

# Activities of the Office of the Science Advisor

Office of the Science Advisor

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December 5, 2013

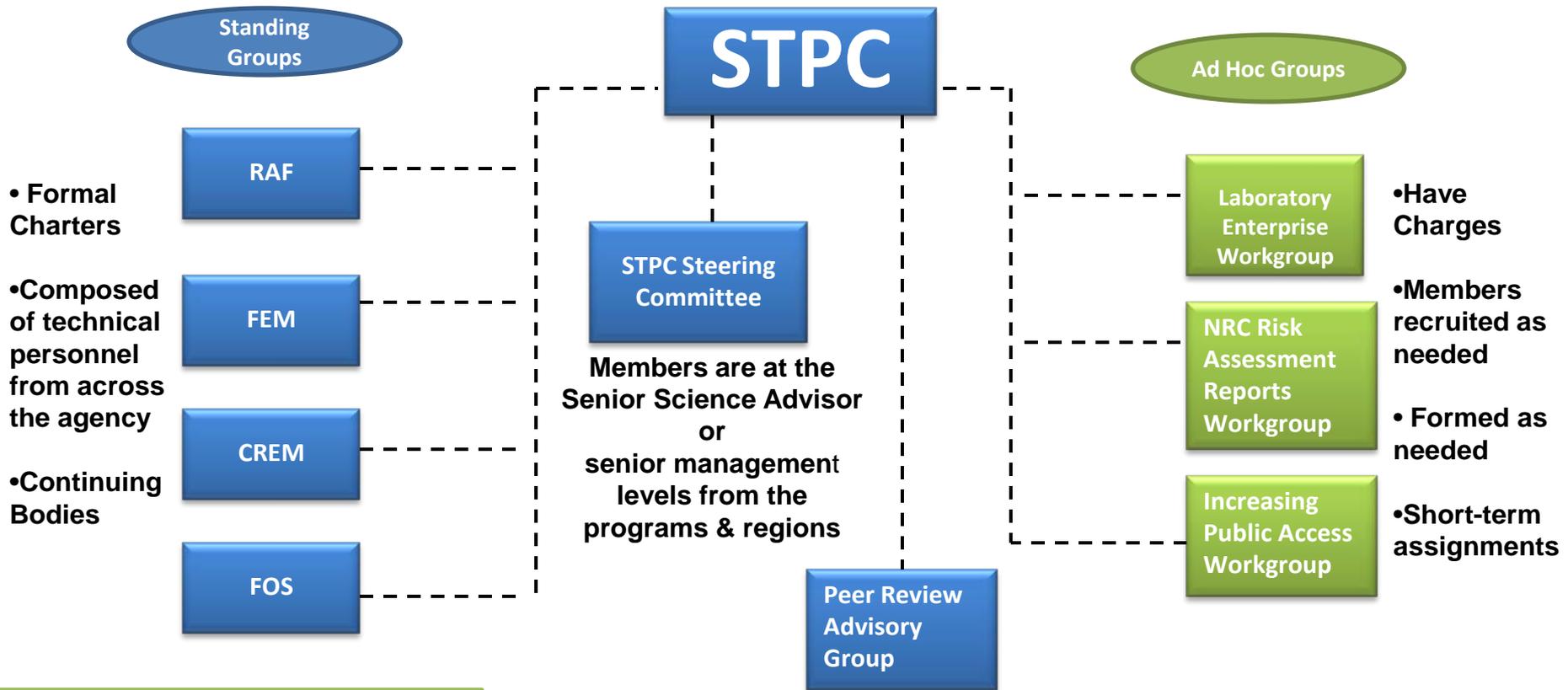
# Background: Functions of OSA

- Cross-Agency science coordination
- Input on broad science and technology policy issues to the Administrator
- Scientific Integrity
- Human Subjects Research Oversight
- Focused training and communications

# **Cross-Agency Science: Science and Technology Policy Council**

- Established as Science Policy Council in 1993 under Administrator Carol Browner
- Reconstituted as Science and Technology Policy Council in 2010, promoting technology innovation by then-Administrator Jackson
- Acts as the principal EPA forum to resolve critical science and technology policy issues

Members are generally DAAs & DRAs; Chaired by the Science Advisor



**Key**

**STPC** Science and Technology Policy Council  
**RAF:** Risk Assessment Forum  
**FEM:** Forum on Environmental Measurements  
**CREM:** Council for Regulatory Environmental Modeling  
**FOS:** Forum on Sustainability (in development)  
**DAAs:** Deputy Assistant Administrators  
**DRAs:** Deputy Regional Administrators

The STPC, STPC Steering Committee, and the standing & ad hoc working groups are supported by staff from the Office of the Science Advisor.

