Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

August 14, 2025

Governance & Accountability Team

Management Board Check-In

Starting Point

- Independent team review of existing materials:
  - [Governance and Management Framework for CBP](#)
  - [Beyond 2025 Evaluation Report (ERG)](#)
  - [Beyond 2025 SC "Critical Path" Report, Part II](#)
  - [GIT 6 Key Priorities document](#)
  - [GIT 6 Key Issue Log with Priorities](#)
  - [Phase I public feedback that pertains to Phase II](#)

First Hybrid Meeting: July 31, 2025

- Objectives:
  - Establish a mental model for the Governance and Accountability Team

  - Define and prioritize fundamental challenges

  - Assess where our initial recommendations stand

Report Out & Mental Model Exercise

- Material review yielded a report out on 44 issues.

- Broke into two groups to map the key issues into themes and propose relationships across themes.
  - Discuss and document related issues
  - Identify "themes" for binning issues
  - Articulate "fundamental challenges"

MENTAL MODEL EXERCISE

LOGISTICS

- Chasing a changing model
- Support on decisional items (context)
- Partnership coordination across GITs is not meeting full potential
- Science is generated but not applied in implementable way
- MB lacks expertise to rep full breadth of outcomes

STRUCTURE

- Complexity of program across GITs, WGs, structure, etc. - siloing and duplication
- Roles and resources – clearly define responsibilities and degrees of participation
- Governance doesn't map entire partnership
- Increase adv committees in structure
- Defining Roles: Structural Changes to GITs, WGs, Adv Committees +
- Streamlining (Standardization GIT, WG structure, audits
- Role / membership and mgmt of MB
- Passive staffing – need to empower CRC
- Governance to reduce program complexity and reduce silos

COMMUNICATIONS

- Break down in communication in partnership
- Transparency – internal and external engagement and budget
- Better vertical and horizonal knowledge sharing
- Lack of understanding– on the ground implementers
- Onboarding and ensure understanding of roles
- Transparency – honest about progress

ACCOUNTABILITY

- What is implementation timeline: Program provides updates but need plan
- Seek accountability in outcomes and principles, funding decisions
- Leadership – status quo (big goal setting is important)
- Lack of transparency in access (inside baseball)

RESOURCES

- Intra GIT competition for resources
- Scope too broad (mission critical vs enhancement) + (prioritization but how? Utilize STAR)
- Resource deployment inefficiencies +
- Jurisdictional capacity

FUNDAMENTAL

- Elevating conservation and social science
- Program more procedural than actionable/ implementation
- Lack of focus on planning and zoning - Cradle to grave conservation
- Operationalizing principles in everyday actions at GIT, WG, MB, etc.
- Focus on communities/ hyper local focus
- Partnership viewed as procedural vs practical
- Tensions between state and fed re evaluations

DECISION MAKING

- Accountability framework (SRS) not yielding results, process should be improved
- Max value of adaptive mgmt (SRS revise)
- Finding data and decisions within bay.net, etc.
- Need logic model: outcomes to actions of WGs
- Decision making and reaching consensus
- What does it mean to sign on to an outcome
- SOPs distributed decision trees / decision making
- Consensus driving decisions to LCD
- Appropriate decision makers aren't on GITs

Fundamental Challenges

- Substantial discussion on their interconnected nature, but agreed on the following challenges (prioritized via rank order):

1. Priority Setting / Decision Making / Resources [22]
2. Role Definition / Logistics [26]
3. Complexity / Structure / Disconnect to Local Communities [32]
4. Transparency [42]
5. Accountability / Adaptive Management [54]
6. Communication [55]

Actions and Decisions

- Team Members will build draft recommendations for each fundamental challenge using one-pager template.

- Members will refine one-pagers at GAT's next team meeting (scheduled for August 26-27; 3.5h each day).

One-Pager Template

- Menu for Management Board Retreat with refined options.
- Format will be tweaked as options are refined for MB → PSC → EC.

- Outline:
  - **Recommendation**
    - Option A -
      - Knowns, Known Unknowns, Tradeoffs
    - Option B (if necessary)
      - Knowns, Known Unknowns, Tradeoffs
  - **Recommendation…**
    - Option…
  - **Key Takeaways**

