

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. Official Designation.

Subcommittee on Ground Water (SOGW) for the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI).

II. Purpose, scope, applicability, and functions.

A. Purpose

The overall goal of the SOGW is to develop and encourage implementation of a nationwide, long-term ground-water quantity and quality monitoring framework that would provide information necessary for the planning, management, and development of ground-water supplies to meet current and future water needs, and ecosystem requirements.

B. Scope

This national framework for ground-water monitoring and collaboration will be developed to assist in assessments of the quantity of U.S. ground-water reserves, as constrained by ground water quality. The SOGW will also consider ground-water-quality monitoring in order to help determine water-quality-related constraints on supply and use, and for helping assess potential ecological impacts caused by changes in ground-water quantity and quality. The overall assessment then can be used to assist, along with water use and other information, in the evaluation of the availability and/or sustainability of the ground-water resource, in conjunction with constraints from ecological/environmental needs and from water-quality conditions.

In undertaking its work, the SOGW will consider policies, programs, and funding for the collection, analysis, assessment, distribution, reporting, and use of ground-water data at all levels of government and in the private sector. The SOGW will review products and activities of ACWI or ACWI subgroups and their predecessors relevant to ground-water monitoring, data acquisition or storage and retrieval.

C. Applicability

As resources are available, organizations that participate in the SOGW will implement recommendations and voluntarily use the guidelines and procedures developed by the SOGW, once they are approved by ACWI. Other organizations

will be encouraged to implement the recommendations and voluntarily use the guidelines and procedures developed by the SOGW.

D. Functions

1. The SOGW will develop a national framework for ground-water monitoring design, collaboration, and data sharing with particular emphasis on changes in ground-water availability.
2. The SOGW will address the following issues:
 - a. Evaluation and prioritization of the various objectives of ground-water monitoring, including a balance between regionally important aquifers and locally important aquifers; responses to climate change and responses to ground-water use; monitoring confined and unconfined aquifers; monitoring wells open to different depths and within the context of the three-dimensional ground water flow system; monitoring among various land uses including areas undergoing transition; monitoring to determine impacts on surface water levels; and monitoring areas of ground water recharge,
 - b. Collaboration among government and non-government entities,
 - c. Consistency of data collection techniques, frequency of data collection, well instrumentation, data storage, and data retrieval in order to facilitate data sharing,
 - d. Recommendations for a monitoring design that can provide a status of the Nation's ground-water resource, how it has changed over time, and how it may change in the future, and
 - e. Recommendations for methods to archive and access ground-water data on a national scale.

III. Membership

- A. The SOGW shall have a membership from among federal, interstate, state, and/or local government agencies and non-federal organizations. The membership will include those with experience in the collection, analysis, dissemination, and/or use of ground-water data, as well as those that develop ground-water monitoring technology, guidelines, or standards.
- B. Any organization that pledges to actively support the functions of the SOGW may become a voting member by informing the co-chairs in writing of their desire to participate and by providing the name and contact information of the organization's representative and alternate. Active support includes participating

in meetings, drafting documents, reviewing and commenting on documents, making presentations, and other contributions of staff time, funding, or other resources.

C. During meetings the co-chairs will announce membership applications received up to 2 weeks before each meeting. Organizations that apply will become members at the following meeting.

D. Other interested individuals may participate in the meetings and activities of the SOGW, but may not vote.

E. The U.S. Geological Survey and a non-federal representative will co-chair the SOGW.

F. Voting members are expected to participate, in person or by teleconference, in meetings of the SOGW. At their discretion in consultation with the other member organizations, the chairs may remove as a voting member any organization that fails to attend at least 50 percent of the meetings in any year (October 1 to September 30) or to actively support the SOGW. . A member organization can be reinstated one year later by informing the co-chairs of the organization's desire to renew his/her participation in the SOGW.

IV. Meetings and procedures

A. The SOGW will meet at least twice a year (in person and/or by remote access) and at other times as designated by the co-chairs. The co-chairs will determine the dates, times, and locations of the meetings in consultation with the members. The co-chairs will be responsible for distributing agendas and information about meetings to all members.

B. Members of the SOGW will receive no pay, allowances, or benefits from ACWI. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business, in the performance of services for the SOGW, non-Federal members may be allowed reimbursement of some travel expenses if funds are available.

C. The SOGW will collaborate with the National Water-Quality Monitoring Council on ground-water quality monitoring issues.

D. The SOGW will conduct business in an open fashion by discussing and attempting to resolve all issues through consensus and by recognizing the legitimate interests and diverse views of the SOGW voting members. If complete agreement cannot be reached on a specific issue, then the following procedure will apply:

1. A consensus will exist unless one or more voting members request a formal vote.

2. Once a vote is requested, the co-chairs will poll the voting members. An affirmative vote of a majority of the members present, in person or electronically, will constitute approval of a motion. Each organization has one vote.

3. The co-chairs will sign and forward to the Chair of ACWI decisions of the SOGW that are proposed advice, guidance or recommendations intended for implementation. If two or more members disagree with the consensus or majority decision, they may prepare minority report(s) to the co-chairs within 3 weeks of a decision. Such minority report(s) will be forwarded to ACWI along with majority reports.

D. Meetings of the SOGW will be open.. Each meeting will include a designated time period for individuals who are not members to make statements or to have written statements distributed during the meeting.

E. The co-chairs will distribute summaries with action items of SOGW meetings to voting and non-voting members. Once agreed to, the co-chairs will forward the information to the Executive Secretary of the ACWI for further distribution, and posting on the ACWI web site.

V. Termination

The Executive Secretary and Chair of ACWI have the authority to terminate the SOGW in consultation with ACWI members. At least 30 days notice will be provided in advance of termination.

VII. Support services

Support services and administrative assistance for the activities of the SOGW will be provided by the USGS and NGWA, as resources are available. In addition, other organizations may provide services and support to the SOGW as mutually agreed.

VIII. Subordinate groups

For assistance in conducting its business, the SOGW may establish work groups for a specific purpose and time period. Such work groups will gather information, conduct research, analyze relevant issues and facts, and draft proposed position papers and recommendations for deliberation by the SOGW. These work groups will be established by the co-chairs and will have the balanced perspectives and knowledge necessary to perform their assigned functions. Representatives that serve on these subordinate work groups may include persons and organizations that are not members of the SOGW, but

who provide knowledge and expertise needed to carry out the assigned tasks. All such work groups will serve for the time necessary to complete the action for which they were formed.

IX. Authority

The SOGW will work under ACWI as part of the Water Information Coordination Program mandated by OMB Memorandum No. 92-01, dated December 10, 1991. The Subcommittee reports to the Chair of ACWI through its Executive Secretary. ACWI operates under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA); the Subcommittee is not separately chartered under FACA.

Dates of Approval: Approved by the Advisory Committee on Water Information on January 18, 2007.

Signed/

William Cunningham
SOGW Federal Co-Chair

Signed/

Robert Schreiber
SOGW Non-Federal Co-Chair

Toni Johnson
ACWI Executive Secretary