

RHODE ISLAND BLUE ECONOMY TECHNOLOGY CLUSTER (RI BETC) OVERARCHING NARRATIVE

SYNOPSIS

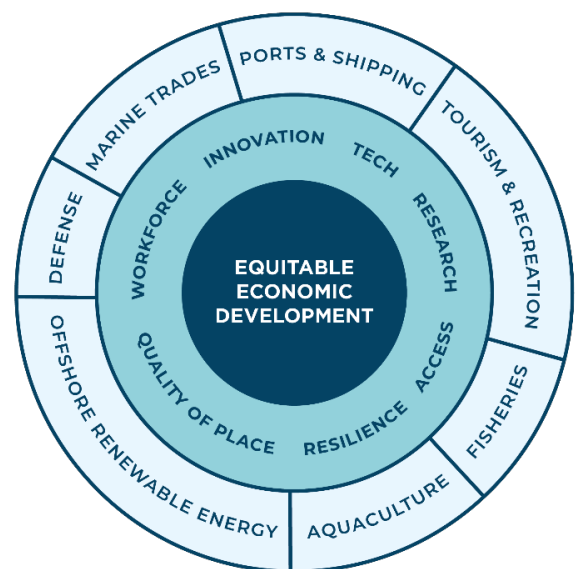
Vision

As the nation's Ocean State, Rhode Island's economic future is bright blue. The proposed RI Blue Economy Technology Cluster (RI BETC) will establish RI and Southern New England as the leading global center of the Blue Economy with equity and sustainability at its core. RI BETC builds upon existing regional, national, and global assets and is backed by a consortium of industry, government, philanthropic, non-profit, and academic partners. RI's Blue Economy spans seven industries: ports and shipping, defense, marine trades, ocean-based renewables, aquaculture, fisheries, and tourism and recreation. The RI BETC Coalition requests a total of \$78.10M in EDA funding. The Coalition has identified over \$14.97M in private and State funds, \$8.40M in in-kind support, as well as an opportunity for regional collaboration in the Blue Economy with Connecticut (CT) and Massachusetts (MA).

The RI BETC goals are ambitious, based on international Blue Economy benchmarks from Denmark, the Netherlands, and Portugal. Namely, we aim over the next 10 years to reach up to 4X faster growth in Gross Regional Product (GRP) and up to 5X-7X faster job growth in this sector over the economy-wide baseline in RI. The RI BETC proposes nine Component Projects, to catalyze the outsized growth potential of the Blue Economy and benefit populations that have historically been underrepresented in high-paying jobs and wealth-building pathways, both in RI and regionally. The Component Projects have the potential to transform RI's Blue Economy and nearly double its size, with up to 54,000 additional Blue Economy jobs, and with a projected annual Blue Economy GRP of \$15-25B within 10 years. Additionally, Blue Economy growth in RI will create multiplier jobs in related industries across Southern New England.

The RI BETC's Definition of Blue Economy

Historically the term 'Blue Economy' has no universally accepted definition and is often used to reference extractive industries such as fossil fuels, as well as maritime shipping and tourism. The RI BETC is taking this unique opportunity to set a 21st century definition for the Blue Economy; one that is centered on equitable economic development and environmental sustainability through advanced technologies and renewable energy. The seven industries that make up the RI BETC's definition of the Blue Economy are interconnected, and together, the RI BETC can expand economic opportunities that are aligned with climate adaptation efforts, leading to growth in the sector that will be resilient and responsive to the effects of climate change. By centering our vision on sustainability and equity, we believe we will transform RI's, Southern New England's, and the US' Blue Economy.



Success Metrics - See Section on Detailed Overview on Expected Outcomes.

