

Long Island Sound Inventory and Blue Plan Advisory Committee

June 6, 2017

7:00PM – 9:00 PM

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority

90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, CT

MINUTES

Advisory Committee Attendance:

Robert Klee, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Chair

Sylvain De Guise, Connecticut Sea Grant

Catherine Finneran, Eversource, Gas and electric distribution industry representative appointed by Governor Malloy

Nathan Frohling, The Nature Conservancy

David Carey, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Aquaculture

Christine Nelson, Town of Old Saybrook Town Planner

Evan Matthews [ABSENT], Connecticut Port Authority, Commissioner Redeker's designee

Jason Bowsza, Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Commissioner Reviczky's Designee

Garrett Eucalitto, represented by Eric Lindquist, Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Secretary Barnes' Designee

Melanie Bachman, represented by Fred Cunliffe, Connecticut Siting Council

Leah Schmalz [ABSENT], Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound

William Gardella, General Manager and Dockmaster, Rex Marine Center, Norwalk

Bruce Beebe, Beebe Dock and Mooring Systems, Madison

Mike Theiler, Commercial finfish industry representative

Alicia Mozian, Town of Westport Conservation Director

Sid Holbrook [ABSENT], Westbrook, recreational fishing/hunting community representative

Other attendees:

Karen Chytalo, New York Department of Environmental Conservation (by phone)

Grace Reville, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies

Bill Heiple, Triton Environmental

Richard Hyman

Shirley McCarthy, Yale

Ben Goetsch, East Coast Shellfish Growers

Jennifer Mattei, Sacred Heart University

Lynn Harris, NAMEPA

Ian Yue, CT Sea Grant

Emily Hall, NOAA Coastal Fellow

David Blatt, DEEP

Mary-beth Hart, DEEP

Kevin O'Brien, DEEP

Brian Thompson, DEEP

Other members of the public did not sign in

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Klee welcomed the Advisory Committee members and others present to the Committee's first evening meeting. Klee noted the continuing uncertainty about state and federal budgets and how proposed cuts might affect DEEP, which relies on 13 separate federal grants.

Brian Thompson provided an update on the site selection process to establish a National Estuarine Research Reserve in Connecticut, an effort distinct from the Blue Plan. <http://www.ct.gov/deep/nerr> Thompson described progress in implementing the Northeast Regional Ocean Plan, whose data portal just incorporated DEEP fisheries information and was already being heavily used by federal agencies. <http://www.northeastoceandata.org/>

Karen Chytalo described developments with the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Plan, which was developing criteria and mapping for Ecologically Rich Areas and holding workshops on topics such as acidification, marine debris, and indicators, all of which could be helpful to the Blue Plan process. <http://midatlanticocean.org/ocean-planning/updates>. In addition, New York has funded the State Ocean Action plan through a \$15 million budget line for oceans and lakes, including monitoring of nearshore fisheries.

Nathan Frohling and Brian Thompson provided a recap of the April 25 Blue Plan event at UConn Avery Point, at which the Greenfire Ocean Frontiers III film was screened. Approximately 200 people were present for the film and panel discussion, and the event received good coverage in a New London Day article, which was shown to the Committee along with posters and photographs of the event.

Mary-beth Hart noted that the Blue Plan logo (shown at the bottom of the agenda and on this document) has been finalized with minor changes as discussed at the last Advisory Committee meeting. The logo may now be used on any data products and other Blue Plan Documents.

Vision and Goals

Nathan Frohling distributed the latest version of the vision and goals statement and described how it had evolved, suggesting that it be adopted as interim or operating goals for proceeding forward, in particular for coordination with New York State agencies. Several Committee members discussed wording of the statement, including the Guiding

Principles. Mike Theiler pointed out that Goals 3, 4 and 7 were broad statements that would need to be fleshed out through the Work Team process; while greater clarity might be provided, the statement alone couldn't solve all problems. Fred Cunliffe suggested adding a footnote making clear that the language of the objectives is derived from the Blue Plan statute. As a result of the discussion, the Committee reached a consensus on adopting the statement as operating goals, and Karen Chytalo agreed that the document should be sent on to the New York agencies. In addition, the Vision and Goals Statement will be updated and remain posted on the Blue Plan website for continuing review and comment.

Subcommittees and Work Teams Update

Leaders of the Subcommittees and Work teams provided updates and led discussions of the work of their respective groups. For the Inventory and Science Subcommittee, Sylvain De Guise presented a slideshow updating the process of data assessment in preparation for developing the Resource and Use Inventory. Kevin O'Brien provided further details on the rapid assessment of data components, such as ecological data, and turning them into one-page template projects. Ian Yue for Sea Grant and Grace Reville for TNC were recognized for their efforts in conducting the rapid assessment process. In response to a question from Klee, De Guise stated that the major data gaps were associated with the designation and ecologically significant area, and older data for sea turtles and marine mammals. Ben Goetsch pointed out that much of the shellfish resources resulted from private cultivations.

The next step in the Inventory process will be to engage stakeholders and interested parties, following up on Commissioner Klee's email invitation as discussed at the March 16 Advisory Committee meeting. The first in a series of webinars will be held on June 7, 2017. The webinar topics will be organized according to the level of feedback needed from stakeholders, who will be asked if the data products accurately reflect what they know of Long Island Sound. If yes, the data will be added to the Inventory; if not, how should flaws or gaps in the data be addressed? The Inventory will consist of a series of maps and accompanying narratives, and a format is currently being developed.

A number of questions were raised about the nature of the data. Klee was concerned that a greater amount of natural resource data might create a bias against uses, but De Guise pointed out that there is a lot of use data, albeit in different formats. Karen Chytalo noted that averaging data values over time might mask changes in marine species composition, which has shifted dramatically in the Sound since the 1990s. Frohling requested that the Data & Mapping team be notified of any new datasets they weren't aware of, and pointed out that metadata for the templates was being carefully documented.

Several Committee members asked about the Inventory timeline, and we are running behind the original timeline presented at the September 2016 meeting. The Inventory will not be completed by October 2017, and only the aquaculture sector has been thoroughly engaged, thanks to the Yale Environmental Policy clinic. Additional resources will be needed to create an Inventory that will support tackling the difficult policy questions, and De Guise and Frohling noted that stakeholders would have to share some responsibility, particularly those who have some stature or credibility within a use sector.

Further discussion followed about the process of developing the Blue Plan document. De Guise noted that, once the inventory was completed, it would take at least a year to conclude the hard conversations across sectors, since we were currently engaged in the relatively easy, objective part of the process (validating objective data). Commissioner Klee intends that the draft Blue Plan to be submitted to the legislature in 2019 should be fairly complete, since state agencies have been part of the process. Frohling pointed out that the Plan would not try to change what people were already doing, and its adoption may be less difficult than in other states since there was no immediate crisis. However, Jennifer Mattei warned that a number of the Sound's resources were in great decline, and she anticipated significant conflicts between uses and preservation of natural resources. De Guise responded that the Plan could not resolve all conflicts, but would minimize them. Brian Thompson added that the Blue Plan would be enforced through existing permit processes, in which it would be a factor for consideration.

