Environmental Information Services Working Group (EISWG)

Terms of Reference Update

Presented by
John T. Snow,
EISWG Co-Chair
Current Membership

Tom Altshuler - Vice President And Group General Manager, Teledyne Marine Systems
Ronald J. Birk - Associate Principal Director, Vaeros Development, The Aerospace Corporation
Ann Bostrom - Professor, Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington
Eddie Hicks - Director, Morgan County Alabama Emergency Management Association
Bill Hooke - Associate Executive Director, American Meteorological Society
Kevin Petty - Chief Science Officer, Vaisala Inc.
Jonathan Porter - Vice President of Innovation and Development, AccuWeather, Inc.
Mohan Ramamurthy - Director, Unidata
Jennifer Read - Director, University of Michigan Water Center
Cheryl Rosa - Deputy Director, U.S. Arctic Research Commission
Justin Sharp - Owner, Sharply Focused LLC
Jean E. Vieux - President, Vieux, Inc.
Robert Weller - Senior Scientist, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
May Yuan - Professor, School of Economic, Political, and Policy Sciences, University of Texas at Dallas
Xubin Zeng - Professor, Dept. of Atmospheric Sciences, University of Arizona

*** One vacancy is in the process of being filled

Co-Chairs

John Snow, Regents’ Professor Emeritus of Meteorology; Dean Emeritus, College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences, University of Oklahoma; Principal, Snow & Associates, LLC
Bradley Colman, Director of Science - Weather Science, The Climate Corporation

Robert S. Winokur (retired) NOAA and Navy
The primary changes to the EISWG Terms of Reference (ToR) include:

- The movement of the largely historical Background section to be an Appendix.
- The addition of a preamble.
- A revised Charge section.
- The addition of a Reporting section.
- Language reflecting what is written about the EISWG in the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (PL 115-25).
Background

In 2003 the National Research Council (NRC) conducted a study of the interaction of the various sectors of the weather and climate enterprise on behalf of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This study was entitled “Fair Weather: Effective Partnerships in Weather and Climate Services” (Fair Weather Report) and it examined the roles and provided recommendations regarding the partnerships among three sectors, public, private, and academic. The NRC specifically recommended: “The NWS [National Weather Service] should establish an independent advisory committee to provide ongoing advice to it on weather and climate matters...”

In 2004, NOAA issued its “Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information,” which applied to provision of all NOAA environmental information services, with the intent to improve the effectiveness of the “environmental information enterprise” composed of partnerships among public, private, and academic sectors, and defined NOAA’s responsibility to foster growth of the environmental information enterprise. After undergoing critical review, the Policy was ultimately revised in January 2006 to clarify NOAA’s recognition of the private sector; this clarification also highlighted “NOAA’s willingness to consider creating a standing advisory body to support the NOAA partnership policy.”

Given this stated policy, NOAA initiated its consideration of an advisory body by seeking the advice of NOAA’s Science Advisory Board (SAB), the one Federal Advisory Committee to NOAA that considers questions relevant to the entire agency. The SAB, at its July 2006 meeting, recommended that NOAA consider establishing an Environment Information Services Working Group (EISWG) to advise NOAA on issues related to the provision of environmental information services.

In 2012, the NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) confirmed the Environmental Information Services Working Group (EISWG) as a standing working group of the SAB. SAB charged EISWG to work closely with all five NOAA Line Offices (National Marine Fisheries Service – NMFS, National Ocean Service – NOS, Oceanic and Atmospheric Research – OAR, National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service – NESDIS, and National Weather Service - NWS), in order to: 1) provide advice on improving communication among the sectors, 2) provide advice on incorporating scientific and technical capabilities to enhance NOAA products and services, 3) provide advice on partnerships and implementation of NOAA’s Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information, and 4) evaluate NOAA effectiveness in responding to advice received from the EISWG, and the environmental information enterprise as a whole. The EISWG also leverages the knowledge and expertise of the other SAB working groups as necessary.

In 2017 the President signed PL 115-25 into law. The Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 affirmed and authorized the EISWG as a standing working group of the SAB and assigned additional, specific charges to the working group.

Changes:
• Language about the EISWG’s creation and original charge is included.
• Language about the EISWG’s authorization under the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 was added.
• Background section from previous ToR is now noted as an appendage.
Charge

The EISWG will work closely with all five NOAA Line Offices (National Marine Fisheries Service – NMFS, National Ocean Service – NOS, Oceanic and Atmospheric Research – OAR, National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service – NESDIS, and National Weather Service - NWS). As part of its work the EISWG will take into consideration the eight themes set forth by the NOAA SAB: 1) Quality, Creativity and Credibility; 2) Timeliness and Scale; 3) Science Connected to the Application and Operational Implementation of Policy; 4) Capacity Building; 5) Education and Outreach; 6) Efficiency; 7) Social Science Integration; and 8) Diversity.

The EISWG, in its role as a sanctioned working group of the NOAA SAB, will advise the SAB on the condition and capabilities of improving communications among the various public, private, and academic entities engaged in environmental information matters and will submit formal reports to the SAB that identify current issues, deficiencies, recommendations for remedial action, and proposed initiatives.

The EISWG is charged to: 1) provide advice on improving communication among the sectors, 2) provide advice on incorporating scientific and technical capabilities to enhance NOAA products and services, 3) provide a sounding board regarding implementation of NOAA’s Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information, and 4) evaluate NOAA effectiveness in responding to advice received from the EISWG, and the environmental information enterprise as a whole.

Changes:

- Information contained in the charge section of the previous ToR was used to create the current preamble in the Background section of the revised ToR.
- Current charge reflects what is mandated of the EISWG by the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017.
Changes:

- The current version contains language that is consistent with what is expressed in the EISWG composition section of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (PL 115-25).
A Reporting section was added to the revised ToR due to the reporting requirement of the working group in the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (PL 115-25).

Section of P.L. 115-25 requiring EISWG Annual Report
Questions?