

NOAA Science Advisory Board

**Working Group to Examine Advisory Options for
Improving Communications among NOAA's Partners**

Terms of Reference

Background

The Science Advisory Board (SAB) at their July 2006 meeting reviewed the advisory mechanisms NOAA uses in support of the NOAA Policy on Partnership in the Provision of Environmental Information¹ and concluded a significant group of participants in the nation's environmental information enterprise do not view NOAA's "ad hoc" use of these advisory mechanisms as the preferred method of garnering external advise. The SAB recommended NOAA establish an *ad hoc*, limited duration, working group to examine and recommend advisory options for improving communications among the various public, private, and academic entities engaged in environmental information matters.

Charge to the Working Group

The Working Group will examine advisory options for improving the dialogue between NOAA and other public, private, and academic entities engaged in the Nation's environmental enterprise.

The group should not rule out any approach, including, for example:

- Expanded use of existing NOAA Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) committees and/or the National Research Council (NRC),
- Changing the structure and/or re-chartering existing NOAA FACA committee(s), including the SAB,
- A new FACA committee
- Some combination of approaches, e.g. a phased implementation of several recommended changes.

The Working Group should consider the effects of recommendations on existing NOAA advisory committees, so as to avoid disruptions to the effectiveness of these other advisory committees. The results to include recommendations as well as any public comments should be conveyed to the SAB in a written report at a regularly scheduled SAB meeting within 6-8 months after establishment of the working group. A draft of the report should be available for a public comment period of not less than 30 days. The working group will consider public comments and incorporate them, as appropriate, into the final report delivered to the SAB. The report recommendations should be specific and capable of implementation within six months of the report's release.

¹ The NOAA Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information ("Partnership Policy") complete text and history available on <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/partnershippolicy/>.

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Term and Composition

The Working Group will consist of between three and eight members selected from a pool of candidates generated by both the SAB and NOAA. The group will be disestablished following the transmittal of the final report by the SAB to the Under Secretary.

Support

NOAA will cover travel expenses of the work group and provide appropriate staff support as needed.

Working Group Members

The Working Group will consist of senior and highly respected members with a balance among weather, climate, and ocean communities.