

Advancing the Gulf of Mexico Shellfish Initiative (GoMexSI)

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium



Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Annual Meeting
March 14, 2018

NOAA's National Shellfish Initiative

The goal of the National Shellfish Initiative is to increase populations of bivalve shellfish in our nation's coastal waters—including oysters, clams, and mussels—through commercial production and conservation activities. NOAA recognizes the broad suite of economic, social, and environmental benefits provided by increasing shellfish populations, including:

- New jobs and business opportunities
- Meeting the growing demand for seafood
- Habitat for important commercial, recreational, endangered and threatened species
- Species recovery
- Cleaner water and nutrient removal
- Shoreline protection

Other Shellfish Initiatives in the U.S.

- Washington
- California
- Oregon
- Connecticut
- Maryland
- Carolinas
- Massachusetts
- Rhode Island



How Did GoMexSI Get Started?



The Gulf Oyster Industry Council approached MS-AL Sea Grant Consortium about developing a regional shellfish initiative in 2013.

Why a Gulf of Mexico Shellfish Initiative?

- Chance to affect future investments with a coordinated plan that includes fisheries, restoration and aquaculture together.
- The first regional shellfish initiative could attract national attention and support.
- Setting a positive, pro-active agenda, instead of reacting to threats.



GOM Key Shellfish Stakeholder Groups

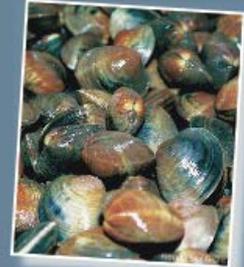
- At each meeting we had representation from many different stakeholder groups.
- One of our main partners is The Nature Conservancy.
- NGOs, Restoration, fishermen's association reps, Dept. of Public Health, Enforcement, Marine Extension agents, shellfish harvesters, shellfish farmers.
- For those who could not attend in person, we received feedback via survey, one-on-one interviews, email.

GoMexSI Stakeholder Meetings

LOCATION	DATE
Biloxi, MS	June 5
Spanish Fort, AL	June 16
Tampa Bay, FL	July 31
Cedar Key, FL	August 1
Apalachicola, FL	August 2
Milton, FL	September 14
New Orleans, LA	August 16
Texas City, TX	November 28
Port Lavaca, TX	November 29
Corpus Christi, TX	November 30

Diverse Stakeholder Groups: Spanish Translation

Gulf of Mexico Shellfish Initiative



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The Gulf of Mexico Shellfish Initiative (GoMexSI) will protect and enhance our shellfish resources in a way that creates sustainable water-dependent jobs while improving the water quality of our numerous Gulf estuaries, through long-term regional planning for the wise and sustainable use of shellfish resources.

GoMexSI is based on NOAA's National Shellfish Initiative and draws from other state Shellfish Initiatives. GoMexSI, like all these initiatives, has the overall goal to increase populations of bivalve shellfish in our nation's coastal waters including oysters, clams, abalone, and mussels through both sustainable commercial production and restoration activities.

GoMexSI will be used to:

1. Leverage support for future projects,
2. Secure funding for shellfish enhancement, and
3. Guide management efforts on a regional basis along coasts of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida Gulf Coast.

The planning team is seeking input from stakeholders from across the Gulf of Mexico to identify common goals among the Gulf states, and those which are unique to each state. Within each state, shellfish stakeholders will be engaged to determine state-specific action items (objectives) to accomplish the goals of GoMexSI.

A starter list of possible goals of the GoMexSI include:

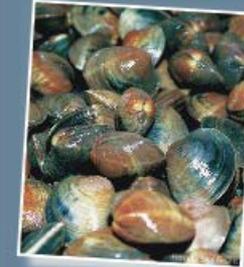
- Ensure clean and plentiful water to protect and enhance shellfish reefs
- Restore oyster stocks
- Expand commercial shellfish harvests
- Expand public/private partnerships for shellfish aquaculture
- Use an ecosystem services approach to guide shellfish restoration

During numerous stakeholder input sessions, the starter list will likely be refined and new goals added.