Next, Nathan Frohling provided copies of the latest draft of the Stakeholder Engagement Program (SEP) discussed at the last Advisory Committee meeting. This version would be available for the full Committee to consider and comment on by the end of June, with a view towards having the Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee approve the SEP at its July 5, 2017 conference call. Once approved, it will be posted on the website:

http://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/long_island_sound/lis_blue_plan/Blue_Plan_Stakeholder_Engagement_Program_2017_07_05.pdf Karen Chytalo noted that the NY DEC was still waiting to hear from their Governor's Office regarding the New York agencies' level of engagement in stakeholder outreach.

Brian Thompson stated that the Policy Subcommittee would soon be convening to begin the hard conversations leading to policy development. The Ecological Characterization Subcommittee will be having its first webinar tomorrow (June 7), with a number of scientists and ecological experts participating in helping the Committee to focus on the state of ecological knowledge of Long Island Sound. The Nature Conservancy expects to soon hire Nick Napoli and Emily Shumchenia, who worked on the Northeast Regional Ocean Plan, as part-time consultants to assist with organizing the ecological data, building on the work of Grace Reville. Commissioner Klee noted the additional consultants and resources being brought to bear on different aspects of the Blue Plan, and pointed out the need for oversight and coordination of all the moving pieces. He will be soon calling on Advisory Committee members to assist within their areas of expertise.

Public Comment Period

Ben Goetsch of Briarpatch Industries pointed out that the Blue Plan will affect state and local shellfish leases, and will directly impact the shellfish industry and town shellfish commissions. Shirley McCarthy asked if certain uses would still be protected if the species they impacted were in decline. Bruce Beebe and others responded that the plan is a process, and will be updated every five years. It will be forward-looking not trying to restore previous conditions but to help make better decisions for the future. Finally, it was noted that Sandy Breslin, a longtime friend and advocate of Long Island Sound, had recently passed away, and that Advisory Committee member Evan Mathews was recovering from a serious illness.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

