

From Benthos to Birds: New Jersey's Offshore Wind Research and Monitoring Initiative

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Formation of the Initiative

The Initiative addresses the need for regional research and monitoring of marine and coastal resources during all phases of offshore wind (OSW) development, as recommended in the New Jersey OSW Strategic Plan.

Initial funding was provided by developers through NJ OSW Solicitation 2 (\$10K/MW nameplate capacity), resulting in over \$26.5 million in funds.

The Initiative is guided by a Steering Committee composed of representatives from both NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and NJ Board of Public Utilities.

The goal of the Initiative is to ensure NJ protects and responsibly manages its coastal and marine resources while moving toward a clean energy economy.

Founding Principles: Transparency, Balance, Scientific Understanding, Rigorous Data Analysis and Reporting, Adaptivity.

Phased Research Agenda



Pre-construction
(current phase)



Construction



Operation



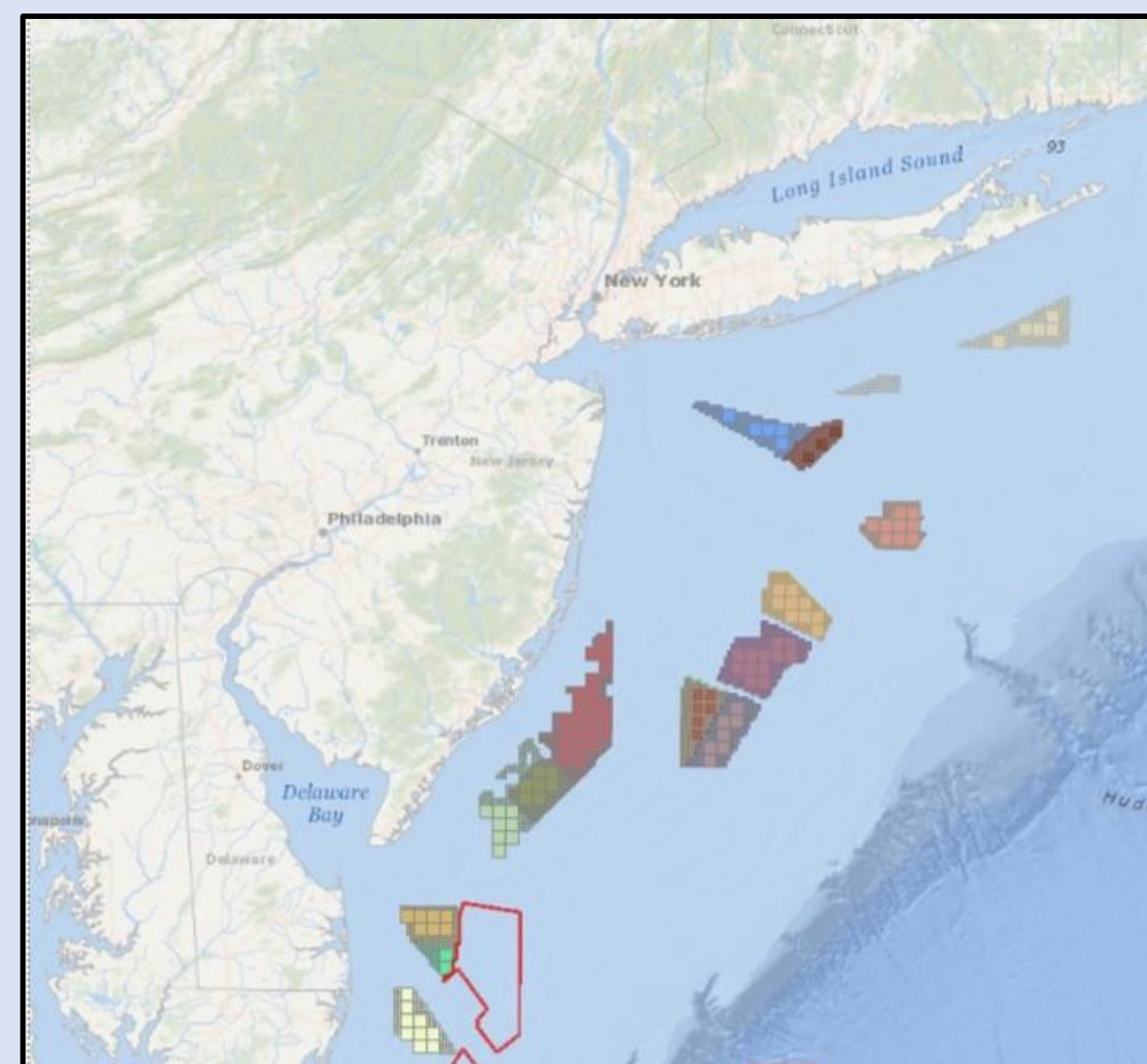
Decommissioning

Initiative Objectives

- ❖ Establish an adaptable framework
- ❖ Maintain communication and coordination
- ❖ Contribute to greater regional research effort
- ❖ Address New Jersey highest research priorities
- ❖ Conduct rigorous, hypothesis-based, and scientifically defensible research and monitoring
- ❖ Identify and inform actions for adaptive management
- ❖ Make data and products readily available

