

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

Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee

Renewal Charter

1. **Advisory Committee's Official Designation.** Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee (SESAC).
2. **Authority.** The SESAC is established under the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Authorization Act of 1977, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7709), and is operated pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended (5 U.S.C. Ch. 10), and the Federal Advisory Committee regulations (FACA Final Rule) found at 41 C.F.R. Part 102-3.
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 will issue an annual report to the Director of the USGS for submission to Congress, on or before September 30 of each year. The report will 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 Federal Officer Receiving the Advisory Committee's Advice/Recommendations.** The SESAC reports to the Director of the USGS through the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).
6. **Support.** Administrative support, technical support, and funding for the SESAC activities 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 \$51,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and .20 Federal staff years. Estimated payments to Federal Staff: \$35,500; travel reimbursement for non-Federal members: \$10,000; travel reimbursement for Federal Staff: \$5,000; and publication of Federal Register notices: \$500.

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 must:

- a. Ensure the SESAC activities comply with the FACA, FACA Final Rule, Agency administrative procedures, and any other applicable laws and regulations;
- b. Approve or call all meetings of the SESAC or subcommittee;
- c. Approve the agenda;
- d. Attend all SESAC and subcommittee meetings for their duration;
- e. Fulfill the requirements under section 1009 of the FACA, Advisory Committee Procedures;
- f. Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines it to be in the public interest;
- g. Chair any meeting when so directed by the Director of the USGS;
- h. Maintain information on SESAC activities and provide such information to the public, as applicable; and
- i. Ensure SESAC members and subcommittee members, as applicable, receive the appropriate training (e.g., FACA overview, ethics training) for efficient operation and compliance with the FACA and FACA Final Rule.

In addition, the DFO should ensure a public facing website is created and maintained for the SESAC.

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 and Chairperson. The SESAC may be required to meet on short notice to address emergent situations. As such, the USGS may give less than 7 calendar days' notice for a meeting of the SESAC, provided that the reasons for doing so are included in the meeting notice published in the Federal Register. If a SESAC meeting is scheduled to be held with less than 7 calendar days' notice, the USGS will also announce the meeting through additional channels, such as websites and social media.

10. Duration. The duration of the SESAC is continuing, subject to the Termination section below.

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 1013 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 will 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 will be designated Chair, to serve on the SESAC. The term for each member of the SESAC will be 3 years but may be staggered to ensure continuity. All SESAC members will serve as special Government employees (SGE).

Selection of individuals for the SESAC will be based on established records of distinguished service, and the Director will ensure a reasonable cross-section of views, experience, expertise, and diversity is represented. In selecting individuals to serve on the SESAC, the Director will 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
- Institutions that serve historically underrepresented communities

The Chairs of the National Earthquake Prediction Evaluation Council; the Advanced National Seismic System National Steering Committee; and the National Seismic Hazard Model Project Steering Committee, all SESAC sub-committees will serve as ex officio members.

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.** Members of SESAC appointed as SGEs are 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 SESAC duties and to receive annual ethics training thereafter. The Department of the Interior will provide materials to those members serving as SGEs, 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.** Detailed records must be kept of each SESAC and formally or informally established SESAC subcommittees. All records must be made available to the public, subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552), and must be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2 and other approved Agency records disposition schedules.
16. **Filing Date.** August 31, 2026



Director, U.S. Geological Survey

08/31/2026
Date