

SAB and BOSC advice on expanding ORD capabilities in the social, behavioral and decision sciences to meet identified research and decisions support needs at EPA.

The SAB, BOSC and other science advisory bodies have over several decades repeatedly recommended expansion of social, behavioral and decision sciences (SBDS) expertise at EPA. A recent Decision Analysis Workshop jointly held by ORD and BOSC (*Report of the Decision Analysis Workshop*, jointly held by ORD and the BOSC on March 30–April 1, 2009) illustrated how systematic application of decision science principles could improve Agency strategic planning. Appendix A list recent SAB advice calling for ORD and EPA to strengthen its SBDS capabilities.

The transformation of research programs in ORD centered around sustainability explicitly requires addressing social and economic as well as environmental factors, highlighting the need for increased capabilities in SBDS. Research plans for every ORD research program propose objectives and tasks that demand expertise in SBDS fields, including risk perception, communication, education, persuasion, value/preference elicitation, behavior change and community assessment and engagement.

Currently, there is essentially no organized SBDS capability within ORD and EPA overall has little organized SBDS capability, with the exception of the rather specialized niche filled by a small contingent of economists in EPA's National Center for Environmental Economics. The need for greater capabilities in SBDS has long been acknowledged, but recent declarations from the highest leadership levels in the Agency and ORD indicate that "this time" good intentions may actually be realized. While current financial and political conditions clearly pose significant challenges, there is reason to believe that the optimism and determination that has propelled the transformation of ORD will prevail and real progress will soon be made toward meeting the recognized need for SBDS capabilities. In support of that effort an *ad hoc* group of SAB and BOSC members has begun to discuss more specific recommendations for development of needed SBDS capabilities in ORD as background for the cross cutting discussion scheduled for tomorrow.

Four questions are proposed to augment ORD's formal charge questions for discussion in the breakout groups and for plenary discussion tomorrow afternoon:

1. What specific roles should social, behavioral and decision sciences fill in meeting science/decision support responsibilities relevant to the realigned ORD research programs (i.e., what might SBD scientists do)?
2. What specific sub-disciplines/fields of SBD sciences might best meet identified research and decision support needs?
3. Where might individuals having the relevant types of training, experience and expertise be found (e.g., what types of academic programs, research organizations, etc)?
4. How might SBD sciences best be organized and supported within the EPA/ORD research and development programs and systems?

Appendix A: Recent SAB reports discussing the need to enhance social, behavioral, and decision sciences at EPA

Science Advisory Board Comments on the President's Requested FY 2012 Research Budget (EPA-SAB-11-007)

Office of Research and Development Strategic Research Directions and Integrated Transdisciplinary Research (EPA-SAB-10-010)

Valuing the Protection of Ecological Systems and Services (EPA-SAB-09-012)

EPA's Strategic Research Directions 2008: An Advisory by the EPA Science Advisory Board (EPA-SAB-09-006)

Comments on EPA's Strategic Research Directions and Research Budget for FY 2008 - An Advisory Report of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Science Advisory Board (EPA-SAB-07-004)

Science and Research Budgets for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for Fiscal Year 2007; An Advisory Report by the Science Advisory Board (EPA-SAB-ADV-06-003)

Science and Research Budgets for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for Fiscal Year 2006 - An Advisory Report by the EPA Science Advisory Board (EPA-SAB-ADV-05-002)

Advisory Report on the Science and Research Budgets for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Fiscal Year 2005; A Report by the EPA Science Advisory Board (EPA-SAB-ADV-04-003)

Toward Integrated Environmental Decision-Making (EPA-SAB-EC-00-011)