy is our Financial Resources and refining our budget process to ensure that our budget prioritization is strategic, transparent, and well understood.

Objectives and Strategic Themes

We developed 22 strategic objectives for the five perspectives to compose the Strategy Map (Figure 3). These objectives are broken into measurable steps (initiatives) for the organization to help achieve the desired outcome (see measures and initiatives).

A number of objectives are connected through strategic themes. Themes include: **fishery management; community and tribal engagement; relationship with the state of Alaska; consultations; and ecosystem-based management and climate change.** Themes that run through the Strategy Map are important to identify because objectives can be interrelated. Impacts and improvements in one area can have ripple effects throughout the Strategy Map which is why it is important to take stock and measure progress.

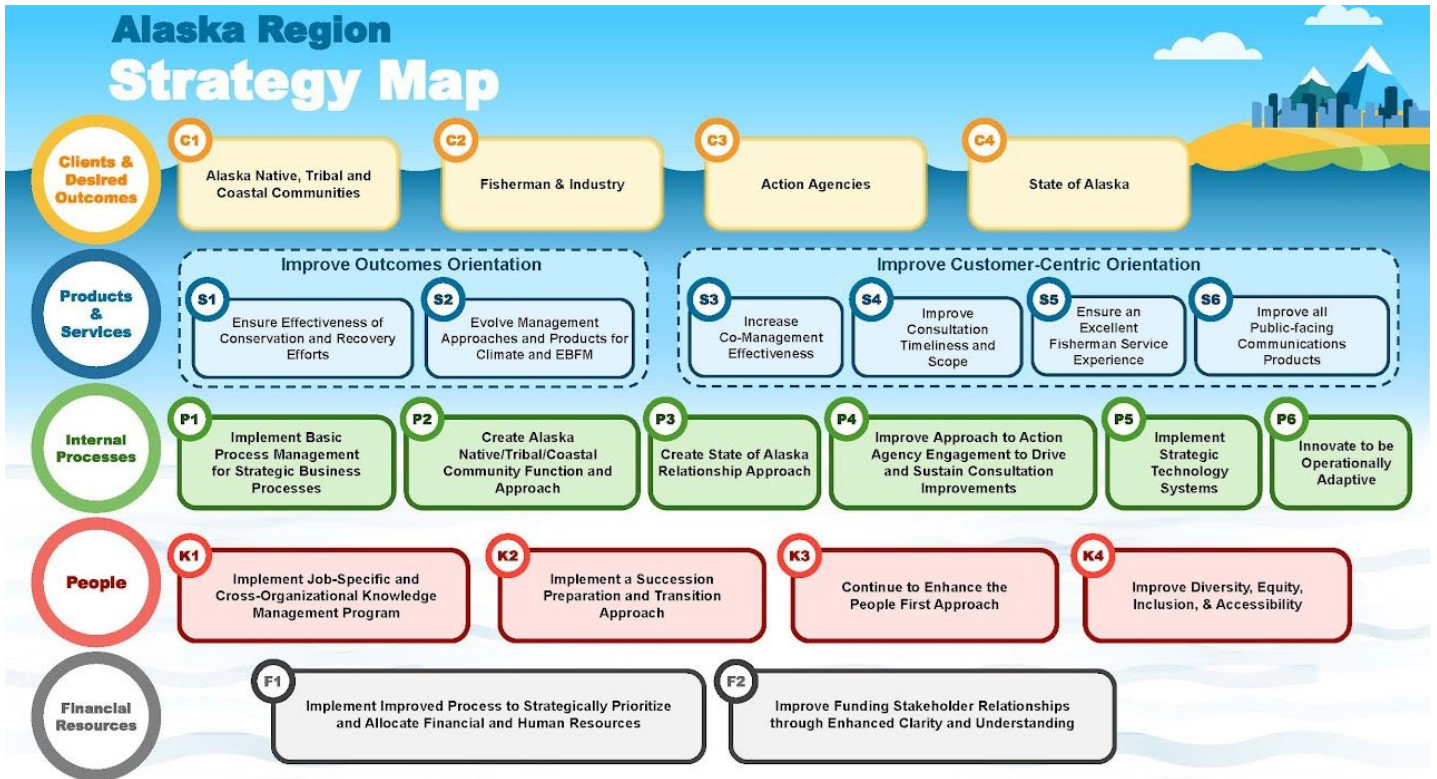


Figure 3. AKR Strategy Map depicts how to change and improve as an organization, which can be specific or cross-cutting. Strategy Maps are selective and focused on Regional perspectives that we choose to focus on for organizational improvement.

Implementing the Strategic Plan

AKR’s Strategic Plan is not a document intended to sit on a shelf. Our plan needs staff engagement, action, evaluation, and refinement to be successfully implemented. The next steps in our process included engaging the AKR to identify measures and initiatives to bring the plan to life, and establishing a series of Strategic Review Meetings to ensure progress and refine the plan.

Measures and Initiatives

Developing measures and initiatives provided an opportunity to engage our entire organization. We identified Objective Owners and Teams from across the organization and empowered them to develop initiatives to advance each objective, and measures to track our progress. In the first round, objective owners and their teams developed 61 initiatives and a suite of measures. The Senior Leadership Team worked with objective owners to prioritize initiatives and decide which initiative to focus on for the first year of implementation.



Measures are data metrics tied directly to an objective that illustrate the desired performance result per objective, and can provide early indicators of future performance. They provide clarity to each objective, and can be either quantitative or qualitative.



Initiatives are specific, targeted actions with start dates, end dates, owners, resources, timelines, and deliverables designed to advance an objective. These initiatives are robust and clearly define how to drive the strategy forward.

AKR Scorecard

The AKR scorecard is the core strategy management tool that contains the complete details of the AKR strategic objectives, measures, and initiatives (Figure 4). It identifies objective owners, objective champions, measure owners, and initiative owners for clarity and accountability. The scorecard allows our organization to communicate our strategy clearly.



Figure 4. The AKR scorecard tracks objective measures and initiative along the five perspective

Strategic Review Meetings

Strategic Review Meetings are collaborative forums that promote accountability, maintain focus and urgency on our strategic plan, and drive measurement-based decision making. These regular gatherings allow Objective Owners to update the organization on the status of progress on the priority initiatives, identify barriers, and provide recommendations to our senior leadership.

AKR Organizational Excellence

AKR Organizational Excellence Teams

The Strategic Plan provides a framework for improvement, but it is our people that make it happen. AKR has multiple teams that work together to achieve organizational excellence (Figure 5). This team-based structure



Figure 5. AKR's cross-divisional teams that work together to achieve organizational excellence.

enables us to foster cross-divisional working relationships to implement actions for the benefit of the entire organization to achieve our mission. The experience of working together in an inclusive and transparent way is foundational to how we do our work. We want to cultivate an environment in which all employees thrive and work together across the organization to achieve our mission and help achieve the objectives identified in our Strategic Plan.

For More Information

The AKR Strategic Plan is not static, and our Strategy Review Meetings are designed to allow us to learn, adapt, and modify actions to keep our organization on a positive trajectory. In addition, we will reevaluate our strategic objectives periodically over time. We appreciate all of the feedback we received that allowed us to craft this Strategic Plan, and the dedication and hard work of our staff that is making this plan a reality. There will continually be opportunities for engagement from our stakeholders, partners, and employees as this process moves forward.

If you have questions, want more information, or are interested in the opportunities to become more involved with the AKR Strategic Plan, please contact the [AKR Senior Leadership Team](#) or our Strategic [Planning](#) and [Implementation](#) Coordinators.