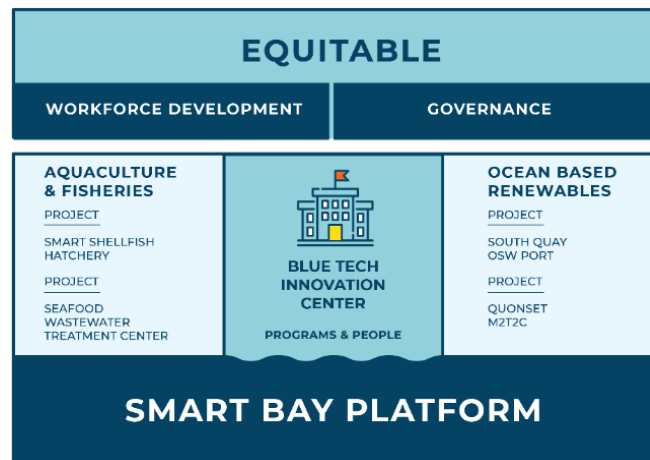
Historical Context

The EDA-approved 2020 RI Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS, “RI Innovates 2.0”) identified the Blue Economy as the industry RI is uniquely positioned to leverage for future economic growth. **All RI BETC Component Projects align with RI Innovates 2.0, and collectively form a cluster of inter-related projects that leverage and amplify each other to catalyze the world’s leading RI Blue Economy cluster.** Building on the strong statewide collaboration on the Blue Economy dating back several years, RI Commerce and URI partnered to convene a “Blue Economy Working Group” in May 2021 to support Governor McKee’s 2030 planning process. This precursor to the RI BETC coalition, met monthly and developed a strategy for RI’s Blue Economy, culminating in RI BETC’s Phase 1 application. The Phase 2 application period added momentum and strength, with increased partner collaboration to define and develop projects and roles. This investment is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to accelerate and scale the state’s long-standing efforts to make RI the center of the American Blue Economy.

RI BETC Platform, Programs & People, and Projects

Platform – SmartBay (Projects 1 & 3):

SmartBay is an infrastructure platform that spans all seven sub-industries of RI’s definition of the Blue Economy. The next generation ocean activities defining the Blue Economy’s future will include infrastructure-based sensing and adaptation to monitor unseen harm from climate change, while improving our ability to map and identify the best places to initiate restoration/planting where water



levels change.¹ RI recognizes and seizes this opportunity – SmartBay is designed as the RI BETC’s marquee project to develop and deploy a key Narragansett Bay-based platform that will create and leverage the next generation of maritime technology, sensing, and telecommunications equipment to enable accurate climate change forecast models, clean energy transportation, autonomous shipping, undersea communications, and robotic sensors and vehicles. SmartBay is predicated on five years of planning, prototyping, and testing supported by the current EPSCoR Track I award to URI, which will prove invaluable in SmartBay’s design, build, and launch.

Programs & People – The Blue Technology Innovation Center (BTIC – see Projects 2 & 3):

The BTIC, strategically located on the URI Bay Campus, will establish and accelerate RI’s innovation environment. It will bring together the world’s leading Blue Tech accelerators, venture capital, startups, industry, academia, ocean and coastal resilience experts, and non-profits. This unique collection of expertise and programs will enable RI **to become one of the foremost ocean-related**

¹ According to the Ocean Foundation

innovation hubs in the world and a premier location to locate, start, and grow a company within this sector. **The BTIC's network of Programs and People, particularly the Blue Minority Business Accelerator, will support innovation in Blue Tech for people historically underrepresented from tech jobs and tech business ownership.**

Equitable Workforce Development and Governance (see Projects 4 & 9): RI BETC's workforce development and governance are cross-cutting strategies that will impact the design, implementation, evaluation, and accountability of each of the RI BETC Projects, and ensure that their benefits are distributed equitably. The RI BETC will create the Rhode Island Blue Economy Partnership, a new partnership-based governance entity to ensure transparency and accountability, with cross-sector membership – industry leaders and employers, academia, nonprofits, labor unions, workforce development experts, and community-based organizations (CBOs). (see: *Engaging Equitably*)

Projects – Ocean-Based Renewables (Projects 5 & 6): The Offshore Wind (OSW) capacity on the East Coast is projected to reach 20 GW by 2035. The sector is expected to create 20K-35K full-time jobs on the East Coast by 2028, with associated capital investments estimated over \$70B. **RI is the geographic center of the East Coast waterfront, making the State the most financially sound and operationally efficient location to support OSW construction, assembly, deployment, operations, and maintenance.** The two OSW projects, the **South Quay Marine Terminal (SQMT)** and the **Quonset Multi-Modal Offshore Wind Transport and Training Center (QMT²C)** will address the region's needs for deep water port capacity to support OSW plant construction and assembly, and for a multimodal operational transport and training hub. These projects will leverage SmartBay and the innovation ecosystem supported by the BTIC to attract OSW companies, and will also be supported by OSW-specific workforce programs and the newly created Southern New England OSW Partnership (details below).

Projects – Aquaculture and Fisheries (Projects 7 & 8): RI is proposing two tech-based investments to improve productivity and increase output in areas where it has a competitive advantage. **The Smart Shellfish Hatchery** will be one of the specialized innovation nodes in the BTIC's network, bringing together local companies, academic institutions, and nonprofits to advance research and development (R&D) and productivity in shellfish seed production. **The Hatchery will interface with SmartBay's sensor network and help protect its underwater equipment by using some of the Hatchery's oysters, forming a truly symbiotic relationship.** RI has also identified an opportunity to unburden its squid producers and processors, who land over half of the East Coast's squid catch, but cannot scale their operations due to the state's lack of wastewater processing infrastructure. **The RI BETC will solve this constraint by increasing the wastewater processing capacity at the existing Scarborough Wastewater Treatment Facility in Narragansett.** This improvement is expected to increase local squid processing capacity of at least another 20M pounds annually and increase jobs for fishermen and processors. Both investments will contribute towards greater food security in RI, and supply the growing demand

across the East Coast, taking advantage of RI's uniquely favorable regulatory landscape that allows out of state shipping.

The Southern New England Regional Offshore Wind Partnership

The RI BETC has made it a priority to develop deeper regional cluster collaboration, demonstrated by our commitment to execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to establish the Southern New England Regional Offshore Wind Partnership. This regional partnership, established between RI, MA, and CT, is committed to identifying mutual areas of interest to make substantive, joint progress to support and design initiatives that are focused on equity and sustainability in OSW. The MOU will include specific, time-bound goals and corresponding activities around supply chain, workforce development, and marketing. The total \$500K investment includes a \$100K investment from the State (see budget for *Project 4*).

DESCRIPTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL REGION(S) SERVED

The RI BETC is projected to have economic impacts across Southern New England region and beyond the primary service area is the State of Rhode Island. The State includes the following five counties (listed by FIPS codes): 44001 Bristol County, 44003 Kent County, 44005 Newport County, 44007 Providence County, 44009 Washington County.

Communities, Target Participants and Stakeholders Engaged - *See Engaging Equitably.*

Regional Assets

Investment in RI's place-based, institutional, and programmatic assets will make the state the world's leading Blue Economy cluster. The work to refine the list of assets will continue after Phase 2 application.

Place-based assets include the unique bathymetry of Narragansett Bay, which enables efficient and effective deployment of sensors. The State's unique central geographic location along the East Coast cannot be replicated, and is an essential enabler for the SmartBay, OSW, and future renewable energy source deployments. **Institutional assets** such as the URI Bay Campus, recognized for its world-renowned ocean-sciences programs (URI Grad School of Oceanography), and the transformative State Education Centers in communities across the state are powerful platforms for growth. **Program assets** such as the State's nationally renowned Real Jobs RI (RJRI) have established strong industry connections and complemented by thriving business accelerator programs and diversity-based entrepreneurship programs, such as Social Enterprise Greenhouse, MassChallenge, 401 Tech Bridge, and others, will make RI the best location to start or expand a business or seek a good job in the Blue Economy.

These components, coupled with our intention to ensure those economic benefits are felt equitably in the long run for individuals that are from historically underrepresented communities - including women, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), immigrants, and residents from low-income communities – will help us realize our vision for RI's Blue Economy.