# Standing Groups

- Risk Assessment Forum
- Forum on Environmental Measurements
- Council for Regulatory Environmental Modeling
- Forum on Sustainability (under development)

# Risk Assessment

- Develop guidance and technical products that support analyses for decision-making
- Guidelines and frameworks in preparation
  - **Framework for Human Health Risk Assessment**
    - Foster increased implementation of agency guidance for conducting HHRA and improve utility of risk assessment in the decision-making process
  - **Cumulative Risk Assessment Guidelines**
    - Expands on the 2003 Framework

# Peer Review

- Develops updates to the Peer Review Handbook while assisting with implementation and interpretation of the Peer Review Policy
- Peer Review Handbook
  - August 2012, the SA tasked the Peer Review Advisory Group to revise the Peer Review Handbook
  - The 2006 Policy and Handbook are currently in revision.
- New COI review process
  - Applies to contractor-managed peer review panels
  - Now includes additional steps to reduce potential for organizational or personal COI concerns

# Ad Hoc Groups

- Laboratory Enterprise Study
- NRC Risk Assessment Reports
- Increasing Public Access to Data and Publications

# Ad Hoc Groups: Laboratory Enterprise Study

- Laboratory facilities are among the most complex built systems in the federal portfolio of about 893,000 buildings and facilities
- In 2010, the President identified objectives to reduce the ‘footprint’ and increase the efficient use of federal facilities, and directed OMB to work with Agency heads on these objectives.
  - In 2012, the US GAO recommended that EPA undertake an evaluation to determine whether to consolidate physical infrastructure and management of its laboratory enterprise*

# Laboratory Enterprise: Next Steps

1. EPA is collecting and analyzing data about its laboratory facilities, operating costs, workforce, and science contributions
2. An NRC Committee will conduct workshops and report its recommendations
3. A cross-agency work group will prepare a summary of EPA analyses and recommendations for review by the Science Advisor and the Science and Technology Policy Council—and subsequently for consideration by the Administrator and Deputy Administrator
4. EPA will consult with stakeholders

# National Research Council Risk Assessment Recommendations

## Recommendation Themes:

- Design of Risk Assessment
- Uncertainty and Variability
- Dose/Response Assessment
- Selection and Use of Defaults
- Implementing Cumulative Risk

# Progress of the STPC Risk Assessment Reports Workgroup

- The STPC is evaluating next week an action plan that addresses recommendations from the NRC's *Science and Decisions* and three other reports.
- The plan will propose additional actions needed to respond to the NRC recommendations and the resources needed to complete the work on them.

# Public Access to Federally Funded Data and Publications

- OSTP directed all federal agencies to increase public access to federally funded data and publications
- STPC workgroup functions:
  - Review how existing materials, systems, etc. can be integrated into the Agency's Draft Public Access Plan
  - Draft Plan to be consistent with the objectives in the February 22 Holdren memorandum
  - Address any comments provided by OSTP and OMB on EPA's draft plan before finalization

# Input On Broad Science and Technology Issues

- Hydraulic Fracturing Research
  - Addresses cycle of HF on drinking water
  - Technical Roundtables and Workshops
  - Three Agency UOG Research Plan
- OSTP Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainability (CENRS)
  - Advise and assist in increasing overall productivity and application of Federal research in areas of environment, natural resources, and sustainability
- Other

# Scientific Integrity

- The Agency's commitment to scientific integrity is established through the Scientific Integrity Policy and reemphasized in the Scientific Integrity Annual Report:
  - Increasing accessibility to EPA's scientific information
  - Providing opportunities for the professional development of EPA's scientists and engineers
- **RECENT:** Dr. Francesca Grifo appointed new Agency Scientific Integrity Official
  - Dr. Grifo's responsibilities include championing scientific integrity and chairing a standing EPA Scientific Integrity Committee.

# Human Subjects Research

- All HSR conducted or supported by EPA must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Review Official
- OSA is responsible for compliance oversight through:
  - Education (training), and
  - Guidance: Advice on the interpretation of EPA regulations governing HSR
- The Human Studies Review Board (HSRB) is a federal advisory committee providing advice on third party studies

# Focused Training and Communications

- Advancement of new Agency-wide web plan
  - OSA Communications Team leading efforts to update internet web pages
- Training
  - Scientific Integrity Policy
  - Human Subjects research training
  - Environmental Modeling

# Conclusion

- OSA performs many cross-Agency functions, including coordination on science policy
- Standing and Ad Hoc groups focus on challenging, cross-cutting issues that shape the future of the Agency
- The Science Advisor provides issue-specific advice and recommendations
- New hires will further support Scientific Integrity and Human Subjects Research

# Comments or Questions

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