

National Geothermal Collaborative

Protocols and Guidelines

The National Geothermal Collaborative is a group of stakeholders interested in supporting geothermal energy development as well as those who see potential for efficient, environmentally and economically sound use of the resource, if specific concerns are addressed.

I. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the National Geothermal Collaborative (NGC) is to advance the use of geothermal heat and power in the U.S. by establishing dialogue with key stakeholders, and catalyzing problem-solving activities to overcome obstacles to appropriate development. Our vision is that geothermal power is environmentally, economically and politically sustainable and is fully integrated into mainstream energy markets.

Among its activities, the NGC will work to:

1. Resolve environmental and siting issues related to geothermal power development, including land use considerations.
2. Resolve geothermal energy transmission and utility system integration issues.
3. Promote assessment to identify and validate promising geothermal resources.

II. NGC MEMBERSHIP

- A. Members are responsible for bringing the views of their constituent groups to the Collaborative process and informing their constituents of major activities and Collaborative resolutions. Members are free to voice their individual viewpoints.
- B. Each member will make a good faith effort to attend each Collaborative meeting.
- C. Designated alternates for an individual member will be allowed. If a member is unable to attend a meeting he or she will make their views on the agenda known to another member or to the facilitator. It is the responsibility of both the alternate and the Collaborative members to keep their alternates informed of NGC activities and decisions.
- D. If a member wishes to withdraw from the Collaborative, he or she is requested to give the group his or her reasons for withdrawing. The interest group sector will decide at the time a member withdraws whether to replace that member or not. The decision to replace a member will depend upon factors such as how far along the group is in the decision-making process, whether addition of a new member would be disruptive, and whether the loss of the current member creates a serious imbalance on the Collaborative in terms of expertise or interests.
- E. Observers will be allowed at meetings of the Collaborative however they will be able to speak only at designated times when called upon by the facilitator or at the request of a Collaborative member.
- F. Members may invite others to attend Collaborative meetings and will coordinate attendance of resource people with the facilitator.

III. DECISION MAKING

- A. The NGC is committed to working by consensus. That is, the organization and its members recognize that the credibility and authority of the NGC's work products derive from the fact that they were developed through the cooperative efforts of a wide range of concerns and perspectives. Participants in the Collaborative will work to craft consensus agreements – those recommendations about policy or practice that all participants can support.
- B. Members not present at a meeting of the Collaborative where a consensus decision is made will be allowed to comment on the decision and sign on to it, but not to block consensus nor establish a dissenting position in the text.
- C. The agenda for each meeting will be developed by the Steering Committee and adopted by consensus of the full group.
- D. Responsibilities of members:
 - 1. Stay informed about NGC projects;
 - 2. Join and participate in good faith in working groups relating to projects of special interest to the member and the member's organization;
 - 3. To the maximum extent possible, prepare and submit comments and suggestions on work product under development within published timelines; and
 - 4. Assume an obligation to work toward the positive resolution of disputes concerning project content within the advisory committee and with the NGC, including an obligation to offer acceptable alternatives to portions of documents that the member cannot "live with," with the goal of producing products that truly reflect group consensus.
 - 5. Listen with respect to the other parties' positions.
- E. Responsibilities of working group project managers and/or working group chairs:
 - 1. Ensure full and fair information and opportunities to participate in product development for all NGC members; and
 - 2. Provide any interested member with an opportunity to participate in working group activities;
 - 3. Produce and publish a project schedule and timeline, with clear indication of opportunities for comment by members of the working group and the NGC at large; and
 - 4. Affirmatively communicate on a regular basis with working group members and NGC staff about schedules and comment deadlines.
 - 5. Listen with respect to the other parties' positions.

IV. STEERING COMMITTEE

- A. The Steering Committee is made up of Individuals from different sectors and interest groups. The membership may be expanded or contracted by consensus of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee members list is attached.
- B. The Steering Committee will serve as the guiding body of the Collaborative, will coordinate the actions of Collaborative members in their sector or Working Group, will review and comment on draft NGC agendas prepared by the facilitator, and will conduct other tasks as required.

V. WORKING GROUPS

- A. Small working groups may be formed by the Steering Committee.
- B. The Work Group chair will ensure full participation of appropriate experts and interests.

