

Governance of Surface Temperature Initiative (Version 1)

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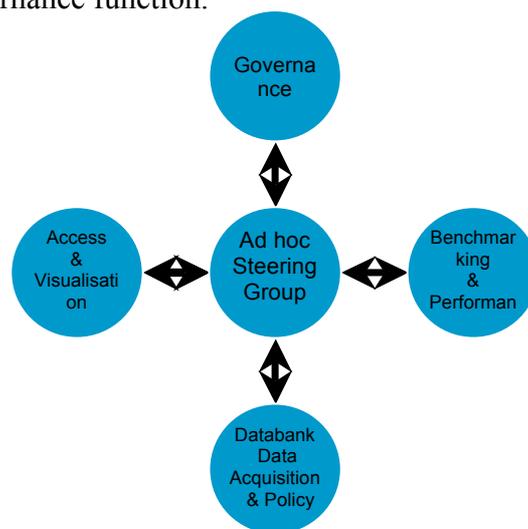
Purpose of Governance Document

The purpose of this document is to define the governance for the Surface Temperature Initiative (www.surface temperatures.org). The appropriate governance structure for the initiative was discussed at the workshop that launched the Surface Temperature Initiative in Exeter, 7–9 September 2010. As an over-arching principle, it was agreed that the governance activity of the Surface Temperature Initiative should concentrate on a) proper coordination of the activities, b) integration of the initiative with appropriate international bodies and c) ensuring that there is a clear accountability and reporting mechanism.

Structure of Surface Temperature Initiative

At the meeting a structure for the running of the Surface Temperature Initiative was proposed, as shown in Fig 1. The structure envisaged the Initiative being composed of four constituent groups: the Benchmarking and Performance Group, the Databank and Data Acquisition Group, the Access and Visualisation Group and the Governance Group, all of which would report to the Steering Group. The governance group has been constituted to draw up a short (1 to 2 page) document that would provide a recommendation to the Steering Group as to an appropriate governance structure and procedures that would serve to guide the conduct of the Initiative. The structure should also provide the transparency required to facilitate the involvement of institutions and individual scientists in various aspects of the project. Once the Surface Temperature Initiative has graduated from an ad-hoc body to a more permanently constituted body, it was agreed that the Governance group would be dissolved. At such a time it is envisaged that the Initiative will formally answer to one or more international organisations which will provide over-arching support and advice (see “endorsement” section below).

Figure 1: Proposed initial ad-hoc structure of Surface Temperature Initiative including governance function.



Governance of the Surface Temperature Initiative

Terms of reference

The steering group of the Surface Temperature Initiative should develop a Terms of Reference (TOR) for the initiative, which show how the scope will be defined, developed, and verified. The TOR provides a documented basis for making future decisions and for confirming or developing a common understanding of the project scope and expectations among stakeholders. Each of the subgroups should create its own terms of reference that would constitute an appendix to that of the steering group and be endorsed by the steering committee and periodically revised as necessary.

Sunset clause

There should be a periodic reassessment of the steering group's terms of reference, its membership and the constituent groups every 2 years. At these checkpoints a decision should be made as to whether to continue with the initiative and whether the current terms of reference and structure remains fit for purpose or needs amendment. These reassessments should consider any input received from initiative sponsors.

Endorsement

The Surface Temperature Initiative should seek endorsement by the relevant committees of the meteorological, metrological and statistical communities. The steering group should report on an annual basis to the appropriate committees of WMO, the International Statistical Institute (via its section on Environmetrics, the International Environmetrics Society), and the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures (via a suitable National Metrological Institute (NMI) such as the National Physical Laboratory), who would provide their overall endorsement of the progress of the group together with suitable feedback back to the steering group. This documentation is to be published on www.surfacetemperatures.org.

In addition, the minutes of the steering group, together with the minutes of the three constituent groups (as described above) are also to be published on www.surfacetemperatures.org to ensure transparency and accountability to the wider community.

Membership

The steering group and constituent committees should be constituted to ensure that across these committees there is appropriate representation of geographical regions, of professional disciplines (meteorological, metrological, statistical, data processing, visualisation and archival technologies) and sufficient representation of complementary activities creating climate databanks and climate records, and visualising and serving such datasets. The global representation shall also facilitate the global buy-in of relevant contributions and data. The chair of each of the constituent committees should be a member of the steering group.

Reporting

The constituent committees should report to the Steering Group at each of its meetings via their chair or via a written submission if the chair cannot attend the steering group. The steering group should meet upon necessity but at least every three months. The Steering group should prepare a report each year outlining progress, that should be delivered to the adopting committees of WMO, ISI, and BIPM (see above) and this should also be posted on www.surfacetemperatures.org. The website should also contain an up to date list of membership of the steering group and constituent committees.

Defined Check points

At the end of each year, the Steering Group should determine progress during the year against the strategic goals of the initiative detailed in an Implementation Plan for which they should be responsible and which should be made publicly available and report progress in a written report to the adopting committees of WMO, ISI, BIPM (see above). A particularly important checkpoint would be at the completion of the first three-year benchmarking cycle in 2014. Upon receipt of feedback, the Steering Group should then report on appropriate actions in response to feedback, on

www.surface temperatures.org, via the blog and by other means (eg by reports to adopting committees).