

Draft for Discussion

Process to Review SAB Standing Working Groups (Subcommittees)

Introduction and Background

The Science Advisory Board is called upon to provide information and advice to NOAA on a wide variety of topics important to the agency. Because of the breadth of subject matter that the group addresses, they frequently consult with additional experts on specific topics. In some cases, the technical nature of a topic requires them to convene a specific group of experts to study subjects of long-term interest to NOAA, and the SAB establishes groups of experts with whom they consult on a regular basis. These subcommittees are called standing working groups. The operating principles or working procedures for SAB subcommittees are included in the SAB Subcommittee Concept of Operations (ConOps).

The SAB Subcommittee Concept of Operations document was revised to include a review of standing working groups every two years in conjunction with renewal of the SAB charter. The language states “The terms of reference for a standing working group should be reviewed and revised on a biannual basis by the SAB and NOAA, in conjunction with renewal of the SAB charter”.

Review of Terms of Reference

As noted above, the guiding document to drive the work of the subcommittees is their Terms of Reference (TOR); the review of the terms of reference includes review of subcommittee work products, value of advice as determined by NOAA and input from the SAB liaison and the full SAB.

All TORs, membership and documents for Standing Subcommittees are posted on the SAB website <http://sab.oarhq.noaa.gov/WorkingGroups/StandingWorkingGroups.aspx>

Subcommittee Review Process in 2017

As the first part of the review, NOAA staff for each subcommittee will do a preliminary analysis of the TOR by comparing it to the work products, usually reports, from the group to the SAB. All subcommittee reports to the SAB that were approved by the SAB can be found on the Standing Working Group website noted above. The analysis by NOAA staff will include the number of reports sent to and approved by the SAB during the review period (for the 2017 review, this will include the time period from 2008 through 2016, as appropriate for each subcommittee) and a comparison of the topics covered to those in the TOR. Staff will also review to see whether the subcommittee met at least once a year as the ConOps requires at least an annual meeting of subcommittees.

After the NOAA staff analyses have been completed, they will be reviewed by the SAB

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Executive Director, who will send them to the NOAA program liaisons for review. At this time, the program liaisons will also be asked for their input on the value of subcommittee advice to the SAB and NOAA, suggestions on changes needed in the TOR and possible work topics for the subcommittee in the upcoming two years. The SAB Executive Director will review the program liaison inputs and send the revised report to the subcommittee chairs and SAB liaison for review and comment. After subcommittee and SAB liaison input, the SAB Executive Director will compile a final report for full SAB review and comment; SAB comments will be sent to NOAA for final action.

Subcommittee Reviews after 2017

The process described above will be used for the subcommittee reviews in 2017. For biennial subcommittee reviews beginning in 2019, reviews will include the annual reports provided by the subcommittees to the SAB as required in the revised ConOps document approved by the SAB. When there is a SAB final work plan as outlined in the SAB ConOps, the 2019 process will be amended to include evaluation of the TOR and program suggestions for work topics in the context of the SAB work plan.

Timeline for 2017 Subcommittee Reviews

April 2017—The SAB reviews and approves the subcommittee review process.

May 2017—Review process begins with the NOAA staff evaluation of the reports and the relevance of work products to the TOR with draft report submitted to the SAB Executive Director.

June 2017-After review, the Executive Director sends the report to the NOAA program liaisons, asking for their input as described above.

July 2017- The revised report is sent by the Executive Director to the subcommittee chair(s) and SAB liaison for review and comment.

August 2017- Final report is sent to the SAB for review and comment.

September 2017 - SAB comments sent to NOAA for final action.

General Timeline (starting 2019)

Review Initiated – NOAA staff evaluation of reports, relevance of work products, meetings– 4 weeks

Draft Staff Report submitted to the SAB Executive Director – 1 week

Report provided to NOAA program liaisons for input- 4 weeks

Revised report submitted to SAB Director-1 week

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Revised Report submitted to the Subcommittee Chair(s) for review and comment – 4 weeks

Final Report submitted by the Executive Director to the SAB Chair – 4 weeks

Final Report sent by SAB Chair to the SAB Members for review and comment – 1 week

Comments from the SAB Members to Chair – 2 weeks

Final Report with appended SAB Comments sent by SAB Chair to NOAA Administrator and Chief Scientist – 2 weeks