- C. Membership of these groups will include Collaborative members and non-Collaborative members invited by the chair of the working group in consultation with other working group members.
- D. The purpose of the small groups will be to discuss issues, develop recommendations to the Collaborative, and carry out activities as approved by the Collaborative.
- E. These groups will operate by consensus (see above). If the group can not reach consensus on a particular issue, the subgroup will elevate the issue to the NGC Steering Committee who will report to the NGC. The working groups are not authorized to make decisions for the Steering Committee or NGC.

VI. CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. Consensus positions can be attributed to individual parties who are members of the NGC and who participated in the consensus decision. Otherwise, no party will characterize the position of any other party in public statements or in discussions with the press, even if that party withdraws from the NGC.
- B. Meeting summaries will be prepared by the facilitator after each meeting. The meeting summaries will serve as a means of characterizing the business conducted at each meeting. The final meeting summaries will be made available to the public. Meeting participants will not attribute discussion to any one individual, organization or sector.

VII. UNILATERAL ACTION

- A. Members will make a good faith effort to keep other Collaborative members informed in advance about major activities within their sector that may affect other sector interests or the Collaborative's actions.

VIII. PROTOCOL FOR REVIEW AND RELEASE OF NGC DOCUMENTS

A. General Guidelines

One of NGC's primary functions is the production and dissemination of informational documents on key topics associated with geothermal power. It is NGC's intent that all documents it produces be of high quality and integrity, ensured by thorough and rigorous review of all information and conclusions presented.

NGC produces two types of documents: Consensus Documents and Resource Documents. These are discussed below.

B. Consensus Document

A consensus document is a publication for general release to the public with which all members are in general agreement. The same ground rules for making decisions by consensus (see III. DECISION MAKING) apply for reaching consensus on publications. NGC publications are presumed to be on the consensus track unless a decision is made to put the document on the resource track described in the following section, 'C. Resource Document.'

The working group with expertise in the subject matter in the proposed report is the first reviewer of the document. Once a revised draft is acceptable to the working group it is reviewed by the full NGC membership. After comments are incorporated a draft is circulated to the membership for final consensus review. Staff and work group chairs should encourage review by all NGC sectors to achieve buy-in. If no objections are raised prior to the review deadline the document is approved as a consensus document of the NGC.

Consensus documents shall be printed with the description: “*This document is acceptable to members of the NGC as a Consensus Document. Consensus is defined as general agreement.*”

C. Resource Document

A resource document is a publication that has not been put through the consensus process and is released for educational purposes. A resource document provides background and factual information and as such is generally not expected to be controversial.

The working group with expertise in the subject matter in the proposed report is the first reviewer of the document. Once a revised draft is acceptable to the working group, it is forwarded for review and comment to the full NGC membership and the Steering Committee, along with a recommendation that the document be classified as a resource document. Both the NGC membership and the Steering Committee will review the document and the classification recommendation. After gauging the sense of the NGC membership, the Steering Committee will decide whether or not to accept the recommendation. If the Steering Committee accepts the recommendation, the document will be revised with comments received and will be finalized. Members who commented will be consulted to ensure their comments are appropriately represented in the final draft.

However if one or more NGC members expresses an objection to a document’s classification as a Resource Document, and if the objection is accompanied by a clear description of the reason(s) for the objection and the changes to or omissions from the document that would remove the objection, then the document will be transferred to the Consensus-Document track. Objections where possible are to be provided in written form. Alternatively, if the changes or omissions desired by the objecting member(s) are carried out, and if no additional objections are raised, the document will then be released as a Resource Document. Any classification objection raised by an NGC member must be expressed within a reasonable period of time (nominally two weeks) following the announcement of the Steering Committee’s intention with respect to classification.

Resource documents will be uploaded onto the NGC web site and printed for distribution.

Resource documents shall be prepared with the disclaimer: “This document is being released as a Resource Document for educational and informational purposes. The document has been reviewed and approved by an NGC working group with relevant experience; but, by choice of the NGC, has not been carried through the full NGC consensus process. Publication does not presume that all members have reviewed the content of the document.”

D. Criteria

Criteria for determining the appropriate document classification are included below.

Consensus-document status is recommended for documents that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Analytic or prescriptive conclusions are presented on specific policies and/or pending legislation or rulemakings;
- The subjects and issues addressed are characterized by a broad range of views;
- Consensus approval of the NGC would enhance the value and/or credibility of the publication.

Resource-document status is recommended for documents that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Descriptive and factual information is presented that is generally not controversial;
- NGC would like to make the information available, but does not wish to take the time required for consensus review;
- The information presented has greatest value if released expeditiously