



Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

(Adopted December 10, 2002)

(Revised December 13, 2011)

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

I. STAC MECHANISMS

A. STANDING WORKGROUP

A Standing Workgroup is a group appointed by the STAC to address major CBP scientific and technical issues. Standing Workgroups hold regular meetings, present findings/plans and recommendations to the STAC for endorsement, communicate findings to the CBP, and make recommendations to the STAC for further action. Standing Workgroups utilize workshops, reviews, white papers, literature syntheses, etc., to assist them in their work. All workgroups should strive to have a STAC member or alternate as Chair. Mission statements are determined by STAC and workgroup membership is drawn from the region's scientific and technical community. The STAC Chair and Executive Board review/approve the Standing Workgroup role, membership, and performance each year to determine the need for its continuance.

B. AD HOC WORKGROUP

Ad Hoc workgroups are formed to tackle a specific issue and, if initiated by the CBP or a formal response from the CBP is required, follow the STAC Review Protocol. Appointed by the STAC Chair or by a STAC Standing Workgroup chair, ad hoc workgroups have a charge, a sunset clause, and a leader drawn from the STAC membership or the STAC Standing Workgroup membership. Members are drawn from the region's scientific and technical community. Ad hoc workgroups present their findings to the STAC for endorsement (some will present to Standing Workgroups first). Their findings may take the form of a white paper, report card, literature synthesis, prioritized research recommendations, or other mechanisms. Publications must be approved by the STAC and follow the terms outlined in the STAC Publications Protocol.

C. STAC STAFF

STAC staff members are funded through the CBP to support STAC activities. They coordinate meetings, workshops and conferences, manage literature syntheses, organize peer review committees, provide technical editing, design, and layout for publications and the STAC website, and act as liaisons between CBP committees and STAC members. Staff support may be provided to help STAC members coordinate relevant STAC projects and activities.

II. STAC PROCEDURES

A. PROACTIVE MECHANISMS/PRODUCTS

The STAC works proactively when possible to strengthen the scientific and technical foundations of CBP activities.

1. Workshop - STAC proactive workshops are an important opportunity for the committee to identify and address emerging issues of concern to the management of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. In this way, STAC provides guidance on new issues and strengthens the scientific and technical foundations of CBP activities. For additional information see the STAC Workshop Protocol.

2. Literature Synthesis/White Paper - A STAC literature synthesis or white paper, facilitates CBP scientific communication and outreach by: (1) summarizing what is understood about an issue based on published scientific and technical information, (2) identifying information gaps to be addressed, and/or (3) recommending to CBP managers ways to utilize existing information in CBP restoration efforts. The STAC selects topics from recommendations by its members, CBP technical subcommittees, CBP managers and other sources. Final reports follow the STAC Publication Protocol.

III. RESPONSIVE MECHANISMS/PRODUCTS

The STAC will evaluate requests from the CBP for topical reviews and workshops and reserves the right to decline or modify requests. All requests for STAC topical reviews must be generated by the CBP's Management Board or Executive Council and submitted by the Chair of either respective group.

A. RAPID RESPONSE TECHNICAL REVIEW

Scientific and technical advisories will be prepared by STAC in response to requests from the CBP after review and approval by the STAC Executive Board. Advisories will be prepared by a subset of STAC members and/or a group of independent individuals with appropriate expertise. By design, these advisories will involve a limited number of individuals, occur in relatively short time frames, and generate concise and focused reports. The goal is to provide access to the best available scientific/technical input.

B. MERIT REVIEW

Scientific and technical evaluations of programs, proposals, products or processes, usually are initiated by requests from the CBP. In a STAC review, the full STAC membership reviews, discusses, and votes to endorse (or not endorse) the item under consideration. Alternatively, a subset of STAC members and/or a group of Bay region individuals with appropriate expertise may be convened by STAC to review the item under consideration and make recommendations. Merit reviews have two main elements:

- 1. Proposal Review** - Technical review of proposals to evaluate their technical merit and relevance to CBP objectives.
- 2. Evaluation Report** - A formal, independent evaluation of specific CBP activities in relation to current scientific and technical knowledge. Written by a STAC member or members and approved by STAC, such reports evaluate and summarize specific CBP activities and offer recommendations.

Additional process guidance for STAC Merit Reviews is available in the STAC Review Protocols.

IV.CONFLICT OF INTEREST

An objective of the STAC is to avoid any direct conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest in matters related to policy recommendations and decisions on funding by the CBP. The major area of concern for direct conflicts of interest relates to situations where a member, alternate member, or employing organization would benefit from the decision and has a substantial role in the decision. Employment ties by the individual or spouse, investments in an organization, positions of authority or responsibility, or other areas of benefit relate to a conflict of interest determination.

