

1 **TERMS OF REFERENCE (01/18/2017)**

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3 **I. Official Designation**

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5 Subcommittee on Ground Water (SOGW) is a subcommittee of the Advisory Committee  
6 on Water Information (ACWI).

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8 **II. Purpose, functions, and applicability**

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10 **A. Purpose**

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12 The overall goal of the SOGW is to promote, support, and provide information for  
13 the effective monitoring, management, and protection of groundwater resources in  
14 the United States, and to advise the Department of the Interior and other Federal  
15 agencies on groundwater issues. Additionally, the SOGW will continue to advise,  
16 guide, and help oversee the implementation of the nationwide, long-term  
17 groundwater quantity and quality monitoring framework and network that  
18 provides information necessary for the planning, management, and development  
19 of groundwater resources to meet current and future water needs.

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21 The SOGW is also a public forum for Federal, State, Tribal, and local government  
22 organizations and public interest and professional organizations to exchange  
23 information, views, and ideas, and to connect efforts concerning groundwater.

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25 **B. Functions**

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- 28 • Pursuant to the original Terms of Reference, the SOGW has developed a  
29 framework for developing and implementing a National Ground-Water  
30 Monitoring Network (NGWMN) that provides information that can be  
31 used to assist in assessments of the quantity and quality of the nation's  
32 groundwater resources. The SOGW will continue to guide the  
33 establishment of the NGWMN according to the design and  
34 implementation parameters in the most recent version of the framework  
35 document.
  - 36 • The SOGW will work with Federal, State, Tribal, local governments, and  
37 other potential data contributors to encourage their participation as data  
38 providers to the NGWMN. The SOGW will facilitate communication  
39 among members and participants, including regular virtual meetings,  
40 infrequent in-person meetings, and notice of presentations at professional  
41 meetings where interested parties may be in attendance and electronic  
42 communication and sharing of materials regarding SOGW activities.
  - 43  
44 • The SOGW will work with ACWI, share information regarding NGWMN  
45 goals, achievements, and hurdles as well as identifying areas for potential  
46 cooperation and collaboration with other ACWI efforts; provide advice to

1 the NGWMN on Federal issues, and suggest directions and priorities for  
2 the NGWMN.

- 3
- 4 • The SOGW will assist in NGWMN program evaluation and provide  
5 feedback to NGWMN data providers, its Program Board, and the USGS  
6 consistent with guidance presented in the framework document.
- 7
- 8 • As needed, the SOGW will maintain work groups to address existing as  
9 well as emerging groundwater issues.
- 10
- 11 • The SOGW will review ACWI products and activities (including ACWI  
12 Subcommittees and their predecessors) that are relevant to groundwater  
13 monitoring, data acquisition, storage and retrieval.
- 14
- 15 • The SOGW will maintain liaison with, and serve on relevant ACWI  
16 Subcommittees, and report back on their activities to the SOGW.
- 17
- 18 • The SOGW will foster intergovernmental coordination regarding program  
19 management, data collection, access, and analysis, and policy issues  
20 related to groundwater resources.
- 21
- 22 • The SOGW will encourage collaboration among government and non-  
23 government organizations (NGOs), and foster communication and input to  
24 scientific and research organizations with capabilities for addressing  
25 research issues related to groundwater availability, sustainability, and  
26 value.
- 27
- 28 • The SOGW will promote methods to access and archive groundwater data  
29 on a national scale.
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- 31 • The SOGW will monitor methods and advances in technology for  
32 enhancing and advancing groundwater quality and quantity measurements.
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### 34 **C. Applicability**

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36 The SOGW will request ACWI's approval for SOGW-developed  
37 recommendations, guidelines, and procedures, as appropriate. As resources are  
38 available, organizations that participate in the SOGW will voluntarily help to  
39 implement the recommendations, guidelines and procedures developed by the  
40 SOGW. Other organizations will be encouraged to implement the  
41 recommendations and voluntarily use the guidelines and procedures developed by  
42 the SOGW.  
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1 **III. Membership**

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- 3 A. The U.S. Geological Survey and a non-federal member representative will
- 4 co-chair the SOGW.
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- 6 B. The SOGW shall enlist an Executive Secretary from one of the SOGW
- 7 member organizations, who will assist the SOGW co-chairs in conducting
- 8 communications, and in organizing and running meetings of the SOGW. The
- 9 SOGW Executive Secretary will be responsible for coordinating the posting of
- 10 meeting, meeting notes, and documents of interest on the SOGW portion of
- 11 the ACWI website and will also help the co-chairs communicate with ACWI
- 12 via the ACWI Executive Secretary.
- 13
- 14 C. The SOGW shall have a membership from among federal, tribal, interstate,
- 15 state, and/or local government agencies, NGOs, academia, and private
- 16 industry. The total membership of SOGW is limited to 20 organizations. The
- 17 membership will include those organizations with experience in the collection,
- 18 analysis, dissemination, and use of groundwater information, as well as those
- 19 that develop groundwater monitoring technology, guidelines, or standards.
- 20 Participation on the SOGW will be on a voluntary basis.
- 21
- 22 D. During meetings, the co-chairs will announce membership applications
- 23 received up to 2 weeks before each meeting. Organizations that apply will
- 24 become members at the following meeting pending approval by co-chairs.
- 25
- 26 E. If member organization seat(s) are open, organizations that pledge to actively
- 27 support the functions of the SOGW may become a voting member by
- 28 (1) informing the co-chairs in writing of their desire to participate and (2) by
- 29 providing the name and contact information of the organization's
- 30 representative and alternate. Active support includes participating in
- 31 meetings, drafting documents, reviewing and commenting on documents,
- 32 making presentations, and other contributions of staff time, funding, or other
- 33 resources. Each member organization shall have one vote.
- 34
- 35 F. Voting member organizations are expected to participate, in person or by
- 36 teleconference, in meetings of the SOGW. At their discretion, and in
- 37 consultation with the other member organizations, the chairs may remove as a
- 38 voting member any organization that fails to attend at least 50 percent of the
- 39 meetings in any year (October 1 to September 30). A member organization
- 40 can be reinstated one year later by informing the co-chairs of the
- 41 organization's desire to renew its participation in the SOGW.
- 42
- 43 G. Other interested individuals (participants) may participate in the meetings and
- 44 activities of the SOGW, but such SOGW participants do not have voting
- 45 rights.
- 46

