

EPA Science and Technology Policy Council Charter

A. Purpose, Membership, and Leadership

i. Purpose

The EPA Science and Technology Policy Council (STPC) is a cross-Agency decision-making body that identifies critical science and technology issues and develops and implements policies to help advance the Agency's environmental and public health priorities. The STPC focuses on issues that require high level action and are relevant to the regional and program offices.

ii. Membership

The STPC is composed of senior Agency executives, generally at the Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) and Deputy Regional Administrator (DRA) level and appropriate Office Directors within the Office of the Administrator; however Assistant Administrators (AAs), Associate Administrators and Regional Administrators (RAs) may determine proper representation for their office/region. STPC members must be able to speak with the authority of the AA or RA on issues before the Council. The STPC is comprised of the Agency Science Advisor and members from:

Administrator's Office: Office of Children's Health Protection

Administrator's Office: Office of Policy - National Center for Environmental Economics

Administrator's Office: Science Advisory Board Staff Office

Office of Air and Radiation

Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Office of Environmental Information

Office of General Counsel

Office of Land and Emergency Management

Office of Research and Development

Office of Water

Lead Region for Science and Research

Next Lead Region for Science and Research

Past Lead Region for Science and Research

The three member regions are responsible for representing the perspectives from all ten regions.

iii. Leadership

The STPC is chaired by the EPA Science Advisor who convenes meetings of the Council. The Director of the Office of the Science Advisor (OSA) is a non-voting, *ex officio* member of the STPC and convenes the STPC in the absence of the Science Advisor.

B. STPC Structure and Function

i. Structure

The STPC is composed of senior executives from EPA Offices as described above. The STPC members are supported by standing panels and workgroups as described in Section C.

ii. Function

The STPC is a venue in which issues and ideas can be raised, discussed, and resolved, for the purpose of developing science and technical policies and/or guidance. The STPC encourages all perspectives to be discussed in seeking consensus.

As part of their responsibilities, the STPC:

1. Selects high priority issues appropriate for coordination or resolution by the Council.
2. Approves the charges of workgroups.
3. Approves, implements and disbands workgroups and standing groups.
4. Reviews policy implications of products for their offices/programs and the Agency.
5. Resolves conflicts on issues identified by standing groups, OSA and/or the Science Advisor.
6. Makes science policy decisions as needed for completion of documents under its purview.
7. Concurs with the external release (outside the Agency) of draft and final versions of significant scientific/technical documents developed by workgroups under its purview.

STPC members are responsible for implementing Council actions within their respective Offices and Regions.

C. Supporting Groups

i. Scientific Support Panel

The STPC is supported by senior scientists from member offices and regions collectively referred to as the Scientific Support Panel (SSP).

Each STPC member designates a SSP member to facilitate communications within their respective organization and to provide scientific and technical support to the STPC. Offices and Regions that do not have STPC membership may also designate a SSP member to facilitate communication and provide their Office/Region's input on STPC activities and topics under consideration. SSP members individually and collectively:

1. Provide input toward developing STPC priorities, products, meeting agendas and materials.
2. Brief STPC members prior to STPC meetings.
3. Inform the OSA Director of significant issues related to the STPC or standing groups.

The SSP has additional functions with respect to workgroups which report directly to the STPC:

1. Work with OSA staff to develop and present to the STPC a detailed charge.
[Note: The STPC approves the concept and detailed charge for the workgroup.]
2. Monitor the progress of each workgroup to achieve the goals of the charge.
3. Review draft products for STPC concurrence.

ii. Standing Groups

The STPC establishes and oversees standing groups that promote effective coordination of a scientific or technical issue having broad and long term implications across the Agency. The standing groups may identify and bring to the STPC's attention high-level, cross-Agency or cross-program issues or policy gaps. The charters of the standing groups are approved by the STPC. The STPC establishes standing groups and workgroups as needed. The Risk Assessment Forum, the Forum on Environmental Measurements, the Peer Review Advisory Group and the Laboratory Enterprise Forum are examples of standing groups that report to the STPC.

Standing groups and the SSP, working with OSA staff, develop specific products as directed by the STPC. Prior to task initiation, the STPC approves a specific charge drafted by a standing group or SSP that defines the goals and expected product(s) for the workgroups and relevant implementation plans.

iii. Workgroups

Workgroups develop one or more products (e.g., guidance, options, recommendations, reports and plans) consistent with their charge for STPC concurrence. The Science Advisor may request from the STPC, or any STPC supporting group, the names of individuals to participate on workgroups. The workgroups established under a standing group report to the standing group chair.

Consistent with their charge, a workgroup is task limited and will:

1. Develop a work plan and schedule appropriate to their designated task for approval by their standing group or SSP.
2. Meet to develop their work product and address comments on their work product.
3. Provide periodic project updates to the standing group or SSP.
4. Identify science policy issues requiring an STPC decision in order to complete the tasks assigned in the workgroup charge.
5. Seek consensus on its products prior to finalization. If the group cannot reach consensus, the issues will be raised to the Standing Group Chair, SSP or OSA Director for resolution.

iv. Office of the Science Advisor (OSA)

OSA supports the Science Advisor, STPC, and related standing groups to the extent that staff and other resources are available. The STPC Coordinator ensures efficient operation of the STPC. OSA provides staff and other resources necessary for the workgroups to function.

D. STPC Agenda and Operations

i. Agenda

The STPC meeting agendas are developed by the STPC Coordinator, with input from STPC members, standing groups and the SSP. Final decisions regarding STPC meeting agendas are made by the Science Advisor. The agenda and background documents are provided to the STPC members and SSP sufficiently in advance of the meeting. Issues included on the agenda for STPC deliberation should meet the following criteria:

1. Important for advancing the Agency's mission;
2. Highlight and/or address gaps or inconsistencies in cross-program or cross-Agency science or technology policy;
3. Are relevant to the Agency strategic plan; and
4. Otherwise impact Council business.

ii. Operations

The STPC meets quarterly. The Science Advisor may cancel or add meetings as deemed necessary. STPC members are expected to attend Council meetings. Videoconferencing will be available for those members located outside of headquarters. If a STPC member cannot attend, the STPC member may authorize a substitute to speak on their behalf. The STPC periodically evaluates the progress and effectiveness of standing groups and workgroups. This evaluation ensures the relevancy of the group's purpose and that the group's tasks and projects continue to address the Agency's priority needs.

The standing groups and SSP provide the STPC with a status of current projects through OSA. Approval and amendments to the standing group charters and workgroup charges can be made by the STPC.

This charter may be amended by the STPC.

This charter, effective immediately, supersedes the previous 2011 EPA Science and Technology Policy Council Charter.



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Date