

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Research and Development**

**BOARD OF SCIENTIFIC COUNSELORS
PARTICULATE MATTER AND OZONE RESEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Conference Call Summary
April 12, 2005
12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m., E.D.T.**

Background

This conference call was the last of four meetings/conference calls for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC), Particulate Matter and Ozone Research Subcommittee. Two other conference calls and one face-to-face meeting were held previously. The main purpose of this conference call was to follow-up with subcommittee members on the progress of their evaluation report by:

- ✧ Discussing comments about and revisions made to the third draft of the subcommittee's evaluation report, which was circulated among subcommittee members for correction and comment, and then submitted to Mr. Lawrence Martin, the Particulate Matter and Ozone Research Subcommittee Designated Federal Officer (DFO), following the March 30-31, 2005 meeting.
- ✧ Determining which comments and revisions were acceptable, what parts of the report still needed revising, what those revisions should encompass, and which member(s) would be responsible for making specific revisions.
- ✧ Reaching consensus on as much of the report's specific language or wording as possible, especially as it pertains to conclusions and recommendations.
- ✧ Setting up a short turnaround schedule for submitting all revisions to Mr. Martin for incorporation into a draft report, which was scheduled for delivery to Dr. Dan Costa, EPA, Office of Research and Development (ORD), National Program Director for Air on or before April 14, 2005.

As previously agreed, Mr. Martin retained responsibility for receiving all members' electronic files, incorporating all revisions submitted, creating the new draft to reflect revisions and any consensus reached by subcommittee members, and compiling the final report to be submitted to ORD.

During the subcommittee's March 3, 2005 conference call, Dr. Rogene Henderson, the Subcommittee Chair, made writing assignments for the four charge questions, pairing subcommittee members to develop responses to one charge question per pair. The writing assignments were as follows: (1) Program Design and Demonstrated Leadership—Drs. Kenneth

Demerjian and Brian Lamb; (2) Science Quality—Drs. Henderson and Peipei Ping; (3) Relevance—Drs. Charles Rodes and Michael Lipsett; and (4) Demonstrated Outcomes—Dr. Christian Seigneur and Mr. Bart Croes.

Opening

The conference call began at 12:00 noon. Mr. Martin opened the conference call by acknowledging each subcommittee member. Participating in the conference call were Drs. Henderson, Seigneur, Demerjian, Lamb, Rodes, and Lipsett; and Mr. Croes and Mr. Martin.

Dr. Henderson began by stating that based on her review of the material submitted to date, the draft appeared to be strong. As a result of this conference call, she expected the subcommittee to have a draft document that would be suitable to submit to Dr. Costa for use in preparing his Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) Report. She emphasized that the subcommittee's report should be marked prominently as a draft to eliminate any confusion with the final version.

Dr. Henderson then turned the discussion to specific elements of the report. Mr. Martin indicated that subcommittee members should have the drafts marked "4/8-CF" and "4/11" to refer to during the call. Because he could not distinguish between each member's comments after he had incorporated them into the draft and accepted the changes, he asked that any missing items be addressed by the author during the conference call so he could include those corrections in the next draft.

Dr. Henderson raised the issue of revising the report's introductory material, which was borrowed from an official EPA document, rather than using it verbatim. She also suggested a change in the "voice" so that the language is more consistent with other BOSC subcommittee reports. In agreeing with Dr. Henderson's request, Dr. Rodes referred to a specific paragraph on page 3 and requested subcommittee consensus on the language to be used there. After a short discussion, the subcommittee members reached consensus on changing the language.

Dr. Rodes explained that the language in the introduction was used because EPA did not provide the subcommittee with detailed background information on the Particulate Matter and Ozone Research Program before the March 30-31 program review meeting. Without the benefit of reviewing such material before the meeting, a proper draft introduction could not be written. Dr. Rodes also mentioned that he and other subcommittee members commented on this earlier, noting that background information also would have helped them better understand the posters. Dr. Henderson concurred, suggesting that this issue be included in the report's introduction.

