

**DRAFT CHARGE**  
**GLOBAL CHANGE MID-CYCLE SUBCOMMITTEE**

**1.0 Objectives.** The objectives of this mid-cycle review are:

- ? Primarily, to evaluate the progress made by the Office of Research and Development's (ORD's) Global Change Research Program relative to the commitments it made following its last review (September 26-28, 2005), and
- ? Secondly, to obtain advice and feedback on issues related to the future directions of the research program and measures of success.

**2.0 Background Information.** Independent expert review is used extensively in industry, federal agencies, Congressional committees, and academia. The National Academy of Science has recommended this approach for evaluating federal research programs.<sup>1</sup>

For the Agency's environmental research programs, periodic independent reviews are conducted at intervals of four or five years to characterize research progress, to identify when clients are applying research to strengthen environmental decisions, and to evaluate client feedback about the research. Mid-cycle evaluations are an important part of this program review process. Scheduled midway through the review cycle, these independent assessments give ORD an opportunity to gauge the program's progress relative to the commitments it made following its last review.

For the upcoming mid-cycle review, the Global Change Research Program is preparing a progress report that will provide the context for discussions during the meeting. The report will identify progress the program has made towards its long-term goals, and changes implemented by the program in response to the major recommendations from its 2005 review.

The Multi-Year Plan (MYP) for Global Change is undergoing significant revision based upon (1) recommendations from the 2006 BOSC review, (2) feedback from the 2006 OMB PART review, (3) significant advances made by EPA Program and Regional Offices to incorporate considerations of climate change into their operations and consequent commitments made by ORD Global Program to support these offices, and (4) scientific advances made in the ORD Global Program. A synopsis of the draft MYP will be provided to the Subcommittee for its review. These and other documents will be available for the Subcommittee to use to address the charge questions.

This review is not intended to be the in-depth technical evaluation of a full program review. Presentation time will be minimized in favor of discussion.

**3.0 Charge Questions for ORD's Global Change Research Program.** ORD is interested in

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluating Federal Research under the Government Performance and Results Act (National Research Council, 1999).

receiving feedback concerning the following questions:

1. How responsive has the Global Change Research Program been to the recommendations made in the April 2006 BOSC program review report? The subcommittee will evaluate progress made regarding “commitments” to the BOSC recommendations as outlined in ORD’s response. Additionally, the program has responded to the BOSC recommendation that it ensure its place-based, decision-support activities have national-scale significance. What progress has the program made towards integrating its results into EPA programs to support the Agency’s statutory, regulatory, and programmatic requirements?
2. How clear is the rationale for the revised Global Change Multi-Year Plan, and are the proposed revisions consistent with the advice given by the BOSC?
3. To what extent does the wording of the Global Program’s long-term goals appropriately reflect the intended purpose of the program?
4. The Global Program is designing a survey to monitor the effectiveness with which it is providing timely and useful information to its clients. The results will be used for internal program management. What recommendations does the BOSC Subcommittee have to help ensure that the survey is designed appropriately given the program’s objectives? And what recommendations does the Subcommittee have regarding the communities to which the survey should be sent?
5. Are the performance metrics being used by all the ORD programs (e.g., quality and impact of ORD publications, timeliness of completing goals) appropriate for the Global Change Research Program? What are additional or more appropriate metrics?

In developing a report that responds to these questions, the BOSC Mid-cycle Subcommittee should provide a summary assessment, including a single qualitative rating that reflects the extent to which the program is making progress in moving the program forward in response to the BOSC review of 2005. The rating should be in the form of one of the adjectives defined below, which are intended to promote consistency among BOSC program reviews. The adjective should be used as part of a narrative summary of the review, so that the context of the rating and the rationale for selecting a particular rating will be transparent. For mid-cycle reviews, the rating should be based on the quality, speed, and success of the program's actions in addressing previous BOSC recommendations. The adjectives to describe progress are:

- o **Exceptional:** indicates that the program is meeting all and exceeding some of its goals, both in the quality of the science being produced and the speed at which research result tools and methods are being produced. An exceptional rating also indicates that the program is addressing the right questions to achieve its goals. The review should be specific as to which aspects of the program’s performance have been exceptional.
- o **Exceeds Expectations:** indicates that the program is meeting all of its goals. It addresses the appropriate scientific questions to meet its goals, and the science is competent or better. It exceeds expectations for either the high quality of the science or for the speed at which work products are being produced and milestones met.
- o **Meets Expectations:** indicates that the program is meeting most of its goals. Programs meet expectations in terms of addressing the appropriate scientific questions to meet their goals, and work

products are being produced and milestones are being reached in a timely manner. The quality of the science being done is competent or better.

o Not Satisfactory: indicates that the program is failing to meet a substantial fraction of its goals, or if meeting them, that the achievement of milestones is significantly delayed, or that the questions being addressed are inappropriate or insufficient to meet the intended purpose. Questionable science is also a reason for rating a program as unsatisfactory for a particular long-term goal. The review should be specific as to which aspects of a program's performance have been inadequate.

#### **4.0 Potential Subcommittee Approach for Mid-Cycle Review**

- \$ Hold one (1) administrative call in the month preceding the face-to-face meeting.
  - ? allows the subcommittee Chair to make review and writing assignments
  
- \$ Hold two (2) teleconference calls prior to the face-to-face meeting.
  - ? allows the ORD to present background and other relevant materials to the subcommittee
  - ? allows the subcommittee to ask clarifying questions
  
- \$ EPA shall distribute background materials and documents requested by the Subcommittee in advance of the teleconference calls.
  
- \$ Hold a one-day face-to-face meeting for the mid-cycle review.
  - ? The meeting will include brief ORD presentations on program progress and discussions with members of the Global Change Mid-Cycle Subcommittee.
  
- \$ If needed, hold one (1) teleconference call within one month following the face-to-face meeting to finalize the draft letter report.