





Responsible Offshore Development Alliance

Scientific Research and Monitoring:

RODA intends to formally engage with NMFS and other entities on collaborative research and monitoring. It initially seeks to partner with NMFS’ Northeast Fisheries Science Center; however, it will structure to allow expansion into other regions and to include other participants as appropriate. The research program would: (1) improve overall understanding and inform dialogues regarding siting and operations; (2) support mitigation requirements (in terms of minimizing and compensating impacts to users and resources), including development of mitigation frameworks (i.e. a standard structure for how to compensate for gear or revenue loss, how to allocate mitigation funds for specific projects, etc.); and (3) inform agency decision-making and industry engagement through existing consultative processes.

RODA proposes to design and implement with NMFS a new model for a persistent, long-term, holistic, and collaborative research program that effectively gathers and incorporates fishery-dependent and independent data and expertise. Existing science programs would be strengthened—but not supplanted—through this partnership, by developing ecosystem-level information for use in assessing fisheries stocks and impacts of ocean use and development.

RODA also seeks to create regional “science panels” or bodies in cooperation with NMFS to (1) identify priority research and monitoring needs (2) prioritize research funding; and (3) provide technical recommendations. While efforts are underway to address this monitoring at state- and project-specific levels, these approaches alone could result in a fragmented program that fails to address the needs of federal fisheries on a regional level. To develop the best long-range solutions to offshore development, industry must be directly involved in study identification, prioritization, design, and execution of well-coordinated scientific research at an appropriate scale.

*Science Program Highlights*

- Work closely with federal, state, and other partners to design and implement a regionally-based collaborative research and monitoring program for transparent, trusted, and accurate scientific information to address the impacts of offshore development on fisheries;
- Identify monitoring, research, and funding needs prioritized by industry and develop channels for collaborative research on all phases of offshore development (planning, assessment, construction and operations, mitigation of fisheries impacts, and decommissioning);
- Articulate a strategy, through development of formal public-private partnerships, for private and public research and monitoring investments to be gathered, coordinated, and streamlined to address joint priorities;
- Support broad monitoring and research needs relevant to offshore energy and other OCS leasing that intersect with existing scientific efforts in regional-scale ecosystem monitoring, stock assessment, and fisheries management; and
- Determine prioritization of data gaps regarding, among other items, baseline conditions, fisheries-specific impacts, cumulative impacts (including intentional and unintentional impacts), site-specific concerns, and ecosystem-scale impact monitoring and assessment.