

Terms of Reference

The following document (herein known as Terms of Reference) describes the background, roles, and responsibilities of the National Invasive Species Council (Council) and its component parts in meeting the obligations outlined in Executive Orders (EOs) 13112 and 13751 that address the prevention, eradication, and control of aquatic and terrestrial invasive species in the United States. The Terms of Reference are also intended to clarify the function, duties, and decision-space of the Council staff as they interact with the Council and its designated representatives in the coordination and implementation of invasive species activities emerging from the EOs and Council member priorities.

Background

The Council was established under Presidential EOs 13112 and 13751. Its purpose is to provide the vision and national leadership necessary to coordinate, sustain, and expand federal efforts to safeguard the interests of the United States through the prevention, eradication, and control of invasive species, and through the restoration of ecosystems and other assets impacted by invasive species. The Council members include:

- Secretary of State,
- Secretary of the Treasury,
- Secretary of Defense,
- Secretary of the Interior,
- Secretary of Agriculture,
- Secretary of Commerce,
- Secretary of Health and Human Services,
- Secretary of Transportation,
- Secretary of Homeland Security,
- Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration,
- Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency,
- Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development,
- United States Trade Representative,
- Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy,
- Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality,
- Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and
- Officials from such other departments, agencies, offices, or entities as the agencies set forth above, by consensus, deem appropriate to invite to be members of the Council.

To enhance communication and coordination across the federal government on invasive species, representatives of other federal agencies may be invited by the Co-Chairs to observe the meetings of the Senior Advisers, provide input and information relevant to their activities, and collaborate with the Council and its staff on mutual priorities where appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities ensure effective and efficient operation of the Council and the implementation of its priorities on a day-to-day basis.

Co-Chairs: The Council is co-chaired by the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of Commerce. The Co-Chairs or their designated Principals meet quarterly or as otherwise determined to review progress on the implementation of Council priorities and attend to strategic planning and other administrative matters as necessary.

Principals: Council members may designate a senior-level official (Principal) to perform their functions. Principals are responsible for oversight and approval of their agency's positions, submissions, and engagement with regard to Council activities, as well as for overseeing their agency Senior Advisers. Principals may also be involved in interagency discussions and processes requiring representation at a senior political level.

Senior Advisers: Council members, their Principals or other designees, may designate a Senior Adviser to liaise and work with Council staff and other Senior Advisers on the day-to-day implementation of Council priorities. Senior Advisers should have the ability to work across offices within their parent agency to provide guidance, identify priorities, disseminate information, collate input, and facilitate communications with programmatic and technical staff. Senior Advisers should be able to work with their respective Principal to facilitate any necessary engagement at a senior political level. Senior Advisers also serve as a principal point of contact for communications and inquiries coming through other Council member representatives.

Council Staff: The EOs authorize the Secretary of the Interior, with concurrence of the Co-Chairs, to designate an Executive Director to oversee staff to support the duties of the Council. Council staff maintain a whole-of-government awareness on the invasive species issue. Duties of the staff include facilitating strategic planning across federal agencies on priority invasive species issues that would benefit from interagency or intergovernmental collaboration, national or regional-level programmatic development, and coordination with Principals, Senior Advisers, and federal interagency committees. Council staff will also implement Annual Work Plans and related operations and directives of the Council and its representatives.

Council staff serve in a support and coordination role to the member agencies that comprise the Council. Per the EOs, the Council staff assist in carrying out the work of the Council on its behalf and in conjunction with relevant personnel from the Council member agencies. The support and coordination work of Council staff should complement, augment, and promote the efforts of all Council member agencies.

Council staff, including the Executive Director, are directly supervised within the Department of the Interior by the Office of Policy, Management, and Budget. Administrative support for the Executive Director and staff positions rests with the Secretary of the Interior. Additional resources from other Council members to support the work of the Council are welcome as available and appropriate. While direct line of authority for Council staff resides within the Department of the Interior, the Co-Chairs, in communication with other Council member representatives, maintain oversight of the activities and functions of the Council staff.

Interagency Committee Representation: To enhance communication and coordination across the federal government on invasive species, representatives of federal interagency committees or other federal bodies addressing invasive species at a national level may be invited by the Co-Chairs to observe

the meetings of the Senior Advisers, provide input and information relevant to their activities, and collaborate with the Council and its staff on mutual priorities where appropriate.

Coordination Role

The Council's mandate in providing the vision and leadership to coordinate, sustain, and expand federal efforts relating to invasive species relies on effective and efficient procedures and mechanisms. 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 goal of such higher level engagement should benefit and facilitate the efforts of federal agencies to address invasive species and their impacts. Council staff will also liaise with other relevant federal interagency committees and non-federal partners as appropriate to further support coordination efforts and implementation of priority activities. In the context of this coordination role, Council staff will:

- 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, 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.
- 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.
- Facilitate information sharing and promote collaborative efforts regarding nationally significant, emerging issues applicable to invasive species management.
- 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.
- Coordinate the development of the Council Annual Work Plans.

Annual Work Plans

Council staff coordinate the development of National Invasive Species Council Annual Work Plans (Work Plans) under the guidance of the Co-Chairs, or their Principals, and in consultation and coordination with the other Principals and all Senior Advisers. The Work

Plans direct the work of the Council staff and are implemented in collaboration with relevant personnel from Council member agencies. The Work Plans include both general coordination responsibilities (see above) as well as select programmatic activities based on priorities identified by the Council. Overall, the Work Plans aim to advance efforts to:

- Facilitate the 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.

Work Plans are developed for each fiscal year in line with available resources and using a set of strategic decision-making criteria 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 agency engagement and/or leadership from two or more Council member agencies.
- Identify a beneficial role for NISC 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).

Work Plans are drafted with the involvement of Council member Principals and Senior Advisers, with input from relevant federal interagency committees, and approved according to the relevant policies and procedures of the Co-Chair agencies.

Amendments

These Terms of Reference may be amended by the Co-Chairs in communication with the Council. They are intended to be reviewed every five years, unless otherwise decided by the Co-Chairs.

Approvals

For the Department of the Interior

 10/21/19

Name: Scott J. Cameron

Date:

Title: Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Policy, Management, and Budget

For the Department of Agriculture

 10.24.19

Name: Greg Ibach

Date:

Title: Under Secretary, Marketing and Regulatory Programs.

For the Department of Commerce

 10/28/19

Name: Kevin Wheeler

Date:

Title: Director of Policy, Office of the Under Secretary
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration