

EPA/UMBC/USGS - Governance Document

INTRODUCTION:

This document describes the organizational function and governance for the Environmental Protection Agency, University of Maryland Baltimore County, and the United States Geological Survey (EPA/UMBC/USGS) Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2023. For the purposes of this document, the term “Party/Parties” refers to the signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding (EPA/UMBC/USGS) as outlined in the 2023 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

DEIJ COMMITMENT:

The 2023 (MOU) (include hyperlink) includes a commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Environmental Justice. As permitted by law, regulation, and policies of the parties, all three Parties will strive to;

- Strengthen and improve diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in leadership, policies, strategic goals, work-plans and program delivery, including guidance on including DEIJ and environmental justice criteria in grant targeting and evaluations.
- Engage, recruit and retain leadership, staff, appointees, interns and volunteers that reflect the diversity of the Parties.
- Foster a culture of inclusion, respect and mutual learning with a focus on outreach, engagement and internal decision-making.
- Increase collaborative planning with organizations led by and primarily serving communities of color and other underrepresented populations that result in informed and mutually beneficial decisions and outcomes.
- Ensure the benefits of STE(A)M programs are distributed in a fair and equitable manner without adverse, disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations, especially those of lower economic status, indigenous, historically underrepresented communities and people of color.

GOVERNANCE:

The Parties will be governed by a Steering Committee as outlined in the MOU and those in proceeding appointments (<https://epa-usgs.umbc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/742/2023/09/MOU-UMBC-USGS-EPA-1.pdf>). The Parties intend to use the latest version of Robert’s Rules of Order (<http://www.rulesonline.com/>) to conduct meetings. When practicable, the meeting will be recorded to produce a detailed transcript. A meeting summary including action items is intended to be provided after each meeting. The key Functions and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee include the following voluntary plans;

- Provide the vision and strategic direction for the MOU, its Parties, and those that will benefit from the Steering Committee activities
- Provide leadership to promote public support for the MOU.

- Report on progress to the Parties using clear measurable objectives.
- Pursue strategic opportunities to align resources and secure new resource opportunities to achieve identified annual priorities.

MEETINGS:

The Parties plan to convene a minimum of three times a year, and to distribute an agenda two business days prior to the meeting. Each Party plans to host a meeting which may be held in-person, hybrid, or virtually. Meetings are intended to be open to members of the three Parties and invited guests. If a participant cannot attend, he/she/they may delegate a proxy to attend in his/her/their place by sending an email to the meeting organizers 24 hours prior to the meeting.

The suggested meeting cadence is (exact dates to be determined);

- Fall: UMBC host
- Winter: EPA host
- Spring: USGS host

In the event that business must be conducted between scheduled meetings, a special meeting or conference call may be called by the voting member of the Steering Committee or his/her/their designee. The purpose of the meeting will be stated in the call for the meeting and the meeting can be held in-person, hybrid, or virtually. In addition, business can be conducted via email if necessary.

VOTING:

Whenever possible, voting by consensus is the preferred method to render decisions. If consensus is not possible, then a vote of the three Parties will be executed. Each Party will have one vote which will be cast by the highest ranking member present. In the event of an unforeseen conflict, the highest ranking available member of the Parties' agency/university should attend in their place.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEES:

The Steering Committee may develop subcommittees and ad-hoc committees to assist with providing recommendations. All recommendations should be approved by the Steering Committee prior to execution.

STAFFING AND SUPPORT:

Prior coordination may be necessary for Steering Committee Meetings, activities, and events. A senior member from each Party may be assigned to assist in coordinating administrative, logistics, and research support. Responsibilities can include; fiscal oversight, scheduling, management, and evaluation.

GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT UPDATES

Changes to the Governance document may be approved by consensus of the Parties. The Parties may suggest and approve updates/changes to the document at regularly scheduled Steering Committee meetings.