DETAILED OVERVIEW OF PRIVATE-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The RI BETC has and will continue to engage industry to ensure alignment between our vision, Projects, and industry needs, and that has included a **public series with Blue Economy stakeholders as part of the Governor and Lt. Governor’s RI 2030 brainstorming and planning.**

2022 RI Innovation Campus Request for Proposals (RFP) – Blue Economy: Concurrently with Phase 2, RI Commerce and URI ran a competitive RFP through the RI Innovation Campus (IC) to understand industry’s needs and garner private financial commitment. In February 2022, URI and RI Commerce administered a new IC RFP, with previously authorized state funds available to match any private investment on a 1:1 basis. In total, \$4.555M in private funds were raised from partners - including the van Beuren Charitable Foundation, IBM, Ørsted, and were matched by the State, totaling \$9.11M.

RI DLT’s Real Jobs RI (RJRI) is the state’s nationally recognized, industry-driven workforce development intermediary and its unmatched employer network is central to our strategy. The RJRI convened partners to shape our workforce Project and if awarded, RJRI will leverage their employer partners to identify and remove hiring barriers that may exist.

Project-Specific Private Sector Engagement

SmartBay’s Collect/Connect/Compute Weekly Working Groups – Starting December 2021, URIRF convened weekly working groups including industry, academia, and government stakeholders, to map regional assets, develop use cases across all RI BETC defined sub-industries and find linkages to other RI BETC projects. These working groups will continue as part of the RI BETC continuous planning and implementation processes

BTIC Industry and Innovation Partner “Node” Feedback Sessions – URIRF held BTIC industry feedback sessions to understand real world “use cases” to determine how the BTIC will address industry needs and industry co-designing the building’s design and future program development. Members of the BTIC planning team also traveled internationally to Nova Scotia to visit and study other complementary Blue Innovation network “nodes” and domestically with the 401 Tech Bridge and the Herreshoff Maritime Museum’s East Bay.

SmartBay and BTIC Funding – In addition to the cash matching funds of \$9.11M from the IC process, SmartBay and BTIC received strong private support in in-kind donations from Mayflower Wind, Dassault Systemes, Roger Williams University, MassChallenge, RIHUB, and the Partnership for RI, amounting to a total of \$6.53M (see Letters of Support).

Quonset Multi-Modal Offshore Wind Transport and Training Center (QMT²C) – Ørsted North America, the largest OSW company operating in the US and owner and operator of the Block Island Wind Farm, committed \$1.5M, matching Quonset Development Corporation’s \$1.5M match, to bring the total to non-federal matching funds to \$3M. Ørsted will be a primary tenant and estimates that approximately 800 Ørsted employees will be staffed in or around the QMT²C during the construction phase of Revolution Wind from 2022 – 2025, with a minimum of 32 staffed jobs through 2050, catalyzing a total of \$250M in private investment.

South Quay Deep Water Port – The RI Waterfront Enterprises committed \$2.5M in matching funds. The landside improvements are estimated to generate **650 jobs for project construction by 2027 and 2,060 OSW construction jobs by 2029.**

Smart Shellfish Hatchery – Matunuck Oyster Farm (MOF), owner of the land for the Hatchery, will fund building improvements and a portion of the equipment costs. URI and MOF finalized an agreement to include internships, fellowships, and sponsored research, and is in discussion with other partners to use the Hatchery facilities for R&D. URI and RWU researchers will have full access to the facilities, and MOF committed \$216K to cover the 20% non-federal cost share of the equipment.

DETAILED PLAN FOR REGIONAL GROWTH CLUSTER SUSTAINABILITY

In addition to the commitments described, the RI BETC will use the following strategies to ensure financial sustainability beyond the 5-year EDA project performance period.

Project Revenue: SmartBay and BTIC will generate revenue streams, including for-fee access to SmartBay’s data; long-term rental from program providers; short-term rentals for multi-week prototyping efforts and entrepreneurship activities; fee generating events; and sponsorships. QMT²C and SQMT will generate lease revenue from OSW tenant companies such as Ørsted, MayFlower Wind, and Flight Level Aviation. For Smart Shellfish Hatchery, MOF will dedicate a portion of their profits to cover the ongoing operational costs, and workforce programs.

