

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Scientific Integrity Committee Charter

I. Purpose, Membership, and Leadership

A. Purpose

The EPA Scientific Integrity Committee (SciC) was established in the Scientific Integrity Policy (SciP)¹ in 2012 as a cross-Agency decision-making body that implements, reviews, and revises, as needed, the SciP. The SciP provides a framework intended to ensure scientific integrity throughout EPA and to promote scientific and ethical standards, including quality standards; communications with the public; the use of peer review and advisory committees; and professional development.

B. Membership

The SciC comprises senior Agency executives at the Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) and Deputy Regional Administrator (DRA) level, and appropriate Office Directors within the Office of the Administrator. Assistant Administrators (AAs), Associate Administrators, and Regional Administrators (RAs) may determine alternative representation for their Office/Region. SciC members are expected to brief and coordinate and represent their organization on issues before the Committee. Desired qualifications for these individuals include significant tenure and breadth of experience within the Agency, as well as a fundamental understanding of how science is utilized within their respective office, program, or region. The SciC members are designated deputy scientific integrity officials (DScIOs). The SciC comprises the Agency's Scientific Integrity Official (SciO) and DScIO members from:

Office of the Administrator: Office of the Chief of Staff
Office of the Administrator: Office of Policy
Office of the Administrator: Office of Children's Health Protection
Office of the Administrator: Science Advisory Board Staff Office
Office of Air and Radiation
Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention
Office of the Chief Financial Advisor
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Office of General Counsel
Office of International and Tribal Affairs
Office of Land and Emergency Management
Office of Mission Support: Labor and Employee Relations
Office of Mission Support: Office of Environmental Management
Office of Research and Development
Office of Water
Regions 1 to 10

¹ US EPA (2012). *EPA Scientific Integrity Policy*.

C. Leadership

The ScIC is chaired by the Scientific Integrity Official who convenes the meetings of the Committee. The Director of the Office of Science Advisor, Policy, and Engagement convenes the ScIC in the absence of the Scientific Integrity Official.

II. ScIC Roles and Responsibilities

A. Committee

1. Provide leadership for the Agency on scientific integrity.
2. Implement the ScIP across the Agency in a consistent manner.
3. Promote Agency compliance with the ScIP, including creating mechanisms to ensure accountability for safeguarding against any alteration or manipulation of scientific data by managers and other Agency leadership.
4. Address ScIP concerns, updates, and amendments and identify and offer suggestions for implementation improvements.
5. Provide an annual meeting and report on scientific integrity implementation and scientific misconduct issues within the Agency.
6. Keep the Agency's senior leadership informed on/involved in the Agency-wide status of scientific integrity, as necessary and appropriate.
7. Develop Agency-wide best practices for the approval of scientific products and communications (i.e., consistent, transparent, and predictable procedure for clearance) for use by each Program Office and Region in developing their own procedures. The ScIC also makes recommendations, as appropriate, to promote standardization of these processes across the Agency.
8. Oversee the development and implementation of training related to scientific integrity for all Agency employees.

B. ScIC Members

1. Annually certify compliance at the office/region level with the Scientific Integrity Policy.
2. Serve as needed on review panels to evaluate allegations of a loss of scientific integrity.
3. Convene and lead meetings within their respective units to update and inform colleagues on the status of Scientific Integrity in the Agency, as well as their office, program, or region.
4. Prepare for and attend Committee meetings.
5. Notify the ScIO ahead of discussions or decisions if a potential or actual conflict of interest exists between their other interests or commitments and this Committee's commitments and obligations, such as may arise in the ScIC or a review panel's discussion of an allegation or other matter.
6. Provide, through the annual FMFIA process, descriptions of their office's efforts to ensure scientific integrity. This annual reporting will include scientific integrity successes, as well as identifying areas for improvement.

7. Communicate any concerns or allegations of a loss of scientific integrity received from their office, program, or region, or from other sources to the ScIO in writing for quarterly reports.

III. ScIC Operations

A. Agenda

The ScIC meeting agendas are developed by the ScIO with input from the EPA Science Advisor. The agenda and background documents will be provided to the ScIC members and EPA Science Advisor sufficiently in advance of the meeting. Committee members may propose agenda topics two weeks in advance of scheduled meetings. The Chair determines topics to be included in the agenda based on Agency needs, input received from Committee members, and recommendations from the EPA Science Advisor. Issues included on the agenda for Committee deliberation should meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Relevant to enhancing a culture of scientific integrity and implementing the Policy;
2. Identified as a significant cross-program or cross-Agency scientific integrity issue; and/or,
3. Identified in the Policy, or by the ScIO, as an issue that the Committee should address.

B. Committee Meetings

The ScIC meets quarterly. The ScIO may cancel or add meetings as deemed necessary or as requested in writing by at least three Committee members. ScIC members are expected to attend meetings. Videoconferencing will be available for members located outside of headquarters.

The Committee will work toward consensus on agenda issues. In consultation with the EPA Science Advisor, the ScIO may take action consistent with a majority of the ScIC members to implement the ScIP in situations where a consensus on how to proceed cannot be reached by the Committee. All Committee decisions will be documented in ScIC minutes, announcements, or emailed correspondence. Decisions internal to the Committee's operations, such as formation of a task group, shall be made by a majority of those present and voting. Voting on Committee business, proposals, and recommendations shall be limited to designated ScIC members. An anonymous ballot may be employed if deemed preferable by a majority of the Committee and individual votes shall not be a matter of record. Consistent with the allegation procedures developed by the Committee, confidentiality of submitters, subjects, witnesses, and experts involved in a scientific integrity inquiry will be protected "to the extent possible, consistent with a fair and thorough evaluation and as allowed by law."²

² USEPA. (2019). *Procedure for Addressing Allegations of a Violation of EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy*. [forthcoming].


C. Committee Support

The Scientific Integrity Program (SI Program) staff support the work of the ScIO and the Committee by researching and preparing documents, training, and outreach materials; planning meetings and preparing summaries of those meetings; and conducting other support functions as appropriate. Each Committee member may designate a point-of-contact to be copied on ScIC communications to further facilitate communications within their respective Office/Region. Committee members may draw on the expertise of scientists, engineers, and policy advisors within respective Program Offices or Regions as deemed necessary.

D. Workgroups

The SI Program may develop options, recommendations, reports, and plans for consideration by Committee members. In addition, the Committee may establish workgroups as necessary to resolve issues requiring broader input over a sustained period. Workgroups may be formed on an *ad hoc* basis, operating temporarily until resolution of the goal(s) or completion of the task(s) established by the Committee. Each workgroup will maintain a record of its deliberations, which will be made part of the Committee's meeting records. Review will be conducted no less than annually by the Committee to evaluate the effectiveness and/or continued need for its workgroups.

This charter is effective immediately, may be amended by the ScIC, and shall be reviewed every three years.


Jennifer Orme-Zavaleta, Ph.D.
EPA Science Advisor

3/2/2020
Date