<http://www.ct.gov/deep/lisblueplan>



Inventory and Science Subcommittee update

Sylvain De Guise

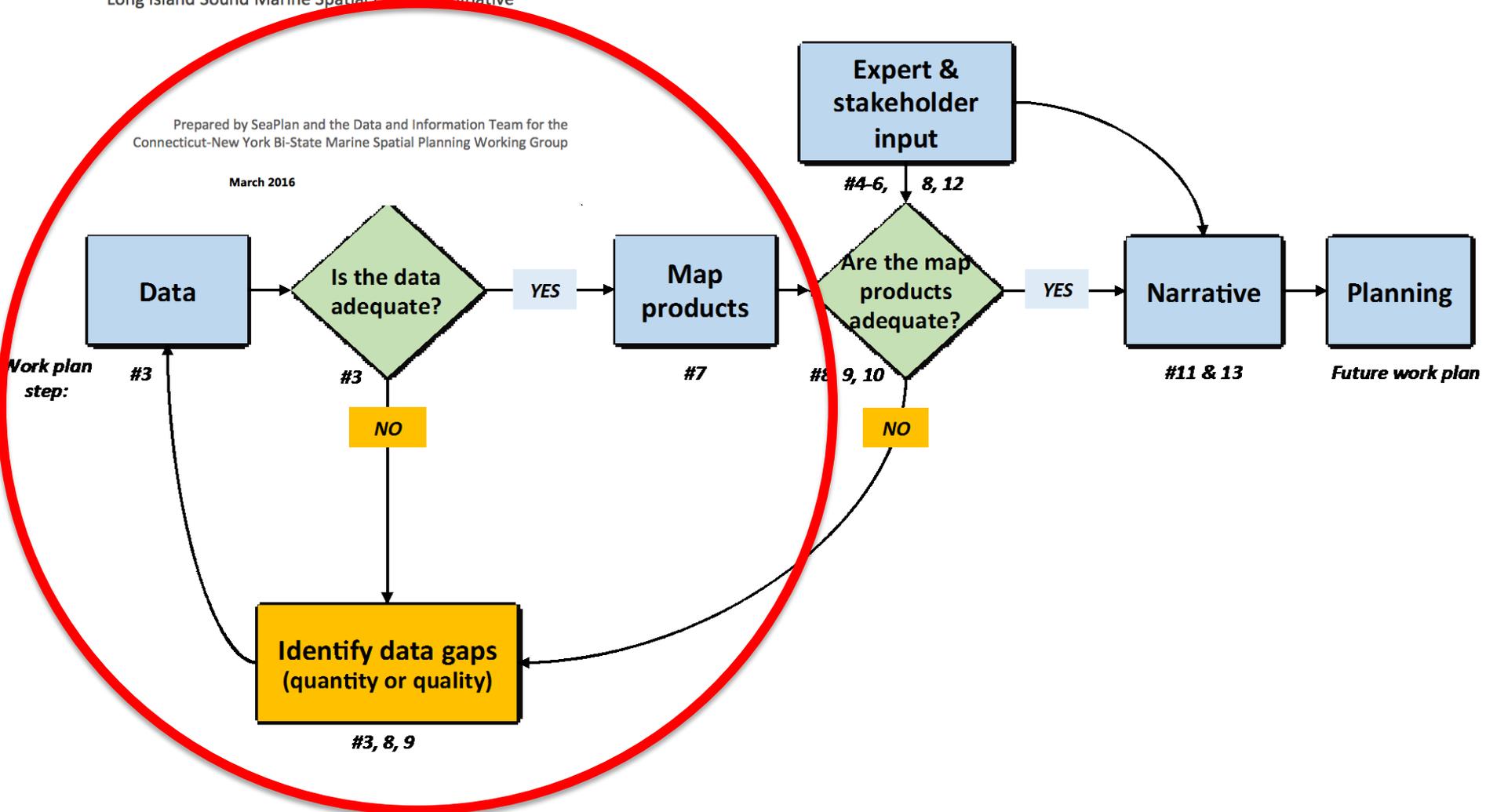
June 6, 2017

DATA AND INFORMATION PHASE II FINAL REPORT: QUALITY AND USABILITY

Long Island Sound Marine Spatial Planning Initiative

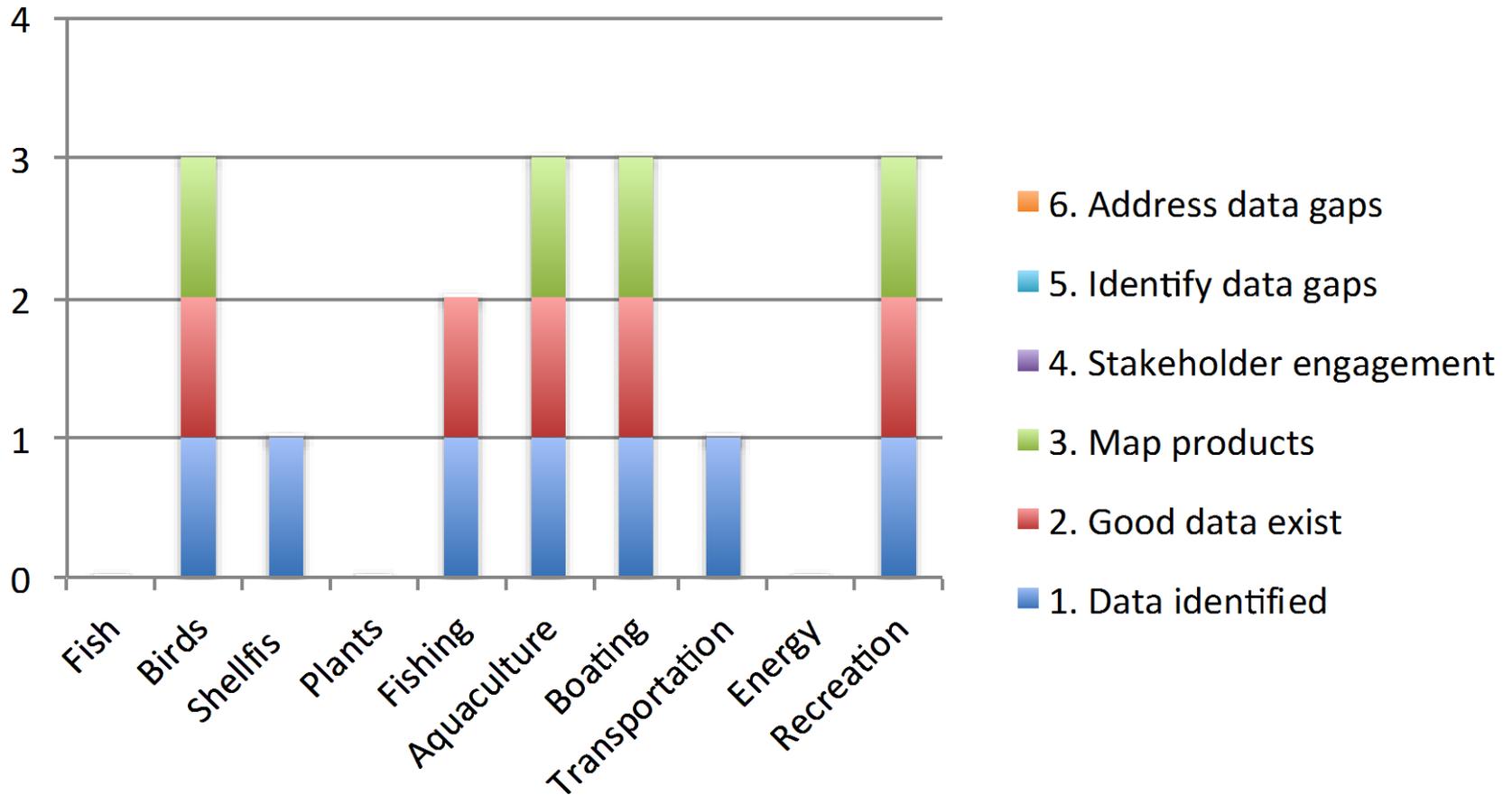
Prepared by SeaPlan and the Data and Information Team for the
Connecticut-New York Bi-State Marine Spatial Planning Working Group