1 **IV. Meetings and procedures**

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3 A. The SOGW will meet at least twice a year (in person and/or by remote access)  
4 and at other times as designated by the co-chairs. The co-chairs will determine  
5 the dates, times, and locations of the meetings in consultation with the  
6 members. The co-chairs will be responsible for distributing agendas and  
7 information about meetings to all members. These meetings may be virtual  
8 meetings, using teleconference, video conference, and webinar technologies to  
9 minimize travel costs. Members are responsible for participating in the  
10 meetings.

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12 B. Members of the SOGW will receive no pay, allowances, or benefits from the  
13 ACWI. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business,  
14 in the performance of services for the SOGW, non-Federal members and  
15 participants may be allowed reimbursement of some travel expenses if funds  
16 are available.

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18 D. The SOGW will conduct business in an open fashion by discussing and  
19 attempting to resolve all issues through consensus and by recognizing the  
20 legitimate interests and diverse views of the SOGW voting members and  
21 participants. If complete agreement cannot be reached on a specific issue, then  
22 the following procedure will apply:

- 23  
24 1. A consensus will exist unless one or more voting member(s) request(s) a  
25 formal vote. A quorum consisting of more than one half of the SOGW  
26 voting membership is necessary for a formal vote.  
27  
28 2. Once a vote is requested, the co-chairs will poll the voting members. An  
29 affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum, either in person or  
30 electronically, will constitute approval of a motion.  
31  
32 3. The co-chairs will sign and forward to the Chair and Executive Secretary of  
33 the ACWI decisions of the SOGW that are proposing advice, guidance or  
34 recommendations intended for implementation. If two or more voting  
35 members disagree with the consensus or majority decision, they may  
36 prepare minority report(s) to the co-chairs within 3 weeks of a decision.  
37 Such minority report(s) will be forwarded to the ACWI along with the  
38 decision.

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40 E. Meetings of the SOGW will be open to all interested parties.

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42 F. At the direction of the SOGW co-chairs, the SOGW Executive Secretary will  
43 distribute summaries with action items of SOGW meetings to SOGW  
44 members and participants.  
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1 **V. Termination**

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3 The ACWI Executive Secretary and Chair have the authority to terminate the SOGW in  
4 consultation with ACWI members. At least 30 days' notice will be provided in advance  
5 of termination.

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7 **VII. Support services**

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9 Support services and administrative assistance for the activities of the SOGW will be  
10 provided by the USGS, as resources are available. In addition, other organizations may  
11 contribute services and support to the SOGW.

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13 **VIII. Subordinate groups**

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15 For assistance in conducting its business, the SOGW may establish work groups for a  
16 specific purpose and/or time. Such work groups will gather information, conduct  
17 research, analyze relevant issues and facts, and draft proposed position papers and  
18 recommendations for deliberation by the SOGW. These work groups will be established  
19 by the co-chairs and will have the balanced perspectives and knowledge necessary to  
20 perform their designated functions. Individuals that serve on these subordinate work  
21 groups may include persons and organizations that are not members or participants of the  
22 SOGW, but who provide the knowledge and expertise needed to carry out the assigned  
23 tasks. All such work groups will report back to the SOGW at its meeting, and will serve  
24 for the time necessary to complete the action for which they were formed. Upon  
25 completion of its assigned task, each work group will be terminated unless otherwise  
26 directed by the SOGW.

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28 **IX. Authority**

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30 The SOGW will work under ACWI as part of the Water Information Coordination  
31 Program mandated by OMB Memorandum No. 92-01, dated December 10, 1991. The  
32 SOGW reports to the Chair of the ACWI through its Executive Secretary. The ACWI  
33 operates under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA); the Subcommittee is not  
34 separately chartered under FACA.

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36 **Dates of Approval:** Approved by the Advisory Committee on Water Information on  
37 February 22, 2017.

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40 Signed/

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43 \_\_\_\_\_  
44 William L. Cunningham  
45 SOGW Federal Co-Chair

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44 Robert P. Schreiber  
45 SOGW Non-Federal Co-Chair

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2 Wendy E. Norton ACWI Executive Secretary