U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee

Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The official designation of the committee is the Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee (SESAC).

2. **Authority.** The Committee is established under the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Authorization Act of 1977 (42 U.S.C. § 7709), as amended, and is regulated by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. Appendix 2.

3. **Objectives and Scope of Activities.** The SESAC advises the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) on matters relating to the USGS's participation in the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, including its roles, goals, and objectives within that program, its capabilities and research needs, guidance on achieving major objectives, and establishing and measuring performance goals. The SESAC shall issue an annual report to the Director of the USGS for submission to Congress on or before September 30 of each year. The report shall describe SESAC activities and address policy issues or matters that affect the USGS's participation in the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program.

4. **Description of Duties.** The duties of the SESAC are solely advisory and are described in paragraph 3 above.

5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports.** The Committee reports to the Director of the USGS through the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).

6. **Support.** Administrative, technical, and funding for the SESAC will be provided by the USGS Earthquake Hazards Program.

7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the SESAC's functions are estimated to be $100,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and .20 Federal staff years support.

8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Senior Science Advisor who is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will approve or call all Council and subcommittee meetings, prepare and approve all meeting agendas, attend all Council and subcommittee meetings, adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and chair meetings when directed to do so by the Secretary.

9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings.** The SESAC will meet approximately one to two times annually, and at such other times as designated by the DFO.

10. **Duration.** Continuing.

11. **Termination.** The SESAC will become inactive 2 years from the date the Charter is filed, unless, prior to that date, it is renewed in accordance with the provisions of Section 14 of the FACA. The SESAC will not meet or take any action without a valid current Charter.

12. **Membership and Designation.** The Director of the USGS shall establish procedures for selection of individuals not employed by the Federal Government who are qualified in the seismic sciences and other appropriate fields and may, pursuant to such procedures, select up to 10 individuals, one of whom shall be designated Chairman, to serve on the SESAC.

    Selection of individuals for the SESAC shall be based solely on established records of distinguished service, and the Director shall ensure a reasonable cross-section of views and expertise is represented. In selecting individuals to serve on the SESAC, the Director shall seek and give due consideration to recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences, professional societies, and other appropriate organizations. Solicitation of nominations will include the following societies and organizations:

    - Geological Society of America
    - Seismological Society of America
    - American Society of Civil Engineers
    - American Geophysical Union
    - Earthquake Engineering Research Institute

    The Chair of the National Earthquake Prediction Evaluation Council shall serve ex officio.

    Terms of membership may be staggered to ensure continuity in the procedure of the SESAC.

    All SESAC members shall serve as Special Government Employees.

13. **Ethics Responsibilities of Members.** A Committee (or subcommittee, workgroup or subgroup) member may not participate in any specific party matter that could affect their personal financial interests or the financial interests of their spouse, minor child(ren), employer, business partner, organizations in which they are officers or board members, or entities with whom a member is seeking employment. The definition of a specific party matter includes a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, agreement, or related litigation with the USGS or the Department of the Interior.

The USGS Ethics Office will provide ethics training materials to Committee members appointed as Special Government Employees and will provide them information on when and how confidential financial disclosure reports must be submitted. Consistent with the ethics requirements, members will endeavor to avoid any actions that would cause the public to question the integrity of the Committee's operations, activities, or advice. The provisions of this section do not affect any other statutory or regulatory ethical obligations to which a member may be subject.

14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFO's approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purposes of compiling information or conducting research. However, such subcommittees must act only under the direction of the DFO and must report their recommendations to the full Committee for consideration. Subcommittees must not provide advice or work products directly to the Department. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO and the availability of resources.

15. **Recordkeeping.** The records of the SESAC, and formally or informally established subcommittees of the Committee, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2 and other approved Agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

Suzette M Kimball
Director, U.S. Geological Survey

4/13/2016
Date

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