

Partnering and Outreach

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's independent status is critical to fulfilling its unique mission. Its independence provides the flexibility to act upon the substantial challenges and opportunities it faces. The agency must recognize its challenges and opportunities and capitalize on its uniqueness by aggressively partnering and reaching out to external organizations that can assist it in fulfilling its mission.

The commission also operates in a highly competitive environment. That competition may assume many forms. Some, but not all, of which include:

1. The various demands and uses imposed upon our natural resources.
2. Public access concerns.
3. The commission's ability to attract, equip, and retain qualified employees.
4. The need to execute tasks competitively.
5. The numerous recreational alternatives available to end users.
6. Competition from other agencies for funding, regulatory jurisdiction, and program administration.
7. Access to funding sources.

These factors represent significant, ongoing concerns. They must be met with new and creative approaches. A broad appreciation for the importance of leveraging and optimizing the allocation of the agency's assets is required to augment, enhance, and supplement its efforts.

To that end, the commission will continuously evaluate the advisability of partnering and reaching out to diverse public and private entities while recognizing that all decisions with this regard will be conducted in accordance with applicable rules, contracts, and regulations.

In making these decisions, the agency should consider, but not be limited to, the following factors:

1. The scale needed to economically justify performing certain tasks in house.
2. The business risk associated with internalizing certain operations and assuming the fixed costs that accompany such a decision. Partnering may result in greater budgetary flexibility through converting fixed costs to variable costs.
3. Agency operating flexibility. The merits of internalizing programs and operations relative to the cost of change should be evaluated. Such cost considerations may include the potential for operational inertia and the agency's willingness to remain current with new technologies and approaches.
4. Long term, strategic flexibility. The potential that new initiatives and policies may be difficult to embrace in the face of high fixed costs and entrenched programs should be reviewed.

5. Capital investment requirements. The benefits of utilizing someone else's capital investment and preserving the commission's assets should always be considered. Internalization may require significant investment and reduce the flexibility with which the agency allocates its finite resources.
6. The need for ongoing investment. It is important to guard against departments and programs becoming self-perpetuating and be mindful that substantial, additional investments may be necessary to preserve the value of the original investment.
7. The importance of nurturing and maintaining access to external research, know-how, and education. The commission should avoid the risk of foreclosing on outside expertise because it has put itself in competition with external suppliers.
8. The need to maintain operational balance. The agency will weigh the possibility that decisions to produce something in house might compromise other initiatives and thwart the agency's ability to proactively pursue its mission.
9. The requirement to maintain internal vigor. Vertical integration frequently means that services are delivered through a captive relationship. Such arrangements may dull the agency's willingness to change. Incentives to change and compete vigorously must be pursued and encouraged. Activities that compromise such initiatives should be avoided.
10. Timeliness. Timely execution is regarded as an essential component of the proactive pursuit of the agency's mission. The agency must avoid the possibility of unreasonable response times and lost opportunities in its competitive world by promoting the prompt and effective execution of all board policies. Comparing the time and risk associated with training, developing, and equipping the proper people versus developing partnerships and reaching out should be an ongoing aspect of this analysis.