

Summary of Major Themes from 1/14/10 SRP Strategic Planning Information Session

The following is a summary of the major points raised during the information session:

Questions 1 & 2. What scientific themes and issues are the most important to address in the SF Research Program and why?

What prioritization criteria should SRP use to guide inclusion of themes and issues in program activities?

What are the key teams and disciplines needed for the SRP to make the greatest advances in scientific themes and issues most important to the Program?

There was considerable interest in the funding levels that have supported SRP over time and the impact that a continued flat funding level would have on supporting future priority research.

Since the number of Superfund sites (as well as other hazardous waste sites, brownfields sites, etc.) continues to grow, concern was expressed that there should be a broad view taken of the research needs. The scope of problems faced by the SRP is very large. This poses a major issue for SRP in indentifying those major science issues it can address.

The Scope of problems facing the SRP is global. SRP needs to continue to evolve to address these science issues from a global perspective.

SRP needs to focus on green technologies and their application.

SRP should be considering the review of new and existing TSCA chemicals as part of its mission.

SRP needs to be “at the table” when the major scientific deliberations are undertaken on hazardous substances.

SRP should also focus on the health effects of pesticides since those impacts are very broad.

SRP should pursue a balanced approach that allows research results to be readily turned into practice.

SRP should address how to prevent future Superfund sites.

Question 3. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the SRP, is the current biomedical/non-biomedical framework the most effective approach? Why or why not?

SRP should also focus on other major disease-related research priorities, such as Parkinson's Disease. The results of this research could be transferrable to other chronic diseases. There also may be common environmental connections among them.

Question 4. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the SRP, what approaches to training are most appropriate for the SRP to meet its research mandates?

SRP research trainees should do a rotational assignment with a government agency. This would provide them with a greater sense of the reality of what goes on in environmental/public health field or HQ programs.

Question 5. Who are or should be SRP's stakeholders?

How can SRP most effectively receive input from them?

Working with State health and environmental agencies offer flexibility in working on both short and long term problems.

SRP should also consider working with local environmental agencies. This would be mutually beneficial and would allow local agencies to address public health/environmental issues at lower cost to them.

SRP should also target interaction with state legislators, who probably are not familiar with NIEHS SRP. States do associate closely with their universities, so there is a natural collaboration interest and opportunity there.

Question 6. What are the best ways for SRP to achieve its goals of research translation that is, making research more accessible by end-users?

What data sharing tools or procedures should SRP use?

SRP should also focus on how its research results are translated into regulations.

Government staff does not get invitations from academic institutions to do talks. That two-way communication could improve interactions between SRP and agencies.

SRP should explore new tools for communicating SRP research results – e.g. make research results available on smart phone applications that would make research results more easily available to a broader audience.

Question 7. What are the most appropriate approaches to community outreach for SRP?

SRP needs to promote communication training for its researchers to aid in community engagement.

Creating new ways to visualize the research results would be very helpful to explaining the research results with communities.