RI Governor’s 2023 Budget: Governor McKee proposed a \$70M investment in the Blue Economy as part of the FY23 budget of State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF) revenue loss dollars. This SFRF investment will be synergistic with the EDA’s investment, ensuring the success of next phases of this application and accelerating RI’s Blue Economy future.

Federal Funding: BTIC and SmartBay teams anticipate possible additional federal funding opportunities to support future phases of programs and infrastructure and are actively pursuing grants in concurrence to the EDA. Additional federal funding will be sought from agencies supporting technology acceleration and innovation, including NIST, NSF, DOD, DOL and NOAA.

Real Estate Strategy: As Smart Bay and the BTIC become the best place in the world to locate as a Blue Economy stakeholder, this could lead to premiums in real estate value in the future years. In addition to increased rental revenues that BTIC could experience, URI may capture the increased real estate value through a targeted real estate strategy and direct a portion of that value for the ongoing operations of SmartBay and the BTIC.

DETAILED PLAN FOR ENGAGING SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONS

The RI BETC will create the Rhode Island Blue Economy Partnership, a new partnership-based governance model to ensure transparency and accountability to secure our vision to create an equitable Blue Economy. The Partnership will integrate engagement into each Projects’ design, implementation, evaluation, decision-making, and accountability. The RI BETC has elevated evaluation and accountability as guiding principles (*see next section*), and the Partnership will have cross-sector members - industry, academia, nonprofits, labor unions, workforce experts, and CBOs. The RI BETC researched multiple governance models, and a partnership model was selected after discussions with over 25 cross-stakeholder entities. The Partnership will be hosted

by URIRF and RI Commerce and supported by four staff, including an Executive Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director, and Project Support Coordinator, in close collaboration with the Regional Economic Competitiveness Officer (RECO).

Since notification, the RI BETC engaged dozens of organizations representing a cross-section of interests to understand future stakeholder collaboration, concerns, and opportunities. URIRF engaged CBOs and acknowledges its efforts are only the beginning of a successful strategy. URIRF hosted in-person meetings in underserved communities in Pawtucket and Aquidneck Island and has committed to future convenings in East Providence and Central Falls. The goal is to identify interested CBOs, leverage their expertise, improve existing programs, and identify new programs to fund. This process will continue in the Phase 2 evaluation period and if awarded into Phase 2. **The RI BETC committed to ongoing collaboration with CBOs on program design and implementation and will allocate a portion of the Phase 1 planning funds to CBOs, to compensate them for their expertise over the next two years.**

Also, the RI BETC acknowledges the unique, cross-cutting role of our workforce strategy (*Project 4*). The RI BETC will create more equitable access to Blue Economy training and jobs for people from historically underserved communities, including people who identify as women, BIPOC, and residents from low-income communities. Current programs have identified talent recruitment of BIPOC and women as a challenge. Engaging CBOs who serve these communities is essential to diversifying programs. To achieve our goals, we will create a RI BETC workforce development sub-committee to elevate CBOs as implementors, decision-makers, and accountability leaders. The sub-committee will determine baseline and target metrics for the programs to report. The sub-committee will determine \$2M in funding to develop new pilots to support access to Blue Economy jobs. URIRF has started this process, engaging CBOs (Center for Women and Enterprise, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Progresso Latino) with expertise in community engagement and program development, and per the above the CBOs will be compensated for their expertise.

To ensure RI's workers can access the benefits of the Blue Economy, the RI American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO) will join our governance entity. AFL-CIO's leadership will help us leverage and align efforts with the Climate Jobs RI AFL-CIO program, a partnership with leading environmental advocacy organizations, that calls for Blue Economy investments. The RI BETC has continued support from the RI Building and Construction Trade Council and the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental, and Reinforcing Iron Workers. Finally, in URIRF-managed construction projects, union contracts are prioritized.

DETAILED PLAN ON ENGAGING EQUITABLY

Racial and ethnic disparities in access to jobs, high wages, and business ownership continue to be among RI's primary economic challenges. **Black and Latinx populations experience up to 75% higher rates of unemployment and median household incomes for racial minorities are up to 39% lower than the State's median.² The rate of business ownership in minority populations is 75-80% lower than their respective shares in the total population³ And, the gender pay gap**

² ACS Data, 2019.

³ State of RI

persists, with women workers earning 82 cents for every dollar a man earns in RI.⁴ Across these disparities, the Blue Economy is no exception. Black and Latinx Rhode Islanders disproportionately reside in urban centers, which are often located alongside bodies of water, while simultaneously individuals lack access to water-related opportunities. The State also boasts one of the largest Cape Verdean and Portuguese populations in the US who live in water adjacent areas and have also been excluded from the benefits of Blue Economy growth. Racial and ethnic disparities also extend to environmental justice concerns, which the RI BETC has included as metrics to measure for improvements.

The RI BETC recognizes these inequities and will collaborate with CBOs and local governments that represent and serve BIPOC, female, and low-income communities to craft bespoke strategies that create a more equitable economic future. This includes building programs that improve access to economic opportunities, such as job-training, jobs, small business services, and procurement. Finally, we have also elevated CBOs as decision-makers in funding, designing, and implementing programs and as accountability leaders in the RI BETC.

Programmatically, the RI BETC workforce Project seeks to create good jobs across advanced Blue Economy sub-industries, which have historically been less accessible to racial and ethnic minorities and women. To address transportation barriers in access, we have started discussions with the RI Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) to support increased service to component areas such as Quonset. We will also partner with the Social Enterprise Greenhouse and the RI Business Empowerment Network (RIBEN) to design and run a “Blue” Minority Business Accelerator to cultivate talent, provide mentorship, foster connections to investors, and provide technical assistance to Black, Latinx, and women founders.

Evaluation and accountability are central to the role of the Partnership. The RECO will participate in continuous engagement, including reporting on metrics with historically underrepresented communities and solicit input. The Partnership has designated staff who will run an equity committee across project components to seek opportunities for improved program outcomes, diverse partner engagement, and address access issues. Each Component Project Lead will be expected to provide semi-annual, publicly accessible presentations to the Partnership towards compliance. Included will be an update on the Blue Economy’s overall metrics, as well as specific project metrics as reported in component proposal narratives. The Partnership will determine key baseline and target metrics for the efforts and the reports will track against these.

The RI BETC will measure success based on significantly increased access to economic opportunity, and all data will be disaggregated by gender, race, ethnicity, age, and geography. The RI BETC recognizes the critical nature of connecting engagement, governance, evaluation, and accountability across this entire proposal towards reaching its core vision to transform RI as the global center of an equitable and sustainable Blue Economy.

DETAILED OVERVIEW ON EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The RI BETC will track success across three categories central to our vision: economic growth, equity, and climate adaptation and resilience. The Partnership (*Project Narrative 9*), through

⁴ Data.org

Leads will collect data and report progress on overall Blue Economy metrics, project-specific Blue Economy metrics, and project-specific metrics, to track against our three broad goals.

VISION	METRIC
Economic Growth	Growth of Blue Economy Jobs
	Growth of Blue Economy good jobs ⁵
	Increase wages per worker in Blue Economy
	Net growth in Blue Economy GRP
	Growth in number of companies in Blue Economy
Equity (Disaggregate data including race, ethnicity, gender, geographic location)	Growth of business ownership in Blue Economy
	Growth of Blue Economy good jobs
	Increase Blue Economy wages per worker
	Growth in investment to Blue Economy businesses
	Change in air quality in environmental justice areas
Climate Adaptation & Resiliency	Reduced statewide greenhouse gas emissions
	Increased energy generation from renewable energy
	Reduced PM _{2.5} and NO ₂ pollutants
	Improved water quality

Overall Economic Impact

The creation of the RI BETC’s platforms, programs, people, and projects will nearly double the size of RI’s Blue Economy and lead to an additional 54,000 Blue Economy jobs within the next 10 years. The Component Projects will catalyze this growth and the traditional economic impact calculations of the one-time and ongoing economic impacts associated with the projects themselves will be a fraction of the projected total growth.

