Overview:
Citizen Science Operations Committee

Background

The 2016 Citizen Science Program Blueprint made recommendations for the organizational infrastructure needed for the Council's Citizen Science Program. The proposed structure was to serve as a possible framework for the different internal support systems needed to guide the development of the Program and determine the operation of the Program once established.

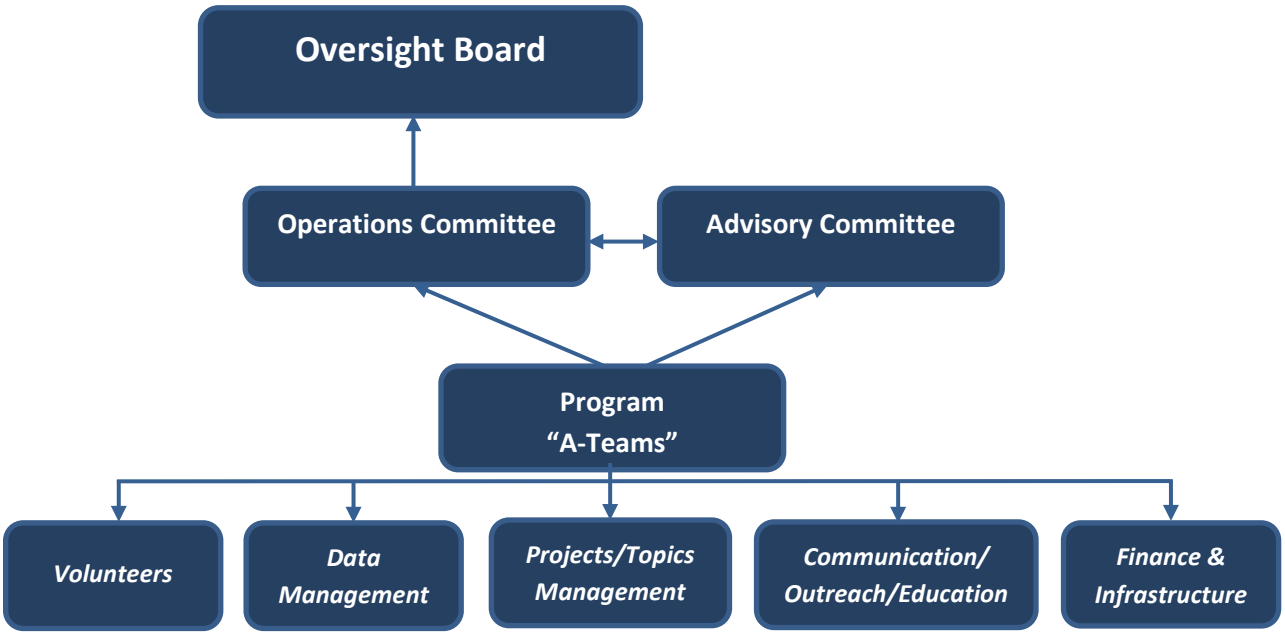
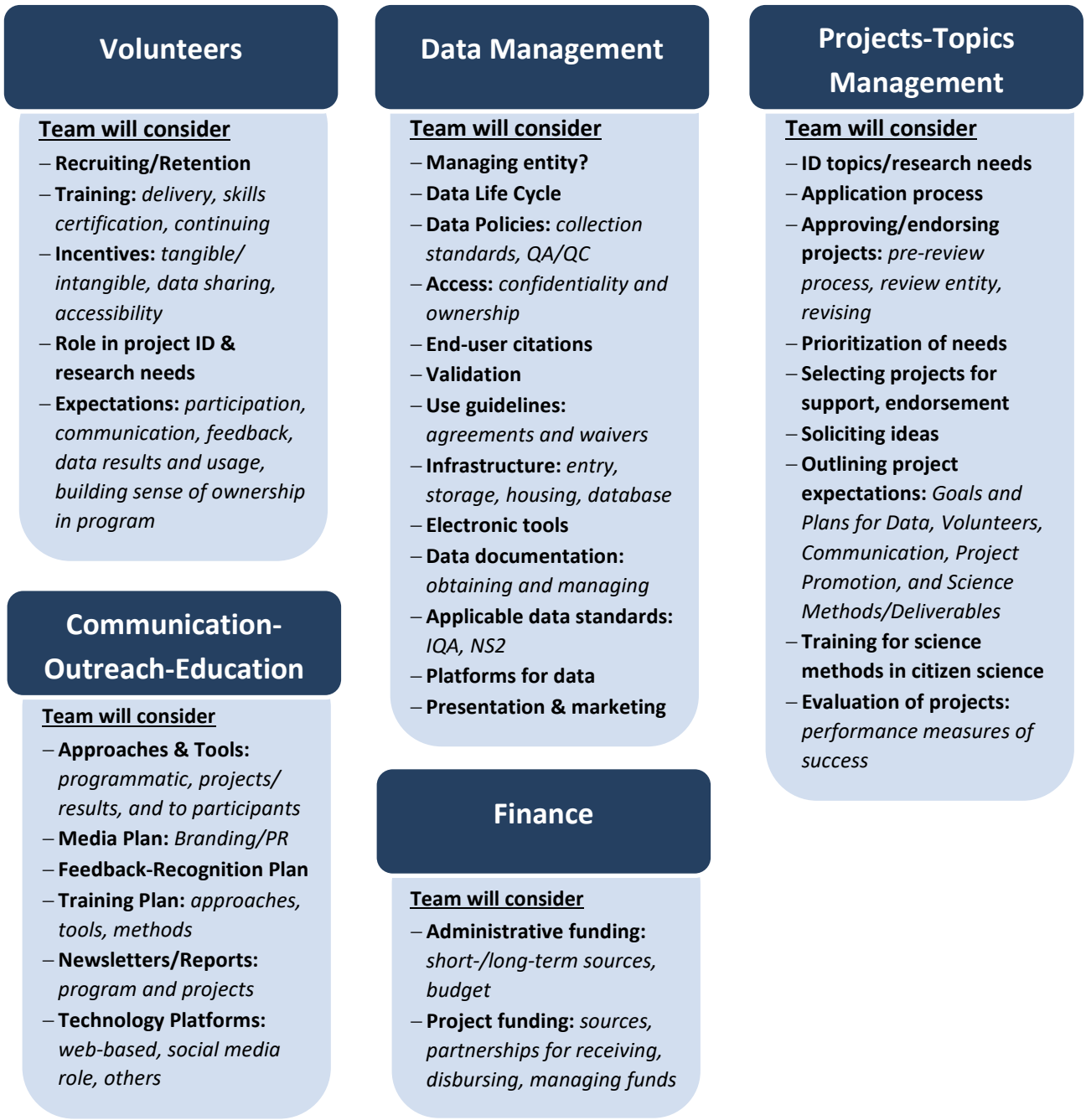


