

## **NCADAC Guidance Regarding**

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NCADAC, NCA AUTHORS, AND REVIEW EDITORS Relating to developing the National Climate Assessment 2013 Report**

*Approved by NCADAC August 15, 2012*

This summary provides guidance for the National Climate Assessment Development Advisory Committee (NCADAC) and National Climate Assessment (NCA) authors regarding their respective responsibilities during the development, publication, and dissemination of the 2013 National Climate Assessment Report.

#### **Purpose of the Guidance**

This Guidance is intended to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the following groups related to the development of the National Climate Assessment:

- **NCADAC:** Under its Charter, described below, the NCADAC is tasked with producing a 2013 National Climate Assessment for transmittal to *the US Global Change Research Program through the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere*, and providing advice and recommendations and otherwise supporting the development of an ongoing, sustained national assessment.
- **Chapter Authors:** In order to produce the 2013 NCA Report, the NCADAC has invited authors to develop chapter content. As a group, authors who contribute to the 2013 NCA Report, some of whom are not NCADAC Members, constitute a NCADAC working group and have the primary task of drafting chapters and specific additional substantive content (e.g., appendices, traceable accounts, etc).
- **Review Editors:** A Review Editor will review each chapter to ensure that comments received in the public comment period were properly addressed.

## 1. NCADAC

Under Section 3 of the Amended Charter of the NCADAC, dated August 31, 2011, the NCADAC's Objectives and Scope of Activities are:

- 3. Objectives and Scope of Activities.** The committee's mission is to synthesize and summarize the science and information pertaining to current and future impacts of climate change upon the United States; and to provide advice and recommendations toward the development of an ongoing, sustainable national assessment of global change impacts and adaptation and mitigation strategies for the Nation. Within the scope of its mission, the committee's specific objective is to produce a National Climate Assessment that:
- a. Integrates, evaluates, and interprets the findings of the U.S. Global Change Research Program ("USGCRP") and discusses the scientific uncertainties with such findings;
  - b. Analyzes the effects of current and projected climate change upon ecosystems and biological diversity, agriculture, energy production and use, land and water resources, transportation, human health and welfare, and social systems, including in a regional context;
  - c. Analyzes current trends in global change, both human-induced and natural, and projects major trends for the subsequent 25 to 100 years;
  - d. Is a continuing, inclusive National process that synthesizes relevant science and information about changes in the Earth system as they affect the Nation's climate, and about how such changes relate to and interact with changes in social, economic, ecological, and technological systems; and
  - e. Supports climate-related decisions by providing an information base in multiple formats, including Web-based and hard copy formats.

Documents: Under Section 3 of the Amended Charter, the NCADAC has the responsibility to produce a National Climate Assessment and "to provide advice, recommendations toward the development of an ongoing, sustained national assessment of global change impacts and adaptation and mitigation strategies." All products associated with these responsibilities, both web-based and printed, including, for example, any reports, summaries, or other materials produced for transmittal to *the US Global Change Research Program through the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere*, or for public dissemination, are the "Documents."

Decisions related to Documents: The NCADAC's responsibilities in production of the Documents are set out in Section 3 a. through e. of the Amended Charter.

A NCADAC decision approving a Document means that each NCADAC member is comfortable with the content of the Document and approves of its transmission to *the US Global Change Research Program through the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere*, or its public dissemination. Recognizing that NCADAC members have varying degrees of expertise across the scope of its activities and responsibilities (see Section 10 of Amended Charter), NCADAC members may base their

approval of a Document on their satisfaction with the process utilized by experts on a topic (including the Chapter Authors and other NCADAC members) to come to a specific conclusion. The *Consensus Decision-making by NCADAC*, adopted by the NCADAC on August 15, 2012, will facilitate the thorough understanding, review, and approval by the NCADAC of all Documents.

NCADAC responsibilities include:

a. Establishing scope of NCA process and products to ensure that they

- Meet the requirements of the Global Change Research Act
- Cover nationally relevant topics
- Cover areas responsive to the NCA strategic plan

Note: authors will also play an important role regarding the scope of individual chapters; the NCADAC's role is more focused on the report as a whole.

b. Ensuring appropriate emphasis by confirming

- Balance and consistency of information across and within topics and chapters
- Emphasis on new information since the last NCA report on the same topic, Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States (2009)

c. Manage for coherent products/synthesis by

- Ensuring that report is clearly organized, with a unified structure and narrative
- Managing content trade-offs between chapters (e.g., text boxes)
- Developing higher level synthesis (ensuring the report covers broad understanding of what is known, not known, and associated uncertainties)
- Developing overarching key findings
- Responding to review comments on scope, emphasis, balance, overarching key findings, etc. (most issues of substance will be dealt with by authors)

d. Manage engagement, communication, networks, and evaluation processes (generally through working groups, workshops, etc.)

e. Produce Guidance for Author teams (e.g., risk-based framing) by

- Establishing foundational assumptions (e.g., scenarios) and data, resources
- Ensuring report can meet the Information Quality Act (IQA) requirements

## **2. Chapter Authors of the 2013 NCA Report**

Chapter Authors have primary responsibility for developing draft content for chapter(s) of 2013 NCA Report to which they are assigned, under the direction of, and for the consideration of, the NCADAC. While NCADAC is responsible for producing the 2013 NCA Report, as described in Section 1 above, the NCADAC will consult with the Chapter

Convening Lead Authors throughout the drafting process. This role will continue at least until the completion of the 2013 NCA Report, anticipated in December of 2013.

Chapter Author Responsibilities Include:

- a. Scientific and Subject Matter Accuracy
  - Summarize consensus scientific understanding (and clearly identify important topics where a consensus does not exist)
  - Generate key messages that follow the criteria for “key” (following the definition of “key” used by IPCC: considering magnitude, timing, persistence/reversibility, the potential for adaptation, distributional aspects, likelihood, and “importance” based on perception of relevant actors and quantitative metrics)
  - Select figures and graphics to illustrate content
  - Work with editors and graphics staff to ensure technical accuracy, clarity and accessibility of content
  - Identify research needs related to chapter topics
  - Identify suggested paths forward for their topics in the context of a sustained assessment
  - Respond to review comments regarding report content in a documented and transparent way
  
- b. Framing and Quality Assurance
  - Ensure chapters adhere to NCADAC guidance, including the traceable account of key findings.
  - Ensure that the state of the science is adequately reflected in each chapter.
  
- c. Rollout of products, ongoing outreach
  - Participate in rollout of products and engagement activities associated with 2013 products.

### **3. Review Editors (as approved at the November, 2011 NCADAC meeting)**

One review editor for each NCA 2013 Report chapter will be responsible for compliance review to determine whether or not public, Federal Agency, and National Research Council comments have been adequately addressed by the chapter authors.

Selection Process:

Review editors will be subject matter experts, and will not include members of the NCADAC or members of chapter author teams.

The review editors will be acknowledged with their chapters in the 2013 NCA Report.

After discussing potential review editors with the NRC and other organizations, the NCA staff will provide a list of potential review editors for each chapter to the NCADAC Chair and Vice-Chairs.

As has been the practice on selecting author teams, the Chair and Vice-Chairs will then provide a slate of review editors for comment by the Executive Secretariat and subsequent comment by the full NCADAC. CLAs and LAs for individual chapters will not participate in NCADAC discussions of the selection of review editors for their chapters. Final decisions will then rest with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, with input from the author teams, the Executive Secretariat and the full NCACAC given due consideration.

The selection process will be initiated in the summer of 2012. Review editors will commence their work early in 2013 after the National Research Council, Federal Agency, and public review periods have ended.