

Terms of Reference

Water Resources Adaptation to Climate Change Workgroup of the Advisory Committee on Water Information

Approved by the Advisory Committee on Water Information: July 10, 2012.

Official designation

The Water Resources Adaptation to Climate Change Workgroup (WRACCW) is a subgroup of the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI).

Purpose and functions

Purpose – The overall purpose of the Water Resources Adaptation to Climate Change Workgroup (hereafter the “Workgroup”) is to promote, support, and provide information for effective management and protection of water resources in the United States as the climate changes and to advise the Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies on water policy as it relates to climate change adaptation.

Additionally, the Workgroup is a public forum for Federal, State, Tribal, and local government organizations and public interest and professional organizations to exchange information, views, and ideas, and to connect efforts concerning adapting water resources to a changing climate.

Functions – The functions of the Workgroup include:

- provide input and comment on proposals and draft materials relating to climate change and water developed by Federal agencies, including future updates or revisions to the *National Action Plan: Priorities for Managing Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate* published in 2011 by the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force;
- foster intergovernmental coordination on program management, data collection and analysis, and policy issues related to domestic freshwater resources and climate change,
- support the continuous improvement and integration of programs for adapting water resources to climate change by providing evaluations of overall strategies and individual products, reports, and programs as appropriate,
- inform and coordinate with other ACWI subgroups concerning climate change and water issues;
- provide input and comment on information and decision support systems related to climate change adaptation, including appropriate approaches to making decisions in face of uncertainty;

- encourage the development of water resources information, policies, and programs that are appropriately tailored to respond to climate change in a manner appropriate to fit the diverse needs in different regions of the country,
- identify opportunities to improve coordination of freshwater climate adaptation programs and policies with adaptation programs and policies related to coastal and ocean waters and fish and wildlife,
- identify priority program and policy actions, including those relating to data collection and analysis, that would enhance adaptation of freshwater resources to a changing climate,
- foster communication with and provide input to scientific and research organizations with capability for addressing research issues related to climate change and water resources, and
- encourage and promote training and education related to the impacts of a changing climate on water resources.

The Workgroup will develop an annual operating plan describing activities, events, and products expected to be implemented or developed over the coming year. The Workgroup will also provide to the Advisory Committee on Water Information an annual report describing its activities over the past year.

Membership

Membership in the Workgroup shall come from the following categories:

- Federal agencies,
- organizations representing Tribal, State, interstate, and local governments,
- public organizations interested in adaptation of water resources to a changing climate, and
- representatives of ACWI subgroups that are working on topics related to the goals of the Workgroup (such as, but not limited to, the Subcommittee on Hydrology, Subcommittee on Ground Water, and the Sustainable Water Resources Roundtable).

Total membership of the Workgroup shall not exceed 40 representatives of Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal government representatives, and organizations representing public and private interests. Each ACWI member agency or organization will designate their representative and an alternate to the Workgroup. Where possible, representatives who could fill more than one category would be preferred.

Federal membership on the Workgroup will not exceed 15 representatives and will initially include the agencies identified in the attached membership list. Organizations identified on the attached membership list are invited to participate as charter members of the Workgroup. In the event that any organization on the attached membership list declines to participate in the Workgroup, the Co-chairs may, in consultation with participating members, invite another organization with similar interests to join the Workgroup.

The Workgroup will be chaired by a Federal Co-chair and a non-Federal Co-chair (i.e., the Co-chairs) whose organizations are members of ACWI. The Federal agency Co-chair will be selected annually by vote of the Federal agency members. In the event that the Federal agency representatives do not select a Co-chair, the Federal Co-chair will annually alternate between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey. The Federal Co-chair will cooperate with the Executive Secretary of ACWI to provide services and staff support to the Workgroup. The non-Federal Co-chair shall serve a 2-year term and shall be selected by vote of the non-Federal Workgroup members, except that the first non-Federal Co-chair shall be nominated by the Federal co-chair and serve a 1-year term.