A. Circumstances in which there is a great potential for conflict, where a member or alternate member should not participate in the rating of a proposal:

1. There is a direct financial benefit to the individual involved in the ranking;
2. Funding would go directly to the organization where one is employed and to the specific position/functional area in which one works.

* If either of these circumstances exists, the member or alternate member shall recuse himself or herself from voting on that proposal and avoid any direct comment on it during discussions.

B. Circumstances in which there is a low potential for conflict, where a member or alternate member may participate in the rating of a proposal; (after declaring their

apparent conflict to the Chair):

1. Organization in which one is employed, is a recipient of the funding, but there is no direct link to the position/functional area of the individual;
2. Member or alternate member is the originator of the proposal or idea, but their organization is not the direct recipient of any funding under it;
3. Name of member or alternate member appears on the proposal but there is no direct benefit to the individual or organization of employment.

STAC members and activity participants represent their area of expertise while serving the STAC, not their employing organizations.

V. EXPENSES

A. Expenses - All members serve without compensation. Members may be reimbursed at the government approved per diem rate for mileage and meal costs (excluding alcoholic beverages). Members may also be reimbursed for the following expenses related to attending official STAC functions upon submission of the appropriate documentation: transportation costs (except for international travel), lodging, tolls, and parking. Federal government members will be reimbursed by their agency. STAC members must complete a travel voucher and receipts must be included. Long distance telephone calls for official STAC business may be reimbursed if documentation is provided. Alternate members may receive reimbursement only when the respective regular member is not present.

VI. AMENDMENTS TO OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

The STAC Executive Board and/or membership establishes the STAC Operational Guidelines and can create and alter them as necessary with a majority vote.

STAC Publication and Correspondence Protocol

Introduction

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) produces, in a variety of formats, documents which are designed to provide scientific information and recommendations to the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP), the public, and restoration partners throughout the Bay's watershed. Due to the importance of reliable, accurate scientific information for the effective management of the Chesapeake Bay, STAC is committed to producing the highest quality technical information, and employs the following procedures in the production of all scientific publications. All recipients of STAC publication funding must agree to adhere to the protocols outlined below.

The STAC Executive Board frequently acts on behalf of the Committee between quarterly meetings as described in STAC's Bylaws. The Executive Board often forwards correspondence such as STAC reviews of scientific or technical policy documents, workshop reports, cover letters to STAC review and workshop reports, and position papers to Chesapeake Bay Program partners. All official STAC correspondence are subject to the following review protocols:

1. All official STAC publications submitted to the CBP and its partners must be accompanied by the Chair's signature. Prior to submission and signature, the Executive Board must allow review of the documents by the entire STAC. For items not facing a specific timeline, STAC members will have two weeks to review and submit comments. For time-sensitive documents, the Executive Board will determine the appropriate review period.
2. STAC members are obligated to review documents and provide specific comments to STAC Staff within the review period. Any comments submitted after the review period will not be considered. Members should indicate whether each comment suggests a) editorial changes; b) modest changes to the document that modifies details but does not change the overall opinions presented in the document; or c) substantial changes to one or more of the major points or opinions of the document. STAC Staff will assemble and forward all comments to the Executive Board.
3. Led by the Chair, the Executive Board will then determine if the comments require: a) modest editorial changes to the document; b) a more substantial discussion with dissenting STAC members; c) a more substantial discussion among the entire STAC; or d) no changes to the document.
4. All Executive Board actions not placed on a STAC quarterly meeting agenda will be itemized in the Consent Agenda for full committee approval and briefly summarized by STAC staff at the beginning of the meeting. Additionally, all relevant materials should be identified for STAC members to see in advance of the meeting either by attachment to an e-mail or a link to material on the STAC website.

STAC Reports

STAC reports are an important mechanism used to convey scientific information and recommendations presented during STAC workshops, reviews, workgroup discussions, and STAC meetings to the CBP, the public, and restoration partners throughout the Bay's watershed.