Fundamental Challenge Assignments

1. Priority Setting / Decision Making / Resources - Kevin Schabow, Natahnee Miller, Natalie Snider, Julia Wakeling

2. Role Definition / Logistics - Marty Qually, Keisha Sedlachek, Ken Hyer

3. Complexity / Structure / Disconnect to Local Communities - Erin Letavic, Kevin McLean, Sara Ramotnik, Ken Hyer

4. Transparency - Adrienne Kotula, Kevin McLean, Sara Ramotnik

5. Accountability / Adaptive Management - Natalie Snider, Natahnee Miller, Kevin Schabow

6. Communication - Julia Wakeling, Marty Qually

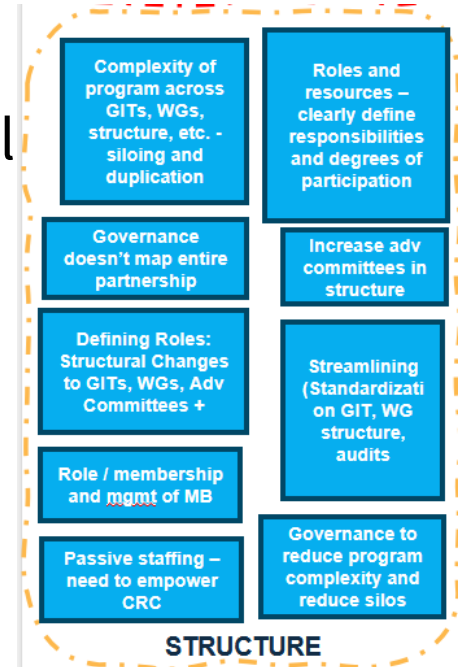# 1. Priority Setting / Decision Making / Resources

The partnership should have a clear and transparent methodology for how decisions about priorities and subsequent resource and time allocation are made and who makes them. Currently, the partnership lacks a comprehensive logic model which would effectively guide information flow and decision making. The partnership should ensure decisions are based on science, including social science, and the policy and economic landscape. States, federal agencies, advisory committees, and other partner organizations should ensure they have representatives with the appropriate topic knowledge and decision-making authority at the necessary levels to minimize redundancy in decision-making. Identify signatory high-level priorities and available existing resources (funding/people) to serve Chesapeake Bay Program functions.

2. Role Definition / Logistics

To work more efficiently and effectively, the partnership must (1) redefine roles recognizing the interconnectedness of all goals and outcomes and (2) implement procedures aimed at breaking down silos that have prevented the collaboration and coordination needed to reach our goals.

3. Complexity / Structure / Disconnect to Local Communities

- The complexity of the CBP and confusing structure results in an inherent disconnect to local communities where actions take place, resulting in limited wholesale improvements.

- The challenge is to connect mission critical roles and responsibilities with available resources to create a direct path to the outcomes and goals reflected in the draft updated Agreement.

Complexity of program across GITs, WGs, structure, etc. - siloing and duplication

Roles and resources – clearly define responsibilities and degrees of participation

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Increase adv committees in structure

Defining Roles: Structural Changes to GITs, WGs, Adv Committees +

Streamlining (Standardization on GIT, WG structure, audits

Role / membership and mgmt of MB

Passive staffing – need to empower CRC

Governance to reduce program complexity and reduce silos

STRUCTURE

4. Transparency

- To improve trust internally and externally, the Program must enhance the transparency of its decision-making processes, priority policy development, resource allocation, actions proposed and taken, as well as its reporting on progress in meeting goals and outcomes.

5. Accountability / Adaptive Management

- Accountability frameworks, including adaptative management, are needed to ensure proper oversight and ownership, allow for adjustments and increase innovation within the Program. There is a need to increase accountability for outcome and target attainment, including identifying resources needs and defining responsible parties. The effectiveness of the SRS process and improving methodologies, while also embracing the distinct differences, should be evaluated to better support the adaptive management process.

6. Communication

- The Chesapeake Bay Program has fragmented and ineffective communication, limited program integration, and partner disconnection that has undermined trust and coordination across the Chesapeake Bay Program. Building silos, sharing limited or confusing information, difficulty in finding information, inconsistent and limited communication across the network have reduced the achievement of goals and expansion of the partnership. Furthermore, a lack of transparency, a lack of consistent plain language scientific explanations of decision making, has created misaligned perceptions between the partnership and impacted communities. Keeping partners and advisory committees out of the communication chain, has resulted in an incomplete understanding of important issues.

Questions?

Governance and Accountability Team

Adrienne Kotula, Chesapeake Bay Commission

Doug Bell, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office

Eric Hughes, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office

Erin Letavic, Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. [Science and Technical Advisory Committee]

Julia Wakeling, District of Columbia

Keisha Sedlacek, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Ken Hyer, U.S. Geological Survey

Kevin McLean, Virginia DEQ

Kevin Schabow, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Marty Qualley, County of Adams (PA) [Local Government Advisory Committee]

Natahnee Miller, Pennsylvania DEP

Natalie Snider, Maryland DNR

Sara Ramotnik, Choose Clean Water Coalition [Stakeholders' Advisory Committee]

Sarah Brzezinski, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office