

National Invasive Species Council Annual Work Plan FY 2021

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 FY2021. 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 and other stakeholders, as appropriate. 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 goal of such higher-level engagement should 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.
- 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 for 2021

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

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

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.

FOLLOW-ON ACTIVITIES FROM THE FY2020 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

Some thematic activities within the Council’s FY2020 Annual Work Plan require additional time and coordination for finalization. The following products will be completed and cleared in FY2021.

1. Rapid Response

- Objective:** Support rapid response efforts by delineating federal agency roles and assessing resource streams.
- Outputs:** (1) 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.
(2) 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.
- Mechanism:** Council staff will continue to facilitate the two task teams already working on these products. As Council staff facilitate these outputs they should be attentive to and inform work by other interagency bodies and agencies that relate to national early detection and rapid response priorities.
- Partners:** DHS, DOD, DOI, EPA, OMB, USDA, ANSTF

2. Environmental DNA (eDNA)

- Objective:** Help federal invasive species management efforts more fully and effectively utilize eDNA.
- Output:** (1) A technical paper for submission in a peer reviewed journal on strategic considerations for invasive species managers to utilize environmental DNA (eDNA).
(2) A white paper summarizing the content of the technical paper with key findings and considerations relevant to federal policy and planning on the use of eDNA for invasive species surveillance efforts.
- Mechanism:** Council staff will continue to facilitate the task team already working on these products.
- Partners:** DOC, DOI, EPA, USDA, ANSTF

NEW ACTIVITIES

3. Invasive Species and Wildland Fire

- 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 under the Council's FY2020 Annual Work Plan. Selection and implementation of relevant actions for the Council in collaboration with the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC).
- Mechanism:** Council staff will work with WFLC to co-facilitate the task team formed under the Council's FY2020 Work Plan.
- Partners:** DOD, DOI, USDA, FICMNEW, WFLC

4. Disaster Preparedness and Response

- Objective:** Reduce the risks associated with the introduction and spread of invasive species in conjunction with natural disasters and extreme weather events.
- Outputs:** (1) 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 due to natural disasters and extreme weather events.
(2) Options to formulate guidance for federal agencies in this area.
- Mechanism:** Interagency task team.
- Partners:** DHS, DOC, DOD, DOI, NASA, USDA, ANSTF

TOPICS FOR FACILITATION OF INTERAGENCY DIALOGUE

5. Several topics have been identified where further dialogue across federal agencies and with non-federal partners would be useful to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of efforts to address invasive species. Council engagement in these areas is intended to identify key issues relevant to the topic and, where appropriate, potential options for moving forward. Council staff would facilitate interagency discussions to assist agency level efforts, and no additional task teams or formal Council outputs would be developed.
- a. *Advanced Biotechnology Applications:* Under the Council's FY2020 Annual Work Plan, a federal Community of Practice (CoP) was developed to share information and discuss issues relevant to the use of advanced biotechnology applications for the control and management of invasive species. Coordination of this effort would continue in order to share information and expertise of particular interest to Council agencies and CoP members.
 - b. *Information Management:* The Council has a history of engagement with federal and non-federal efforts supporting information management resources that inform invasive species management. Numerous federal agencies and non-federal partners are involved in the collation, analysis, sharing, and dissemination of relevant data and information. Council staff will continue to actively identify opportunities to improve coordination and facilitate engagement with relevant federal agencies activities as appropriate.

- c. *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*: With new NEPA guidance and federal efforts to streamline NEPA implementation, several Council agencies have been considering the use of categorical exclusions and environmental assessment processes related to invasive species. Council staff will promote information sharing across Council agencies with particular attention to areas that can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of efforts to address invasive species.
- d. *Public Health*: The intersection between invasive species and public health has been a regular topic of engagement by Council staff and member agencies, most particularly with regard to wildlife health and vector-borne disease. Council staff will continue to engage with OneHealth bodies and other relevant interagency efforts to identify and advance opportunities to address invasive pathogens and zoonoses, as well as their vectors.

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

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

NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration

OMB – Office of Management and Budget

USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture

WFLC – Wildland Fire Leadership Council

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