

ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

Policies and Procedures

Title: Organizational Management Policy

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Distribution: ARS Headquarters, Areas, and Locations

This P&P establishes policy, procedures, and documentation requirements for organizational structure or title changes within ARS.

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1. Purpose and Scope

This P&P establishes policy, procedures, and documentation requirements for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) organizational structure or title changes. It applies to all organizational levels formally recognized in the organizational structure codes, formal organizational charts and documents, and all actions involving organizational change. This P&P also defines the ARS scientific organizational hierarchy.

2. Authorities

- 7 CFR 2.7
- 7 CFR 2.57
- Departmental Regulation 1010-1

3. Policies

GENERAL

The Agency organizational structure system, maintained by the National Finance Center (NFC), forms the basis for establishing organizational units within ARS. As applicable to the organizational setting, change proposals must:

- Be compatible with ARS Strategic Plan and National Programs.
- Maintain or improve mission and program accomplishment and/or reduce overhead expenses.
- Eliminate unnecessary supervisory positions and organizational levels.
- Support and reinforce the Research Leader's (RL) ability to function as both research scientist and supervisor. The span of control should not place such an administrative burden on the RL that personal performance of research is not practical.
- Assure office or facility locations comply with provisions of ARS and USDA policy, specifically:
 - Acquire only such real property as necessary to carry out authorized programs in accordance with applicable, laws, policies, and procedures;
 - Use Government-owned rather than leased property where practical; and
 - Give first priority to locating new offices and other facilities in rural areas in accordance with the Rural Development Act of 1972, as amended;
- Recognize that organizational titles do not correspond with the name given to the facility or building where the organization is housed.

- Be compatible with Agency and Departmental requirements regarding civil rights laws, labor relations policies, sound position management, and consistent facility and organizational titling.
- Meet economic development and redevelopment needs consistent with State, regional, and local plans and programs.
- Protect workforce diversity gains and avoid unfavorable civil rights impact.

CHANGES REQUIRING DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL

Certain organizational change proposals require Departmental approval. These include establishment, abolishment, or transfer of:

- An agency, service, or office.
- An agency headquarters unit down to and including division level or equivalent.
- A unit reporting directly to the head of an agency, service, or office.
- A regional structure or office. (**Note:** In the ARS organization, an Area Office would be the equivalent of a regional office.)
- Abolishment or transfer of a unit or office outside of headquarters to another Congressional district.
- Establishment or closure of a location.

Information on making changes requiring Departmental approval is set forth in Departmental Regulation 1010-1. Contact the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Policy Branch, Human Resources Division (HRD), for assistance in determining if Departmental approval is required and preparing the package.

4. Delegations of Authority

Operations Staff (Op Staff) concurrence is required if an Area Director (AD), or the Director, National Agricultural Library (NAL), seeks approval to make an organizational change and/or to rename an existing unit within their organization. This is to ensure coordination and consistency throughout ARS program organizations. Requests for concurrence and approval are submitted using the Program Adjustment Decision Item (PADI) format shown in Exhibit 2.

The Deputy Administrator, Administrative and Financial Management (AFM), is delegated authority to rename and approve changes to AFM branches and staffs.

Approved organizational and/or name changes must be submitted to the REE Policy Branch, HRD, to officially effect the change in the NFC system.

5. Organization and Leadership Roles

General. This P&P defines the various ARS scientific organizational hierarchy and organizational roles and responsibilities, and provides instructions for reorganizing and redesignating organizational units.

Scientific Program Structure

Level I (Research Projects) are comprised of research tasks to be accomplished or completed according to established goals, objectives, and timeframes. Projects are normally directed toward solving one or more closely related problems. In most cases, these projects require fewer than 5 Scientist Year (SY) positions. Project resources are accounted for by a CRIS Work Unit (CWU) and generally come from a single management unit. However, resources may also come from several management units and scientific disciplines to achieve research tasks. In such instances, resources are accountable to the CWU leader.

Level II (Research Units) are management units which generally comprise 5-15 SY positions and associated support, equipment, and operating resources. Research units are designed to maintain research capabilities essential to the Agency mission. Research units are organized on a program basis or rationale such as discipline, subject of investigation, process, technology, or goal. AD's, with National Program Staff (NPS) concurrence, are responsible for assuring each research unit adheres to ARS National Program structure. **Note:** Beltsville Area research units have historically been named as "laboratories" and this practice is retained. Additionally, some research units outside of Beltsville Area are named "laboratories" due to Congressional mandates but function as research units.

Level III (Program Management Units) are large research organizations such as institutes, major laboratories (normally comprised of three or more research units), or centers maintained where necessary to broadly coordinate related Level II units. The Administrator determines and approves Level III organizations.

Scientific Leadership Levels

General. These levels parallel organizational levels described above. Level I-III leadership responsibilities may be assigned to individual positions in addition to nonsupervisory and nonmanagerial duties, to include conducting personal research. An individual may also be assigned more than one level of leadership or managerial responsibility simultaneously.

Level I (Lead Scientists) are responsible for the scientific leadership of Level I projects and report to a Level II RL. Lead Scientist (LS) positions are usually classified in Category 1. In this capacity, the LS:

- Develops the 5-year project plan for research projects in consultation with other scientists involved in the research program. This is accomplished in accordance with the legal requirements for peer review of research project plans in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (PL 105-185) and related procedures established by the Office of Scientific Quality Review (OSQR).
- Reviews peer review recommendations and makes appropriate modifications to research project plans for submission to the AD and NPS.
- Coordinates scientific activities of participating scientists after certification of the project by OSQR and ensures the research team carries out the project in accordance with the approved project plan.
- Assures human, fiscal, and physical resources assigned to project(s) are utilized as in accordance with the approved project plan.
- Evaluates and recommends, with NPS concurrence, project changes.
- Prepares annual reports.
- Provides technical information and consultation pertaining to assigned project(s), both internal and external to ARS.
- May, with RL approval, supervise Category 2 scientists assigned to the project, e.g., Research Associates.
- May, with AD approval, supervise other permanent Category 1 scientists assigned to project(s).

Level II (Research Leaders) head management units and are responsible for exercising leadership and line authority over scientists and support personnel assigned to the unit. An RL reports to either a Level III Director or an AD. RL positions are normally in Category 1 unless Op Staff has approved a different position category. In this capacity, the RL:

- Ensures that a consensus with NPS was developed on each project's direction and scope by documenting the project's relevance to the National Program Action Plan and scientific approach to addressing objectives.
- Ensures that research project plans are prepared according to programmatic direction provided by the NPS and guidelines established by the OSQR.
- Submits project plans for approval by the Center, Institute, or Lab Director, National Program Leader, and AD.
- Submits formal responses to recommendations made by peer reviewers to OSQR.
- Confirms that research teams carry out projects in accordance with approved project plans.
- Hires personnel and manages unit human, fiscal, and physical resources.
- Serves as unit fund holder.
- Provides technical information and consultation, both internal and external to ARS.
- Ensures proper interpretation and reporting of scientific research results and information.

Level III (Directors) typically exist only where there is an organizational need for research administration to coordinate Level II efforts. A typical Level III assignment would be the

director of a center or laboratory. Level III Director positions are usually classified in Category 6.

Level IV (Area Directors) provide leadership and line authority over all personnel assigned to an Area and report directly to the Administrator.

Location Coordinators perform collateral duties associated with location administrative management. This is an informal leadership level. Neither program management nor line supervisory responsibilities for other organizational units at the location are inherent in the designation. The Location Coordinator supervises the location administrative support staff.

6. Summary of Responsibilities

Initiating Organizations

- Request approval to make an organizational change and/or rename an organizational unit using the PADI format (Exhibit 2) and forward to the AD for review and concurrence.

Area Offices

- Advise field units on organizational change policy and procedure.
- Review organizational and personnel change proposals submitted by Area field units.
- Prepare organizational and personnel change proposals relating to Area Offices.

Operations Staff (Op Staff)

- Reviews and evaluates National Program impact of organizational and personnel change proposals.
- Reviews proposals for feasibility and regulatory compliance.
- Recommends for Administrator approval, organizational change proposals dealing with:
 - Structure, title, and/or functions of Area Offices, centers, laboratories, and locations.
 - Geographical jurisdiction of research units with activities extending to other locations or Areas.
 - Establishment or closure of worksites and locations.

Civil Rights Staff, Office of the Administrator

- Reviews and evaluates civil rights impact of organizational change proposals.

Human Resources Division

- Employee Relations Branch provides labor relations advice to initiating organizations and reviews and evaluates labor relations impact of organizational change proposals.
- Servicing Branches provide position management advice to initiating organizations and review and evaluate position management impact of organizational change proposals.
- REE Policy Branch:
 - Provides advice and staff assistance on organizational policy and procedure to program and administrative officials and those proposing organizational changes.
 - Reviews and evaluates organizational change proposals requiring Departmental approval for adequacy and compliance with such features as:
 - Organizational goals, mission, and functional statements.
 - Reporting relationships.
 - Line/staff relationships.
 - Assigns organizational structure codes after requests are approved and maintains the Organizational Coding Guide .
 - Coordinates preparation of required paperwork when Departmental approval is required.

Facilities Division

- Real Property Management Branch provides advice and guidance on the assignment of custody and control of land, buildings, and structures, including the transfer or disposal of real property.

Area Directors

- Initiate and/or concur with PADI's containing organization and/or organizational name changes in ARS field organizations.
- Forward PADI's to the Office of the Deputy Administrator (ODA), NPS.

Deputy Administrator, National Program Staff

- Review PADI's for national program considerations.
- Forward PADI's to the Deputy Administrator, AFM for review of administrative issues.

Deputy Administrator, Administrative and Financial Management

- Forwards concurrences and/or comments on PADI's to the ODA, NPS.
- Assures HRD assesses all proposed changes for labor relations, position management and position classification impact.

- Assures Facilities Division and Procurement and Property Division assess all proposed changes for real and personal property management impact.
- Exercises delegated authority to approve organizational changes at branch and staffs levels in AFM.
- Reviews all organizational change proposals submitted for Departmental approval.

