

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.