

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Annual Peer Review Report  
June 16, 2005 – December 31, 2005**

**I. Purpose**

This report provides information for peer reviews that EPA conducted that were subject to reporting for 2005 under the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) *Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review*. It also provides information on actions that EPA has taken in response to the Bulletin.

**II. Background**

On December 16, 2004, OMB issued its *Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review*. This Bulletin asks all federal agencies to submit an annual report to OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs providing information on peer reviews that were subject to the Bulletin and conducted during the previous fiscal year. The Bulletin establishes minimum peer review provisions for all non-exempt "influential scientific information" and "highly influential scientific assessments." The Bulletin defines "influential scientific information" as "scientific information the agency reasonably can determine will have or does have a clear and substantial impact on important public policies or private sector decisions." A scientific assessment is an evaluation of a body of scientific or technical knowledge that typically synthesizes multiple factual inputs, data, models, assumptions, and/or applies best professional judgment to bridge uncertainties in the available information. The Bulletin considers a "scientific assessment" to be "highly influential" if the agency or OMB determines that the dissemination could have a potential impact of more than \$500 million in any one year on either the public or private sector, or that the dissemination is novel, controversial, precedent-setting, or has significant interagency interest.

The Bulletin requests the following information regarding these peer reviews:

- 1) the number of peer reviews conducted subject to the Bulletin;
- 2) the number of times alternative procedures were invoked;
- 3) the number of times waivers or deferrals were invoked;
- 4) any decision to appoint a reviewer pursuant to any exception to the applicable independence or conflict of interest standards of the Bulletin;
- 5) the number of peer review panels that were conducted in public and the number of that allowed public comment;

- 6) the number of public comments provided on the peer review plans; and
- 7) the number of reviewers used who were recommended by professional societies.

### **III. EPA Activities**

EPA revised its Peer Review Handbook in 2005, to incorporate the Bulletin's provisions and to incorporate experiences from using the previous edition of the handbook. The draft Peer Review Handbook was distributed throughout the Agency for use and review, and will be made final once comments from Agency staff and managers are considered.

The Agency also redesigned its Science Inventory ([epa.gov/si](http://epa.gov/si)), a consolidated, Agency-wide database of science activities and products, to achieve the goals stated in the OMB Bulletin and to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on peer review plans for highly influential scientific assessments and influential scientific information.

Three training sessions for Agency staff on the Peer Review Handbook, the Bulletin, and requirements for reporting to the Science Inventory were given in 2005. These training sessions were held in Chicago, Research Triangle Park, NC, and Washington, DC.

The Agency has identified 26 highly influential scientific assessments and 57 influential scientific information products as of December 16, 2005. These are listed in the Science Inventory with related peer review plans. Two of the highly influential scientific assessments identified underwent peer review and are subject to the reporting for 2005 under the Bulletin. Information regarding these peer reviews is presented in this report.

### **III. EPA Peer Reviews Conducted Subject to the Bulletin**

There were two peer reviews subject to the Bulletin for 2005 reporting. These peer reviews were selected based on the following criteria:

- it was a peer review of a highly influential scientific assessment or influential scientific information and the charge for the peer review was given to peer reviewers after June 16, 2005; and
- if it was a panel review, the panel met between June 16 and September 30, 2005; or
- if it was a letter review, all of the peer reviewer responses were received by September 30, 2005.

The two peer reviews are the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) Evaluation of Inorganic Arsenic and the issue paper, "Cacodylic Acid (DMAV): Metabolism and Carcinogenic Mode of Action." Both of these items are considered to be "highly influential" under the OMB Bulletin. EPA did conduct other peer reviews during this period, but these reviews were initiated prior to the effective date of the Bulletin.

For these two peer reviews:

- no alternative procedures, waivers, or deferrals were invoked;
- no reviewers were appointed pursuant to any exception to the applicable independence or conflict of interest standards of the Bulletin;
- both reviews were conducted in public by the EPA's Science Advisory Board and both allowed public comment; and
- neither employed reviewers that were recommended to the Agency by professional societies.

For all of the peer review plans posted on the Science Inventory for influential scientific information and highly influential scientific assessments, EPA did not receive any comments in fiscal year 2005.