Visit the initiative's website: <http://masgc.org/gulf-of-mexico-shellfish-initiative>

The Gulf of Mexico Shellfish Initiative is a collaborative effort of several agencies and organizations. This program is funded in part through the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission under NOAA grant award number FNA15NMF4720399. This publication was supported by NOAA under NOAA Award NA14OAR4170098 and the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium. MASGP-17-021

La Iniciativa de Moluscos del Golfo de México



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La Iniciativa de Moluscos del Golfo de México (GoMexSI, por sus siglas en Inglés) protegerá y mejorará nuestros recursos de moluscos de una manera que generará empleos sustentables dependientes del agua que a su vez mejora la calidad del agua de nuestros numerosos estuarios del Golfo mediante la planificación sabia y sostenible del uso de los recursos marinos a largo plazo.

GoMexSI se basa en la Iniciativa Nacional de Moluscos de NOAA así como en otras iniciativas de moluscos estatales. GoMexSI, como todas estas iniciativas, tiene como objetivo general aumentar las poblaciones de moluscos en las aguas costeras de nuestra nación incluyendo a ostras, almejas, abulón y mejillones, mediante actividades de producción comercial sostenible y de restauración.

GoMexSI se utilizará para:

1. Aprovechar el apoyo para proyectos futuros,
2. Asegurar el financiamiento para el mejoramiento de los moluscos, y
3. Guiar los esfuerzos de gestión a nivel regional a lo largo de las costas de Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama y Florida.

El equipo de planificación está buscando la contribución de las partes interesadas de todo el Golfo de México para identificar objetivos comunes entre los estados del Golfo, y los que son únicos para cada estado. Dentro de cada estado, las partes interesadas en los moluscos serán contratadas para determinar los elementos de acción (objetivos) específicos del Estado para lograr los objetivos de GoMexSI.

Una lista inicial de los posibles objetivos del GoMexSI incluyen:

- Asegurar agua limpia y abundante para proteger y mejorar los arrecifes de moluscos
- Restaurar las poblaciones existentes de ostras
- Expandir las cosechas comerciales de moluscos
- Amplificar las asociaciones público-privadas para la acuicultura de moluscos
- Utilizar un enfoque de servicios ecosistémicos para guiar la restauración de moluscos

Durante las numerosas sesiones de participación de los interesados, la lista inicial seguramente será refinada y se agregarán nuevos objetivos. Visite el sitio web de la iniciativa:

<http://masgc.org/gulf-of-mexico-shellfish-initiative>

La Iniciativa de los Crustáceos del Golfo de México es un esfuerzo de colaboración de varias agencias y organizaciones. Este programa se financia en parte a través de la Comisión de Pesca Marítima de los Estados del Golfo -the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission- bajo el número de concesión NOAA FNA15NMF4720399. Esta publicación fue apoyada por NOAA bajo el Premio NOAA número NA14OAR4170098 y el Consorcio Sea Grant de Mississippi-Alabama. MASGP-17-021-01

