

# **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.