

SETAC Strategic Plan

Updated 2014

DOCUMENT FOR INTERNAL USE

Original: 2003

Revised: December 2007 and December 2014



Introduction

This updated SETAC strategic plan was prepared during 2014. The process involved an initial framing of the approach to plan development by SETAC Vice President Barnett Rattner. This was followed by solicitation of input from the SETAC World Council (SWC) and SETAC staff. Two face-to-face meetings were held. The first occurred as part of the SETAC Europe annual meeting in Basel, Switzerland, in May 2014. This first meeting was used to provide an overview of the plan, a comparison to planning approaches used by other societies, and a discussion of next steps for the planning process. The second face-to-face meeting occurred as part of the SETAC North America annual meeting in Vancouver, Canada, in November 2014. At this meeting, the SWC, SETAC staff, and a few SETAC members that attended the SWC planning session engaged in a more concerted effort to examine and update the plan. This took the form of workgroups that addressed the various elements of the plan, followed by discussions of these outcomes. Input received from this meeting was further considered during the subsequent months and incorporated into this document.

The updated strategic plan is organized into two major parts. The first provides an updated overview of SETAC's vision and mission. The second part outlines the updated strategic plan for implementing SETAC's vision and mission. The strategic plan is organized around a set of goals, objectives, and strategies. Priorities for strategic actions have been assigned based on discussion among the participants engaged in the planning process.

Part 1: SETAC Vision and Mission

The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) is a nonprofit, global, professional society established to provide a forum for individuals and institutions engaged in the study, analysis, management, and solution of environmental problems. SETAC provides a venue for environmental education and outreach. Aware of the fact that environmental quality is determined by many different factors, SETAC provides a central scientific arena generating knowledge to help enhance global environmental quality.

SETAC is an open, tripartite, and democratic organization comprised of professionals from academia, government, and business sectors. This organizational structure facilitates approaching complex environmental problems from different perspectives through civil discourse. It propagates and facilitates the translation of environmental science for practical uses and for policy makers.

SETAC Vision

As a leading global environmental society in scientific research, communication, and education, SETAC seeks to ensure environmental quality and ecosystem integrity through synthesis and translation of knowledge. SETAC uses the phrase *Environmental Quality Through Science*® to convey this vision to its members and the public.

SETAC Mission

As described in the society's constitution, SETAC's mission is to support the development of principles and practices for protection, enhancement, and management of sustainable environmental quality and ecosystem integrity.

To realize its vision, SETAC will:

- Promote the conduct of scientific research on the effects of chemicals and other stressors on the environment
- Provide a forum for professionals to exchange scientific information and ideas
- Advance the use of findings and existing knowledge for protection and enhancement of environmental quality, natural resources, and human health
- Foster education, communication, and the use of science in environmental policy and decision-making.

Part 2: SETAC Strategic Plan

The SETAC strategic plan:

- Defines goals and objectives to fulfill and enhance the society's mission
- Defines strategic actions to achieve the goals, including the roles and responsibilities of SETAC leadership and staff assigned to implement the actions specified in this strategic plan
- Provides a structure and process for SETAC to achieve its goals
- Requires periodic review and updates to assure maximum effectiveness of the society's resources to achieve its vision

The strategic plan is subject to change through time in response to suggestions and new priorities brought forward by the SWC, Geographic Unit (GU) governing bodies, committees, standing advisory groups, and the SETAC membership. It is implicit that the global executive director and executive directors of SETAC North America and Europe (the directors) have an integral role in the strategic planning process and implementation. The directors will regularly report to the SWC about the

implementation and progress, and the document will continue to evolve through long-range planning. The plan is intended to complement the strategic plans of the GUs.

