



TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Conference Call Summary
Tuesday, December 11, 2007
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Welcome

Dr. John Giesy, University of Saskatchewan, Subcommittee Chair

Dr. John Giesy, Chair of the Board of Scientific Counselors' (BOSC) Technology for Sustainability Subcommittee, welcomed the Subcommittee members to the conference call. He stated that Dr. Martin Abraham was unable to attend the teleconference, but he had sent his editorial comments regarding the draft report to Dr. Giesy prior to the call. The purpose of this teleconference is for the Subcommittee members to discuss the draft report.

Administrative Procedures

Ms. Clois Slocum, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Office of Research and Development (ORD), Subcommittee Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

Ms. Slocum asked those on the call to identify themselves and then reviewed the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) procedures that are required for all BOSC Subcommittee meetings. As the DFO for the Technology for Sustainability Subcommittee, Ms. Slocum serves as the liaison between the Subcommittee, the public, and EPA and ensures that all FACA requirements are met.

Ms. Slocum stated that all meetings and conference calls involving substantive issues, whether in person, by phone, or by e-mail, that include one-half or more of the Subcommittee members must be open to the public, and a notice must be placed in the *Federal Register* at least 15 calendar days prior to the call or meeting. The information for this conference call was published on November 6, 2007, and entered into the federal docket management system (<http://www.regulations.gov>; Docket ID EPA-HQ-ORD-2006-1010). The Subcommittee Chair and DFO must be present at all conference calls and meetings, and the Chair must certify the minutes within 90 days of the call. All documents discussed during the call must be made available to the public.

The Subcommittee Chair will administer the call according to the preapproved agenda and mediate discussions. EPA technical staff may speak after they have been recognized by the Chair. Because a contractor is present taking detailed notes of the call, Ms. Slocum asked speakers to identify themselves when making a comment. The summary of this call will be made available to the public after it has been approved on the BOSC Web Site (<http://www.epa.gov/osp/bosc>). The agenda allows time for public comment at 3:20 p.m., and she will call for comments at that time. Ms. Slocum reiterated that the purpose of the teleconference was to finalize the draft report.

Subcommittee Discussion

Dr. John Giesy, University of Saskatchewan, Subcommittee Chair

Dr. Giesy asked if Subcommittee members had additions to the agenda; they did not. He thanked the members for all of their help in improving the draft report. The Executive Committee reviewed the report and offered a number of comments. Overall, the Executive Committee was impressed with the quality of the report and asked Dr. Giesy to congratulate the members on a job well done. The Executive Committee did identify some areas in which the report could be strengthened. The draft report that the Subcommittee members received prior to this call has been amended to include these suggestions.

One substantive change that was made was to move the conclusions and recommendations into the summary section. The other substantive change was the inclusion of examples to support statements made by the Subcommittee in the report. When utilities are mentioned in the report, the Executive Committee asked for supporting information such as who is using the utilities and how they are being used. When the quality or impact of various programs is described in the report, specific examples to support these statements should be added.

Dr. Giesy explained that he had sent the report to the Subcommittee members and asked members to provide these examples. He received some input and these are included in the current draft of the report. Additionally, he reviewed his notes and the meeting minutes to select additional examples; these also are included in the current draft report. Approximately three-quarters of the items that the Executive Committee highlighted have been completed, but some still are outstanding. Dr. Giesy asked for guidance from the Executive Committee regarding this; the advice he received was that if the draft report cannot be amplified further, then it should be finalized and sent to the Agency.

Public Comment

Ms. Slocum offered members of the public the opportunity to comment at 3:20 p.m. No comments were offered.

Subcommittee Discussion (continued)

Dr. John Giesy, University of Saskatchewan, Subcommittee Chair

Dr. Giesy asked if there were any questions about the next steps or about the process; there were no questions. He explained that the Subcommittee ultimately must come to closure about the current draft report and determine whether this will be the Subcommittee's final report.