PROTOCOL

1. For any STAC report identified as a deliverable, it is the sole responsibility of the steering committee, workgroup, or review team to develop and complete the report.
2. Professional editorial services are generally not provided for the production of STAC reports unless funding is requested and approved for these services in the proposal or additional funding is identified.
3. Prior to a workshop or review, the steering committee, workgroup, or review team will submit a proposal (See [STAC Review Protocol](#), [STAC Workshop Protocol](#), and STAC Current Year Request for Proposal) that will include the proposed completion date of all publications. All STAC reports should be completed within 90 days of completing the STAC activity. Any requests for extensions to the completion date must be submitted by the steering committee, workgroup, or review team to the STAC Chair for Executive Board for approval. Failure to meet completion deadlines may jeopardize future funding.
4. Before submitting a final report to STAC Executive Secretary, the draft report should be reviewed by all parties deemed necessary and appropriate by the report author(s).
5. The STAC Executive Secretary will conduct a final editorial review before publication and dissemination of the final report. Significant editorial changes made during this review will be submitted to the author(s) for approval prior to publication and distribution.
6. All reports are published and distributed in electronic format and will be made available to any interested party via the STAC website. Should significant, justifiable need arise for hardcopies, the report author(s) may request hard copy publication funding from the STAC or include costs of hardcopy publication in their activity proposal. The STAC will make a decision based upon need and the availability of STAC publication funds. Hardcopy publications are generally published in black and white with the exception of a color cover. Full color copies of the report are available electronically via the STAC website.

STAC Factsheets

STAC factsheets are an effective tool available to distill and disseminate important scientific and technical information and recommendations to audiences that may not be accessed through the use of a STAC report. STAC factsheets may only be developed in addition to STAC reports.

PROTOCOL

1. Steering committees, workgroups, or review teams wishing to develop a factsheet should incorporate a request for a factsheet in their activity proposal. The request should include intended audience and justified need.
2. Pending STAC approval, professional editorial services can be provided to assist author(s) in editing, layout, and design. Within three weeks following the workshop, the author(s) must provide the editor with detailed and specific guidance on intended audience, desired content, appropriate graphics, background information, references, and data before the editor begins assembling the factsheet.
3. The editor will create a draft version of the factsheet for review within three weeks of receipt of all materials requested to complete the document. This deadline also assumes availability of the lead person for the factsheet to address questions and concerns during its development.
4. The STAC representative or identified activity lead as well as the STAC Executive Secretary may work with the editor to make minor editorial changes before publication and distribution of the factsheet.
5. The finalized factsheet should be submitted to the STAC Executive Secretary for publication and distribution.
6. All factsheets are published and distributed in electronic format and will be made available to any interested party via the STAC website. Should a significant, justifiable need arise for hardcopies, the report author(s) may request hard copy publication funding from the STAC or include costs of hardcopy publication in their activity proposal. The STAC will make a decision based upon need and the availability of STAC publication funds.

STAC Media Briefs

STAC media briefs are intended to relay newsworthy information to the broader public on scientific discoveries or management recommendations emerging from STAC activities. Media briefs are to be developed alongside a STAC report or factsheet, and will be produced for any activity that STAC deems worthy or necessary.

PROTOCOL

1. Requests for media briefs must be submitted by the STAC representative or activity lead to the STAC Executive Secretary.
2. Pending STAC approval, professional writing and editorial services can be provided.

3. The activity lead will work with the STAC Executive Secretary to draft a media brief within two weeks of completing the activity. The activity lead and the STAC Executive Secretary will provide a draft media brief to STAC for final approval.
4. The STAC must approve the completed media brief before it is disseminated by STAC Executive Secretary to regional media outlets and posted on the STAC website.

STAC Review Protocol

Introduction

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) supports the scientific and technical basis of the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) through the independent peer review of technical reports, policy statements, and activities. The objective of these reviews is to provide thorough, competent, and objective STAC approved technical reviews in a timely fashion. Priorities for STAC usually emphasize reviews at the broad program level and development of advice on major issues.

Merit Reviews of Budget Proposals

The merit review is an important element of Chesapeake Bay Program operations and STAC remains committed to advising on how to obtain the best scientific and technical information. Due to budget limitations and STAC decisions, STAC does not conduct reviews of individual budget proposals for each CBP governance unit.

1. STAC can assist the CBP infrastructure in their annual budget proposal merit reviews by identifying potential reviewers, and providing advice and guidance on the review process as necessary.
2. The CBP governance units are responsible for contacting potential reviewers, distributing the review material, and compiling and assessing the results of the review for consideration during the selection process.
3. STAC conducts peer reviews following [conflict of interest protocols](#).

Programmatic Reviews Addressing On-going CBP Efforts and Special Reviews of Major New Plans or Issues.

The purpose of Programmatic Reviews is to provide a technical peer review of ongoing CBP activities, identifying areas of merit, needed improvement, and concern. Special Reviews are conducted to provide guidance and advice before new programs are implemented by the CBP. The purpose is to review the new program for potential problems or conflicts and make recommendations based on the findings.