SETAC strives to achieve its mission and vision by facilitating the integration, synthesis, and communication of knowledge that will enhance environmental quality on a global scale. SETAC's central challenge is to increase and expand the understanding of the sciences and concepts related to ecotoxicology, hazard, life cycle assessment, risk assessment, risk management, environmental damage assessment, and environmental remediation and restoration as they relate to sustaining and/or enhancing environmental quality. SETAC members and staff conduct numerous activities including:

- Hosting annual meetings comprised of short courses, platform and poster presentations, interactive forums, group meetings and networking events, and the recognition of professional achievements through merit awards
- Organizing and conducting workshops and focused-topic meetings to assist in the development of emerging scientific areas or to evaluate existing knowledge and approaches related to chemical and other environmental stressors
- Communicating through peer-reviewed journals, books, newsletters, technical publications, webinars, and other digital communications
- Interacting and cooperating with other societies to co-sponsor scientific sessions, workshops, and meetings
- Facilitating the incorporation of science into decision-making and policy by communicating science to technical and non-technical stakeholders through standing and ad hoc committees, advisory groups, and publications, and through direct outreach activities to policymakers and the public via meetings, presentations, and by providing written materials focused on specific issues
- Providing opportunities for students and early career professionals in SETAC mission-related areas
- Supporting education and training through SETAC awards, fellowships and grant programs
- Broadening disciplinary, geographic, and human diversity within SETAC
- Minimizing carbon footprints and embracing green and recycling efforts in all SETAC activities
- Promoting personal integrity and the scientific process

The following goals and objectives are an update of the goal statements that appear in the 2007 strategic plan and the 2008 version of the SETAC constitution. Strategic actions have been established, and they each include a priority, time frame, cost, implementation, and metrics or benchmarks to evaluate progress.

Goal I [SCIENCE]: Promote interdisciplinary research on the understanding, management, and remediation of stressors in the environment.

Objective 1: Promote critical research, hypothesis testing, and problem solving in the relevant sciences and science applications.

- A. **Strategy:** Foster integration of basic sciences and new discoveries that support and enhance assessment, management, remediation, and sustainability research.

Priority for SWC: High

Time frame: Ongoing and continuous

Cost: Self-sustaining

Implementation: Science committee and others

Benchmark/metric: Growth in membership and meeting attendance, and increased reference to SETAC in the media

- B. **Strategy:** Pursue and obtain grants from organizations with similar interests.

Priority for SWC: Intermediate

Time frame: Ongoing and continuous

Cost: Moderate

Implementation: Science committee and SETAC scientific officers

Benchmark/metric: Secure one new funding source per year

- C. **Strategy:** Communicate announcements of new research initiatives, requests for proposals, and grant opportunities to membership.

Priority for SWC: Intermediate to low

Time frame: Ongoing and continuous

Cost: Intermediate

Implementation: Science officers and committee, global and GU executive directors via SETAC website, SETAC News and SETAC Globe

Benchmark/metric: Quarterly appearance of announcements in above referenced SETAC media outlets

- D. **Strategy:** Recognize excellence in research through announcements and awards for high-priority findings and accomplishments in discovery and problem solving.

Priority for SWC: Low because a mechanism is already in place

Time frame: Ongoing and continuous

Cost: Low

Implementation: Awards committee

Benchmark/metric: Annual awards and associated publicity in SETAC media outlets

Objective 2: Promote training and education in relevant SETAC sciences and science applications.

- A. **Strategy:** Provide innovative educational forums and materials, and deliver them to the membership and public.

Priority for SWC: High

Time frame: Ongoing and continuous

Cost: Intermediate

Implementation: Education and communication committees

Benchmark/metric: Annual delivery of new materials via the various SETAC publishing and outreach outlets (e.g., journals, Globe, books, webinars)

- B. **Strategy:** Education of members and non-members to achieve accreditation or certification.

Priority for SWC: Low for SWC but high for some GUs

Time frame: Two years

Cost: Intermediate

Implementation: SETAC North America and SETAC Europe

Benchmark/metric: Launch of programs and accreditation or certification of 100 individuals by 2016

- C. **Strategy:** Increase educational opportunities in economically disadvantaged, less developed, and developing areas of the world through short courses and other educational venues. Include digital or web-based broadcast courses or training. Promote accessibility through translation as appropriate.

Priority for SWC: Intermediate

Time frame: Ongoing and continuous

Cost: Moderate

Implementation: Education and communications committees

Benchmark/metric: Short courses and training delivered through in-person or real-time online courses via the SETAC website

Goal II [COMMUNICATION]. Provide forums for interaction among professionals on a tripartite (academia, government, and business) and multi-national basis. Communicate and translate science to policymakers and the public.

Objective 1: Organize high-quality World Congress, GU, and regional meetings that address critical scientific issues relevant to SETAC's mission and that promote tripartite sector balance

A. **Strategy:** Maintain and improve high quality scientific meetings.

Priority for SWC: High

Time frame: Ongoing and continuous

Cost: Self-sustaining and strive for low

Implementation: Executive directors, advisory groups, committees, and SWC

Benchmark/metric: Survey feedback, meeting attendance, and publications

Comment: There is a need to find a way to measure quality (tracking citations, repeat attendance, student participation and retention, and digital capture access)

Objective 2: Organize and conduct high-quality workshops and special symposia.

A. **Strategy:** Maintain and improve the quality and impact of workshops and special symposia, including rapid communication in SETAC publications.

Priority for SWC: High

Time frame: Continuous and ongoing

Cost: Self-sustaining and strive for low

Implementation: Steering committees, science committee, ALL executive directors, advisory groups, committees, and SWC

Benchmark/metric: Survey feedback, attendance, and publications

Comment: There is a need to find a way to measure quality (tracking citations, repeat attendance, digital capture access, and feedback and development comments on submitted abstracts)

Objective 3: Strengthen the impact of our journals and other publications.

A. **Strategy:** Secure worldwide open access for *ET&C* and *IEAM* in their entirety.

Priority for SWC: Unknown to high (to keep an eye on the developments)

Time frame: 2–5 years

Cost: High

Implementation: Publications advisory committee (PAC), editors, publications manager

Benchmark/metric: Downloads and citations, impact factor

Comment: Undertake scenario mapping re: open access mandates and pressures

- B. **Strategy:** Continue to ensure and improve the quality of *ET&C*, *IEAM*, and all SETAC publications.

Priority for SWC: High

Time frame: Ongoing and continuous

Cost: Low to moderate

Implementation: Editors, PAC, and publications manager

Benchmark/metric: Impact factors, downloads, and sales

- C. **Strategy:** Increase interdisciplinary and geographic representation on editorial boards.

Priority for SWC: High

Time frame: Ongoing

Cost: None

Implementation: Editors

Benchmark/metric: Summarize disciplines and geography of editorial board members, and determine if it reflects membership

Objective 4: Communicate to policy makers and broader audiences about the sciences and science applications relevant to SETAC's mission.

- A. **Strategy:** Provide forums for the interaction of scientists and decision makers, and increase interaction with members of the government sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and others who are unable to participate in traditional SETAC forums such as annual meetings, special workshops, or virtual meetings.

Priority for SWC: High

Time frame: Ongoing and ad hoc

Cost: High or variable

Implementation: Individual GU

Benchmark/metric: Interest expressed by decision makers in SETAC activities

Goal III [ASSISTANCE WITH POLICY]. Provide SETAC expertise to inform decision makers (address life cycle assessment, environmental impact assessment, and ecological risk assessment).

Objective 1: Reach out to policymakers and decision makers to learn what is needed so that SETAC can align research initiatives and needs.

- A. **Strategy:** Develop strategic liaisons with national and international bodies, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the forum for Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Health Organization (WHO), on chemical management and sustainability issues, and maintain continuity of engagement.

Priority for SWC: Moderate to high

Time frame: Continuous

Cost: Low to moderate

Implementation: Executive directors, science officers, and various advisory groups and committees

Benchmark/metric: Expressed interest and support of SETAC research initiatives by policymakers and decision makers

- B. **Strategy:** Identify opportunities and topics that could assist policymakers and decision makers, and conduct outreach to them.

Priority for SWC: Moderate

Time frame: Ongoing

Cost: Low

Implementation: Executive directors, science officers, and various advisory groups, and committees

Benchmark/metric: Expressed interest and support of SETAC research initiatives by policymakers and decision makers

Objective 2: Generate or compile information, describe and interpret its application, and communicate it in a form that is applicable to policymakers, regulators, legislators, and other decision makers involved in issues relevant to SETAC's mission.

