

National Invasive Species Council Annual Work Plan FY 2022

In line with Executive Orders 13112 and 13751, the mandate of the National Invasive Species Council (Council) is to provide the vision and leadership to coordinate, sustain, and expand federal efforts to safeguard the interests of the United States from the negative impacts of invasive species. The following document outlines the core activities that the Council staff will implement in cooperation with Council member agencies over the course of FY 2022. These activities are intended to build on the mechanisms and responsibilities outlined in the Council's Terms of Reference with the goal of advancing a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to priority invasive species issues that require inter-agency or intergovernmental collaboration.

Council staff develop Annual Work Plans (Work Plans) under the guidance of the Council Co-Chairs, or their Principals, in consultation with the other Principals and Senior Advisers, and with input from relevant federal interagency committees. These Work Plans direct the efforts of Council staff and are implemented in collaboration with relevant personnel from Council member agencies as well as other stakeholders through the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC). The conduct of NISC activities should take into account the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, including, as appropriate, representation in task teams and ISAC, consideration of traditional and indigenous ecological knowledge and perspectives, and identification of opportunities for historically underserved communities to fully access and benefit from NISC outputs.

Work Plans are approved according to the relevant policies and procedures of the Co-Chair agencies: the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Interior. Support for Council staff coordination activities is generally provided through the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, although other agencies may contribute personnel or fiscal resources as available and appropriate.

Work Plans include both general coordination responsibilities that are consistent from year to year as well as select, thematic activities for that year based on priorities identified by the Council. Overall, Work Plans aim to advance efforts to:

- Facilitate institutional leadership and priority setting by Council members;
- Achieve effective interagency coordination and cost-efficiency;
- Raise awareness and motivate action;
- Remove institutional and policy barriers;
- Assess and strengthen capacities; and
- Foster scientific, technical, and programmatic innovation.

Core Coordination Activities

The Council staff play a coordination role to ensure effective and efficient communication and collaboration across Council member agencies on issues related to invasive species. The goals of such higher-level engagement are to benefit and facilitate the efforts of federal agencies to address invasive species and their impacts. The Council staff also liaise with other relevant federal interagency committees and non-federal partners as appropriate to further support coordination efforts and implementation of priority activities.

The following activities reflect the general coordination responsibilities of Council staff. Specific coordination actions are also tailored to the thematic priority activities and depend on staff capacity and ongoing dialogue with Principals and Senior Advisers:

- Coordinate meetings of the Council, as directed by the Co-Chairs or their Principals, and develop meeting summaries, compile action items, and distribute information regarding the meetings as applicable.
- Coordinate meetings of the Senior Advisers on a regular basis to share information and provide input and guidance on current and future Council activities. Representatives of relevant federal interagency committees are invited to participate as observers.
- Provide regular updates to Senior Advisers and representatives of relevant federal interagency committees on policy developments including Congressional activities, Council member activities and outputs, and other relevant information.
- Coordinate with other relevant federal interagency committees addressing invasive species, including through participation in their meetings and collaboration on mutual priority activities where appropriate.
- Coordinate with Council member agencies to facilitate engagement with non-federal stakeholders in relevant meetings.
- Compile the annual crosscut budget of federal spending on invasive species by collating agency budget data and regularly monitor for opportunities to enhance the value of interagency coordination on budgetary issues.
- Liaise with Council member agencies to identify nationally significant, emerging issues applicable to invasive species management and facilitate information sharing and collaborative efforts as appropriate.
- Manage the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC), including facilitating nomination processes, convening meetings, and soliciting advice relevant to NISC priorities.
- Engage with stakeholder groups and the public. Enhance engagement with Tribes, Alaskan native corporations, native Hawaiian organizations, and U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States as appropriate.
- Organize and convene webinars and workshops, as needed and in consultation and coordination with Council member agencies, to facilitate conversations on timely invasive species issues.
- Convene and coordinate task teams, as needed and in consultation and coordination with Council member agencies, to address thematic priority activities with specific, discrete deliverables.
- Maintain the Council's online presence and help organize, provide, and/or coordinate content with other federal invasive species websites.
- Respond to requests for assistance from Council members on relevant activities as resources allow, including materials and briefings for new agency staff and administration transitions.
- Coordinate the development of Annual Work Plans.

Thematic Priority Activities

Thematic priorities include a select number of activities where Council staff engages with federal agency experts to advance work in particular areas of importance.¹ Priority activities will include discrete outputs from NISC developed through interagency task teams (e.g., white papers, briefing papers) and/or facilitated dialogue across relevant agencies that advance individual agency interests but may not result in a defined NISC product (e.g., Community of Practice). In addition to the details provided below, each area of activity is guided by the development of an operational planning table that specifies clear objectives, activities, or outputs to be delivered, quality standards, key targets, performance indicators, risk management considerations, staffing and resource requirements, implementation timetables, and a process for monitoring progress.