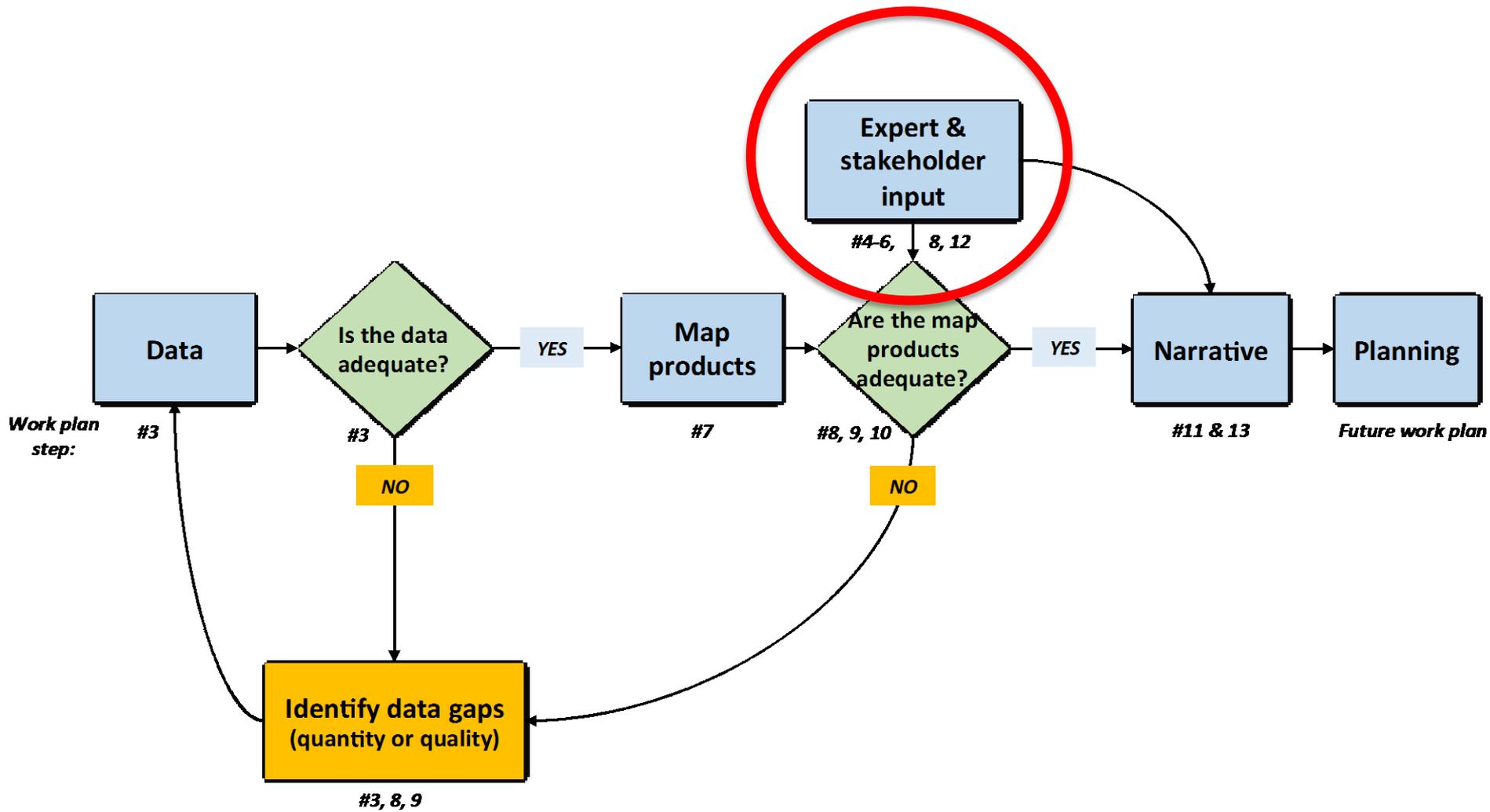
March 2016

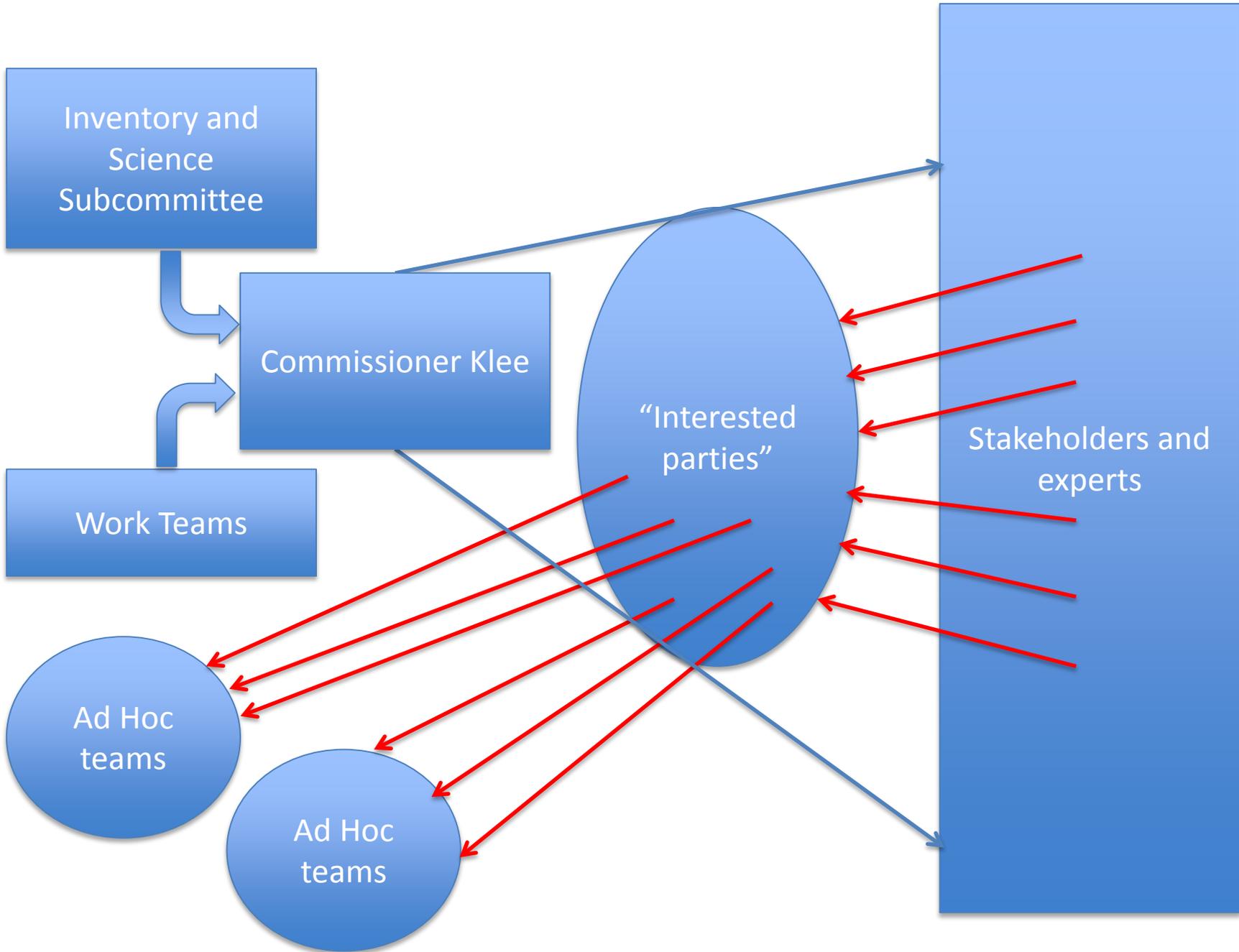


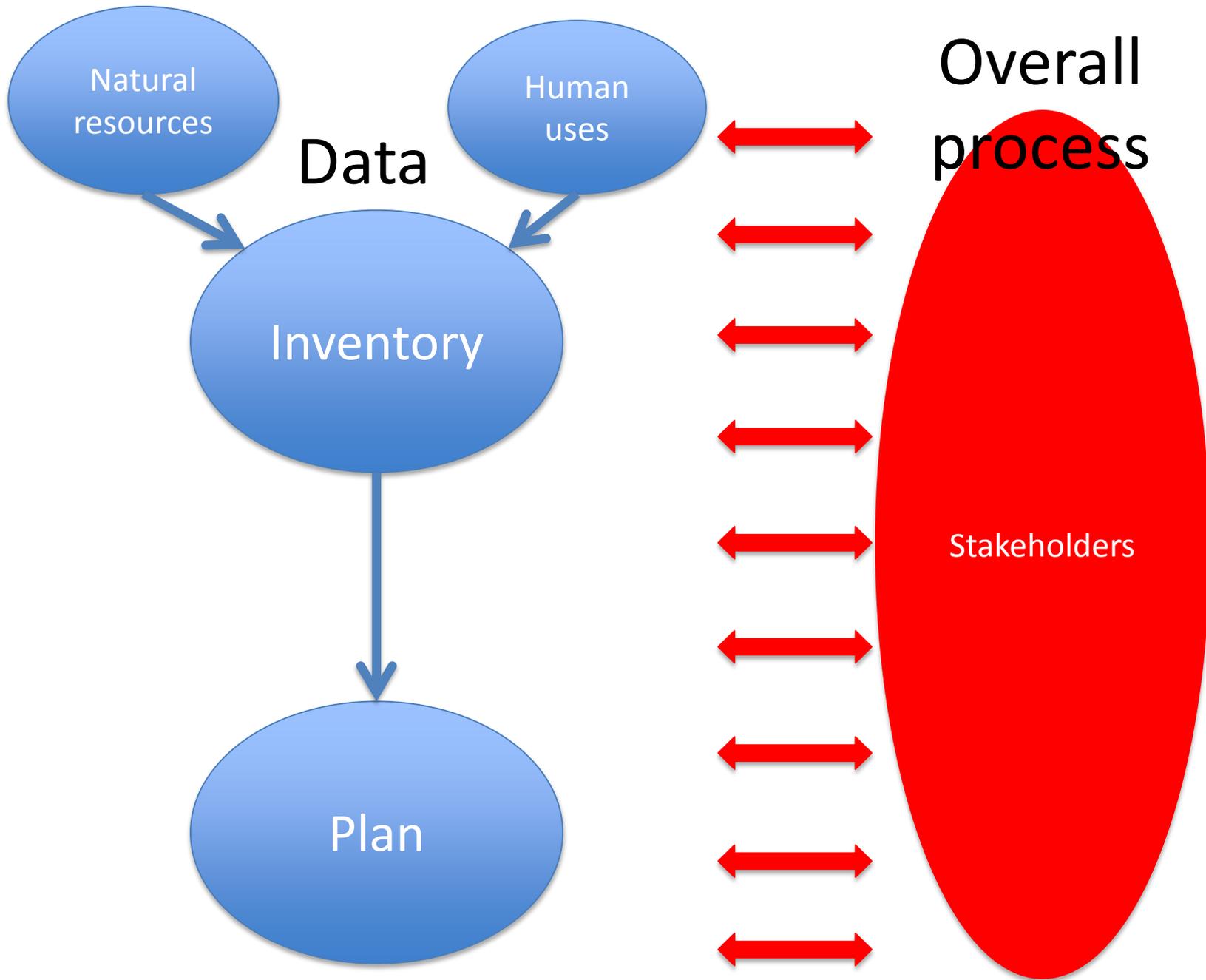
Tracking progress

Assessment









Natural Resources

Living Resources

Plants

- 1 Seaweed/Algae
- SAV
- Other

Animals

- 2 Birds
- 3 Fish
- 4 Marine Mammals & Sea Turtles
- 5 Plankton
- Marine Invertebrates & Benthic Fauna
- Other

Environmental Characteristics

- 6 *Water Chemistry/Quality*

Meteorology

Physical Oceanography

Other

Habitats

Physical

- 7 Geology/Sediments/Topography
- Bathymetry

Biological

- 8 Species Persistence Areas

Ecological

- 8 Seafloor Complexity
- Ecological Marine Units
- Habitat Classes/Units
- Benthic
- Water Column