Figure 1: Proposed Citizen Science Program Organizational Infrastructure

In 2017, the Council created and appointed members to the Citizen Science Advisory Panel Pool and the five associated Action Teams. The Action Teams focused around key components for Program development including Volunteers; Data Management; Projects/Topics Management; Communication/Outreach/Education; and Finance & Infrastructure. (*See Figure 2 below.*)

The Action Teams have been meeting via webinar on a monthly basis since August 2017 to develop program recommendations on each of the five topical areas. The work of the Action Teams has been guided by Terms of Reference which outlined specific tasks and research needed to determine the best methods and mechanisms to establish for the Program to be able to support citizen science projects that meet the research needs of the Council. Each Action Team is led by two, co-chairs and the Program Manager provides support for meeting coordination and facilitating work on the Terms of Reference.

Figure 2: Citizen Science Action Teams



In January 2018, the Action Teams had a plenary, "All-Hands" Action Team meeting that brought all of the Action Team members together via webinar to review and discuss their work in each of the five Program areas. The goal of the meeting was to further develop their work into formal recommendations for the Council to consider at their March 2018 meeting. The Council reviewed and adopted 13 recommendations from the Action Teams at the March 2018 Council meeting:

Communication/Outreach/Education A-Team - Recommendations

- **RECOMMENDATION 1: Projects should consider pre-testing and post-validation of the data collection method to be used.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 2: The Program needs to establish training guidelines for projects to follow.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 3: The Program should help support evaluation of volunteer expectations and attitudes.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 4: The Program should establish guidelines for disseminating results of projects.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 5: Projects need to have a clear plan for sharing data and results of projects.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 6: The Program should support and develop guidelines for project promotion and sharing results that considers audience type.**

Finance & Infrastructure A-Team - Recommendation

- **RECOMMENDATION 1: The Council should retain operational oversight of the Citizen Science Program and identify options and pathways for securing the necessary funds to do so.**

Data Management A-Team - Recommendation

- **RECOMMENDATION 1: The Program should consider use of the Data Management Resources Inventory as a reference for development of proposal review criteria and project/data standards.**

Projects/Topics A-Team - Recommendations

- **RECOMMENDATION 1: The Program should use existing resources, such as the Council's Research & Monitoring Plan, to identify priority topics and project ideas for the Program.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 2: The Program should develop a Citizen Science Research Needs document and develop a process for soliciting additional input and review of the document on a regular basis.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 3: Project criteria should be incorporated, when possible, into a SAFMC Citizen Science Project Endorsement Program.**

Volunteers A-Team - Recommendations

- **RECOMMENDATION 1: The Program needs to support development of a Volunteer Interest Form to serve as the initial mechanism for engaging volunteers in the Program and to better understand the demographics, interests, skills and experience of potential volunteers.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 2: The Program needs to develop Training Plan guidelines to help projects develop initial and continuing training efforts for different types of projects.**

The Action Teams continue their work to address items in the Terms of Reference. The next step needed to implement the Action Teams initial recommendations adopted by the Council is to develop Standard Operation Policies & Procedures (SOPPs) for the Citizen Science Program.

Citizen Science Operations Committee – Structure and Function

As identified in the Blueprint, the role of the Operations Committee is to draft SOPPS and policies, provide program direction/multi-partner support, and operational advice, as needed.

Members of the Operations Committee would consist of an A-Team co-chair, SEFSC designee, SERO designee, and SSC designee. Staff would provide support to the committee to help translate Action Team recommendations into development of the SOPPs.

The Committee will review draft documents via webinar and meet in-person one to times per year (as needed) to further coordinate development of SOPPs for the Program.