Social Science Working Group
Framework and Criteria for Vetting Themes
DRAFT AS OF 8 JANUARY 2021

The following is a draft. Each piece of the framework or criteria are up for discussion. We welcome suggestions for framework and criteria. The NBEP staff developed the framework and criteria based on the suggestions made at the October 2020 meeting.

At the October 2020 meeting, the Social Science Working Group developed themes to discuss more broadly in 2021 (Tables 2 and 3 from the meeting notes). The Working Group also discussed potential actions that could be taken to leverage social science in the region (Table 4 from the meeting notes). These potential actions have become a framework to use as we vet and dive deep into the themes in Tables 2 and 3 (attached at the end of the document).

Framework
Below is the framework that each theme (and subsequent actions) will be bound by. The actions that develop from the themes discussed by this Working Group must:
- Advance the role of social science outcomes in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut over the next 10 years
- Build exchange/collaboration between social science researchers and local groups through leveraging, integrating, and coordinating two-way learning
- Strengthen integration of social sciences from the watershed to coastal regions to offshore concerns
- Build exchange/collaboration between social science researchers, keeping the discussion relevant to the group's work and expertise (allowing for the group to expand if need be)
- Have trackable metrics

Outside of this framework is a larger goal – to develop social science funding mechanisms. We should not create a funding boundary to these discussions at this time. Moving forward requires us to think outside of funding sources. Funding (or lack thereof) will always be part of the discussion, but should not frame the discussion and development of action plans. For example, we don't want to limit our brainstorming at this time because we know funding is unavailable, or conversely, focus only on actions that are fundable at present.

Criteria
Each theme (Tables 2 and 3, copied below) will be vetted through these criteria.
- Does this theme provide a practical application? Practical application is broadly defined to include two-way learning as well as "on the ground" use.
- Does this group have the expertise to develop tangible outputs/outcomes? If not, do we know experts to invite to this group?
- Can we imagine practical outputs that fall under this theme? Is the output/outcome tangible to the region within the defined framework/purpose?
- Is it realistic that this group can deliver an output on a defined timeline?

Combining the Framework and Criteria

The overall goal of this group to create action plans for the themes identified in the October meeting. To do that, we propose using the above framework to create the boundaries of the themes, while the criteria will be used to vet the themes

Through vetting the themes, we will discover which themes fit into the framework and match the criteria. If a theme does not meet the criteria, we can discuss if we still want to address the theme, if we missed anything, or if the theme is too broad/narrow.

The goal of vetting the themes is to develop action plans for each theme. These action plans will be similar to logic models. I have included the logic model from NBEP's Vision 2032 blueprint.
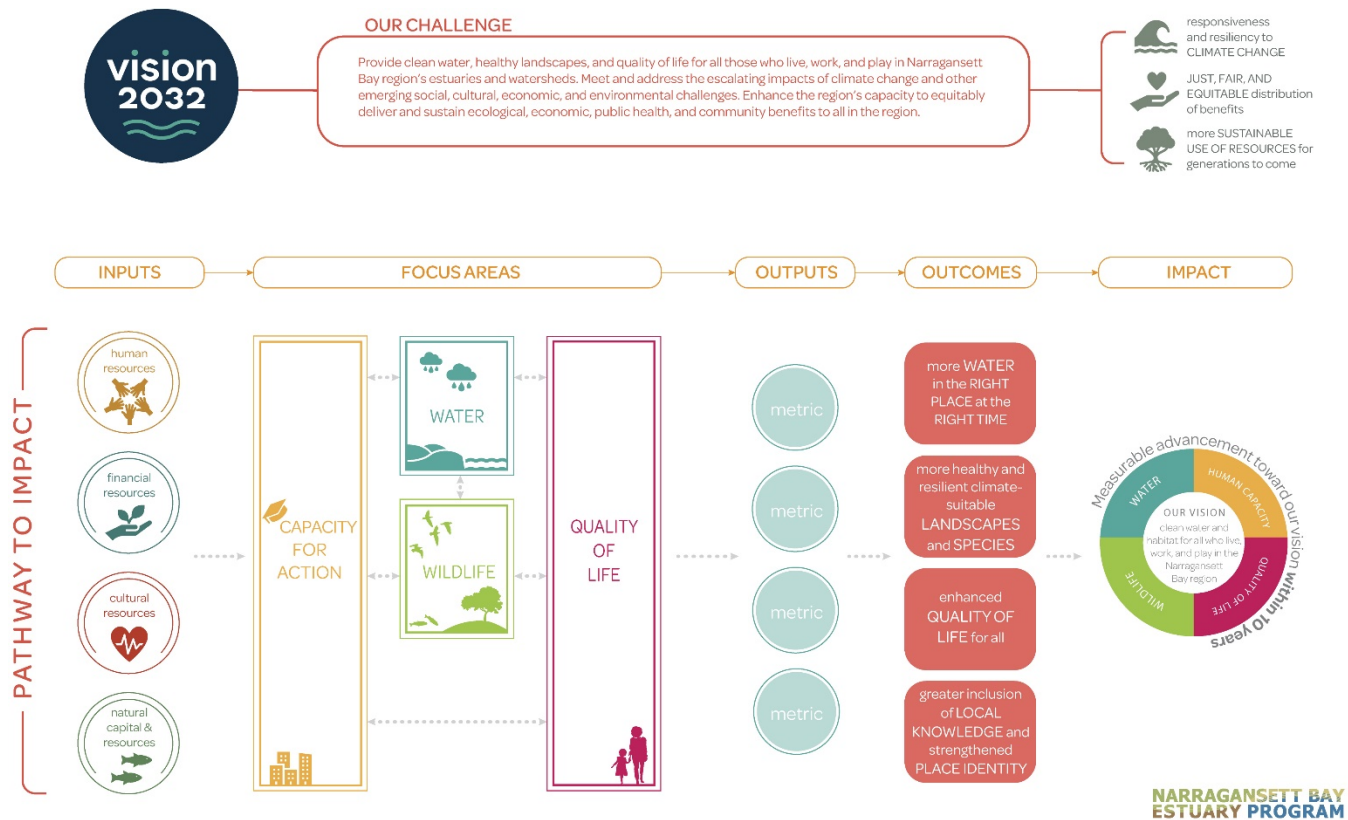
Future meetings will focus on vetting themes, and eventually going through a brainstorming process which develops action items for each theme the Working Group chooses to pursue. The NBEP is contracting with a trained facilitator to keep order to this process, while making the process fun and engaging.