Gathering Feedback

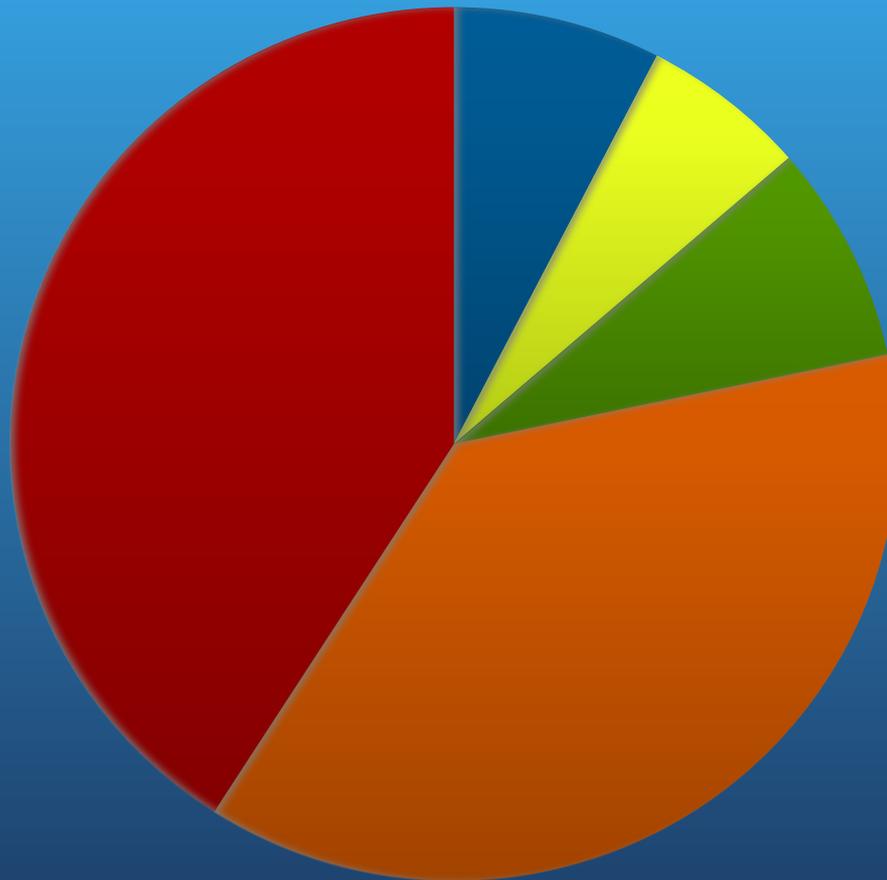


Our team reached out to stakeholders across the Gulf.

