



Gulf of Mexico Alliance

Water Quality Priority Issue Team



To help ensure healthy beaches and safe seafood in our coastal areas, the Alliance has identified four water quality priorities that will guide the partnership's efforts: (1) reducing risk of exposure to disease-causing pathogens, (2) minimizing occurrence and effects of harmful algal blooms (HABs), (3) identifying sources of mercury in Gulf seafood, and (4) improving monitoring of Gulf water resources. These issues are far-reaching and are best addressed through regional-scale efforts such as the Alliance.

Action Plan I "Successes"

- Approximately \$2.5 million awarded in 2008/2009 for Projects in the State of Florida to support Water Quality Team activities in Action Plan I and II.
- First Annual Monitoring Forum and Field Sampling and Measurement Round Robin. Monitoring Forum address harmful algal blooms, microbial source tracking, and coastal/estuarine monitoring.
- The five Gulf States have identified a standard set of methods for nine water quality parameters and instituted quality assurance round robin programs for analytical and field measurements.
- Solidified red tide monitoring in Florida and Texas and have expanded into Mexico.
- Joint GCOOS/GOMA HABIOS workshops held to support the prediction, detection, monitoring and tracking, and forecasting of harmful algal blooms along the Gulf coast.

Action Plan II "Goals"

- Improve the understanding of waterborne, disease-causing microorganisms (pathogens), including their sources and survival so that coastal managers can make informed decisions that benefit public health and coastal economies.
- Reduce the effects of HABs by improving our ability to detect, track, forecast, and mitigate HAB movement and their effects along the Gulf Coast.
- Identify sources of mercury in Gulf fishery resources, understand its presence in the Gulf food web, and develop the ability to reduce the human health risk of exposure.
- Obtain and provide vital information about the conditions of Gulf waters to support better management decisions regarding coastal fisheries, recreation, tourism, public health, and infrastructure planning.

