

National Ground-Water Monitoring Network Program Board

Structure and Operating Principles

September, 2015

The National Ground-Water Monitoring Network (NGWMN) Framework document describes a three-tiered structure for Network management:

1. Subcommittee on Ground Water
2. NGWMN Program Board
3. USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group

This document outlines the structure and operating principles for the NGWMN Program Board (Board) as part of the Network management structure. Individuals who agree to serve on the Program Board are expected to read and abide by these requirements. This document will be revisited annually with input from the Program Board, the Subcommittee on Ground Water (SOGW), and the USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group.

A key role of the Board is to represent NGWMN data providers. The Board will provide input to the USGS and the SOGW on issues related to network growth, development, and operation from the perspective of data providers. The Board will work with the USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group to evaluate proposals submitted to the NGWMN for cooperative funding.

- The Board's duties and responsibilities are to:
 - Provide input on the NGWMN Program's scope, priorities, and overall direction.
 - Provide advice on details of monitoring – number of and location of monitoring points.
 - Lead efforts to build consistency in data collection and management methods between various data providers.
 - Offer input on Network growth and development.
 - Represent the concerns of data providers.
 - Evaluate funding proposals.
 - Provide advice to USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group on goals/priorities for funding opportunities to be described in the NGWMN Program Announcement.
 - Serve as the review panel for NGWMN proposals submitted to Grants.gov. The Board will meet annually with USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group to evaluate proposals for the National Ground-Water Monitoring Network. The result will be a priority ranking of proposals.
 - Communicate with current and potential data providers.
 - Bring issues raised by NGWMN data providers to the SOGW.

- Reach out to potential NGWMN data providers to encourage participation.

Membership:

- The Board members will be NGWMN data providers, representatives of the SOGW, and representatives of the USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group.
- The Board will be composed of up to 10 members. Data providers (including Federal) will be at least 50% of the Board. The Board will have less than 50% Federal membership.
- The Board will include at least 1 representative each from the SOGW and the USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group.
- Members of the Board will be selected by the USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group in consultation with the SOGW. Each founding member will be assigned an initial 1, 2, or 3 year term so that the terms will be staggered.
- After the initial Board members are assigned, all new Board members will be assigned a term of three years.
- At the end of an assigned term, Board membership may be renewed. The Board membership will be evaluated annually. If current Board members are unable to meet their responsibilities during their term, a replacement will be named.
- Data provider representatives will be selected to represent the three regions as specified below. There will be two data providers assigned as Board members in each of the three regions.
 - East
Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, and Virginia
 - Central
Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin
 - West
Arizona, Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming
- The Board will elect co-chairs from within the membership. At least one co-chair shall be a data provider.
- If a Board member cannot attend the Proposal Review Meeting, the USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group Lead in consultation with the Program Board co-chairs will assign an alternate member.

Restrictions:

- Board Members must agree to the confidentiality conditions related to proposal review. Proposal content cannot be disclosed or discussed with outside parties.
- Board members will be required to attend the annual proposal meeting in person, if budget and travel restrictions allow.
- Board Members may not provide advice to applicants who are preparing proposals to the NGWMN. The USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group may not assist applicants in preparing a proposal. Because of this restriction, applicants should be referred to the SOGW for questions about NGWMN proposals.

Working methods:

- General guidelines for meetings.
 - Meetings will include:
 - A meeting will be held annually to review proposals for the NGWMN. If budget and travel restrictions allow, this will be a face-to-face meeting.
 - A face to face meeting of the Board may be held in conjunction with ACWI/SOGW meetings.
 - One or more conference calls will be necessary to provide input to the USGS regarding the annual NGWMN Program Announcement, to discuss the proposal review process, and to plan the proposal review meeting.
 - Meetings will be organized by the co-chairs in coordination with the USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group Lead.
 - Cost for meeting attendance will be paid by the USGS.
 - The co-chairs will generate the meeting agenda in consultation with the USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group Lead.
 - At least 2/3 of the members will need to be present at any meeting where key issues are voted upon.
- Special considerations for proposal review meeting
 - Members will be provided an electronic version of all proposals prior to the meeting and will be expected to read and consider each proposal prior to the meeting.
 - All discussions regarding proposals are confidential. All proposals, notes, and summaries (paper and electronic) need to be returned or destroyed after the meetings
 - At the beginning of the meeting, members will review the list of proposals submitted and complete a 'Panel Member Conflict of Interest Statement' that indicates any proposals for which the member has a conflict or an apparent conflict.

- Members who are NGWMN data providers will not be allowed to review or comment on proposals from the State they represent (even for other state and/or local agencies within their state).
 - Members will be asked to leave the room during discussion of proposals for which Board they have a conflict of interest.
 - Prior to the meeting, the USGS Management and Operations Group will assign a Board Member to be the lead reviewer for each proposal.
 - The lead reviewer for each proposal will lead the discussion of that proposal and will be responsible for preparing a Proposal Summary Document by the end of the meeting. The summary will represent the Board's review and comments for each proposal.
 - The Proposal Summary Document will be returned to the applicant with the funding decisions.
 - The score for each criterion from each Board member will be recorded and a weighted score will be determined. The scores from all Board members will be averaged.
 - The USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group will prepare a ranking of proposals based on the average scores from the Program Board.
 - Funding decisions by the USGS will be based on this ranking and other Program considerations.
- Sharing of information and resources
 - Proposals submitted to the NGWMN are confidential. Members may not discuss copy, quote, or use material from any proposal. Proposal Review meeting notes and Summary Documents are also confidential and may not be disclosed. Notes and comments will be collected at the end of the meeting. Members will also be asked to delete any electronic copies of proposals, notes, or summaries and discard any paper copies of these documents.
 - A USGS managed site may be used to share Proposal submissions and track review assignments. This site will be password protected and open only to Board members.

Definition of terms

- NGWMN
The National Ground-Water Monitoring Network. The Network was established under the direction of the Subcommittee on Ground Water using network design principals outlined in the NGWMN Framework Document.
<http://cida.usgs.gov/ngwmn/>
- SOGW

The Subcommittee on Ground Water is a subgroup of the Federal Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI). The overall goal of the SOGW is to develop, encourage, and guide implementation of a nationwide groundwater monitoring network. <http://acwi.gov/sogw/index.html>

- ACWI
Advisory Committee on Water Information. ACWI is a Federal Advisory Committee with the Department of the Interior. The USGS is the lead agency. <http://acwi.gov/>
- NGWMN Program Board
A Board composed of NGWMN data providers and representatives of the Subcommittee on Ground Water and the USGS NGWMN management and Operations Group. The Board will provide input on issues related to network growth, development, and operation from the perspective of data providers and evaluate proposals submitted to the NGWMN for cooperative funding.
- NGWMN Data Portal
The interface to the NGWMN data. <http://cida.usgs.gov/ngwmn/index.jsp>
- USGS NGWMN Management and Operations Group
The group responsible for day-to-day network management.
- NGWMN Framework Document
The Document ('A National Framework for Ground-Water Monitoring in the United States') produced by the SOGW in 2009 and revised in 2013 describes the need for the network, goals of the Network, design of the Network, and guidance on data collection and management for data providers. http://acwi.gov/sogw/ngwmn_framework_report_july2013.pdf
- NGWMN data provider
Federal, Tribal, State, or local agencies that collect groundwater data as part of their purpose and agree to provide their data to the National Ground-Water Monitoring Network.