1. Requests for STAC programmatic reviews are generated by the CBP's Management Board or Executive Council. A request, directed to the attention of the STAC Chair, should indicate whether an external peer review or a STAC review is desired, the required completion date of the review, the preferred form of the final report, and an anticipated date for official response by the CBP to STAC to meet EPA peer review requirements for influential or highly influential scientific information.

2. STAC convenes a review panel of qualified experts, from within STAC membership and outside institutions. A STAC member can be appointed by the STAC chair to oversee the review process.
3. STAC develops a charge to the review panel, which is submitted to the Chesapeake Bay Program for concurrence and verification.
4. STAC reviews must be presented to the STAC membership by the review panel and approved by STAC before release.
5. STAC transmits the findings of the review panel to the CBP, with a formal request for response to include a due date for response by CBP.
6. All review products are subject to the [STAC Publications Protocol](#).
7. Following the transmission of the review, the STAC Chair will supervise any responses or justified revisions in the report, in consultation with reviewers, the STAC Executive Board, and STAC members as appropriate.
8. The CBP is expected to respond to the STAC's recommendations, in writing, within 90 days of receiving the review report, and respond at a STAC quarterly meeting within six months of receiving the review report.
9. Review products, and CBP responses to the review products (comment-response documents) are made available to the public. STAC also reserves the right to create additional public documents, such as factsheets or press releases, from the review products.

Amendments to Review Protocols

The STAC Executive Board and/or membership establishes the STAC Review Protocols and can create and alter them as necessary with a majority vote.

STAC Workshop Protocol

Introduction

Workshops are a primary mechanism by which the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) of the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) brings the broad expertise of the scientific and technical community to bear on critical and timely issues relevant to the successful restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Workshops convene independent experts and active managers in a dialogue to review current state of knowledge on an issue and outline management concerns and priorities. This provides a format for formulating recommendations from the scientific and technical community on information needs, opportunities for collaborations, and further management actions. Previous workshops have addressed the impact of nutrient loads on the watershed, the integration of monitoring and modeling, and the application of growth analyses within the Bay watershed. STAC workshops are designed to maintain high scientific standards in the consideration, review, and implementation of scientific information in the restoration efforts of the Chesapeake Bay region. The STAC workshop protocol outlined below will assist in maintaining the established scientific quality and integrity of the workshops.

STAC Proactive Workshops

STAC proactive workshops are an important opportunity for the committee to identify and address emerging issues of concern to the management of the ecosystem which have not yet identified as priorities by the Chesapeake Bay Program. In this way, STAC provides guidance on new issues and strengthens the scientific and technical foundations of CBP activities.

PROTOCOL

1. Workshop topics are selected annually by the STAC membership. The number of workshops sponsored is constrained by the amount of available funding.
2. Workshop proposals must be submitted to STAC for approval by the full committee. Proposals must follow the Request for Proposal (RFP) guidelines. A workshop proposal must result in a written report and include a timeline for report submission. Failure to meet reporting deadlines may jeopardize future workshop funding.
3. A steering committee must be identified by the workshop requestor(s) which may consist of both STAC members and outside experts with at least one STAC member identified as part of the steering committee. The STAC representative can serve as chair of the steering committee but it is not required for a workshop. The workshop steering committee must include the STAC Executive Secretary or designee in all teleconferences, meetings, email correspondence, etc. for the workshop. The steering committee is responsible for the following tasks:
 - Oversight of all aspects of the workshop, including the workshop proposal.
 - Development of workshop agenda and objectives
 - Identification of key participants including the CBP committees, goal implementation teams, workgroups, or other task forces and individuals who will be impacted by or use the information generated by the workshop.