Ecologically Significant Areas

- 17 *Essential Fish Habitat*
- 18 *Migratory Pathways*
- 19 *NDDB*
- 20 *"Ecologically Notable Areas"*

Categories with geospatial data

Categories without geospatial data, constituents interested in the process

Potentially a little bit of both

Human Uses

Institutional and Organizational

Federal Entities and Elected Officials

Governmental Jurisdictions & other related data (e.g., reg

Regional Ocean Groups and Commissions

Conservation and Environmental Protection Groups

Marine Consulting Firms

Marine Transportation and Navigation

Shipping

- 9 *Marine Passenger/Ferries*

Towing

Navigational Dredging

National Security

- 16 *Coast Guard*

Navy

Recreation and Tourism

Cruises and Island/Lighthouse Tours

Charter Fishing & Party Boats

- 10 *Recreational Sailing, Boating, kayaking*

- ? *Beach and other non consumptive activities (e.g., marine e*

- 11 *SCUBA and Recreational Diving*

Wildlife Watching/Tours/Viewing

- 12 *Waterfowl Hunting*

General

Marine & Coastal Cultural Resources

Tribal

Coastal Property Owners

Communities

Planning & Development Groups

Waterfront Business

- 13 *Historic & Archaeological*

Visual Resources

Fish and Shellfish Resources

- 14 *Aquaculture*

Finfish

Seaweed

Shellfish

General

Submerged Lands Leasing

Commercial Fishing

Recreational Fishing

Seafood Processors & Wholesalers/Aquaculture Facilities

Energy and Minerals

Oil and Gas

Renewables

Tidal

Wind

- 15 *Electrical and Transmission Lines/Energy Facilities*

Sand and Gravel

Marine & Coastal Infrastructure

Commercial Ports

- 9 *Harbors & Marinas*

Dredged Material Disposal

Other U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Projects

Shipyards & Ship Builders

Bridges & Tunnels

- 15 *Telecommunications Cables*

Research and Education

Aquariums and Museums

Colleges, Universities, and High Schools

Regional Research and Monitoring Efforts

Educational Cruises

Natural resources:

1. Seaweed, algae and SAV
2. Birds
3. Fish
4. Marine mammals and sea turtles
5. Plankton, marine inverts and benthic fauna
6. Water chemistry/quality

Human uses:

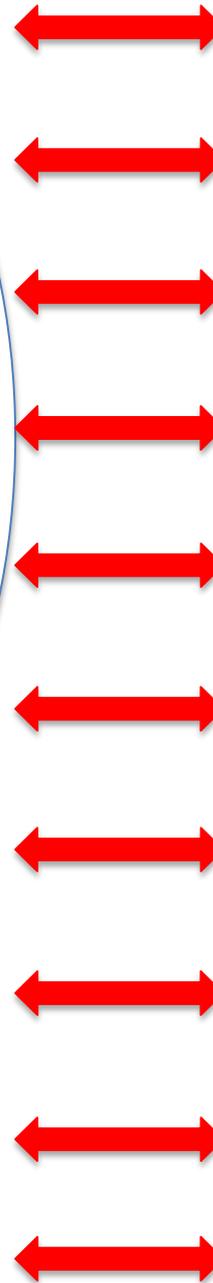
9. Marine transportation, navigation and infrastructure
10. Recreational sailing, boating and kayaking
11. Scuba
12. Waterfowl hunting
13. Historic and archeological
14. Aquaculture
15. Energy and telecom cables
16. Fishing (com. and rec.)

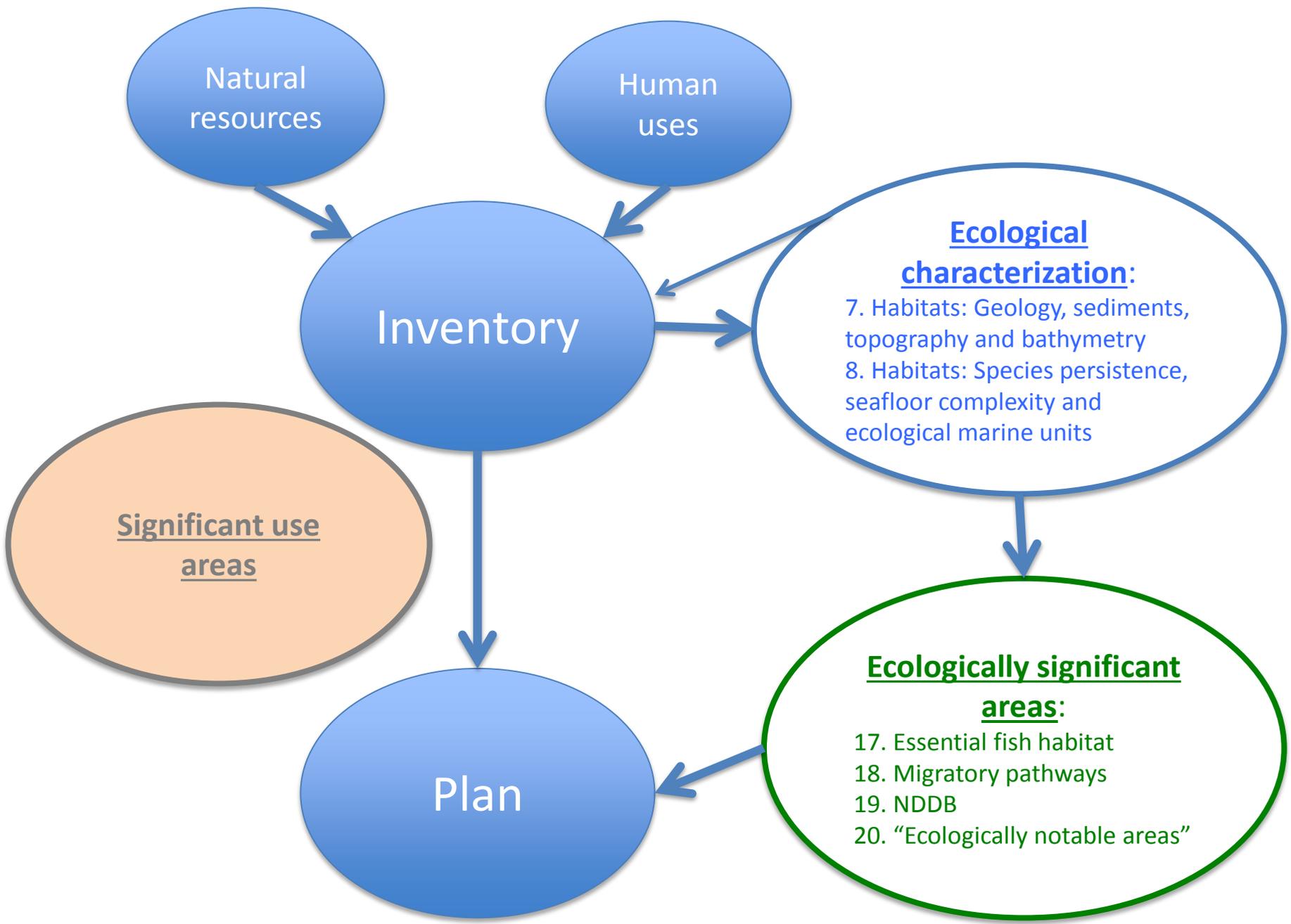
Stakeholders:

