

SETAC Standard Operating Procedure

Science Briefs and Technical Issue Papers

Version: March 2019

Purpose

SETAC Science Briefs and Technical Issue Papers are short (2-4 pages; max. 2000 words) summaries on scientific topics relevant to SETAC. They provide objective information on the environmental sciences covered by SETAC reflecting multi-sectorial perspectives.

SETAC Science Briefs are intended to serve as outreach documents, supporting the SETAC mission to promote education in the environmental sciences and the use of science in crafting environmental policy and decision-making.

SETAC Technical Issue Papers (TIPS) are intended to serve as in-reach documents and bring scientists up to date on state-of-the-science developments in fields outside their area of research.

Process

To propose a topic for a Science Brief or TIP, please email the [Scientific Affairs Manager](#). The email should include:

- A brief description of the proposed Science Brief or TIP, including a tentative title
- The intended audience – see more on that below
- Names of co-authors, if any, and potential reviewers (or reviewers that should be excluded, with justification)

The Scientific Affairs Manager will work with the Publication Manager to determine suitability of the proposal. Once the proposal is approved, you can get to work!

These are informational documents founded on scientific fact, they are not opinion pieces. They should maintain a neutral voice. The document can have a single author or co-authors, but the more contributors, the harder it can be to organize. If you need help finding co-contributors, SETAC staff can help.

Some helpful hints for a successful Brief or TIP:

- Define your audience and be specific. “General public” is too broad for a Science Brief, and “SETAC member” is too broad for a TIP. Are you trying to convey information to policy makers? Science educators? Journalists? Environmental regulators? Is this

document intended to introduce a concept to students with limited background knowledge?

- Cover the topic with basic and understandable concepts; aim to write at a high school reading level. There are free readability programs available, such as: <http://www.readabilityformulas.com/free-readability-formula-tests.php>
- Use clear language – active voice, no jargon, simple syntax
- Cover the basic concepts of your topic and use examples that could be encountered in everyday life
- Organize the content with ease of comprehension in mind
- Keep references to a minimum; where necessary, treat references like footnotes
- Use concise definitions of terms
- Include examples of application that are easy to understand
- Incorporate, where possible, visual aids such as diagrams, flow charts, boxed text. Graphics and photos will be added by the SETAC office, but suggestions for visuals are encouraged

Submit your Brief or TIP to the Scientific Affairs Manager when you and any co-authors have agreed on the final draft. The Scientific Affairs Manager will shepherd the document through the review process. A Technical review will be conducted by a technical review team composed of three to six individuals. The technical review team will be identified by cooperation between Scientific Affairs Manager and the Publication Manager. The team can draw from suggested reviewers by the authors, the editorial boards, the IG steering committees, and the membership at large. Care should be taken that the review team represents scientific expertise on the topic as well as diversity in sector and geography. The technical review team should be instructed to maintain confidentiality. The technical review team will review the proposal for scientific merit within 30 days, then forward their comments and recommendation to the SETAC Scientific Affairs Manager. When the SETAC Scientific Affairs Manager is confident that the comments were addressed, the Publication Staff will edit and format the document. The galley will then be forwarded to the original authors and the Publications Advisory Committee (PAC) who will give a final review to ensure that the quality of the product is such that they are comfortable publishing the document with the SETAC brand. This version of the PAC-approved document will be presented to an executive director for final approval, at which point the SETAC office will finalize the publication, post it on the SETAC website, and promote it to its intended audience.

SETAC staff will maintain the author list internally and will disclose all names to the reviewing committees. All documents will be periodically reviewed to ensure that they reflect the current science.