Project Development Process

Identify Resources of Concern



OSW lease areas off New Jersey coastline

Form Scientific Questions

Coordinate with Experts and Regional Partners

Develop Project Concepts

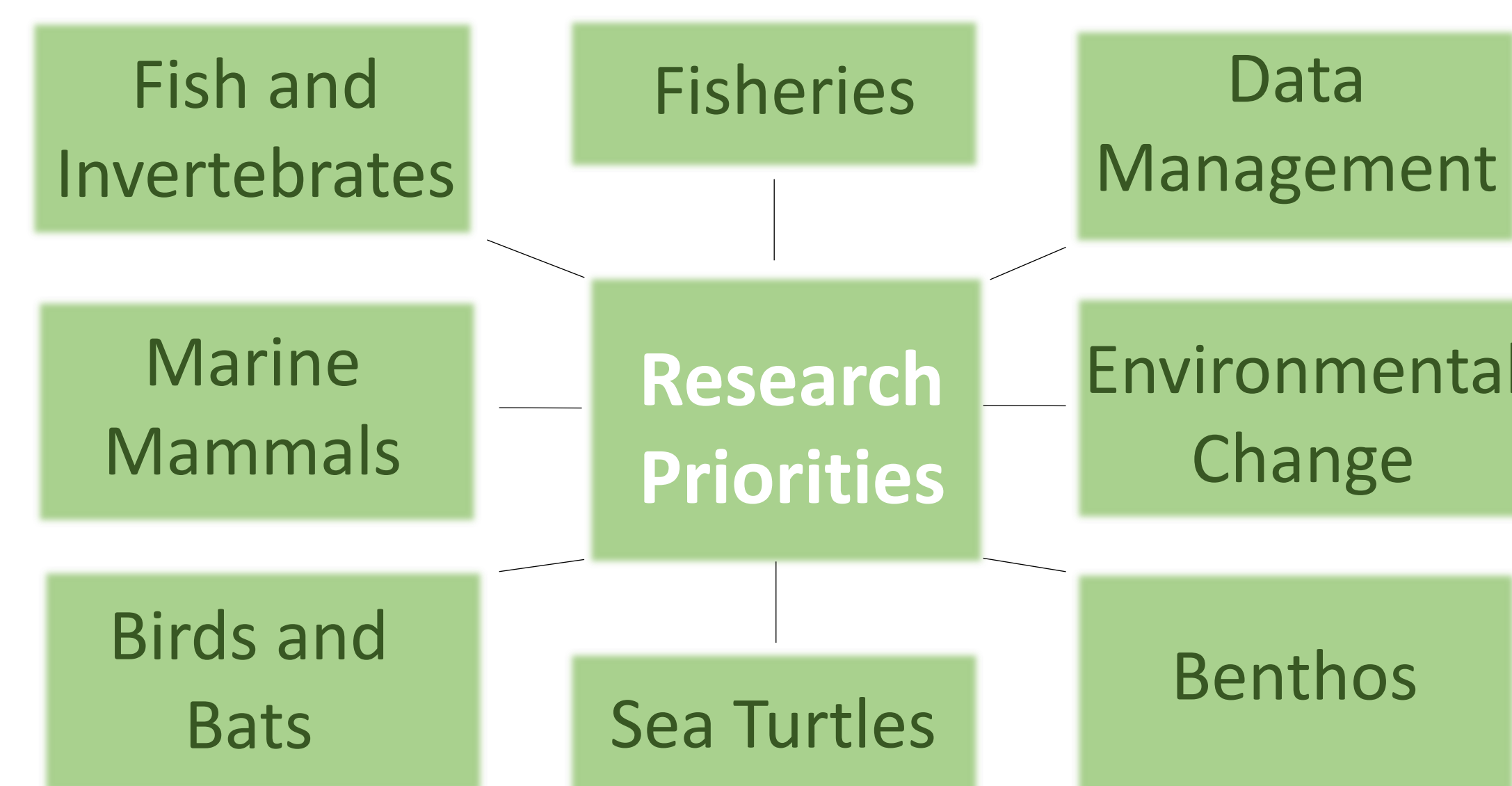
Requests for Proposals Or Direct Contract

Steering Committee Approval

Project Management

Reporting, Data Sharing, and Regional Coordination

Evaluate data from ecological baseline studies, high value marine habitats, Mid-Atlantic Data Portal, federally and state-managed fisheries, literature review, stakeholder (NJ ERWG) input. Develop short-term, highest need Research Priorities;



An impact-oriented approach:

- 1) Is evidence convincing the resource will be impacted?
- 2) Is the topic being pursued by other entities?
- 3) Are potential impacts limited to development site?

RMI Staff regularly coordinates with state and federal agencies, regional entities, conservation groups, fisheries management councils, and OSW developers

RMI staff develop Project concepts that address the RMI Priorities, identifies potential partners, and considers pathways for development.

Mechanisms for funding include:

- 1) Competitive process with traditional Request for Proposals
- 2) Direct proposal development with state university or NJ Sea Grant Consortium member

Proposals are reviewed external Subject Matter Experts and vetted by RMI staff before submitted to Steering Committee.

RMI staff collaborate with approved project Principal Investigators and institutions to execute contracts and manage project activities. **Current RMI projects include:**

