



ICARP

INTEGRATED CLIMATE ADAPTATION & RESILIENCY PROGRAM

Technical Advisory Council

Item 6: Science Advisory Group Update

April 14, 2023

Introduction & Background

Previous ICARP staff reviews and a summary of best practices around the Science Advisory Group (SAG) highlighted the role of “actionable science” as a key part of California’s climate agenda, with the goal of supporting science-informed policies and investments that are responsive to the impacts of climate change. As part of this review process, the TAC highlighted SAG priorities as including identifying best available data, providing scenario guidance, and elevating emergent science priorities to support policy and decision making. To clarify the possible scope and role of the SAG, ICARP staff conducted a comprehensive review of similar groups in 2022 to document the range of types and frameworks used in this capacity. The roles they identified included (see [TAC SAG memo, Mar 27, 2022](#)):

- climate assessments and technical reports that provide guidance-on and translation-of climate and adaptation science,
- a review of as-current scientific and technical information,
- input on the alignment and integration of climate science in government policy and planning,
- as a connector between the climate scientists and agencies tasked with climate related decision making, and
- to identify priority research areas and gaps.

State agencies face a wide range of data and information for decision-making and planning, and guidance on climate change science and adaptation practice can be challenging to navigate. Initial recommendations for the SAG were to draw from subject matter experts across the range of California’s climate impacts (e.g. wildfire, sea-level rise, drought, flooding, heat, etc.), and to provide ad-hoc scientific and technical guidance around climate science and research needs, to facilitate use of climate information in planning and decision making.

Potential for Leverage and Coordination

Numerous interagency working groups and advisory groups already provide guidance and input similar to those identified as core SAG activities, and the 5th California Climate Change Assessment has identified research priorities in an extensive consultation process that included input from scientific experts. There is an opportunity to leverage the widespread

subject matter expertise (SME) of existing advisory and working groups (AG/WG) that avoids duplicative effort. An ad-hoc SAG could summarize emergent science priorities identified by various working groups, provide a resource for climate policy alignment across state agencies, and support the use of best available information for decision making. Coordination could elevate the work and SME of existing AG/WGs, and could identify gaps where new AG/WGs could be proposed in response to emergent challenges identified by SAG members.

Implementation

Goal & Framework: A **network of networks** that draws from existing AG/WGs to provide a resource (SME) that supports use of climate information in decision making, and provides a space to summarize ongoing and emergent priorities identified by agencies or other AG/WGs. Coordination by ICARP staff will facilitate connecting ad-hoc guidance from the SAG to emergent questions around climate impacts, science, and adaptation practices.

Participation: ICARP staff would identify points of contact from existing AG/WGs but could also expand beyond typical scientific or academic networks as relevant – e.g. SME and knowledge from diverse perspectives from Tribal groups, community-based organizations, or local governments. Rotating/flexible membership could reduce the overall time commitment, but allow the SAG to adapt and operate in an ad-hoc basis – *i.e. a nimble framework for curating existing information to support CA agency and science guidance*. Ad-hoc participation means any representative of a particular group could contribute as a liaison to their representative group.

Discussion Questions

- Does this approach – staff coordination of a network of networks (the SAG) – seem like a feasible way to address the priorities originally identified for the SAG?
- What would be an optimal cadence for regular SAG meetings and reports to the TAC, or could this operate as an ad-hoc network responsive to emergent questions and issues?