Tables 2 and 3 reprinted from October Meeting Notes

Table 2. List of keywords that represent the reach of the Question 3 conversation around needs, issues, and focal areas. This list may not perfectly represent every possible topic but we hope demonstrates the thrust of the conversation as well as the breadth of areas that researchers and experts believed important needs for social science in our region.

Issues:	System:	Implementation:
- Shellfishing - Aquaculture - Water quality - Source control - Plastic pollution - Fisheries - Stormwater management - Seafood - Offshore wind - Conflicting use of natural space - Recreational and commercial use of coastal waters - Restoration - Environmental gentrification - Distribution of benefits and harms - Public health - Public access - Mitigation / adaptation - Coastal communities - Coastal and maritime economies - Watershed management - Estuary management	- Power - Trust - Justice and equity - Knowledge access - Well-being - Quality of life - Sense of place - Place identity - Voice - Conflict - Local democracies	- Individual behavior - Society, social norms, etc. - Perceptions of problem - Perceptions of policy/implementation - Communication, education, messaging, outreach - Residential behaviors - Coastal homeowner behaviors - Conflict resolution - Financing **Information:** - Local ecological knowledge - Resource quality perceptions - Ecosystem services -> perceptions, market impact

Table 3. Broad themes grouped from the conversation that dealt with needs, issues, and focal areas that social science could benefit in the Narragansett Bay region (numbers in parentheses represent the number of dots received during voting).

Just and equitable prioritization and allocation of resources	• Understand distribution of benefits and harms and who is impacted (3) • Understand health impacts related to coastal systems (2) • Prioritize: Which communities can benefit most? • Allocation of resources in the region (2) • Access - to natural spaces, power, knowledge, information (3)
Inclusive representation	• Include and elevate voices of residents from communities typically left out in conversations, processes, decision making; strengthen local democracies (3) • Enrich communication and education for diverse audiences • Enrich outreach to garner participation, awareness, behavior changes • Make research methods more democratic, representative, equitable (2)
Behavior change implementation	• Aid in conceptualizing and defining policy problems (e.g., plastic pollution, WQ, fisheries) (2) • Understand social connections to restoration projects (1) • Understand societal impacts of policy change – on individual behavior, social norms, etc. (2) • Understand impacts of policies on individual and community well-being • Inform homeowner incentives and policies – coastal homeowners in particular are at the crux of many crucial issues in the region (public access, water quality, source control, etc.) (3) • Understand individual and community support for mitigation/ adaptation policies • How and why environmental changes matter to people and the choices they make
Decision making support	• Navigate issues of trust, conflict, and conflict resolution in decision making processes (1) • Understand unintended consequences of environmental policies and incentives (e.g., preferential treatment for wealthy, environmental gentrification) (4) • Navigate conflicting uses of natural spaces – e.g., quantify and spatially represent recreational and commercial use of coastal waters (3) • Quantify ecosystem services (in particular financial valuation) • Quantify market impacts of N. Bay condition and change
Finance	• Conservation finance (most finance coming from gov't) • Sustainable funding for stormwater management - build community buy-in