

# **The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) Social Sciences Task Force**

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U.S. Global Change Research Program

# The U.S. Global Change Research Program:

## Roles, Responsibilities, and Partnerships

- The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) mandated by Global Change Research Act of 1990
- *“To provide for development and coordination of a comprehensive and integrated United States Research Program which will assist the Nation and the world to **understand, assess, predict, and respond** to human-induced and natural processes of global change.”*
- Provides center of gravity for linking global change science with efforts to respond



# The U.S. Global Change Research Program:

## New Vision and Mission

### Four Strategic Goals:

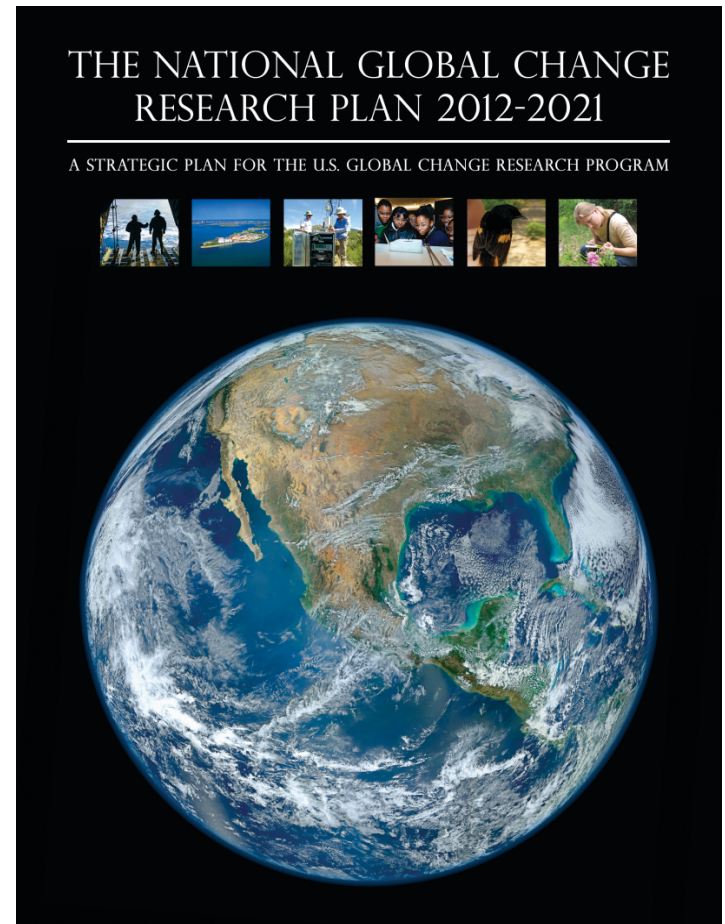
Advance Science

Inform Decisions

Conduct Sustained Assessments

Communicate and Educate

- Scientific knowledge base in dynamic interaction with new, societally-facing arms of the program
- Transcend old USGCRP boundaries into critical areas of societal need and partnerships
- Move science into action



<http://library.globalchange.gov/u-s-global-change-research-program-strategic-plan-2012-2021>

**Big picture - national mission of global change preparedness and risk management: We need to do the right science; we need to move that science into action**

USGCRP transition:

- large-scale problems of basic biophysical understanding (e.g., global climate change and its mechanisms) to ...
- ... highly distributed, contextualized, regional-scale problems across natural and social sciences (e.g., impacts, vulnerabilities, and responses)

