

National Invasive Species Council Annual Work Plan FY 2024

September 29, 2023

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 2024. 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 indigenous 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. Core coordination activities may be tailored to the thematic priority elements, should be implemented in coordination with relevant Council member agencies where necessary and appropriate, and are subject to staff capacity.

- 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.
- 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.
- Coordinate with Council member agencies to facilitate engagement with non-federal stakeholders in relevant meetings.
- Develop the annual crosscut summary report on federal invasive species-related expenditures through collection and compilation of agency budget data, and regularly monitor for opportunities to enhance the value of interagency coordination on relevant 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.
- Liaise with federal research programs to identify connections with NISC priorities and advance information sharing and coordination on such efforts.
- Track international invasive species policy and management efforts and help support engagement in conjunction with relevant Council member agencies.
- Manage the ISAC, including facilitating nomination processes, convening meetings, overseeing subcommittee work, and soliciting advice relevant to NISC priorities.
- Engage with stakeholder groups and the public. Enhance engagement with Tribes, Alaskan native corporations, native Hawaiian organizations, U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States, and underserved communities.
- 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 the National Invasive Species Information Center and 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: Facilitation 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, NASA, USDA

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.

Output (c): Managed Relocation: Guidance on harmonizing terminology and addressing invasive species risks associated with managed relocation as a conservation strategy.
Partners: 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: Implementation of priority opportunities identified by the NISC/Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) partnership, including those intended to advance regional prioritization, national and regional coordination, and scientific research and information exchange.
Partners: DOC, DOD, DOI, HHS, NASA, USDA, FICMNEW, WFLC

3. Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR)

Objective: Build capacity for a national EDRR framework, including enhanced interagency preparedness and collaboration.
Output (a): Aquatic Invasive Species at Ports of Entry: Coordination of interagency discussions on preventing the introduction of aquatic invasive species in association with imported goods. This will include: additional guidance on referrals of shipments to USFWS; a tool to facilitate communication across federal agencies operating at ports of entry; and a document outlining the authorities of relevant NISC member agencies at ports of entry.
Partners: DHS, DOC, DOI, USDA, ANSTF
Output (b): National EDRR Framework: Support for agency and interagency efforts to operationalize a national EDRR framework with a particular focus on addressing capacity needs and integrating the Council's past outputs on EDRR. This will include considering options for a coordination mechanism(s) that incorporates relevant federal agencies and interagency committees and that enhances engagement with other governments (e.g., states, Tribes, territories) and non-governmental entities.
Partners: DOC, DOD, DOI, EPA, USDA, ANSTF, FICMNEW

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): Identification of options to support the National Invasive Species Information Center and its Strategic Vision, including long-term sustainability and the structure and curation of site content.
Partners: DOC, DOI, HHS, NASA, 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, DOD, DOI, NASA, USDA, HHS

Output (c): Forecasting and Horizon Scanning: Information sharing on data sources for and outputs of federal agency efforts related to forecasting and horizon scanning processes for invasive species where possible and appropriate (e.g., with managers, law enforcement). This will include: a white paper for land managers and other decision makers to inform how horizon scan outputs can be used to aid management decisions, allocate resources for surveillance, and inform other decisions; and a resource paper for federal agencies on current federal horizon scanning activities, data sources used, and analytical capabilities.

Partners: DOC, DHS, DOI, USAID, USDA

5. Outreach and Engagement

Objective: Advance engagement with non-federal partners to improve invasive species management efforts.

Output (a): Recreation.gov: Support for agency efforts to include invasive species outreach messaging on Recreation.gov to improve public awareness and modify the behavior of federal land users to reduce invasive species risks.

Partners: DOC, DOD, DOI, USDA

Output (b): Underserved Communities: Internal briefing paper on the impacts of invasive species on underserved communities with a view to identifying opportunities for future work. This could include identifying particularly vulnerable communities and addressing related issues such as human health, safety, and local livelihoods (e.g., fisheries, aquaculture).

Partners: DOC, DOD, DOI, USDA

6. Interagency Dialogues

Objective: Support coordination across federal agencies on select topics related to invasive species with a view to advancing ongoing agency and/or interagency activities and identifying potential opportunities for future work.

Output: Engagement in agency and interagency discussions related to:

- Island biosecurity and invasive species management
- Biological control of invasive species

Partners: DOC, DOD, DOI, DOS, EPA, HHS, USDA, USTR, 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 one or more Council member agencies 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

DOS – Department of State

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

OSTP – Office of Science and Technology Policy

USAID – U.S. Agency for International Development

USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture

USTR – Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

WFLC – Wildland Fire Leadership Council