- A. **Strategy:** Provide traditional and innovative forums for the dissemination of peer-reviewed information in support of policy and regulatory decisions.

Priority for SWC: Intermediate

Time frame: Ongoing

Cost: Low to moderate

Implementation: Executive directors, science officers, advisory groups, and workshop organizing committees

Benchmark/metric: Expressed interest and support of SETAC research initiatives by policymakers and decision makers

Goal IV [ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH]. Expand organizational capacity to provide membership services and educational opportunities to better foster our mission.

Objective 1: Undertake activities that sustain the organizational effectiveness of SETAC.

- A. **Strategy:** Sustain and expand membership in established GUs, and attempt to expand membership in under-represented geographic regions focusing on balanced, tripartite membership (academia, business, and government) and representation.

Priority for SWC: High

Time frame: Ongoing and continuous

Cost: Aim for self-sustaining or low

Implementation: Global partners, SWC, GU boards and councils

Benchmark/metric: Maintain membership numbers in SETAC North America and SETAC Europe, and increase membership by 15% in each of the newer SETAC GUs (i.e., Asia/Pacific, Latin America, and Africa) over the next five years.

- B. **Strategy:** Continue to update the SETAC website, and add or improve features including greater ease of use, news updates, document sharing, links to other sites, journal access, environmental search engines, request for proposals, meeting abstracts, links to protocols, educational materials, and other mission-allied websites. There is a need to prioritize features.

Priority for SWC: High

Time frame: Ongoing

Cost: Low to get information and high to implement

Implementation: Communications committee, GUs, SETAC staff

Benchmark/metric: Online survey responses

- C. **Strategy:** Create virtual meetings on the web, and add online discussion areas through the use of the SETAC portals.

Comment: This is a philosophically sound idea but cost prohibitive for the size of our organization. It may be more appropriate for board and council meetings, but infrastructure supports need to be in place. Receiving side is where the issues arise, and strong bandwidth availability is necessary for all involved parties.

Priority for SWC: Low (high if only low-tech resolutions are available)
Time frame: 2–5 years
Cost: Prohibitive
Implementation: On hold
Benchmark/metric: Not applicable at this time

- D. **Strategy:** Encourage other professional societies and organizations to take advantage of SETAC offerings, to join our meetings and events, and to access available information.

Priority for SWC: High
Time frame: Ongoing
Cost: Low
Implementation: Local organizing committees and councils
Benchmark/metric: Number of interactions with other societies and tracking their attendance or presence at SETAC meetings

- E. **Strategy:** Increase the involvement and membership of students and early career professionals, and foster their transition to long-term members.

Priority for SWC: High
Time frame: Ongoing
Cost: Moderate to self-sustaining
Implementation: Membership committees, student groups, career development committees, GU boards and councils, SWC, member responsibility, and sliding dues scale for recent graduates
Benchmark/metric: Tracking (at GU level)

- F. **Strategy:** Recruit new and diverse global partners.

Priority for SWC: High
Time frame: Ongoing and continuous
Cost: Low to self-sustaining
Implementation: Global executive director, global partner liaison
Benchmark/metric: Two new members annually from diverse sectors

- G. **Strategy:** Investigate alternate financial income streams.

Priority for SWC: High
Time frame: Short-term
Cost: Nothing
Implementation: Varied (ideas from members or committees that are then shaped by finance committees)

Benchmark/metric: New income categories in financial reports and formal statements

H. **Strategy:** Increase our global reserve fund.

Priority for SWC: Medium

Time frame: 2–5 years

Cost: Low

Implementation: SWC

Benchmark/metric: Increase reserve fund by 10% annually

Comment: Disaster insurances are in place. Revenue streams need to be diversified before reserve funds can be considered. Budgetary pessimism as an approach is preferable to budgetary optimism.

I. **Strategy:** Understand the impact of the above activities on the financial health of SETAC.

Priority for SWC: High

Time frame: Contingent on other activities (unknown)

Cost: Low

Implementation: Executive directors and finance committees

Benchmark/metric: Growth of reserve fund and annual budget