Turning the discussion to the subcommittee's overarching conclusions and recommendations, Dr. Henderson stated that those were the most important elements of the report to address, considering the fact that some people would read only those sections. Referring to the conclusions in the working draft, she asked the subcommittee members whether any conclusions had been missed. All agreed that the conclusions were complete.

Dr. Henderson then asked members to offer their comments on each conclusion. The ensuing discussion addressed changes in wording, copying or relocating certain sentences to other

conclusions or recommendations, coordinating language in and cross-referencing specific conclusions to their corresponding recommendations on the same issues, as well as subcommittee member assignments for making the agreed-upon changes.

Dr. Henderson then directed discussion to the recommendations section of the report. For Recommendation 1, clarity of wording was the issue addressed by Drs. Lipsett and Henderson. Dr. Lamb suggested that some content revisions were needed as well. In response to Dr. Lamb, Dr. Demerjian suggested that the recommendation be written from the standpoint of reducing uncertainty, rather than using levels of uncertainty as the unit of measure. The subcommittee agreed on this matter.

The discussion of Recommendation 2 addressed incorporating language linking source-to-health outcomes and study hypotheses. Because using hypotheses would be a new way for EPA studies to measure performance, some of the issues raised included: (1) whether the subcommittee should suggest requiring hypotheses for new research studies, and (2) whether examples of hypotheses should be included in the recommendation. After considering several options, the subcommittee decided that language should be added to the recommendation indicating that future research studies should be hypothesis driven and that hypotheses should be designed to demonstrate or prove source-to-health outcomes. Drs. Demerjian and Lamb suggested the inclusion of a reference to or an example of a hypothesis-driven pilot study. Dr. Henderson and Mr. Martin recorded the language suggested for this change at the appropriate location in the draft report.

The brief discussion related to Recommendation 3 was confined to revising the wording on the structure of multi-year plans.

Two comments were submitted for Recommendations 4 and 5. Dr. Henderson suggested acceptance of both, and the subcommittee agreed.

With regard to the remaining recommendations (6-10), there was significant and detailed discussion about the wording of several sentences and paragraphs pertaining to the recommendations on relevance. The subcommittee members discussed the content of the recommendations that addressed anticipatory research at length. They also discussed the potential effects on the EPA budget presented by the recommendations that called for separate funding for anticipatory research. In addition, the subcommittee discussed whether to include such recommendations, because any research spawned by them was not likely to be funded. The subcommittee agreed to include the recommendations and suggest that separate funding be allotted for anticipatory research.

Mr. Croes raised several issues pertaining to the recommendations that addressed coarse and ultrafine PM research. He read some sections of the text, offering “either/or” language and asked for members’ opinions. He agreed to revise those recommendations based on the subcommittee members’ feedback.

Dr. Lamb expressed some concern about which organizations EPA selected as partners with which to leverage and how the Agency decided what program elements to leverage. He stated

that not knowing this kept him from devising a recommendation addressing the issue of partnering. Dr. Henderson said that without knowing what the current process entails, the subcommittee could not suggest how EPA should select its partners. She noted that this was not made clear at the March 30-31 meeting. The subcommittee needed more information on this from Dr. Costa. Mr. Martin was asked to followup on this issue.

Dr. Henderson said that she was pleased with the recommendations and that some final language adjustments would make them acceptable for submission to Dr. Costa as draft recommendations.

Charge questions were the next topic of discussion. Noting that little feedback had been received from subcommittee members on the direct responses to charge questions, Dr. Henderson asked for comments on them during the conference call.

Charge Question 1: Program Design and Demonstrated Leadership

Minor adjustments in wording were suggested for this charge question.

