

**Executive Committee
Board of Scientific Counselors
Charge: Mercury Multi-Year Plan**

Background

The Office of Research and Development (ORD) has initiated a multi-year planning effort to plan the direction of our research program in selected topic areas over five or more years. This approach promotes ORD's focus on the highest priority issues and provides coordination for achieving our long-term research goals. The focus of this effort is the development of Multi-Year Plans (MYPs).

The purpose of the MYPs is to provide a framework that integrates research across ORD's laboratories and centers and Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goals in support of the Agency's mission to protect human health and the environment. The MYPs identify long-term goals, and present annual performance goals (APGs) and associated annual performance measures (APMs) for a planning window of approximately 5-10 years. MYPs also foster the integration of strategic risk-based environmental protection and anticipation of future environmental issues by communicating our research approach and timing for responding to environmental issues. MYPs are intended to be living documents and are updated every two years to reflect the current state of the science, resource availability, and Agency priorities.

To assess the relevance of the research programs described in the MYPs to the Agency's mission, the related fields of science and technology, and customer needs, the MYPs are undergoing external reviews. Because the MYPs are living documents, we would like the external reviews to be prospective in nature. That is, the reviewers should provide ORD with advice and recommendations on how to modify the plan in its next update. In order to achieve our goal of reviewing each plan on a 3-5 year cycle, ORD requests that the Board of Scientific Counselors conduct a review of the Mercury MYP.

This version of the Mercury MYP is the third and reflects ORD's most recent interpretation of Agency research needs concerning mercury sources, control and treatment, environmental fate and behavior, impacts on ecological resources, and potential effects on human health. The plan includes research activities implemented and planned for the period 2002 through 2010. Resources for the implementation of these research activities are currently approximately \$5.5 M and 8.0 FTE per year.

BOSC Charge for the Review of the MYP:

What changes should be made to ensure that:

1. The proposed scope of the work is consistent with:
 - a. ORD's subject area Research Strategy
 - b. The current state-of-the-science
 - c. Research by others

2. The science questions address the most important scientific gaps and uncertainties in the subject area.

3. The long-term goals are relevant to the science needs of the Agency, and the MYP situates the annual research products (APGs, APMs) on a clear path to accomplishing each of the LTGs (and APMs contribute to APGs).
4. Research products and emphases over the next 5-7 years are sequenced appropriately to accomplish goals and meet program and regional needs.
5. The MYP is flexible enough to adapt to future science and policy changes.
6. The MYP articulates a strategy that facilitates effective communication and utilization of research products (with domestic and international parties).
7. There is a clear path for assessing/evaluating the MYP and progress toward its goals.