# What are USGCRP's objectives for increasing attention to the social sciences now?

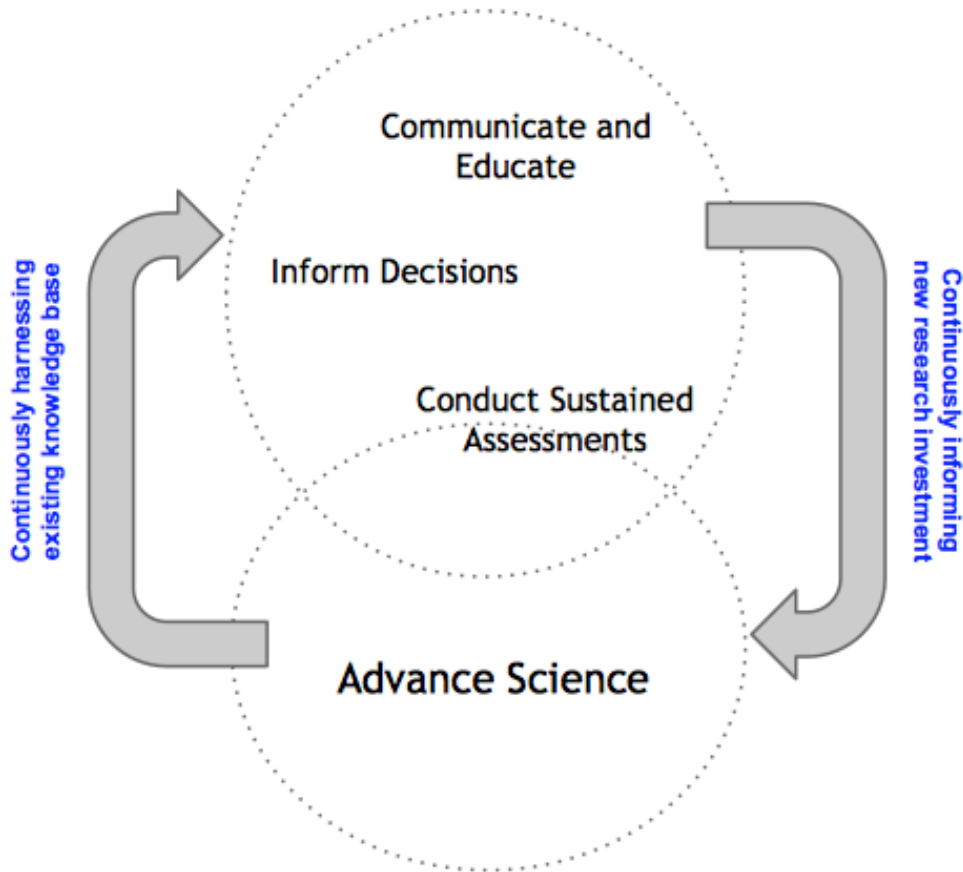
It is people - and their communities, institutions, and governments - which are at the center of the three main aspects of the global change problem:

- Humans are drivers of global change
- Humans are affected by global change
- Humans have the capacity to respond to the risks posed by global change

*Understanding the fundamental human dimensions of global change, aligning research with societal needs, and moving knowledge into action require increased integration of the social sciences*

However, lack of capacity in USGCRP agencies

- Need to work to build this capacity internally
- Need to establish and sustain partnerships outside historical core



## Dual role of social sciences in USGCRP context:

Social sciences research and expertise an important part of the integrated knowledge base about the causes and consequences of global change

Can also identify principles that help make this knowledge “work” better for society

Recommendations speak not solely to new research investments, but also to operationalizing existing research, expertise, and practices to make possible linkage of science and societal actions

# The USGCRP Social Sciences Task Force

## Charge and Operations

The Subcommittee for Global Change Research (SGCR) directed the formation of an ad hoc Social Sciences Task Force

Membership (~ 20) drawn from the USGCRP agencies: Kathy Jacobs (OSTP) and Bill Hohenstein (USDA) are the co-chairs

### Task:

- Identify options, and provide recommendations, for accelerating this integration
- Conceptual framework for prioritizing needs and better leveraging social sciences research, expertise, and practices in the activities of USGCRP
- Delivery of a **white paper** (draft being revised, release soon)
- Interaction with the NRC

# How to prioritize targets of opportunity?

Close to fruition; we can build off; clear implementation pathway:

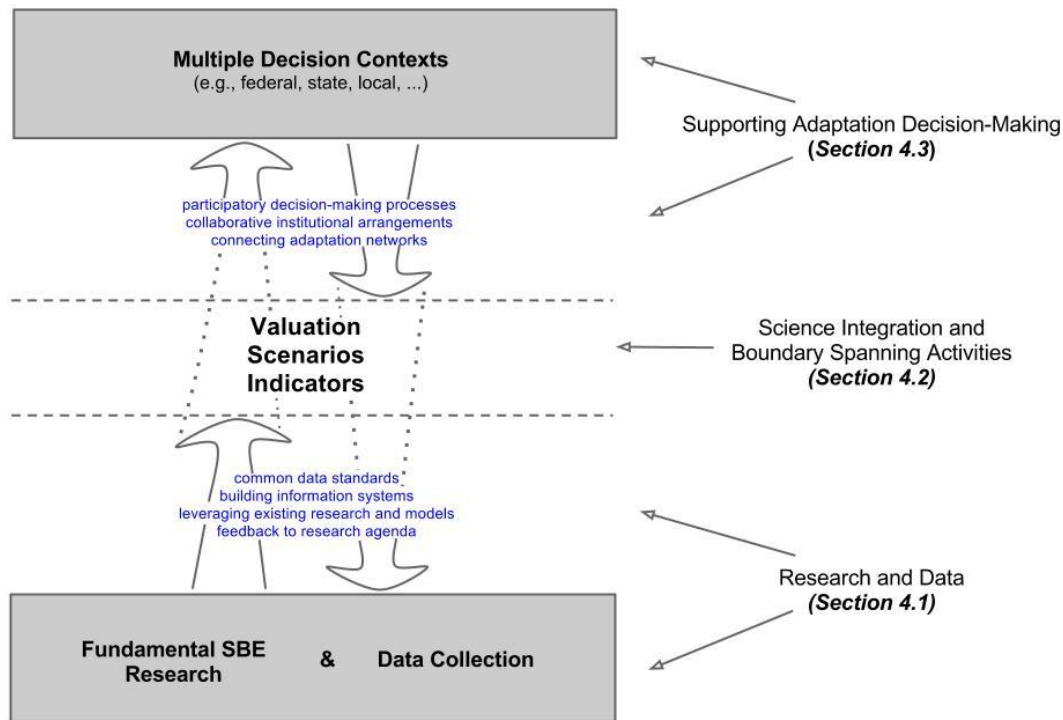
- What is USGCRP already doing that provides straightforward opportunities to integrate more social sciences expertise?
- Where could USGCRP reap substantial near-term benefits from this improved integration, while achieving efficiencies?

High priority placed on leveraging existing activities:

- National Climate Assessment (NCA)
- Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force (ICCATF)
- USGCRP IWGs and agency-specific efforts
- Other interagency efforts (e.g., other CENRS subcommittees)

But also need to search for new capacity via partnerships beyond USGCRP to support longer-term transformation





Framework for understanding boundary management, science integration, and translational activities

Connect the scientific knowledge base with decision-making about responding to global change

USGCRP-specific and internally consistent set of organizing principles for thinking through challenge of better integrating social sciences:

- Consistent with historical investments within USGCRP and emerging infrastructure around federal climate-related decision-making
- More tractable in near term
- Critical research needs underlying indicators, scenarios, and valuation
- Social and natural sciences are intertwined in all of these activities

# Recommendations Categories

## **Part 1: Research and Data**

- Priority Topics for New Fundamental Research
- Data Policies and Standards

## **Part 2: Science Integration and Boundary Activities**

- Indicators
- Scenarios
- Valuation

## **Part 3: Supporting Adaptation Decision-Making**

- Scaling Up Decision Support Innovation
- Institutional Arrangements

## **Implementation Type:**

Strategic mainstreaming into current USGCRP activities

A number of small, exploratory steps

A few "big bets"

# Questions?

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