

**Action Learning Scenario #3**  
**Room \_\_\_\_\_**

**Fostering high priority, multi-Mission Area science with the expertise,  
facilities and capabilities required**

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**Action Learning Team**

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**Issue/Challenges**

Issue/Challenges: The USGS organizational structure of Mission Areas is inherently discipline focused. This focus carries through when setting priorities, determining funding allocation levels, and establishing and maintaining facilities. Each Mission Area establishes annual and longer-term science themes to carry out its priorities and execute the program funding appropriations. Science centers, which are also primarily Mission Area focused, are allocated funds to execute science in alignment with the established priorities.

The challenge is that many of the complex societal issues USGS addresses require a multidisciplinary and coordinated approach to provide comprehensive science that informs natural resource management decisions. One current example that USGS is addressing is integrated drought science. Expertise and capacity from multiple mission areas is needed to understand the complexity of drought issues and the impact of drought on human and natural systems. The USGS has a wealth of technical expertise and capabilities housed in both our field-based science centers and centers managing national capabilities. Bringing all the needed USGS capabilities together to address complex science questions is a significant challenge. Particularly when the issue itself may not be a high priority for any one Mission Area these challenges can translate to

limited resource availability. To maximize USGS collective impact, we need to foster these science efforts.

**Expectations:** Develop an approach that would provide USGS priorities that are not specific to any one Mission Area with a way to be vetted, resourced, and carried out.