

Roles and Responsibilities for the 2017 Mid-Point Assessment STAC Peer Reviews

Overview

STAC is often asked to conduct independent peer reviews of technical reports, policy statements, and activities relevant to the Chesapeake Bay Program restoration effort. Only Chesapeake Bay Program partners can request an independent peer review, and STAC encourages requestors to submit their request first to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Management Board or Executive Council. The Management Board or Executive Council then forwards the request on behalf of the partner to STAC. This request should: 1) introduce the issue; 2) detail the questions for STAC to review; 3) provide a deadline for the review should be completed by; 4) describe the form of report desired from STAC; 5) and provide an anticipated date for official response by the partner/CBP to STAC. STAC members may also proactively decide to review an issue or report.

STAC normally considers all review requests at quarterly meetings. Due to time constraints, STAC will review and approve all midpoint assessment review requests via email. A majority of STAC members must approve the review request before STAC begins work on the activity. Upon approving the review request, STAC staff should consult with members to determine who can lead the review for STAC (i.e., STAC Liaison; see below). The STAC *ad hoc* review committee, in coordination with the STAC Liaison, is responsible for nominating both internal and external reviewers with expertise in the topic area. These nominees should be approved by the STAC Executive Board.

Upon the request of the *ad hoc* review committee, STAC staff can offer reviewers honoraria for their work. Honoraria are offered to non-federal reviewers as a contractual payment for their services on the review committee. STAC staff should consult with the CRC Grants Coordinator and Finance Director to create contracts for each reviewer. Honoraria for non-federal reviewers typically ranges from \$200 to \$1,000, but the final honoraria amount offered must be approved by the STAC Executive Secretary.

STAC staff handles all logistics for reviews including: scheduling conference calls and webinars; collecting research articles and/or data relevant to the review; and taking notes for meetings.

For an external peer review, reviewers are asked to analyze the evidence collected and the issues at hand and prepare a report of their findings. The STAC Liaison and STAC staff oversee drafting of the review document(s) and may offer help in editing the document, but the final report must be drafted by the review panel and submitted by the Review Panel Chair.

Once a draft review report is complete, the report is sent to STAC members for feedback. STAC's comments will be returned to the Review Panel Chair (and the review panel) for further discussion and possible inclusion. STAC staff and the Review Panel Chair help to coordinate the additional editing process. Once the editing process is complete, STAC staff should refer to the "How to Prepare a STAC Activity Report."

STAC Ad Hoc Review Committee

The *ad hoc* review committee will be responsible for the following activities shortly after receiving each review request from CBP for the 2017 midpoint assessment reviews. The committee was charged with developing this review process that outlines the appropriate steps for STAC to complete for each review.

The process is a general overview. The review charge will vary depending on the scope of each review. A more detailed process can be outlined for the reviews that requires additional steps.

Each review request will be accompanied by a specific set of questions that each review panel will focus on. The *ad hoc* review committee will be the first group to (a) receive the review questions, (b) determine if these are the appropriate science questions to ask, and (c) determine appropriateness for a STAC review. When needed, this group will also communicate with CBP, focusing on the high level perspective as opposed to the detail oriented role of the review panel.

The full STAC membership will be invited to review the questions, but the *ad hoc* committee (now including the STAC Liaison) will ensure the final questions are appropriate for the each review panel.

STAC Review Panel

The review panel can consist of both STAC members and external scientists. The review panel will have the appropriate expertise to review and answer the charge questions for each request.

All members of the review panel must sign the STAC Conflict of Interest Form.

If warranted, the STAC review panel will meet with CBP leadership and/or staff for an informational session related to each review. If the documentation provided is not clear, the panel can request clarification or a detailed overview. This could be an in-person meeting or a webinar.

The review panel is responsible for writing/drafting the final STAC review report. STAC staff can provide editorial assistance throughout the drafting process but is not responsible for contributing to the scientific content. Sections of the report may be split between the panel members.

Review Panel Chair

Each review panel must have a Review Panel Chair who is an active member of the review team, but who may or may not be a member of STAC. If a STAC member has agreed to serve as the Review Panel Chair, then that person will also serve as the STAC Liaison. If the Review Panel Chair is not a STAC member, a STAC Liaison will be assigned.

The Review Panel Chair is responsible for leading the review. The Chair will facilitate panel meetings, conference calls, and be responsible for drafting the review report. The Review Panel Chair is decided based on expertise, leadership ability, and (importantly) availability to serve. The *ad hoc* review committee will help nominate a person to serve as the Review Panel Chair.

STAC Liaison

STAC members are NOT required to be on a review panel. If one or more STAC members is on the review panel, one STAC member panelist will serve as the STAC Liaison. If there is no STAC member on the review panel, a STAC Liaison will be assigned. To help facilitate the review, this person is charged with moving the review process forward in a timely manner and assisting STAC staff when needed. Participation includes the following:

- Initial contact with potential reviewers. Explain their role, the needed expertise, the time commitment, etc.
- Participate on planning conference calls.

- Serve as the liaison between the STAC members and the review panel.
- Oversee drafting of the review report.
- Present findings and recommendation to the full STAC membership or CBP Partnership (upon request).

STAC

All of STAC will be invited to review the charge questions and provide feedback before the review panel starts. A majority of STAC members **MUST** approve the review request before STAC begins work on the activity. STAC will use its network of colleagues to identify the appropriate reviewers. STAC will review and approve the final report produced by the review panel.

STAC convenes a review panel of qualified experts, from within STAC membership and outside institutions. A STAC member will be appointed as the STAC Liaison to oversee the review process. STAC discusses the review panel charge, and if amended, re-submits the charge to the Chesapeake Bay Program for concurrence and verification.

STAC reports must be presented to the STAC membership by the review panel and approved by STAC before distributed. 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. All review products are subject to the STAC Publications Protocol.

Following the transmission of the report, 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.

If CBP requests a STAC review, 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. The response should specify new measures it will take to address each STAC recommendation. 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.