Federal entities and elected officials, Regional ocean groups and Commissions, Conservation and environmental Protection groups, Tribes, Coastal property owners, Communities, Planning & development groups, Waterfront businesses, Aquariums and museums, Colleges, universities and high schools

Inventory

Plan





Natural resources

Human uses

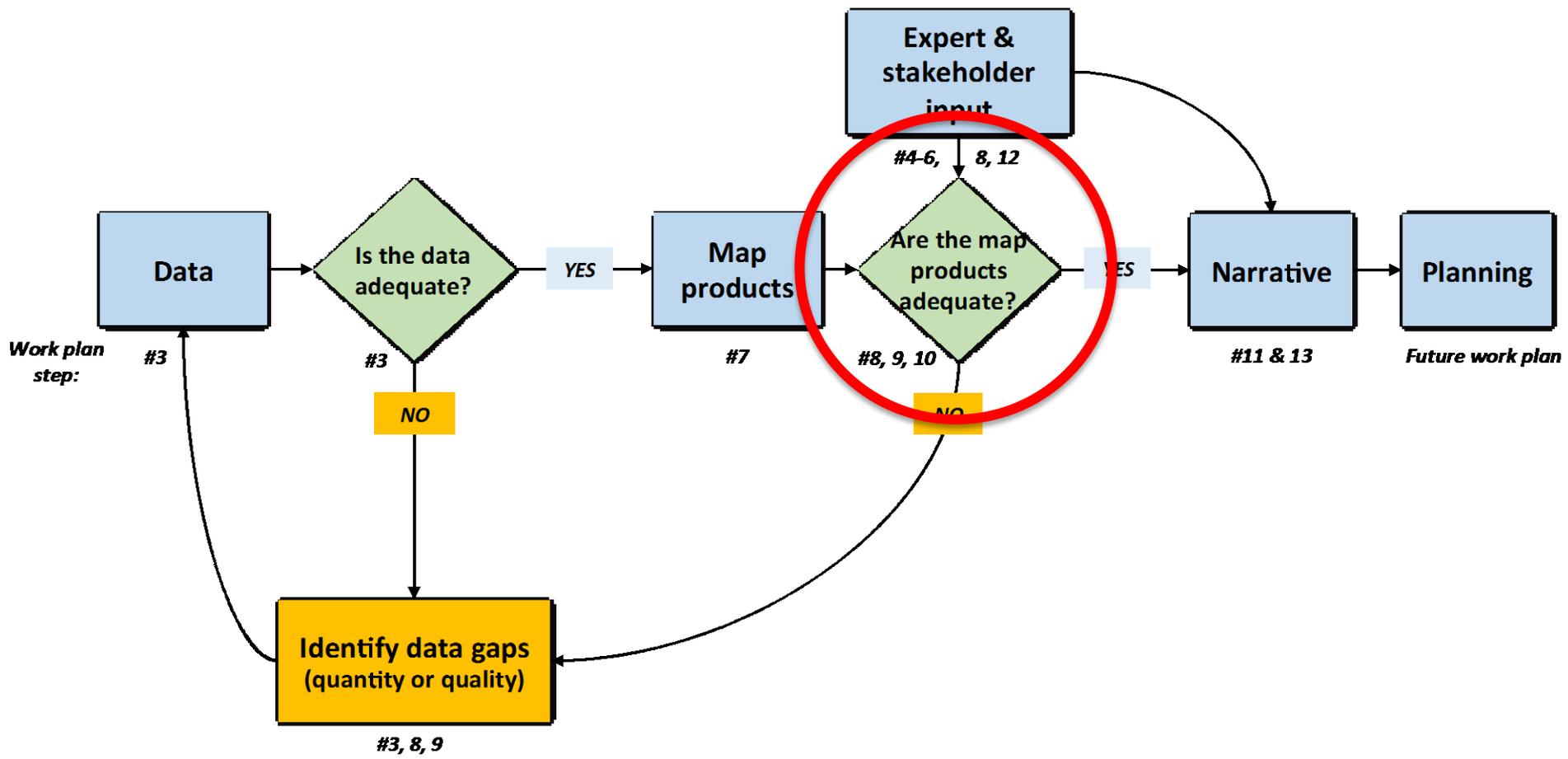
Inventory

Ecological characterization:
7. Habitats: Geology, sediments, topography and bathymetry
8. Habitats: Species persistence, seafloor complexity and ecological marine units

Significant use areas

Plan

Ecologically significant areas:
17. Essential fish habitat
18. Migratory pathways
19. NDDB
20. "Ecologically notable areas"