Focus group meetings

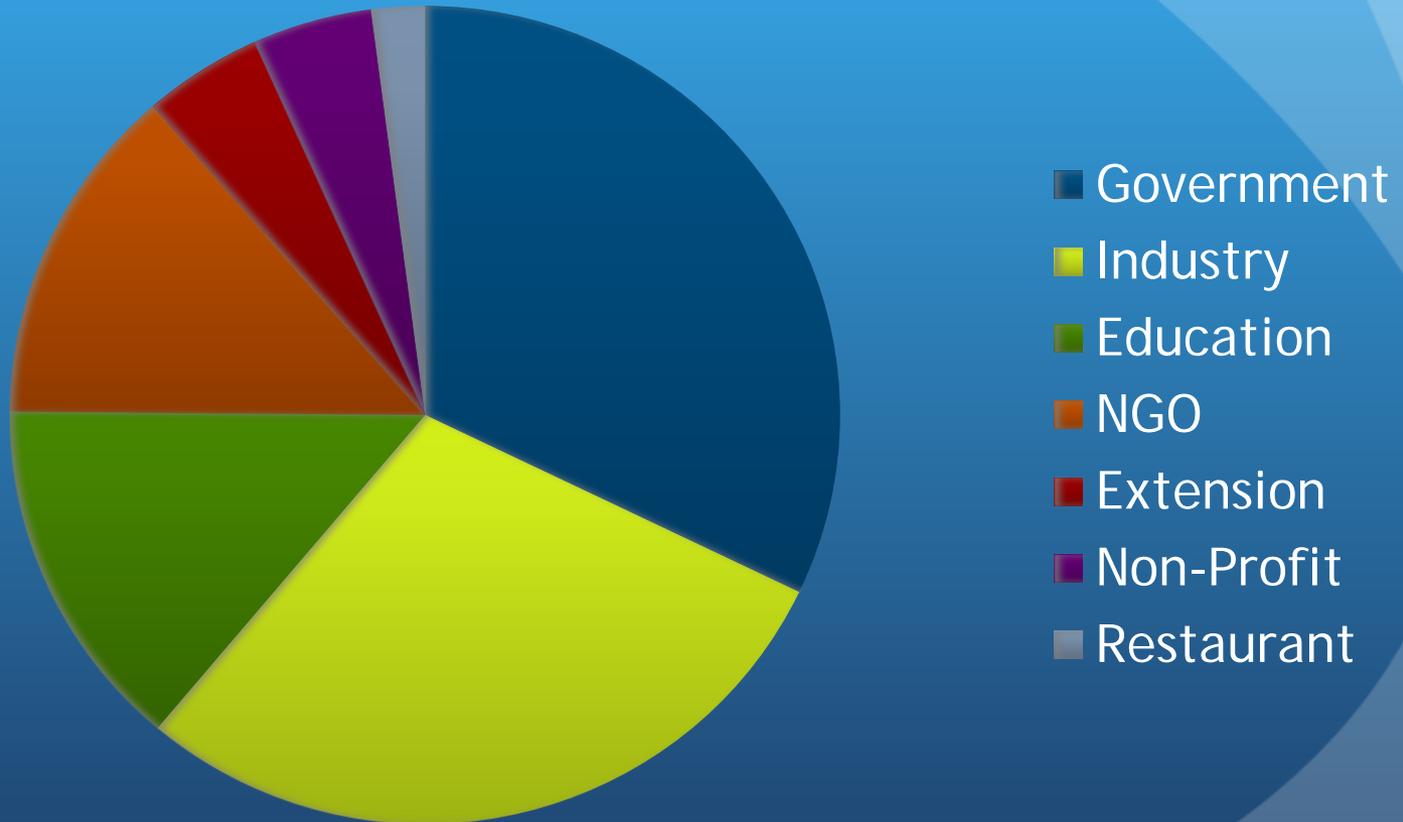
- Vision?
- What Is Not Going Well?
- What Is Going Well?
- Success?

