



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

September 11, 2025

Governance & Accountability Team

MB Check-In

Governance and Accountability Team

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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 Qually, 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

Deliverables:

- Provide recommendations for MB and PSC
- High-level, one-pager format requested by MB (due as part of MB Retreat)
- Red-line version of the Governance and Management Framework (6/30/2026)

Recent Progress:

- **Leverage existing review resources**
- **August 26-27 Meeting:**
 - Reviewed EC, PSC, MB sections of Governance and Management Framework
 - Identified items that should be addressed for December EC
 - Initiated recommendation brainstorming (first 2 challenges)
- **September 8 Meeting:**
 - Draft Recommendation refinement (mainly first 2 challenges)

1. Priority Setting, Decision Making, and Resources

Clear methodology, align priorities & capacity

2. Role Definition and Logistics

Explicitly define, improve collaboration and coordination framework

3. Complexity, Structure, Disconnect to Local Communities

Streamline connection between implementation actors

4. Transparency

Decisions, priorities, resources, actions, reporting

5. Accountability and Adaptive Management

Clear guidelines for outcome attainment, decrease burden, enable innovation

6. Communication

Ensure awareness and connection is robust where needed

Framework for Discussion

- Developed a logical framework for summarizing issues and preparing recommendations (1 pagers)
- Considered governing structure (EC, PSC, MB, AC)
- Progress was made on the first 2 challenges (Roles, Priority Setting)
- GAT is seeking clarity from the MB on the 3rd challenge (Complexity)
- Extensive interconnectedness and parking lot items for the challenges #4-6

Thematic Challenge: Priority Setting, Decision Making, & Resources

1. **A priority setting framework, established by the PSC, is recommended to provide strategic direction.** An effective priority setting framework would likely incorporate:
 - Robust engagement with the ACs and relevant public interest groups.
 - Transparency regarding the availability and allocation of resources towards a specific priority.
 - Implementation gaps (staffing or technical needs) related to Outcome attainment.
2. **The appropriate authority and expertise are recommended to be a key component in defining membership between governing levels,** particularly when considering how best to streamline outcome implementation actions.
3. **Federal membership and coordination are recommended to be clearly defined at each level of the governing structure.**

Thematic Challenge: Role Definition and Logistics

EC

1. **Minor updates to the roles and responsibilities of the EC are recommended** to emphasize the EC's function and delineate specific roles and responsibilities across the governing bodies of the CBP.
 - Functions emphasized would include pledging overarching commitment to achieve the CBWA, establishing and adhering to the Vision of the CBWA, and serving as the public face of the CBP.
 - Amendments to the roles and responsibilities, would including rephrasing “policy direction” and specifying that any amendments to CBWA Outcomes is at the discretion of the PSC, rather than the EC.

PSC

2. **Moderate updates to the roles, responsibilities, and operations of the PSC are recommended** to strengthen its functions as a body of politically appointed executives.
 - Functions strengthened would be related to strategic direction, priority setting, executive-level decision making, and resource mobilization.
 - The primary operational update would summarize an annual priority setting framework, which would consider communication requirements across the CBP governing structure and its technical expertise, advisory committees, and public interests.
 - Succession planning using a chair and vice-chair framework is also recommended to maintain priority commitment.

Thematic Challenge: Role Definition and Logistics

MB

3. **Major updates related to the roles, responsibilities, and operations of the MB are recommended** to emphasize the MB's function and delineate specific roles and responsibilities across the governing bodies of the CBP.
 - Functions emphasized would be related to oversight and execution of the PSC's priorities, operational and implementation-related decision making, and staff coordination.

AC

4. **Minor updates to the roles and operations of the ACs are recommended** to target their engagement across the CBP, while working collaboratively amongst the ACs.
 - Given the breadth of the CBP and the voluntary commitment of AC members, the ACs are recommended to streamline membership-specific positions, so that information transfer is facilitated from members participating in technical deliberations and into executive-level decision-making bodies.
 - Operationally, the ACs are recommended to convene together on an annual basis to share best practices.

Thematic Challenge: Complexity, Structure, Disconnect to Local Communities

- Structural considerations of the Bay Program overlay all of the Challenges and Considerations we are discussing
- Structure is not only consideration within this challenge
 - Lack of access and "inside baseball"
 - Bay Program speak vs. plain language
- There are multiple options for streamlining the vertical structure of CBP which need further deliberation.
- **The GAT is seeking clear guidance from the MB on path forward for Structure recommendations, decisions, and implementation**



Ongoing Work

Transparency

- Example: While there are viable reasons for holding a closed-door meeting, clear documentation should articulate such reasoning and the procedures for disseminating minutes, actions, and decisions from such a meeting.
- Example: Transparency could be improved by identifying resources at each level of the CBP and from each participating entity.

Accountability and Adaptive Management

- Example: The CBP should clearly articulate expectations related to CBP's accountability to the public (e.g., outcome progress, standard public feedback procedures).
- Example: With respect to CBP's adaptive management framework, the roles of the CBP's governing entities (EC, PSC, MB, GIT) are clearly defined, so issues can be efficiently directed to the appropriate decision-making body.

Communication

- Example: The responsibility of the EC and PSC to engage with the Advisory Committees and general public should be clearly articulated in the GMF.
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Discussion

- **Primarily seeking input on first two challenges, path forward on Structure, and confirmation that we are on the right track!**

