

**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. At the conclusion of each meeting or shortly thereafter, provide a detailed recommendation report, including meeting minutes, to the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).
5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports.** The Committee reports to the Director of the USGS through the 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 SESAC and subcommittee meetings, prepare and approve all meeting agendas, attend all SESAC 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 be 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. The term for each member of the SESAC shall be 3 years, but may be staggered to ensure continuity. All SESAC members shall serve as special Government employees.

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.

Non-Federal members of the SESAC will serve without compensation. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business, non-Federal SESAC and subcommittee members engaged in SESAC, or subcommittee business, approved by the DFO, may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Government service under 5 U.S.C. § 5703.

13. **Ethics Responsibilities of Members.**

Special Government Employee Members. Members of the Committee are appointed as special Government employees (SGEs) and are therefore subject to applicable Federal ethics statutes and regulations, to include applicable exceptions and exemptions. Additionally, SGE members are required, prior to appointment and

annually thereafter, to file a Confidential Financial Disclosure Report. SGE members are also required to receive initial ethics training prior to performing any Committee duties and to receive annual ethics training thereafter. The Department of the Interior will provide materials to those members serving as special Government employees, explaining their ethical obligations.

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 SESAC 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 SESAC, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2 and other approved Agency records disposition schedules. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552).



Director, U.S. Geological Survey

07/28/2020
Date

08/12/2020

Date Filed