Administrator

- Approves structure, title, or functions of Area Offices, centers, laboratories, and locations.
- Approves geographical jurisdiction of research units with activities extending to other locations or Areas.
- Approves establishment or closure of worksites.
- Approves organizational change proposals dealing with structure, title, or functions of division, branch, or equivalent echelons in ARS Headquarters not otherwise delegated.
- Recommends to the Department (through Under Secretary, REE) organizational change proposals and location establishment or closure proposals requiring Departmental approval.

7. Glossary

AD. Area Director.

AC. Administrator's Council.

Administrator's Council. The AC is composed of the Administrator, Associate Administrators, Deputy Administrators, Associate Deputy Administrator's in NPS, Area Directors, and the Director, NAL. Senior Advisors include the heads of offices reporting directly to the Administrator.

AFM. Administrative and Financial Management.

CFR. Code of Federal Regulations.

CRIS. Current Research Information System.

DA-AFM. Deputy Administrator, Administrative and Financial Management

HRD. Human Resources Division.

Location. A city/state designation enabling ARS information systems to group organizational units, funds, and resources below Area/center level. A location is not an organizational unit. These sites are identified in the budget process and are used for Congressional allocations.

LS. Lead Scientist.

NFC. National Finance Center.

NPS. National Program Staff.

ODA. Office of the Deputy Administrator, NPS.

Office of Scientific Quality Review. This office manages and implements the ARS peer review system for research projects, including peer review policies, processes, and procedures. OSQR centrally coordinates and conducts panel peer reviews for project plans within ARS' National Programs every 5 years.

Office or Facility. Any space used for housing ARS personnel whether purchased, leased, or acquired free of charge from a cooperator.

Op Staff. Operations Staff is composed of the Administrator's Council members except the AD's.

Organizational Change. The establishment, discontinuance, consolidation, transfer, or realignment of work, functions, areas of responsibility or geographical jurisdiction, and changes in official organizational titles.

Organizational Coding Guide. Documents formal recognition and official establishment of organizational units in the NFC system.

Organizational Title. The official title specified for an organizational entity in the ARS Organizational Coding Guide.

OSQR. Office of Scientific Quality Review.

PADI. Program Adjustment Decision Item.

Position Management Advice. Advice on how distribution of duties and responsibilities to positions affect classification, recruitment, employee utilization and productivity, and related human resources features.

RL. Research Leader.

RPB. REE Policy Branch, HRD.

SY. Scientist Year (Category 1 or 4 position).

Scientist Year. An ARS administrative designation for Category 1 and 4 scientist positions. SY positions comprise the ARS core mission workforce.

Worksite. A worksite is normally considered a temporary site where a particular aspect of research is conducted. A worksite is not reported in the budget process or separately identified in the Agency organization codes. A worksite reports to a “parent” location which is an established organizational unit which may or may not be in the same Area.

-/Sd/-

FLOYD P. HORN

Administrator

Agricultural Research Service

Exhibit 1 - Approval Procedure for Organizational Change Requests		
Step	Responsible Person/Office	Action
1	Initiating Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares PADI and submits through appropriate channels to Area Director (AD) or Deputy Administrator (DA), as appropriate.
2	AD or DA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forwards PADI to the ODA, NPS.
3	Program Analyst, ODA, NPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forwards PADI for functional review to designated contacts. Consolidates comments and schedules proposal for discussion at Op Staff meeting.
4	Op Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses PADI and makes recommendation to the Administrator.
5	Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes final decision on organizational changes for actions within delegated authority.
6	NPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notifies initiating organization and other interested offices of approval/disapproval.
7	Initiating Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implements approved organizational changes including any necessary communications with bargaining units and customer groups. In consultation with HRD Servicing Branch, determines SF-52's or other paperwork needed to effect organizational change.
8	REE Policy Branch, HRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigns organizational structure code, determines effective date, and updates Organizational Coding Guide for approved changes. For changes requiring Departmental review, coordinates preparation of package for Departmental approval.
9	Servicing Branch, HRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consultation with initiating office, determines effective date for personnel changes (which can be on/after the date that the change is made in the NFC system). Processes associated personnel actions.

Exhibit 2 -- Format for Program Adjustment Decision Item

1. Location:
2. Unit:
3. Other Units at Location:
4. Originator of Proposal:
5. Executive Summary:
6. Issues:
7. Major Benefits:
8. Recommended Adjustments:
 - a. Project and Organization Code Actions:
 - b. Subject of Investigation Balance:
 - c. Personnel Actions:
 - d. Management Criteria:

ITEM	BEFORE \$\$	AFTER \$\$
Permanent Funds		
Percent in Salary		
Number of SY's		
Discretionary \$/SY		
Total \$/SY		
Total Unit FTE		
9. AD Recommendation:
10. NPS Recommendation:
11. AFM Recommendation:
12. User/Cooperator/Congressional Issues:
13. Operations Staff Decision:
Approved: _____ Disapproved: _____ Date: _____
14. Implementation Actions/Responsibility following Operations Staff Decision:
Briefing Papers:
Notify Under Secretary:
Industry/User Contacts:
Congressional Contacts:
Notification Date:
Completion Date: