

## Action Learning Scenario #3:

### Increasing Program Efficiencies

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#### **Issue:**

For many years, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) budget structure and programmatic structure have been almost identical. In most cases, each science budget line item (see attachment #1) has an associated management structure – disciplines, program coordinators, deputy program coordinators, etc. The primary purpose of an agency's budget request, however, is to justify, and sell, to Congress the resources that are needed to conduct a given program. The way an agency chooses to organize itself does not have to correspond to the budget structure.

#### **Background:**

In 2007, the USGS released a new science strategy -- a strategic plan, for the period 2007 to 2017 (see attachment #2). This report identifies six thematic areas where the USGS, through its scientific programs, is well-poised to make major contributions toward the advancement of key national issues. What is readily evident from this plan, however, is that no one scientific program can address any, or all, of the national issues in their entirety. A better-integrated, or multidisciplinary approach is required in order to more fully address each of the national issues.

With the advent of the new science strategy and the ongoing regionalization efforts, it is now time to evaluate the internal programmatic structure – not necessarily the budget structure – and make any recommendations that would increase programmatic efficiencies. Simply put, a budget structure should be clear enough and enduring enough to sell the USGS programs that it highlights. A programmatic structure is how you manage a Center, project, or activity to get the job done in the best possible manner. They are NOT synonymous. Although this programmatic structure largely manifests itself at Headquarters, it should be noted that it is often propagated in the Regions, and in some instances at Science Centers.

#### **Questions to Address:**

1. Do you have experience that you can draw upon with other Federal Agencies who have de-coupled their budget and programmatic/managerial structures? If so, what were the benefits, and what were the risks? Who benefits from an aligned structure versus one that is de-coupled?

2. Could a de-coupling of these structures increase science integration and increase programmatic efficiencies? How?
3. If these structures were de-coupled, how would you ensure both financial and programmatic accountability back to Congress on how they see us, i.e. through our budget line items?
4. What, if any, decreases in administrative and operational costs would be achieved?
5. Does the current budget structure help or hurt changing our programmatic structures? What are the risks versus opportunities in changing the USGS programmatic structures to selling the importance of our science programs to the Congress and to customers?

**Expected Outcomes from this Action Learning Scenario:**

A written document with your recommendations regarding an alternate program management construct, not a budget restructuring, which would simultaneously increase program integration, and decrease administrative and operational costs thereby increasing program efficiencies.

**Attachments:**

1. The United States Department of the Interior Budget Justifications and Performance Information, Fiscal Year 2009, U.S. Geological Survey. (FY09 Green Book)
2. Facing Tomorrow's Challenges – U.S. Geological Survey Science in the Decade 2007-2017: U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1309, 69p.