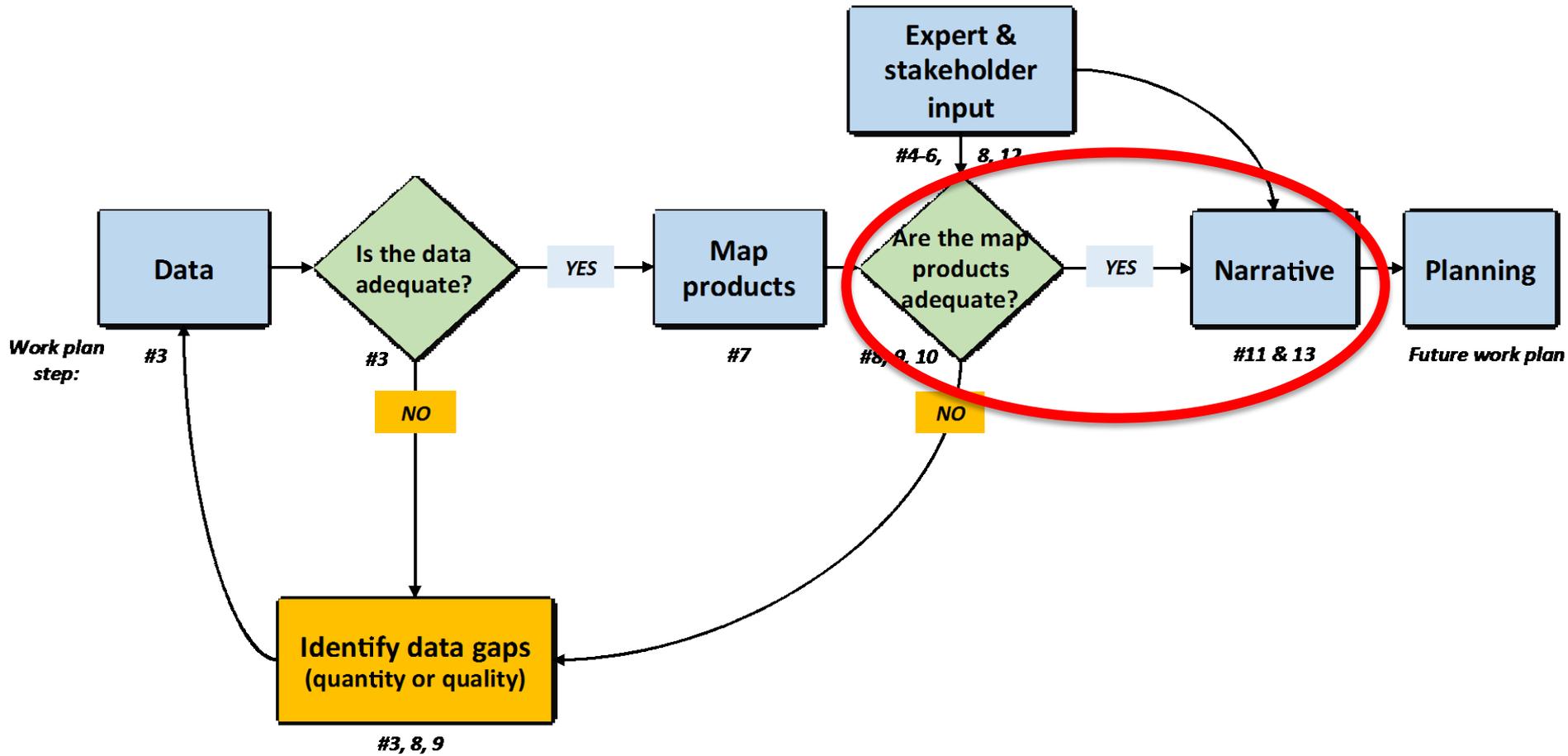


Expert and Stakeholder Engagement

- Who is **on point**? Who helps?
 - Blue Plan familiarity
 - Content and process including stakeholder engagement
 - Need consistent narrative
 - Credibility with the sector
 - Familiarity with the sector itself
 - Ability to commit necessary time and effort
- Format: 1 on 1 meetings or group meetings?
(same for all sectors?)

Building capacity

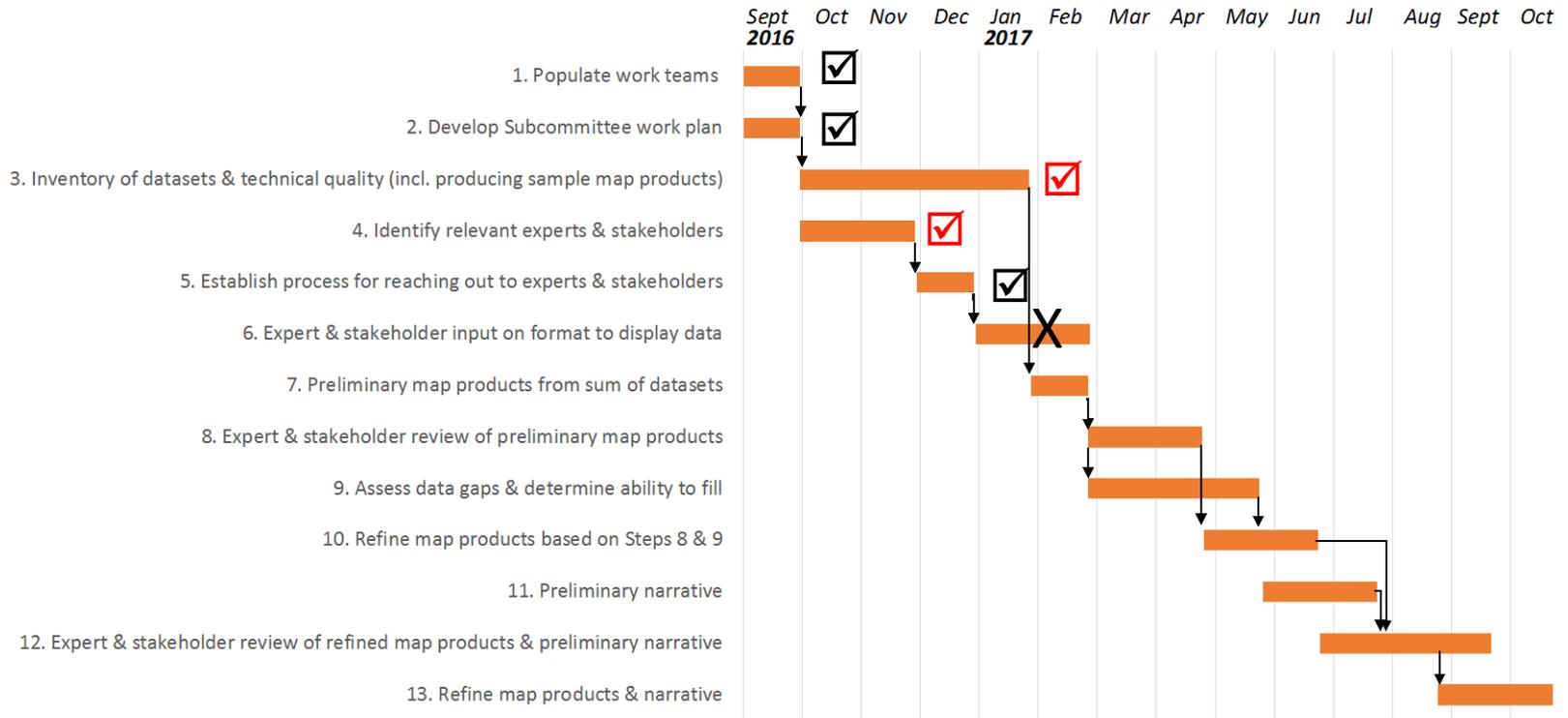
- Ian Yue (LISS Futures Funds grant)
- Yale Environmental Protection Clinic
 - Shellfish, shellfish aquaculture and recreational harvesting
- Coastal Fellow
- TNC volunteer
- Consultants?
- EPA LISS allocation (\$200k)
- More opportunities with Yale grad students?



