

STAC Social Science Workgroup (SSWG)

Charge and Membership

October 2, 2024

Subject to Further Revision

Overview

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership is establishing a Social Science Workgroup (SSWG) under the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC). The goal of this workgroup is to provide a platform to integrate social science perspectives into CBP's efforts, focusing on the human dimensions of watershed management. Social sciences cover a wide array of disciplines, including behavioral economics, sociology, governance, environmental justice, and public policy. The SSWG aims to help define and apply social science frameworks that address key partnership challenges while fostering collaboration between physical and social scientists.

Charge

The Social Science Workgroup (SSWG) will:

- Define what social science means within the Chesapeake Bay Program and how it interfaces with existing efforts to restore the watershed.
- Provide advice, feedback, and recommendations on integrating social science into the Chesapeake Bay Program's policies, strategies, and practices.
- Develop methods for bridging gaps between scientific research and decision-making processes, particularly focusing on governance, environmental justice, and equity concerns.
- Assist in identifying and overcoming barriers to the inclusion of social science in CBP projects, ensuring that efforts reflect the diverse needs of all stakeholders.
- Facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration to address the social and behavioral dimensions of environmental challenges, including land use, water quality, and community engagement.
- Contribute to discussions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ), ensuring that environmental decisions consider the equity implications of various policy options.

Membership

The SSWG will consist of individuals from a range of social science disciplines, including but not limited to behavioral economics, sociology, environmental justice, and governance. This diversity will ensure that the workgroup has a broad representation of perspectives to address the CBP's complex socio-environmental challenges. Members of the workgroup will:

- Include experts with experience in governance, DEIJ issues, and environmental policy integration.
- Bring unique insights into how decisions affect different communities, particularly underserved groups.
- Be selected from academic institutions, government agencies, and the private sector, ensuring a balanced representation of interests and expertise.

Operations

The Social Science Workgroup will operate through a mix of face-to-face meetings, video conferences, and conference calls. The workgroup will:

- Provide regular updates and reports to STAC and engage with other CBP committees.
- Invite guest experts as needed to provide additional insights and perspectives.
- Ensure its findings and recommendations are communicated effectively to decision-makers and partners within CBP.

The workgroup will report back through STAC, which will ensure that the social science perspectives are considered in broader CBP strategies and initiatives.

Workgroup Formation and Staffing

The membership of the Social Science Workgroup will be selected by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), and the workgroup will be formally convened as a Standing Workgroup under the STAC's authority. Nominations and input will be gathered from the Chesapeake Bay Program's Goal Implementation Teams, supporting workgroups, and the three advisory committees. The STAC Chair and Executive Board will review and approve the role, membership, and performance of the Standing Workgroup annually to assess its continued relevance and effectiveness.

Staff support for the panel will be provided by the Chesapeake Research Consortium, namely STAC Coordinator and the STAC Projects Manager. Funding for supporting the Workgroup (e.g., travel, meeting logistics) will be provided by EPA through the Chesapeake Research Consortium.