

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. Official Designation.

Subcommittee on Ground Water (SOGW) for the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI).

II. Purpose, scope, applicability, and functions.

A. Purpose

The overall goal of the SOGW is to develop, encourage, and guide implementation of a nationwide, long-term ground-water quantity and quality monitoring framework and network that will provide information necessary for the planning, management, and development of ground-water supplies to meet current and future water needs.

B. Scope

Pursuant to its purpose, the SOGW has developed a framework for developing and implementing a National Groundwater Monitoring Network (Network) that provides data that can be used to assist in assessments of the quantity and quality of the nation's groundwater resources.

In July, 2013 the SOGW released a revised version of *A National Framework for Ground-Water Monitoring in the United States*. As discussed in that document, the SOGW will guide the establishment of the Network according to the design and implementation parameters in the 2013 Framework Document. The SOGW will serve as an interface between the ACWI and the Network, and will identify directions and priorities for the Network. The SOGW will provide input to the USGS Network management/operation group, which handles day-to-day administration of the Network. The SOGW also will provide guidance and input regarding scope, priorities and overall direction of the Network as described in the Framework document.

In undertaking its work, including Network oversight, the SOGW should promote data sharing and efficient use of resources while being aware of the inherent limitations resulting from the policies, programs, and funding for the collection, analysis, assessment, distribution, reporting, and use of ground-water data at all levels of government and in the private sector. The SOGW will review products and activities of ACWI (including ACWI subgroups and their predecessors) that are relevant to ground-water monitoring, data acquisition or storage and retrieval.

The SOGW will obtain ACWI approval of SOGW-developed recommendations, guidelines, and procedures, as appropriate.

C. Applicability

As resources are available, organizations that participate in the SOGW will voluntarily help to implement the recommendations, guidelines and procedures developed by the SOGW. Other organizations will be encouraged to implement the recommendations and voluntarily use the guidelines and procedures developed by the SOGW.

D. Functions

1. The SOGW will develop a national framework for guiding ground-water monitoring design, operation, collaboration, and data sharing with particular emphasis on observing changes with respect to ground-water availability, considering both quantity and quality, as well as the efficiencies facilitated by improvements in monitoring and data-processing technologies.
2. The SOGW will address the following issues:
 - a. Evaluation and prioritization of the various factors integral to and/or influencing the implementation of the Network, including (1) balancing monitoring between regionally important aquifers and locally important aquifers; (2) design/development of subnetworks, (3) designation of monitoring categories, (4) design of monitoring to help assess responses to climate change/variability and responses to ground-water use; (5) tailored monitoring of confined and unconfined aquifers; (6) monitoring wells open to different depths and within the context of the three-dimensional ground water flow system; (7) monitoring among various land uses including areas undergoing transition; (8) monitoring to determine impacts on surface water levels; and (9) monitoring areas of ground water recharge,
 - b. Collaboration among government and non-government entities,
 - c. Consistency of measurement/sample collection techniques, frequency of measurement/sample collection, well instrumentation, analytical methods, analyte selection, data storage, data retrieval, and data standards in order to facilitate data sharing,
 - d. Recommendations for methods to archive and access ground-water data on a national scale.
3. The SOGW will work with State, Tribal, local governments, and other data contributors to implement the Network. Participation on the SOGW will be on a voluntary basis. The SOGW will provide technical/administrative assistance to prospective participants in the Network, in

regard to and limited by the scope of SOGW-specific activities including regular teleconferenced meetings, infrequent in-person meetings, and electronic communication and sharing of materials.

III. Membership

A. The SOGW shall have a membership from among federal, interstate, state, and/or local government agencies and non-federal organizations. The membership will include those with experience in the collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of ground-water data, as well as those that develop ground-water monitoring technology, guidelines, or standards.

B. Any organization that pledges to actively support the functions of the SOGW may become a voting member by informing the co-chairs in writing of their desire to participate and by providing the name and contact information of the organization's representative and alternate. Active support includes participating in meetings, drafting documents, reviewing and commenting on documents, making presentations, and other contributions of staff time, funding, or other resources.

C. During meetings the co-chairs will announce membership applications received up to 2 weeks before each meeting. Organizations that apply will become members at the following meeting.

D. Other interested individuals may participate in the meetings and activities of the SOGW, but may not vote.

E. The U.S. Geological Survey and a non-federal representative will co-chair the SOGW.

F. Voting member organizations are expected to participate, in person or by teleconference, in meetings of the SOGW. At their discretion in consultation with the other member organizations, the chairs may remove as a voting member any organization that fails to attend at least 50 percent of the meetings in any year (October 1 to September 30) or to actively support the SOGW. A member organization can be reinstated one year later by informing the co-chairs of the organization's desire to renew its participation in the SOGW.

IV. Meetings and procedures

A. The SOGW will meet at least twice a year (in person and/or by remote access) and at other times as designated by the co-chairs. The co-chairs will determine the dates, times, and locations of the meetings in consultation with the members. The co-chairs will be responsible for distributing agendas and information about

meetings to all members. Members are responsible for participating in the meetings.

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

C. The SOGW will collaborate with the National Water-Quality Monitoring Council and, as appropriate, other ACWI subcommittees on ground-water quality and quantity monitoring issues.

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

1. A consensus will exist unless one or more voting members request a formal vote.

2. Once a vote is requested, the co-chairs will poll the voting members. An affirmative vote of a majority of the members present, in person or electronically, will constitute approval of a motion. Each organization has one vote.

3. The co-chairs will sign and forward to the Chair of ACWI decisions of the SOGW that are proposed advice, guidance or recommendations intended for implementation. If two or more members disagree with the consensus or majority decision, they may prepare minority report(s) to the co-chairs within 3 weeks of a decision. Such minority report(s) will be forwarded to ACWI along with majority reports.

E. Meetings of the SOGW will be open. Each meeting will include a designated time period for individuals who are not members to make statements or to have written statements distributed during the meeting.

F. The co-chairs will distribute summaries with action items of SOGW meetings to voting and non-voting members. Once agreed to, the co-chairs will forward the information to the Executive Secretary of the ACWI for further distribution, and posting on the ACWI web site.

V. Termination

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

VII. Support services

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

VIII. Subordinate groups

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

IX. Authority

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

Dates of Approval: Approved by the Advisory Committee on Water Information on August 20, 2014

Signed/

William L. Cunningham
SOGW Federal Co-Chair

Robert P. Schreiber
SOGW Non-Federal Co-Chair

Wendy E. Norton ACWI Executive Secretary