- Development of workshop proceedings and/or products and their timely submission to STAC for publication.
 - Compliance with the allocated STAC budget, not to exceed the funds allocated by STAC.
4. The STAC Executive Secretary provides logistical support for the workshops, or arranges for independent support as needed.
 5. The steering committee will be assigned a web page accessible through the STAC website for document distribution and information sharing among steering committee members, workshop participants, and interested parties. The steering committee will be responsible for maintaining posted information with technical support provided by the STAC Executive Secretary.
 6. Registration fees may not be charged for workshop participants unless approved in advance by STAC Executive Secretary.
 7. STAC has discretion over the number of participants invited to the workshop, as determined by the function of the session. For example, a workshop directed toward information dissemination may benefit from a large number of participants, whereas a directed, problem-solving session may function more efficiently with a small group.
 8. A written report must be developed by the workshop steering committee following any workshop. The report's format and length will be determined by the workshop steering committee and included in the workshop proposal. The workshop steering committee may request press releases or factsheets only in addition to completing a written report. Workshop publications, reports, and proceedings are subject to the [STAC Publication Protocol](#).
 9. Workshops, but not workshop products, must be completed in the fiscal year for which they are approved. The STAC fiscal year runs from June 1 – May 31.
 10. Workshop reports must be completed and forwarded to STAC no more than 90 days after the completion of the workshop unless an alternate schedule has been approved by STAC. Failure to meet reporting deadlines may jeopardize future workshop funding.
 11. Final review, distribution, and web posting will be completed by STAC within six weeks of receipt of the workshop report unless an alternate deadline is approved by STAC.
 12. STAC reserves the right to release workshop products to the public. STAC also reserves the right to create additional public documents, such as factsheets or press releases, from workshop products.

STAC Responsive Workshops

STAC responsive workshops are held in direct response to requests for assistance from the Chesapeake Bay Program. STAC provides support to convene the workshops in order to gather critically needed information on a topic. These workshops provide a flexible response mechanism to provide scientific and technical information and guidance on high priority issues as they arise in the management of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In submitting a responsive workshop proposal, requestors agree to adhere to the protocols outlined below.

PROTOCOL

1. Workshop topics are selected annually. A Request for Proposals (RFP) is released by STAC in January of each year, inviting submission of workshop topics from the Chesapeake Bay Program. Proposals submitted for consideration must be accompanied by a letter of support or e-mail from the committee or Goal Implementation Team (GIT) chair, indicating that the proposal is a priority for the primary governance units of the CBP.
2. Workshop proposals must be submitted to STAC for approval by the full committee. Proposals must follow the Request for Proposal (RFP) guidelines. Each workshop proposal must result in a written report and must include a timeline for report submission. Failure to meet report submission deadlines may jeopardize future workshop funding.
3. A steering committee must be identified by the workshop requestor(s) which may consist of both STAC members and outside experts with at least one STAC member identified as part of the steering committee. The STAC representative can serve as the chair of the steering committee but it is not required for a workshop. The workshop steering committee must include the STAC Executive Secretary or designee in all teleconferences, meetings, email correspondence, etc. for all aspects of the workshop. The steering committee is responsible for the following tasks:
 - Oversight of all aspects of the workshop, including the workshop proposal(?).
 - Development of workshop agenda and objectives
 - Identification of key participants, including the CBP committees, goal implementation teams, workgroups, or task forces impacted by the workshop results.
 - Identification of CBP staff to provide logistical and/or technical support for the workshop.
 - Development of workshop proceedings and/or products and their timely submission to STAC for publication.
 - Compliance with the allocated STAC budget, not to exceed the funds allocated by STAC. These funds must include travel costs for STAC members involved in the workshop.
4. The STAC Executive Secretary and collaborating Chesapeake Bay Program staff work together to provide logistical support for the workshops.

5. The steering committee will be assigned a web page accessible through the STAC website for documentation distribution and information sharing among steering committee will be responsible for maintaining posted information with technical support provide by the STAC Executive Secretary.
6. Registration fees for participants may not be charged unless approved in advance by the STAC Executive Secretary.
7. STAC, in conjunction with the steering committee, has discretion over the number of participants invited to the workshop, as determined by the function of the session. For example, a workshop directed toward information dissemination may benefit from a large number of participants, whereas a directed, problem-solving session may function more efficiently with a small group.
8. A written report must be developed by the workshop steering committee following any workshop. The report format and length will be determined by the workshop steering committee and included in the workshop proposal. The workshop steering committee may request press releases or factsheets only in addition to completing a written report. Workshop publications, reports, and proceedings will be subject to the [STAC Publications Protocol](#).
9. Workshops, but not workshop products, must be completed in the fiscal year for which they are approved. The STAC fiscal year runs from June 1 – May 31.
10. Workshop reports and/or projects must be completed and forwarded to STAC no more than 90 days after the completion of the workshop unless an alternate schedule has been approved by STAC. Failure to meet reporting deadlines may jeopardize future workshop funding.
11. Final review, distribution, and web posting will be completed by STAC within six weeks of the receipt of a workshop report unless an alternate deadline is approved by STAC.
12. STAC reserves the right to release workshop products to the public. STAC also reserves the right to create additional public documents, such as factsheets or press releases, from workshop products.

Amendments to Workshop Protocols

The STAC Executive Board and/or membership establishes the STAC Workshop Protocols and can create and alter them as necessary with a majority vote.