Representatives or their alternates are expected to attend all meetings of the Workgroup. If a member organization is not represented at three consecutive meetings, then the Co-chairs may appoint a new member organization to replace the member that has failed to participate.

Meetings and procedures

The Workgroup will meet at least two times each fiscal year and at other times as designated by the Co-chairs. The Co-chairs will jointly determine the dates, times, and locations of the meetings in consultation with the members. These meetings may be virtual meetings, using teleconference, video conference, and webinar technologies in order to minimize travel costs.

Representatives to the Workgroup will receive no pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of their service on the Workgroup. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business and in the performance of services for the Workgroup, non-Federal representatives to the Workgroup will be allowed travel expenses if needed. Travel expenses will include per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Government service are allowed such expenses under Section 5703 of Title 5 of the United States Code.

The attendance of two-thirds of the representatives, or designated alternates, of the member organizations will constitute the quorum necessary to conduct business. The Workgroup will conduct business in an open fashion by attempting to resolve all issues through consensus and by recognizing the legitimate interests and diverse views of the Workgroup members. If complete agreement cannot be attained, then the following procedures will apply:

- A consensus will exist unless one or more representatives request a vote.
- If a vote is requested, then Robert's Rules of Order will apply, and the Co-chairs will poll the Workgroup. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present will constitute approval. Each Workgroup member organization may cast one vote.
- Actions that constitute final reports or recommendations intended for nationwide implementation will be signed by the Co-chairs and submitted to the ACWI for final approval. Representatives may prepare minority reports and provide them to the Co-chairs within 3 weeks of a decision. Minority reports will be included with the final majority reports.

The Workgroup, with the approval of the ACWI as appropriate, will announce significant proposed actions and products in the Federal Register for the purpose of obtaining public review and comments.

Summaries with action items of Workgroup meetings will be prepared by the executive secretary of the Workgroup and distributed to all members and to the Executive Secretary of the ACWI. In addition, meeting summaries and other documents will be available for public access and review.

Minutes of each Workgroup meeting, recommendations adopted, and copies of all studies and reports received, issued, or approved in conjunction with the activities of the Workgroup will be available for public inspection on the Internet (through the ACWI website, <http://acwi.gov>) and for review and copying at the following location:

Water Information Coordination Program
U.S. Geological Survey
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Mail Stop 417
Reston, Virginia 20192

Period of time necessary for the activities of the Workgroup – The total period of time necessary for the Workgroup to carry out its activities is estimated to be for as long as the Federal Government has responsibilities and interests related to adapting water resources to a changing climate.

Official to whom the Workgroup reports – The Workgroup reports to the Chair of the ACWI through the Executive Secretary of the ACWI.

Support Services – The ACWI Executive Secretary and USGS Water Information Coordination Program will provide support services to the Workgroup in the same manner as they support other Subcommittees and Workgroups. The Federal Co-chair shall provide staff support to act as the Executive Secretary for the Workgroup.

Duties of the Workgroup – The duties of the Workgroup are to provide information and advice as set forth above.

Termination date – The Chair of the ACWI has the authority to terminate the Workgroup in consultation with the member organizations of the ACWI and the Workgroup.

Subordinate groups – For assistance in conducting its business, the Workgroup may establish subordinate groups. Such groups may gather information, conduct research, analyze relevant issues and facts, and draft proposed position papers and/or recommendations for deliberation by the workgroup. These groups will have the balanced perspectives and knowledge necessary to perform their assigned functions.

Federal agency subgroup – The Federal agency members shall constitute a subgroup of the Workgroup and will meet to coordinate Federal agency activities related to climate change and water resources, including the Federal agency coordination activities identified in the *National Action Plan: Priorities for Managing Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate*.

Authority – The Workgroup is part of the Water Information Coordination Program mandated by OMB Memorandum No. M-92-01, dated December 10, 1991. The Workgroup reports to the ACWI that operates under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.