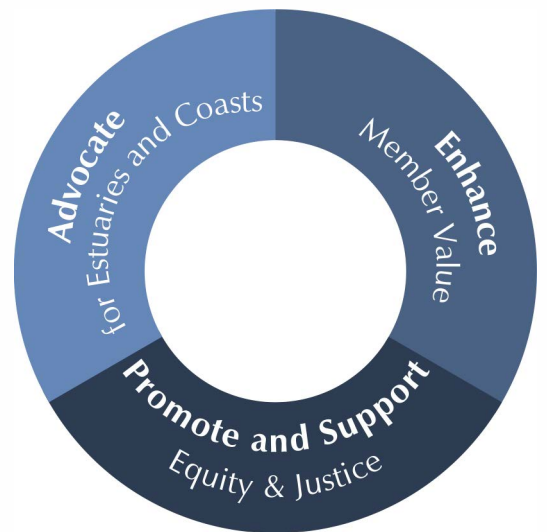




## Visions V: 2023–2026 CERF Strategic Plan

### CERF's Strategic Goals:

- 1. Advocate for Estuaries and Coasts.** Address global coastal and estuarine ecosystems challenges and opportunities by advocating for the use of sound science in policy and management.
- 2. Enhance Member Value.** Be the first choice for education, career advancement, volunteer engagement, and networking for estuarine and coastal professionals at all stages of their careers.
- 3. Promote and Support Equity and Justice.** Foster greater diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) in science management and ensure that DEIJA is considered in all the work of CERF.



**In four years...**

CERF and its members are at the center of the world's most urgent conversations regarding the science, management, and stewardship of estuarine and coastal ecosystems. CERF is globally recognized for bringing together a diverse community of individuals dedicated to addressing the challenges we face and providing research and knowledge to support management and policy decisions. CERF is the first organization individuals turn to when they seek to advance their careers, expand their knowledge, and ensure their efforts to solve challenges associated with coastal and estuarine ecosystems can be accomplished.

# Strategic Goal I

**Advocate for Estuaries and Coasts.** Address global coastal and estuarine ecosystems challenges and opportunities by advocating for the use of sound science in policy and management.

- Promote the application of research and science to the benefit of coastal and estuarine communities.
- Make scientific and research findings accessible and understandable to the public and key decision makers.
- Help professionals in the field contextualize work for greater understanding and impact.
- Develop and translate knowledge for policy- and management-directed action.
- Collaborate with Affiliate Societies and other scientific societies to address current, local, regional, national, and global challenges to amplify our voice.
- Identify and collaborate with underrepresented, frontline, and justice communities to promote the co-production of research.

## Outcomes

- Improved estuarine and coastal health and resilience to climate change and other anthropogenic stressors.
- Increased influence on and engagement with policy makers and decision makers.
- Science is mobilized into local, regional, national, and international policy.
- Contacted as a trusted, reliable, and authoritative source for scientific research and information related to the management and stewardship of estuarine and coastal ecosystems.
- Expand CERF's membership.
- Increase members' connectedness with and confidence in CERF policy work.
- Coastal communities see benefits of research.
- Increased awareness and engagement of CERF with the larger scientific community, practitioners, educators, decision makers, advocacy groups, traditional and local knowledge makers, and the public.

## Strategic Goal II

**Enhance Member Value.** Be the first choice for education, career advancement, volunteer engagement and networking for estuarine and coastal professionals at all stages of their careers.

- Support progression within the field that benefits members across all career stages, pathways, and transitions with educational resources based on goals, needs, and values.
- Develop or enhance training and education programs focused on key underserved audiences.
- Use a variety of technological solutions to increase knowledge sharing, collaboration, mentorship, and professional growth.
- Connect, convene, and collaborate with Affiliate Societies and other local and regional groups to conduct research, deliver education, and create a greater sense of community and belonging.
- Grow a robust online collaborative community of individuals who can assist in peer-to-peer learning, knowledge sharing, and networking.
- Improve accessibility to CERF education, tools, mentoring, and resources.
- Examine and adjust CERF's business model to ensure individuals and organizations can engage in ways that are most meaningful and relevant to them.
- Provide training in business and leadership skills to prepare members for diverse careers and transitions.
- Increase opportunities for students and those from underfunded and underrepresented groups to attend CERF programs and events.
- Develop a communication strategy to inform and engage membership in CERF's policy, management, education, and DEIJA work.

### Outcomes

- Increase in number of students and early career professionals who join CERF and stay members throughout their careers.
- A civic-minded and welcoming community within CERF.
- Improve CERF's financial stability and solvency.

## Strategic Goal II cont.

- Increase membership across multiple career types, including managers and decision-makers
- Increase engagement of volunteers, as well as increase participation in CERF programming and contributions
- Increase member satisfaction, retention, and referrals
- Develop new programs and acquire new technology that supports members throughout their careers

## Strategic Goal III

**Promote and Support Equity and Justice.** Foster greater diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility (DEIJA) in the coastal and estuarine research, management, and policy communities and ensure that DEIJA is considered in all the work of CERF.

- Incorporate DEIJA into all aspects of the work of CERF by increasing access and identifying and reducing barriers that lead to disparities.
- Elevate and enable equity by identifying and creating transparent pathways to volunteer positions within CERF, including leadership positions.
- Work with Affiliate Societies to achieve better connections to minority-serving institutions, 2-year colleges, and local community organizations.
- Establish CERF as a leader for DEIJA through publications and other product development, and implement methods to track, measure, and hold the organization accountable for these efforts.
- Improve capacity for translating and communicating research to different audiences.
- Curate and make available DEIJA training programs, resources, and support through CERF offerings.
- Create inclusive practices at conferences and events to foster a welcoming environment.
- Expand and improve existing programming focused on broadening participation in coastal and estuarine science, management, and policy.

## Strategic Goal III cont.

### Outcomes

- CERF is a leader for supporting underserved and underrepresented coastal communities
- Strengthen Affiliate Societies' agency in the DEIJA space and connections with the community
- Recruit and retain a broader workforce who feels welcome and included in the advancement of science, management, and policy related to coastal and estuarine ecosystems
- Increase membership by 100% of non-White members in four years
- Continue the evolution of CERF to increase diversity beyond race and ethnicity



### Reaching Our Goals

The implementation of this strategic plan will require the development of specific actions and timelines to achieve the stated goals and outcomes, and metrics to assess success. The Governing Board and its committees will develop detailed work plans guided by this plan and regularly adjusted as goals are achieved and conditions change. The Governing Board will routinely review the strategic plan over its four-year lifespan to ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to the needs of our community.