1. Climate Change

- Objective:* Address the intersection between climate change and invasive species with a focus on identifying and evaluating appropriate management tools as well as risks (including both environmental and human-health risks) associated with species movement and pathways.
- Output (a):* Community of Practice: Formation of a NISC Community of Practice (CoP) for interested federal experts, resource managers, and invasive species experts to share information and identify strategic opportunities related to invasive species and climate change.
- Partners:* DOC, DOI, HHS, NASA, USAID, USDA, CEQ, OSTP, ANSTF, FICMNEW, ITAP
- Output (b):* Disaster Preparedness and Response: Collation of tools and information resources that can assist the evaluation of risks of and response to the potential introduction and spread of invasive species from natural disasters and extreme weather events. This could include ways to improve engagement with the broader disaster response community.
- Partners:* DHS, DOC, DOI, USDA

2. Wildland Fire and Invasive Species

- Objective:* Advance landscape scale and coordinated approaches to the management of invasive species and wildland fire.
- Output:* Prioritization of specific actions for Council member agencies to advance coordination of wildland fire and invasive species management activities building on the options identified by the joint NISC/Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) task team. This prioritization exercise will inform follow-on activities in FY2022 related to invasive species and wildland fire.
- Partners:* DOC, DOD, DOI, HHS, USDA, FICMNEW, WFLC

¹ Note: references to specific agencies as activity partners indicate potential interest of that agency and do not imply or confer any additional budgetary obligation on those agencies to support that activity.

3. Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR)

- Objective:* Build capacity for a national EDRR framework, including enhanced interagency preparedness and collaboration.
- Output (a):* Rapid Response Federal Agency Roles: A white paper that details the major stages and steps in rapid response and details the different roles that federal agencies play in response actions. This product will help clarify agency authorities, processes, and means of engagement with non-federal partners. *(Follow-on activity from FY2021)*
- Partners:* DHS, DOC, DOD, DOI, EPA, HHS, NASA, USDA, ANSTF
- Output (b):* Rapid Response Fund: A white paper that assesses existing invasive species funding mechanisms and models from other sectors to inform the criteria and considerations for the development of a rapid response fund. Note this activity does not reflect any current federal budgetary request or allocation for such a fund. *(Follow-on activity from FY2021)*
- Partners:* DHS, DOC, DOI, HHS, OMB, USDA, ANSTF
- Output (c):* Aquatic Invasive Species at Ports of Entry: Coordination of interagency discussions on preventing the introduction of aquatic invasive species associated with imported goods. This would include enhancing protocols for the inspection of aquatic species at ports of entry; establishing processes for engaging relevant federal agency leadership in the response to new, potentially invasive wildlife contaminants requiring additional interagency coordination; and identifying gaps in federal agency authorities and capacities to address aquatic invasive species detected in imported plant commodities.
- Partners:* DHS, DOC, DOI, USDA, ANSTF

4. Information Management

- Objective:* Advance the collation, analysis, and distribution of information and data related to invasive species and their management by federal programs.
- Output (a):* National Invasive Species Information Center: Support for the National Invasive Species Information Center, including providing input on content, structure, curation, and long-term sustainability, as well as broader collaboration with NISC and other interagency committees.
- Partners:* DOC, DOI, HHS, USDA, ANSTF, FICMNEW
- Output (b):* Federal Information, Data, and Innovation Programs: Briefing paper highlighting the types of information and data relevant for invasive species management (e.g., occurrence locations, abundances, treatments, operational guidance), how such data and information are used in decision-making; and relevant federal data, information, and innovation programs and resources.
- Partners:* DOC, DOI, USDA, HHS

Output (c): Forecasting and Horizon Scanning: Repository, mechanism, or other process for sharing outputs of federal agency forecasting and horizon scanning processes where possible and appropriate (e.g., with managers, law enforcement). This could include potential species of concern, emerging pathways of introduction, and geographical hotspots for invasion.

Partners: DOC, DHS, DOI, USAID, USDA

5. Environmental DNA (eDNA)

Objective: Help federal invasive species management efforts more fully and effectively utilize eDNA.

Output: A white paper summarizing key findings and considerations relevant to federal policy and planning on the use of eDNA for invasive species surveillance efforts.
(Follow-on activity from FY2021)

Partners: DOC, DOD, DOI, EPA, USDA, ANSTF

Criteria for Inclusion of Actions

A set of strategic decision-making criteria shall be used in the development of Work Plans to identify priority activities for implementation that:

- Address a pressing invasive species issue or opportunity identified by a Council member agency that could be advanced by interagency cooperation.
- Have a commitment for federal agency engagement and/or leadership from two or more Council member agencies.
- Identify a beneficial role for Council staff participation as agreed upon by engaged federal agencies.
- Align with administration and Council member agency goals.
- Are feasible given the capacity of Council staff coupled with human or financial resources contributed by engaged agencies.
- Align with one or more objectives from Executive Order 13751
 - Provide institutional leadership and priority setting,
 - Achieve effective inter-agency coordination and cost-efficiency,
 - Raise awareness and motivate action,
 - Remove institutional and policy barriers,
 - Assess and strengthen capacities, and
 - Foster connections to the latest scientific, technical, and programmatic innovation.
- Follow “USMART” principles (Useful, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Based).

Acronyms

ANSTF – Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force

CEQ – Council on Environmental Quality

DHS – Department of Homeland Security

DOC – Department of Commerce

DOD – Department of Defense

DOI – Department of the Interior

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

FICMNEW – Federal Interagency Committee on the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds

HHS – Department of Health and Human Services

ITAP – Federal Interagency Committee on Invasive Terrestrial Animals and Pathogens

NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration

OMB – Office of Management and Budget

OSTP – Office of Science and Technology Policy

USAID – U.S. Agency for International Development

USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture

WFLC – Wildland Fire Leadership Council

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