Charge Question 2: Science Quality

Dr. Lamb suggested that a timeframe be added to one of the responses. Mr. Croes expressed some confusion about separating intramural and extramural research responsibilities. Dr. Henderson suggested that Dr. Costa should be consulted to verify the information. Mr. Croes commented that the posters seen during the March 30-31 subcommittee meeting recognized only university-based research, not the research done by contractors and interagency partners. Because of that, the identities of the organizations collecting data for EPA were unclear. He suggested that EPA clarify the issue, especially as it relates to giving contractors credit for their work. The subcommittee members confirmed that they had noticed this discrepancy as well, and agreed to include a statement to that effect. Dr. Henderson noted that the subcommittee did not review how resources were allocated (i.e., to contractors, partner organizations, or EPA staff researchers).

Charge Question 3: Relevance

Subcommittee members agreed to accept all comments made about the relevance charge question and asked that they be coordinated with issues pertaining to the conclusions and recommendations about relevance that had been discussed earlier. Drs. Henderson and Rodes agreed to work on resolving this issue.

Charge Question 4: Demonstrated Outcomes

Regarding Long-Term Goal 2, Mr. Martin mentioned that some subcommittee members had commented on the interval for *ad hoc* review panels, suggesting that it should be changed from 5 years to 3 or 4 years, and asked members which interval best suited the situation. Subcommittee members agreed that a range of 3 to 4 years should be suggested.

Dr. Henderson reminded the members to finalize and send their revisions to Mr. Martin by the end of the day (April 12). Mr. Martin agreed to send a copy of the draft, highlighting the revisions he made during the conference call, to the subcommittee members as soon as the call ended. He noted that subcommittee members should use that version of the draft to make their remaining revisions. Mr. Martin agreed to incorporate the revisions resulting from the conference call and send another draft to all members by noon the following day (April 13). If no corrections are received to that draft, he will forward a copy of it to Dr. Costa no later than April 14.

Dr. Henderson concluded the conference call by commenting that given the amount of time allotted for turnaround, the subcommittee had done an exceptionally good job of creating a draft document. She also recognized Mr. Martin for helping the subcommittee. Dr. Henderson and Mr. Martin thanked the subcommittee members for their time, hard work, and commitment to evaluating the PM and Ozone Research Program. Dr. Henderson adjourned the conference call at 1:30 p.m.

Action Items

- ✧ Drs. Henderson and Rodes will work on revising the report's introduction to include the fact that EPA did not provide the subcommittee with detailed background information on the Particulate Matter and Ozone Research Program before the March 30-31 program review meeting.
- ✧ For each recommendation and its associated conclusion(s), the original authors will collaborate and make revisions based on wording changes discussed and agreed upon by the subcommittee members during the conference call.
- ✧ Drs. Demerjian and Lamb will develop language addressing the issue of research hypotheses and identify a reference to or an example of a hypothesis-driven pilot study.
- ✧ Mr. Croes will revise the recommendations that addressed coarse and ultrafine PM research.
- ✧ Mr. Martin will followup with Dr. Costa to obtain information on how EPA selects its research partners.
- ✧ Mr. Croes will develop a paragraph about giving proper recognition to contractors and interagency partners that participate in Agency-sponsored PM-Ozone research projects.
- ✧ Drs. Henderson and Rodes will work on merging and refining all of the comments made about the conclusions and recommendations associated with the relevance charge question.
- ✧ Mr. Martin will incorporate revisions he made during the conference call and send a copy of the resulting draft to each subcommittee member immediately following the conference call. Subcommittee members should use that version of the draft to make their remaining revisions and send additional revisions to Mr. Martin by the end of the day (April 12).

- ✧ Mr. Martin will incorporate all April 12 revisions and send another draft to the subcommittee members by 12:00 noon on April 13.
- ✧ Subcommittee members will submit final draft revisions to Mr. Martin by the close of business on April 13.
- ✧ Mr. Martin will incorporate all April 13 revisions and forward a corrected copy of the subcommittee's draft report to Dr. Costa on April 14.

✧ **Conference Call Participants**
BOARD OF SCIENTIFIC COUNSELORS
Particulate Matter and Ozone Research Subcommittee Conference Call
April 12, 2005

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