



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

August 14, 2025

Structure

To prompt discussion and initiate the Management Board's recommendation process on identifying a simplified and streamlined structure at the upcoming August 14th meeting, please suggest immediate action(s) that could be considered by the MB.

Governance related feedback will be handed off to GAT.

Clarify Governance Roles and Accountability: Review roles and responsibilities across the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP), including the Federal Leadership Committee, Management Board (MB), and workgroups, while strengthening accountability, expectations and representation.

Update Partner Commitments and Representation: Reassess partner commitments to Watershed Agreement goals to determine needed representation, voting membership, and accountability in GITs and workgroups.

Define and Strengthen Management Board Functions: Establish roles, responsibilities, and expectations for Management Board members, ensure realistic timelines for deliverables, and formalize meeting processes.

Refine Priority Setting and Decision-Making: Establish clear processes to determine high-level partner priorities, allocate resources, and streamline CBP functions. Emphasize adaptive management, accountability mechanisms, and realistic timelines for deliverables.

Governance Feedback continued...

Structure Meetings and Communication: Standardize meeting schedules, expectations, materials, and participation rules (e.g., cancel meetings without sufficient preparation time). Improve communication efficiency—more clarity, not more meetings.

Improve Outcome Management Strategy Development: Identify a path for developing new outcome management strategies in 2026, including temporary workgroups, signatory leadership, and stakeholder engagement.

Build Accountability and Adaptive Management Mechanisms: Identify ways to hold signatories and groups accountable to outcomes, potentially using the SRS or alternative structures, and embrace adaptive management approaches.

Revise Governance Documents for Clarity: Update governance to clearly define voting roles, authority delegation, partner responsibilities, and cross-coordination mechanisms. Incorporate advisory committees more regularly into planning, not just annually.

Structure Feedback



- 1. Align Around High-Level Priorities, Not Just Goals:** Shift focus from static goal teams to flexible structures organized around actionable priorities and targets. Convene/sunset teams based on task relevance rather than standing mandates.
- 2. Evaluate and Restructure Workgroups and GITs:** Assess current workgroup effectiveness using a simplified evaluation process. Identify opportunities for consolidation, sunsetting, or restructuring to better align with program goals.
- 3. Create Interim and Long-Term Structural Plans:** Develop a short-term structure based on current frameworks while actively soliciting partner input for long-term reforms, aiming for implementation in 2026.

Structure Feedback



- 4. Explore New Governance Models and Integration Approaches:** Research alternative structures (including from other geo programs), seek input from social scientists, and form a team to develop and propose structural improvements. Explore alternative partnership models to break down silos and enhance coordination (e.g., leverage STAR, SET, GIT 6, or hire collaboration-focused staff).
- 5. Create Body to Link Budget/Funding with Priorities/Strategy:** Identify a group and process to align funding decisions with program priorities. Use tools like SRS and workshops to guide investment in key initiatives.
- 6. Combine PSC and MB:** To streamline decision-making, the Bay Program should consider merging the Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee into a single, unified leadership body. A consolidated body would align strategic direction with operational oversight, reduce meeting fatigue, and enable more agile responses to emerging challenges.

A starting point...

3. Create Interim and Long-Term Structural Plans:

Develop an interim structure based on current frameworks while actively soliciting partner input for long-term reforms, aiming for implementation in 2026.

