

VISIBILITY IMPROVEMENT FOR STATES AND TRIBES ACROSS THE SOUTHEAST (VISTAS)

WORKGROUP GUIDELINES November 7, 2001

Purpose Of Workgroups

Workgroups are a major tool to be used by VISTAS to carry out its purposes. The purposes of VISTAS are:

- To promote the coordinated efforts of States and Tribes in their efforts to address federal regional haze and visibility requirements.
- To identify regional or common air management issues.
- To conduct research and undertake other activities to provide the membership with scientific and technological information which may be of value in development of agency strategies.
- To develop strategies on regional haze and other air quality issues for use by member States and Tribes, where appropriate, in developing their implementation programs, regulations and laws.

Workgroups are the primary focal point for participating in the process, gathering and reviewing data, and the development of detailed implementation tactics and action plans.

How Workgroups Are Created

The State and Tribe Air Directors (STAD) will appoint chairs/co-chairs for each workgroup. In consultation with the respective chairs/co-chairs, the STAD will provide objectives and expectations for each workgroup. The workgroup chairs/co-chairs have the responsibility of identifying issues to be addressed by their respective workgroups based on input, priorities and directions from STAD. Temporary ad hoc workgroups may be established to address specific issues and will sunset upon completion of the work as defined by the STAD.

Workgroup Participants

VISTAS Bylaws established the following standing workgroups: Technical Analysis (Emissions Inventory and Modeling), Data (Monitoring), and Planning. The Bylaws prescribe that guidelines for the staffing, function, operation and goals of workgroups will be established by the STAD. Workgroups may consist of, but are not limited to, participants from the following categories:

- State government
- Tribal government
- Local air programs
- Federal government
- Other government agencies
- Industry (focused on production sector but excluding the mobile source sector)
- Small business (focused on the service sector, including “green industry”)
- Mobile sources (including vehicle manufacturers, fuel providers, and transportation planners)
- Academia
- Public interest groups
- General public

In some cases it may not be possible or appropriate to include each of the above categories in each of the workgroup processes. Workgroups are encouraged to have balanced geographic representation from throughout the VISTAS region and should strive to contain diverse perspectives. The STAD will review the workgroup make-up and alter as necessary to be consistent with organizational objectives.

VISTAS members and participants are expected to avoid any activity which creates even the appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest. Therefore, participants in VISTAS workgroups (and/or their companies) cannot bid on VISTAS contracts.

How Workgroup Participation is Established

The STAD will appoint chairs/co-chairs for standing and ad hoc workgroups. The chairs/co-chairs will solicit workgroup participants following the established guidelines as stated above subject to review/approval of the STAD.

Workgroup Responsibilities

In consultation with the workgroup chairs/co-chairs, the STAD will review and revise as necessary, workgroup assignments, which include the objectives, expectations, and process requirements for the respective workgroups. Workgroup Chairs/Co-chairs, in consultation with workgroup members, will determine their schedule of meetings and their locations. Workgroups, in conjunction with the Planning Workgroup, are responsible for translating technical materials into a form understandable by the general public.

Workgroup Processes

It is desirable that workgroups conduct their business on a consensus basis; however, where a consensus cannot be achieved a voting process may need to be utilized. The following shall apply with respect to consensus for VISTAS:

- Consensus is agreement among member states, tribes, and local air programs in consideration of input and feedback from other workgroup participants.
- Consensus is selection of an option that most everyone can live with.
- Consensus may not result in the selection of everyone's first choice, but workgroup members are willing to support the choice of the members.
- Consensus does not have to be a unanimous position of workgroup members.
- Workgroup chairs will make all reasonable efforts to obtain a consensus.
- Attainment of a consensus shall be the sole judgment of the workgroup chair.

Whenever there is disagreement among members (as defined under Article III Part 1 of the VISTAS Bylaws), each member should commit to making all reasonable efforts to achieve consensus. Where the workgroups are not able to resolve issues through consensus, voting may be necessary to assure that progress is maintained with respect to the conduct of workgroup business. Differing member positions shall be recorded along with a vote for purposes of the public record. It is the responsibility of the chair to determine when a vote should be taken. For the purposes of this resolution process, the state, tribal, and local program members are the only workgroup members with voting privileges. Eligible states and tribes shall each have one vote and the local air programs shall collectively have one vote. A quorum of voting eligible members must be present at any meeting or on any conference call where a consensus is obtained on a major issue or for a vote taken on any issue. A quorum shall be a simple majority of eligible voting members. Passage of any matter in which a vote is taken requires the support of two-thirds of the voting membership present.

Workgroups are encouraged to make use of conference calls, e-mail and other technological tools to develop agenda, disseminate information, and conduct general business in an effort to minimize cost.

VISTAS Representation at National and Other Designated Meetings

In those cases where VISTAS and its workgroup participants are expected to represent VISTAS at national regional planning organization and other designated meetings, the workgroup chairs shall solicit and appoint participants. Workgroup chairs will coordinate representation across the various workgroups. In all cases, because this is a state and tribal led regulatory development process and states and tribes bear the burden of developing SIPs and TIPS to comply with the Clean Air Act, all such state and tribal representatives are invited to participate at these meetings. Federal regulatory and land manager agencies shall also be represented. Participants to be appointed by the workgroup chairs should include the following stakeholder sectors: utility industry, other industry, environmental, and general public. Because VISTAS is sponsoring attendance of various stakeholders at these meetings, it is expected that the various stakeholder perspectives be presented in relation to the overall purpose and goals of VISTAS. Further, it is expected that the attendees at these meetings will report back to the workgroups so that all participants will be aware of discussions held at these meetings. Workgroup chairs will coordinate this communication.

Workgroup Support

An initial orientation session will be provided for each workgroup chair by the STAD to provide background information, discuss the workgroup's charge, cover administrative issues, and identify available resources.