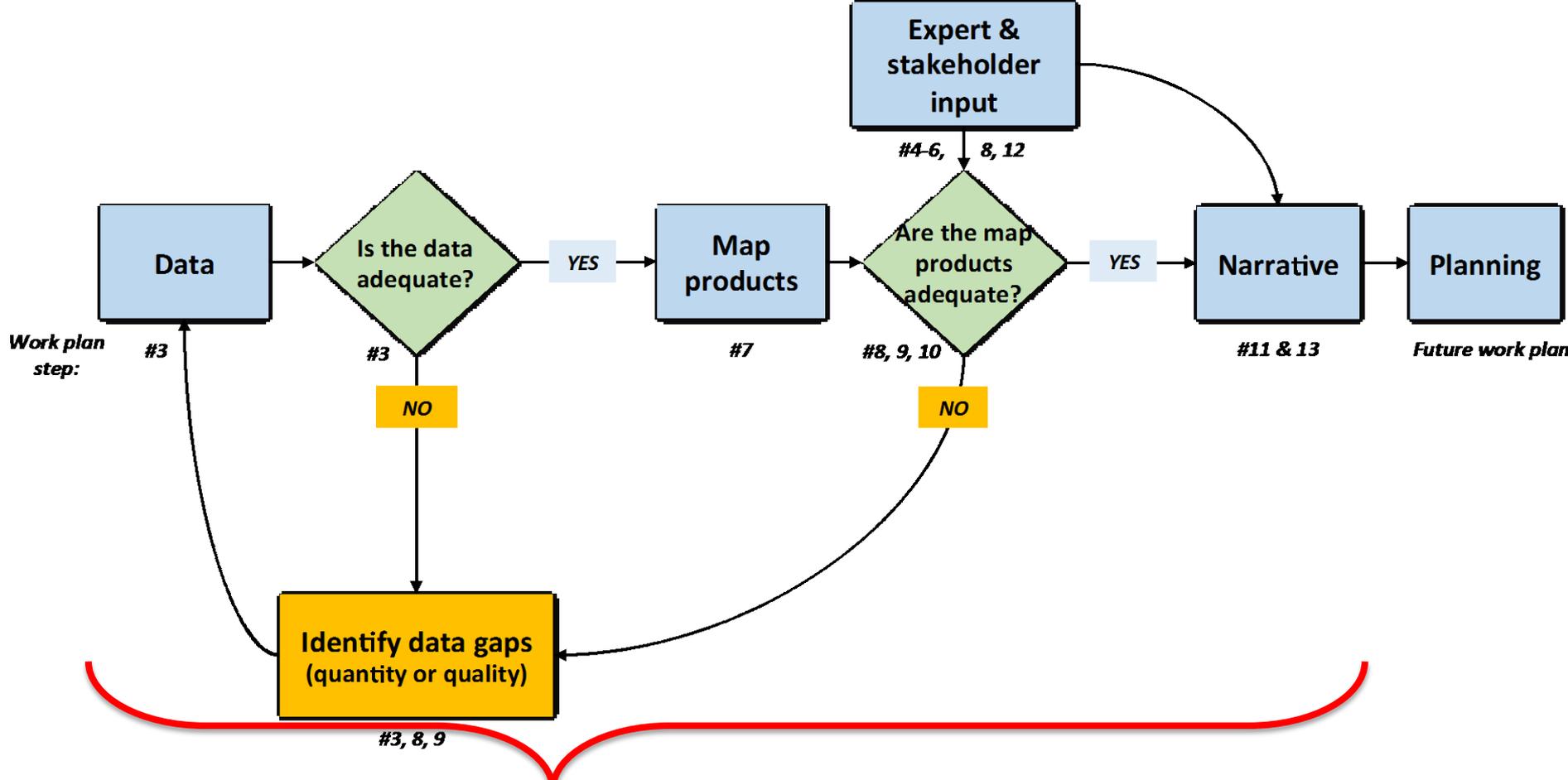
Inventory format

- Short introduction
- Map products (1-3) and narrative summarizing the information
- Assessment of data “quality”
 - Source and quality of data and meta-data
 - Accuracy, representativeness, and relevance (stakeholders and technical experts)
 - Data gaps, availability of data/datasets
- Relevance (non-spatial data)
 - Historical importance, socio-economic context
- Appendices
 - Individual map products supporting the summary map products
 - Notes on stakeholders engagement

LIS Blue Plan Inventory & Science Subcommittee: Year 1 Work Plan Timeline



Black arrows denote dependent tasks (if two tasks are connected by an arrow, the second task cannot begin until the first task is complete or at least partially complete).



Inventory
(geospatial data and narrative)

Plan
(policy, social, economic considerations)

July 2015

???

March 2019



Natural resources:

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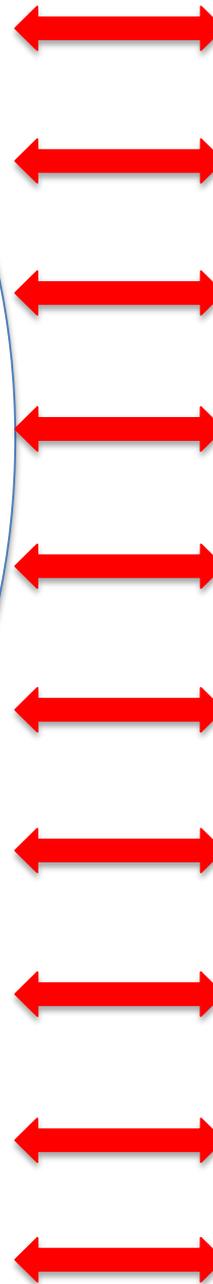
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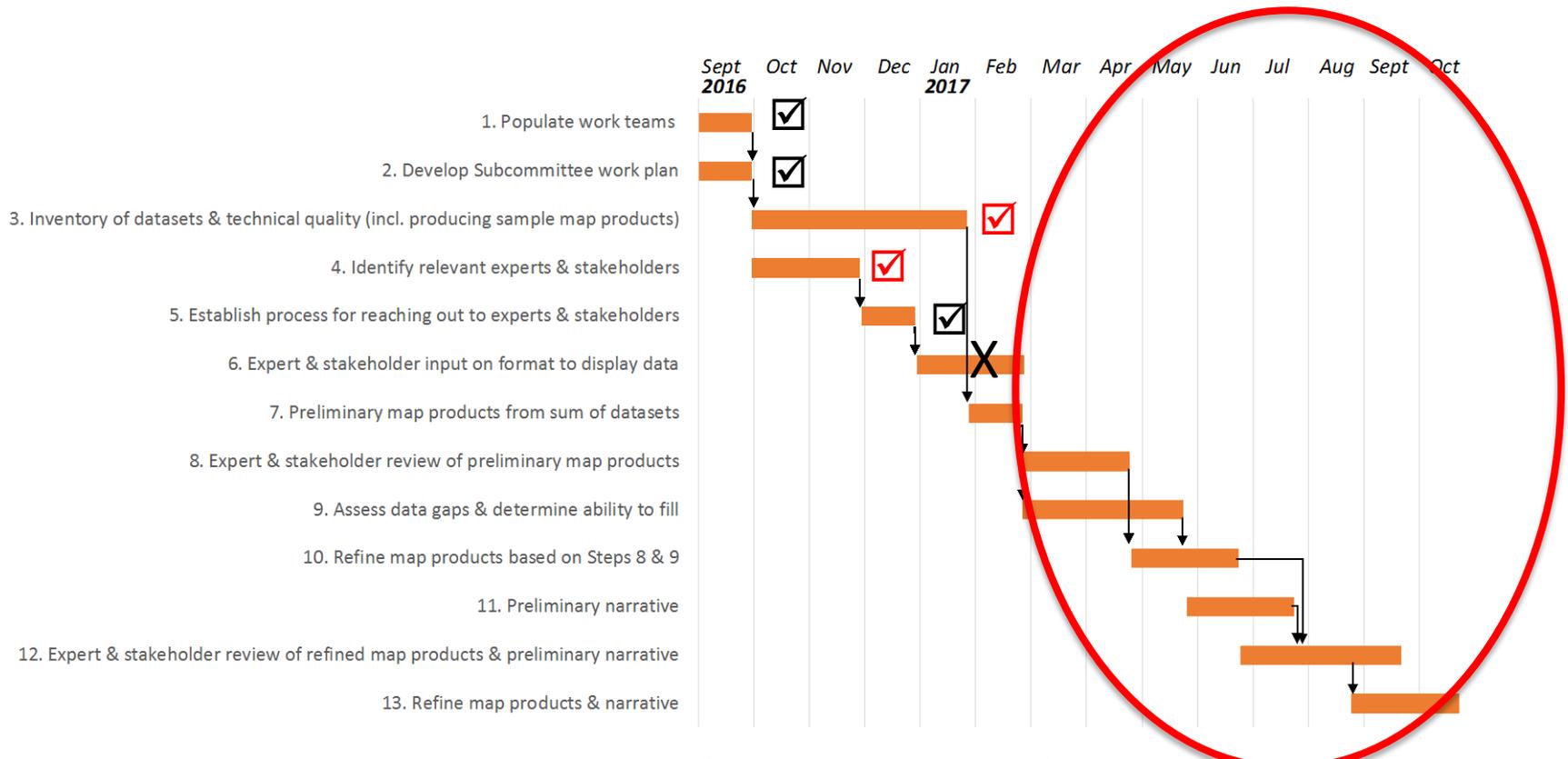
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Inventory

Plan



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