The Executive Committee discussed the appropriateness of a BOSC Subcommittee to make comments regarding resources and resource allocations. It is the policy of BOSC to limit the mention of resources in its reports, as BOSC cannot influence the Agency's budget or how resources are used by EPA. Resource allocation is an Agency management decision. It is not in the purview of the BOSC to determine what resources EPA assigns to its tasks, projects, and programs. Some of the comments in the Subcommittee's report cited resources, and the Subcommittee must determine if these comments need to be modified or deleted. He asked if the Subcommittee members understood the policy and its implications.

Dr. Wayne Landis stated that he understood the policy and its implications, but he did not think the comments made by the Subcommittee regarding resources violated the policy. The Subcommittee did not recommend that resources be allocated in a certain manner but cited resources to put the comments into context (i.e., the program did an outstanding job given the available resources).

Dr. Giesy agreed and explained that it is Agency policy to determine its own allocation of resources. As reviewers, the BOSC is tasked with reviewing the program's charge and determining whether or not the program met its charge. He agreed with Dr. Landis that the Subcommittee's comments were appropriate,

but it was necessary for him to discuss this detail with the Subcommittee and ensure that the members understood the policy and were in agreement that their comments should remain. Dr. Peter Blaze Corcoran remarked that the comments were not only appropriate, but also it is important that they are expressed given that resources can be limiting in terms of completion of tasks. This is important information to communicate. Dr. Giesy agreed and stated that this was the reason that the comments were included originally.

Dr. Landis moved that the comments in the report regarding resources be maintained without changes. Dr. Concepción Jiménez-González seconded the motion. Before voting on the motion, Dr. Giesy added that the comments were included in several different areas of the report and in two different manners. In addition to making comments regarding the progress the program made considering the limited resources allocated, the Subcommittee also commented on what contributions could be made given the allocation of resources. The latter comments are somewhat closer to breaching the BOSC policy. Dr. Landis remarked that these were cited as “What if?” examples and not as recommendations for resource allocation. Dr. Giesy called for a vote on Dr. Landis’ motion; the Subcommittee voted unanimously to maintain all of the comments regarding resources with no changes.

Dr. Giesy explained that the next order of business is to bring the report to closure. He commented that the limited time available at the face-to-face meeting for the Subcommittee to draft the report was responsible for many of the struggles the Subcommittee faced following the meeting. A third day for the Subcommittee to work on the draft report, as is common for most BOSC reviews, would have been helpful. In regards to this, Dr. Giesy had spoken to Dr. Gary Saylor, Chair of the BOSC Executive Committee, and he recommended that the Subcommittee finalize the current report with the changes made in response to the suggestions of the Executive Committee. Dr. Giesy added that Dr. Abraham had forwarded minor editorial comments that had not yet been incorporated into the draft report. He asked that the Subcommittee vote on finalizing the current draft report with the allowance that he will consider Dr. Abraham’s editorial changes and incorporate them as appropriate.

Dr. Landis made a motion to accept the draft report as the final report of the Subcommittee. Dr. Jiménez-González seconded the motion. Dr. Giesy added that this motion includes the provision that he can consider the minor editorial changes from Dr. Abraham. Dr. Corcoran stated that he had some minor editorial changes as well. He suggested that the bullets, currently identified with symbols, be numbered and lettered for easier reference. Additionally, on page 2, line 14, in the first paragraph under Section I.2, Findings and Recommendations, the word “apparent” does not speak to the quality of the research. Dr. Giesy explained that in this summary paragraph, the Subcommittee did not want to target any specific components of the program, so the word “apparent” was used intentionally.

In the same introductory paragraph under Section I.2, Dr. Corcoran referenced the sentence, “Where the Program does not exceed expectations, the primary reasons are the fact that these program elements are small components and lack a critical mass of personnel while other elements are in transition to the current focus on sustainability.” He indicated that this appeared to be two different ideas and suggested that it might be made more clear if the two ideas were separated into two sentences.