Stakeholder Attendance By State



- Mississippi
- Alabama
- Louisiana
- Florida
- Texas

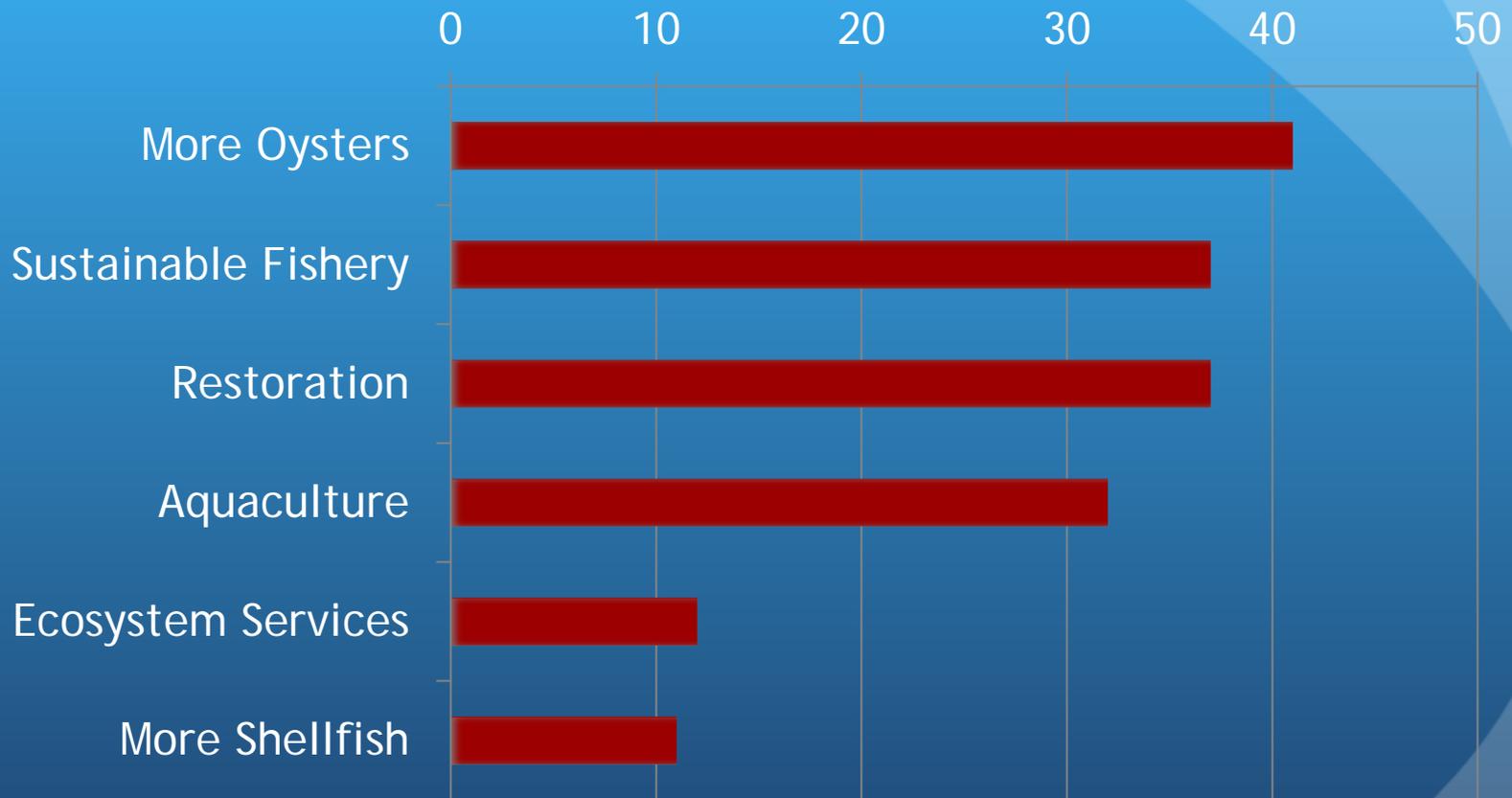
Gulf Stakeholder Groups Who Attended In-Person Meetings



