

Proposed Revisions to the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership's BMP Expert Panel Protocols: Fact Sheet

The last update to the Best Management Practice (BMP) Expert Panel Protocols (Protocols) was approved by the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) in July 2015. Since then, questions and new considerations have been raised by the CBP partnership about the application of the existing Protocols. To address these questions and considerations, CBPO management and staff are proposing specific revisions to the Protocols for CBP partnership review, discussion/comment, and approval over the next several months. Preliminary discussions of these proposed revisions have occurred with the leadership and staff of the WQGIT and its Workgroups.

Highlights of these revisions include the following:

- Separation of the scientific findings of an Expert Panel report from the technical appendix, which explains how the BMP is to be tracked, verified, and reported for progress.
 - The scientific findings, which would undergo a partnership review period, would not require partnership approval.
 - The Expert Panel members could choose to make any modifications to the Expert Panel report based on partnership feedback during the review period; otherwise the scientific findings reflected in the Expert Panel report would stand.
 - Given the implementation concerns raised by partners, and the experience of state and local jurisdictions in the tracking, verifying, and reporting of BMPs, only the technical appendix would undergo a formal approval process. However, the partnership would approve whether the Expert Panel recommendations would be incorporated into CAST.
 - The development and review process of the scientific findings and the technical appendix would occur concurrently.
- Any requests to revisit an existing Expert Panel report must present scientific justification for doing so. It is expected that updates to existing Expert Panel reports will be approved by the appropriate Workgroup, the WTWG, and the WQ/GIT through the consensus decision-making process.
- Requests for new Expert Panels need to be “sponsored” by a signatory member via either a GIT or a Workgroup. The signatory member would work with the requestor to provide the necessary documentation and justification to convene an Expert Panel, in coordination with the appropriate Workgroup or GIT.
- A suggested definition for “best professional judgement” was added to the revised Protocols.
- The communication of the status of Expert Panels was consolidated and the website for Expert Panel reports and associated documentation was updated to reflect all CBP-partnership approved Expert Panel reports.
- Language was added that It is the responsibility of the hosting Workgroup, GIT, or the original requestor for the Expert Panel to identify and provide any required resources needed to convene and fully execute an Expert Panel, following this Protocol and in consultation with the CBP partnership.