

**Task Force for Ocean Exploration and Research Technology and
Infrastructure (TFORT)
Five Year Goals and Priorities Plan
FY 2013 – FY 2017
August 5, 2013**

The Task Force on Ocean Exploration and Undersea Research Technology and Infrastructure (TFORT) is charged under Public Law 111-11, Title XII-Oceans, Subtitle A-Ocean Exploration, Part I Exploration, Section 12004 (33 USC 3404) to develop and implement a strategy:

- (1) to facilitate transfer of new exploration and undersea research technology to the programs authorized under this part and part II of this subtitle;
- (2) to improve availability of communications infrastructure, including satellite capabilities, to such programs;
- (3) to develop an integrated, workable, and comprehensive data management information processing system that will make information on unique and significant features obtained by such programs available for research and management purposes;
- (4) to conduct public outreach activities that improve the public understanding of ocean science, resources, and processes, in conjunction with relevant programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies; and
- (5) to encourage cost-sharing partnerships with governmental and nongovernmental entities that will assist in transferring exploration and undersea research technology and technical expertise to the programs.

BUDGET COORDINATION.—The task force shall coordinate the development of agency budgets and identify the items in their annual budget that support the activities identified in the strategy developed under subsection (a).

The TFORT will also support the priorities of the National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan of April, 2013, especially to “Advance technologies to explore and better understand the complexities of land, ocean, atmosphere, ice, biological, and social interactions on a global scale.” This strategic priorities plan describes this strategy and intentions for its implementation over the time period FY 2013 – 2017, and will be updated annually.

Background

The Task Force on Ocean Exploration and Undersea Research Technology and Infrastructure (TFORT) was established under the interagency Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (SOST) Interagency Working Group on Ocean Partnerships (IWG-OP) and is guided by Terms of Reference approved by the IWG-OP co-chairs Nov 23, 2012. It is co-chaired by Karen Kohanowich of NOAA’s Office of Ocean Exploration and Research and Brian Midson of the National Science Foundation, Division of Ocean Sciences, and consists of representatives from USGS, BOEM, NASA, USN, and NOAA’s Ocean Observation and Fisheries Advanced Technology Programs.

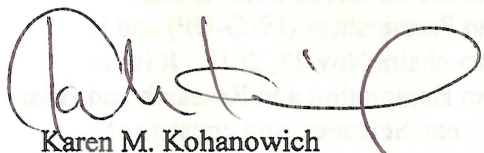
Ocean Exploration and Undersea Research Technology Definition

Ocean Exploration and Undersea Research technology is technology used to further observe or characterize heretofore unknown or poorly known marine environments, and to expand the pace, scope and efficiency of this effort. This spans in situ and remote sensing as well as sample collection technology. Communications and data processing technology are vital support components for application of this technology.

Goals and Priorities

The TFORT Terms of Reference calls on the group to develop strategic goals and priorities to guide activities for the next 5 years, and update them on an annual basis. For 2013, TFORT will address the goals of 33 USC 3404 through the following priority activities:

- 1) **Develop a catalog of priority Ocean Exploration and Undersea Research Technologies.** Such a catalog will be the core reference for the activities of TFORT. It will identify the most pressing needs for ocean exploration and research technologies and assist in identifying those with common agency requirements. The catalog will be developed and updated in coordination with TFORT members to be used as a working reference resource.
- 2) **Investigate technology solutions.** Identify sources of technology solutions to meet the priorities catalogued above.
- 3) **Communicate technology needs, solutions, and technology partnership opportunities.** Conduct activities in coordination with and to support the strategic communication goals of the Interagency Working Group for Ocean Partnerships as they apply to ocean research and undersea technology. Examples include presentations at appropriate public forums (ocean technology conferences) that communicate interagency activities and specific projects (i.e. NOPP initiatives like MARES and BON.)
- 4) **Identify potential funding to further the use of high priority ocean exploration and undersea research technologies.** Through the above mechanisms, and ultimately through development of a TFORT-focused NOPP announcement, advocate and identify funding to apply to technology development, testing and use



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Appendix A: TFORT Five Year Plan

TFORT Goals	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1) Catalog	Initiate	Sub-groups/Final	Implement	Update	Update
2) Tech Solutions	Internal	Establish process (i.e.wkg gp)	Execute	Execute	Execute
3) Communicate	Oceans SD	ID other user venues (AGU, etc)	Oceans DC, tbd	Tbd	Tbd
4) ID funding	Existing NOPP	Existing NOPP/interagency	TFORT-NOPP	Update	Update