Dr. Giesy stated that he would make the above changes if the Subcommittee members agreed. Dr. Landis explained that symbol bullets were easier to use as numbering bullets allows for potential misnumbering. Dr. Giesy added that numbering and lettering of bullets had not been included in previous BOSC reports, but the Subcommittee is free to make this change. Dr. Landis stated that he was inclined to retain the current bullet style. Dr. Jiménez-González remarked that she did not have a preference. Dr. Giesy stated that the format of the bullets would remain unchanged. He will separate the sentence that Dr. Corcoran referenced into two sentences. He explained that he already had made the primary changes requested by the Executive Committee, including moving the conclusions and recommendations into the executive summary. Approximately three-quarters of the areas highlighted by the Executive Committee for

inclusion of additional examples have been addressed. This was not a demand of the Executive Committee, but the members did suggest that more discussion and examples would be helpful.

Dr. Giesy called for a vote on Dr. Landis' motion that the Subcommittee accept the draft report as the final report with the provision that Dr. Giesy will consider Dr. Abraham's minor editorial comments. The Subcommittee members voted unanimously to accept the draft report as the Subcommittee's final report, which will be submitted to the BOSC Executive Committee via Ms. Slocum.

Dr. Giesy explained that the next step is for the final report to be reviewed by the BOSC Executive Committee during its next meeting in January 2008. He will be unable to attend, and he does not believe that it is necessary for another representative from the Subcommittee to attend in his place. Following Executive Committee review of the final report, it will be submitted to EPA and forwarded to the responsible division and branch chief. EPA will prepare a written response to the BOSC, which will be provided to the Subcommittee. Additionally, EPA staff members will orally present the Agency's response to the BOSC Executive Committee. EPA and ORD take the suggestions of the Subcommittee seriously, and the recommendations are helpful to the Agency to improve its research programs. He thanked the Subcommittee members and the DFO for their time and effort in preparing this useful report for EPA.

Ms. Slocum stated that she would contact the Subcommittee members individually to discuss outstanding administrative issues. Members are considered special employees of EPA, and their information is retained in a dedicated EPA database. Special employees may be requested to serve again within 3 years from their entry into the database.

Dr. Corcoran asked if it would be useful for a Subcommittee member to attend the BOSC Executive Committee meeting in Dr. Giesy's absence. Dr. Giesy responded that sometimes this is helpful, but as the draft report already has been presented, it may not be necessary in this case. He will ask Dr. Sayler if he would like a Subcommittee member present; if so, Dr. Landis would be the likely attendee.

Dr. Landis asked if the Subcommittee members will receive a copy of the final report. Dr. Giesy stated that he will incorporate the editorial changes from Dr. Abraham and forward the report to Ms. Slocum. Ms. Slocum then will forward the report to the Subcommittee members.

Dr. Landis made a motion to adjourn the teleconference. Dr. Jiménez-González seconded the motion. Dr. Giesy thanked the Subcommittee members for their time and efforts and adjourned the call at 3:50 p.m.

Action Items

- ✧ Dr. Giesy will review Dr. Abraham's editorial changes and incorporate them into the report at his discretion.
- ✧ Dr. Giesy will separate the sentence in lines 11–13 on page 2 in Section I.2 into two sentences.
- ✧ Ms. Slocum will contact Subcommittee members individually to discuss outstanding administrative issues.
- ✧ Dr. Giesy will forward the final draft report to Ms. Slocum, who will send the report to the Subcommittee members and the BOSC Executive Committee.
- ✧ Dr. Giesy will ask Dr. Sayler for his recommendation regarding Subcommittee representation at the BOSC Executive Committee Meeting in January 2008.

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APPENDIX A: Teleconference Agenda

TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

December 11, 2007

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time

CONFERENCE CALL

Participation by Teleconference Only

Dial-in number: 866-299-3188

Follow prompt:

Conference Code is 5135697852#

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Welcome - Roll call - Overview of Progress	Dr. John Giesy Subcommittee Chair
3:15 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.	Administrative Procedures	Clois Slocum DFO
3:20 p.m. – 3:25 p.m.	Public Comment	
3:25 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Subcommittee Discussion - Summary of Draft Report - Draft Report Discussion - Next Steps and Schedule	Dr. John Giesy Subcommittee Chair
5:00 p.m.	Adjourn	