

**Second Set of Additional Preliminary Comments received  
for the July 10-11, 2012 SAB/BOSC Meeting**

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## Comments from Dr. Bernd Kahn

Here is my review of the Homeland Security Strategic research Action Plan 3012-2016 that you sent.

The Action Plan can be much improved by introducing consistency into the various section and removing redundancy and wasted space:

p.8, par.2: On the previous page, Theme 3 is #2. Why is # 3 from p.7 not mentioned?

p.9, bottom: Delete picture; it provides no information.

p.10, Fig.2n note: Define “Section III below”.

p.11: Why is there no discussion of natural disaster response?

Delete picture; it provides no information.

p.13, column 2: Refer the “example” and “research products” to the “Summary Tables” at the end, where they are presented more effectively.

p.14: Delete picture; it provides no information.

p.15: Theme B is listed on p.7 as “#3. Laboratories”. Be consistent.

p.16., column 1: see comment for p.13.

Delete picture.

p.18: See comments for p.13.

p.22-27: Delete, in the last columns, cross-references to the same theme, companion Science Questions, because all entries refer to all of them, and simply say at beginning that all science questions in the same theme are related.

General comments:

The following are examples of important scientific questions that were widely discussed at the time and indicate the kind of discussion that I expected to see – but did not – cited in this plan for research needs for terrorism and incident response:

- 9-11 destruction of World Trade Center: airborne contamination inhalation effects in population nearby;
- Gulf oil spill: Is addition to Gulf water of chemicals to disperse oil beneficial or, in the long run, more deleterious?

**Comments from Dr. Earthea Nance**

- Overall very impressive; the progress is apparent.
- Discussion of sustainability in terms of both future generations and existing injustices could be better organized; also global versus local issues appears ad hoc, with planetary conditions being used as evidence of community issues without tying the two together. For example, wastes are dumped regionally or even internationally, yet the sustainability analysis is only looking within communities.
- Program appears to put the onus on communities to use the data and tools to change their world, a recipe for failure; what are people supposed to do with all the tools and data? Will they be required to use them? To what degree are current tools and data being used by communities to improve their environment?
- Use of the term “unintended consequences” might be problematic for EJ communities
- Program appears to be working with a clean slate, with little discussion of past products and tools being expanded, with little discussion of the success or failure of past products, with no discussion of how past data and products were or were not used, etc.
- No discussion of the role of lack of enforcement, poor governance, etc. as part of the problem; rather, the problem is framed as a lack of integration among complex systems, with the solution logically being trans-disciplinary systems science.
- Appears to be no strategy to challenge known biases in the distribution of environmental risk
- The ecosystem services theme is the most important product and should be prioritized. As good as the TRIO product is, it cannot exist until ecosystem services are characterized.
- The program should not stop at data and product development. The investment should be carried through to completion with several pilot communities. The term “implementation” should not apply to EPA product development, it should apply to the use of the product in a community.

**Comments from Ms. Marie Zhuikov**

My role on the committee is one of communications advisor. The charge questions are not worded in a way that makes use of my expertise. The EPA will be getting some good feedback on those questions by the other BOSC and SAB committee members. I'd like to take this opportunity to comment on the communications component of the Strategic Research Action Plans to provide input that won't be coming from other sources.

While most of the research program plans mention some form of communications ideas, none of them include a communications action plan. The EPA does have a research communications strategy that was shared with the BOSC at our meeting in October 2010. It contained two parts; Part 1 outlined an overall research strategy and Part 2 detailed the development of communications action plans for each research strategic area.

I would think that at least Part 1 of the Communications Strategy for EPA Research should be included and integrated in the overview of the EPA Research Program. But a better approach would be to integrate Part 1 in the overview and add Part 2 to each strategic research action plan. Part 2 states that communications plans will be developed for each of ORD's strategic areas and that each plan will:

- Specify the messages and target audiences
- Identify communications strategies, tactics, mechanisms and media needed to help achieve goals
- State specific measures of success and how each objective/measure will be tracked
- Use the sample Communication Strategy in the Communication Handbook as a template
- Identify the team leader, members and technical experts.

It is imperative that these communications plans be included for each strategic area, otherwise it looks like the EPA is just talking to itself. As a taxpayer-funded organization, it is imperative to describe how the research findings will be communicated to the audiences that can most benefit from them.