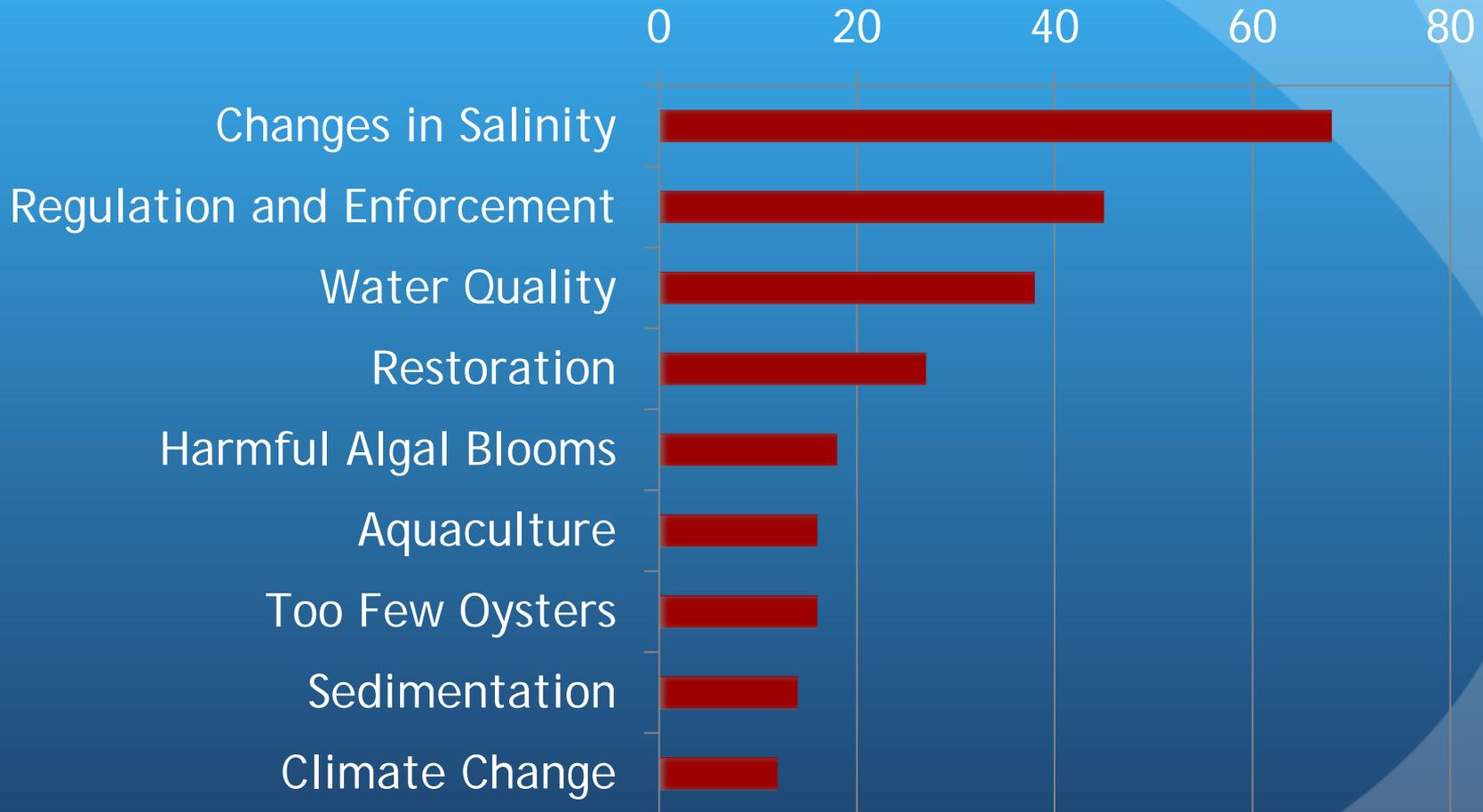
Gulf of Mexico – Vision of Shellfish



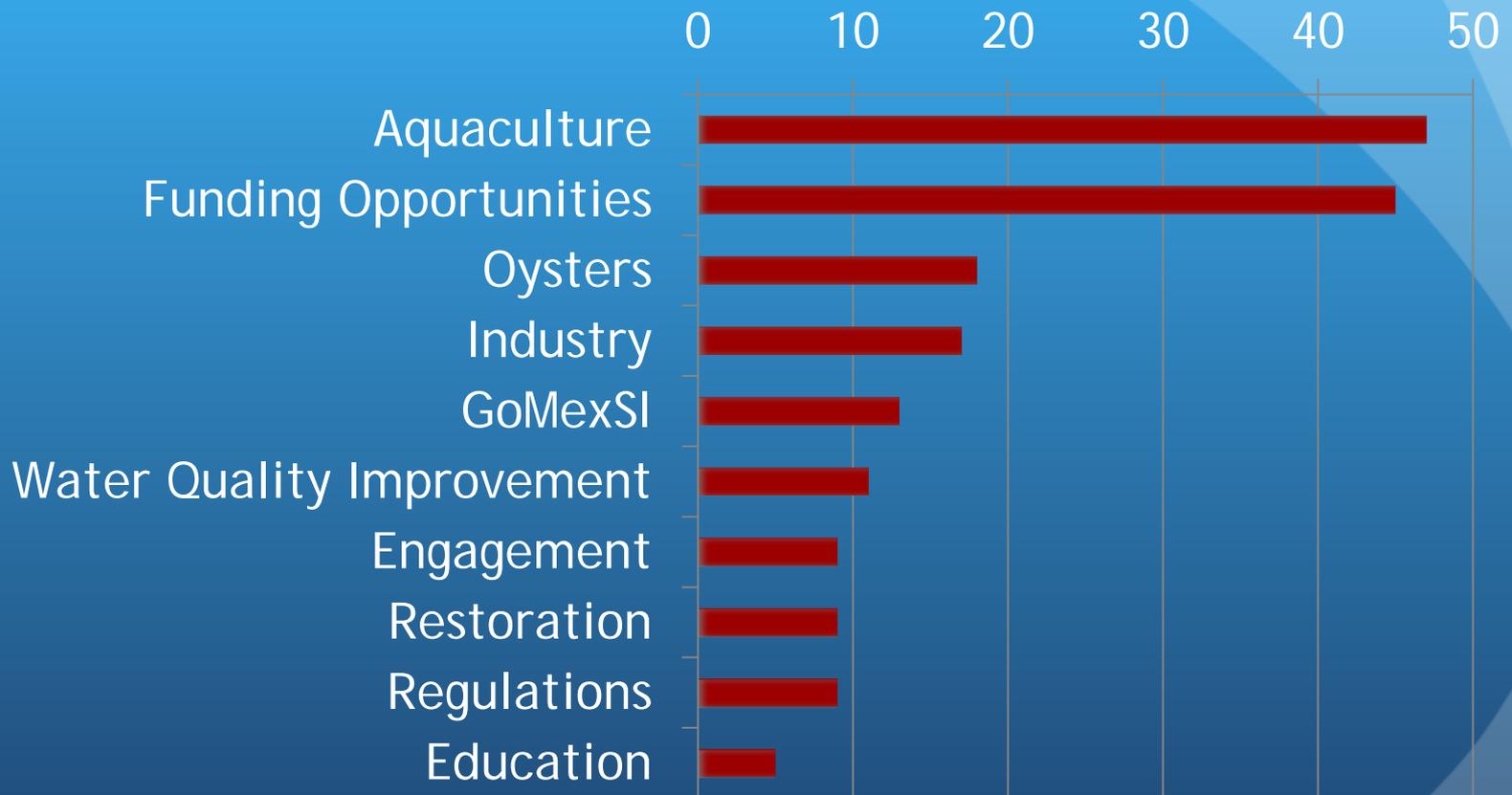
Vision



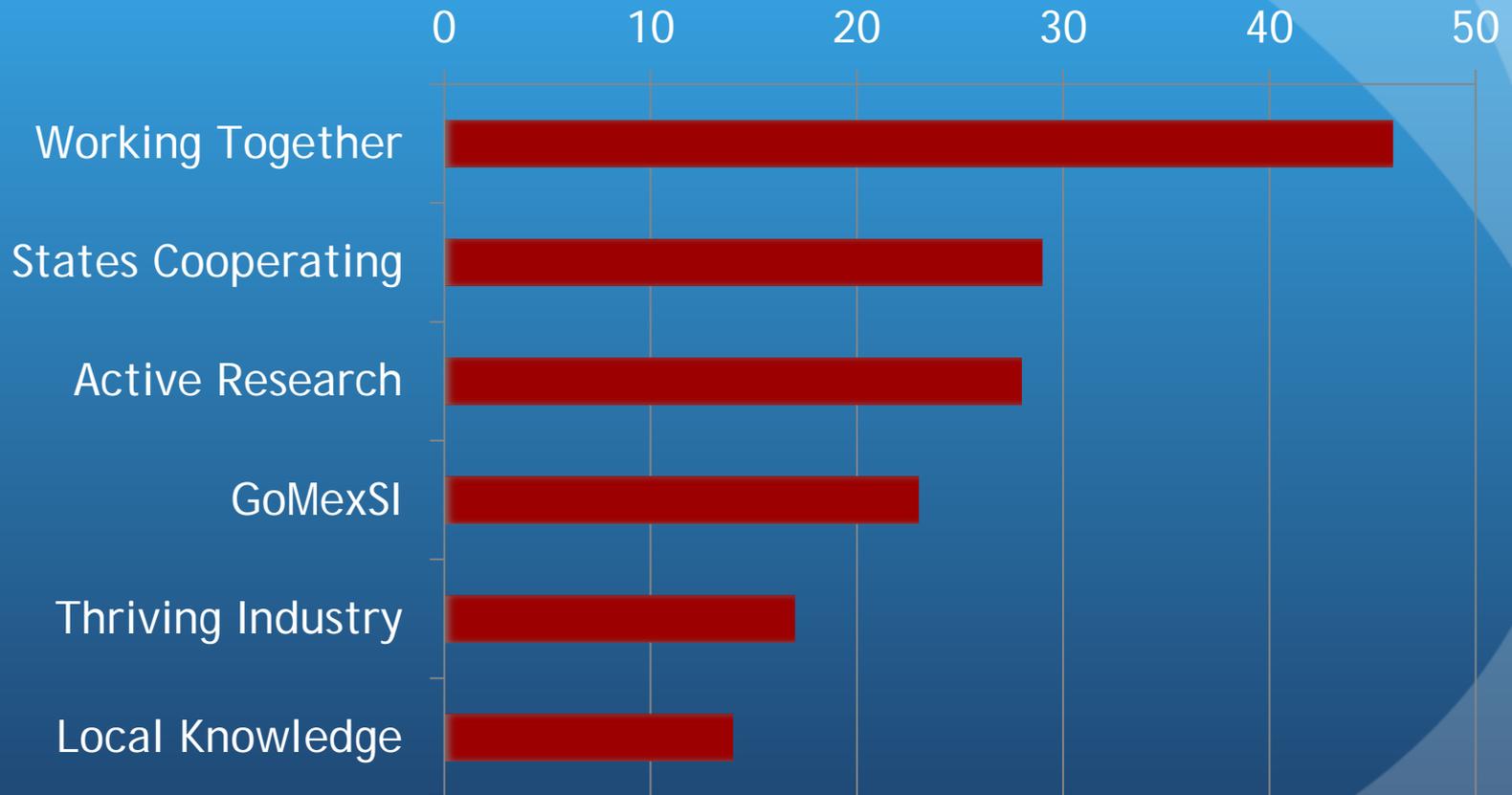
What Is Not Going Well



What Is Going Well



Success



Additional Stakeholder Feedback

- We also have a short online survey available:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GoMexSI>

- We have 200+ responses from across the Gulf.
- We wanted to have a way for anyone to offer feedback for who could not attend an in-person meeting AND for anyone who wanted to leave additional feedback!

In the Gulf of Mexico, how important to you are the following sectors of shellfisheries?

	NOT IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Recreational Fisheries	8.46% 11	28.46% 37	27.69% 36	35.38% 46	130
Commercial Fisheries	0.76% 1	9.16% 12	28.24% 37	61.83% 81	131
Conservation	0.00% 0	3.05% 4	19.08% 25	77.86% 102	131
Restoration (No Harvest)	3.85% 5	11.54% 15	26.92% 35	57.69% 75	130
Commercial Aquaculture	2.34% 3	14.06% 18	33.59% 43	50.00% 64	128
Shellfish Gardening	16.03% 21	32.82% 43	25.19% 33	25.95% 34	131
Recreational Aquaculture	27.13% 35	39.53% 51	19.38% 25	13.95% 18	129

In the Gulf of Mexico, what are the most pressing issues with shellfish?

	NOT IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Water quality	0.76% 1	3.79% 5	17.42% 23	78.03% 103	132
Habitat degradation	0.76% 1	1.53% 2	23.66% 31	74.05% 97	131
Overfishing	5.38% 7	13.85% 18	36.92% 48	43.85% 57	130
Resource management	0.00% 0	6.92% 9	32.31% 42	60.77% 79	130
Cultural significance	5.43% 7	26.36% 34	41.86% 54	26.36% 34	129
Changes in public health requirements	3.88% 5	31.01% 40	44.96% 58	20.16% 26	129
Changes in the economy	5.43% 7	29.46% 38	43.41% 56	21.71% 28	129

Quick Feedback from GoMexSI

- There IS real value in face to face meetings
- People really appreciate being asked their thoughts
- Put a face with an agency
- Perspective changer for all groups

“Complete membership in the “Brotherhood (or Sisterhood) of the Bivalve”

- Erik Lovestrand, Franklin County Extension Director (Apalachicola, FL).

What's Next for the Gulf of Mexico Shellfish Initiative?

- Gather all preliminary data and combine these results into one regional document.
- Stakeholders view GoMexSI as a living “document” and an ongoing process.
- Get active support from stakeholders in each state (e.g., endorsements and logos on documents).
- Use this to leverage partnerships and for potential future regional funding opportunities!

For More Information:

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