Project-specific, one-time, and ongoing

Construction-related economic output and employment: The RI BETC construction projects (SmartBay, the BTIC, QMT²C, and SQMT) are projected to support **nearly 1,100 "full-time equivalent" (FTE) jobs, with an average annual income of \$67,000.** Over the 5-year build-out, the RI BETC construction projects will support **over 220 jobs on an annual average basis, and** these construction projects are expected to support **over \$180M in total economic output.** Both employment and economic output projections include direct and multiplier impacts.⁶

Ongoing economic impact: The RI BETC has collected numerous ED-900B forms from future industry partners who have shared their expectations of estimated impact, directly attributable to the projects. Based on these estimates, **over 3,400 jobs are expected to be created or saved, in addition to generating a total of \$385.5M in private investment.** As the Component Projects

⁵ Good Jobs defined as roles that do not require a four-year degree, pay at least the regional median wage, and offer benefits (Brookings Institution).

⁶ The projections are estimated using IMPLAN input/output economic impact analysis. The construction cost estimates consider the respective first stages of each project. As projects implement future stages with additional funding, these impacts will be considerably larger.

are developed, ongoing revenues and expenses will be estimated with greater clarity, to then estimate RI BETC-wide ongoing impacts of employment and economic output.

OVERVIEW OF WORK CONDUCTED IN PHASE 1

Upon receiving Phase I notification, the RI BETC reviewed and developed Component Projects, with extensive engagement across industry, academia, nonprofits, labor unions, workforce experts, and CBOs (*Sections: Private-Sector Engagement, Engaging Specific Organization, Engaging Equitably*). The RI BETC also collected cash and in-kind matching funds, demonstrating that the RI BETC has the support needed to lead the Blue Economy. This includes a new \$2M cash donation secured from the van Beuren Charitable Foundation and industry donations totaling \$2.555M, and then doubled with a 1:1 state match to \$9.11M. Other cash matches from Ørsted, Quonset Development Corporation, RI Waterfront Enterprises, and Matunuck Oyster Farm bring the total cash match to \$14.97M. In-kind donations from DLT, URIRF, Mayflower Wind, Dassault Systemes, RWU, and Partnership for RI total approximately \$8.40M. Since Phase I, the RI BETC has taken steps to advance industry partnerships, including the IC competitive RFP process, and SmartBay’s weekly Connect/Collect/Computer meetings (*Section Private-Sector Engagement*). Given SmartBay’s technical requirements, it solicited through sole-source procurement, the unparalleled global expertise of IBM in large-scale sensor-based marine data networks.

The RI BETC also held three sessions with global Blue Economy expertise – on general cluster development, ocean-based renewables, and marine logistics – to benchmark against the current global standard-bearers, providing strategic due diligence and refining our vision, long-term economic goals, and industry engagement strategies. Additionally, URI President Marc Parlange assembled a cohort of leading U.S. Blue Economy academics, meeting several times throughout Phase 2 and will continue to meet on an ongoing basis.

DETAILED LIST OF CHANGES TO THE VISION/PROPOSAL TO PHASE 1 CONCEPT PROPOSAL

Upon notification, the RI BETC performed analysis and met extensively with stakeholders to refine construction and operational models for all Projects. As part of that process, *Project 8. Seafood Wastewater Processing* transformed in scope into a planning grant, to ensure critical due diligence and public participation. The Project considered options such as pre-treatment on-site at the squid processors, or a new standalone facility. However, through stakeholder engagement, a new third option presented itself, to expand municipal wastewater treatment capacity in the facility closest to Narragansett – RI’s major fishing port. The Town and facility managers have become strong partners, and the Project has adapted to give adequate time for planning with public participation.

The breadth of the proposed projects revealed the need for an overarching structure for reporting, accountability, and coordination. Through extensive engagement with coalition partners, EDA’s guidance on governance models, and ambitious equitable economic development goals, it was made clear a dedicated workstream was needed to define this entity. The RI BETC created the RI Blue Economy Partnership as an overarching board with dedicated sub-committees and requirements for project-specific public reporting to ensure accountability.