

Environmental Information Technology Leadership Council

Interim Governance Charter

Section I. Background

In 1998, state agencies with primacy for administering environmental programs and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formed the State/EPA Information Management Work Group (IMWG) to guide their collective efforts to develop more efficient and effective environmental information management systems. The partnership forged in the IMWG produced significant accomplishments, including the National Environmental Information Exchange Network (Exchange Network)—a standards-based system that enables states, tribes, EPA, and other partners to efficiently share high quality environmental information.

In the decade that has passed since the establishment of the IMWG, information technology has quickly evolved into a critical component of state and federal agencies. EPA and the States now face an increasingly complex and sophisticated set of environmental information management challenges that are integral to the success of state and national environmental goals. Consequently, States and EPA recognize the need to reformulate their partnership to guide the next decade of environmental information management and technology decisions.

The States and EPA, having agreed to dissolve the IMWG, agree to establish the Environmental Information Technology Leadership Council (Council) through this Governance Charter.

Section II. Purpose

The Council provides a collaborative leadership forum for information technology (IT) leaders, managers and their designees to transfer knowledge, share solutions and information, and provide opportunities for creative thinking in support of organizational goals. The purpose of the Council is to:

1. Collaborate on the exchange of ideas and information to save agencies time and money and to more efficiently achieve future information management goals.
2. Provide a forum to discuss current and future business and IT policy including best management practices, resources, training and other critical issues
3. Participate in the evaluation, funding, and development of new IT management programs, technologies and applications.
4. Identify, discuss, and resolve key state and federal policy issues in information management.
5. Solicit and provide State input and recommendations into proposed guidelines, rules, and decisions in accordance with the federal Administrative Procedures Act.
6. Provide a community to engage a broader group of organizations with experience in environmental information, such as:
 - State departments of health, natural resources, and agriculture;
 - The Center for Disease Control (CDC), Department of Interior (DOI), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); and
 - Non-profit organizations such as Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA), National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and NatureServe.

Section III. Membership

Members of the Council are the information technology leaders, managers, and directors who provide leadership and policy guidance in their respective organizations. Examples of such positions include Information Technology Division Managers, Information Resource Division Managers, Information Systems Administrators, Chief Information Officers, and others with similar decision-making authority in the partner groups. Membership in the Council is open to EPA and state agencies and tribes with primacy for administering environmental programs.

Section IV. Governance

1. EPA and the States (through the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS)) are Co-Chairs of the Council.
2. EPA's Chief Information Officer (CIO) designates the EPA Co-Chair. The ECOS President, after receiving a recommendation from the ECOS Data Management Work Group (DMWG), approves the appointment of the State Co-Chair.
3. Co-Chairs preside at all meetings of the Council and jointly arrange for staff support for the activities of the Council.
4. A six-member Steering Committee governs the Council. The Co-chairs and four Council members—two designated by EPA and two selected by the States—serve as the Steering Committee.
5. The Steering Committee holds at least two meetings per year upon the call of the Co-Chairs.
6. The Steering Committee provides recommendations to the Council for the formulation of subcommittees, their duties and scope, and appoints subcommittee chairs.
7. The terms of the members of the Steering Committee are two years, staggered.
8. Members should strive for consensus on issues brought before the Council. Where consensus is needed and cannot be reached, the Co-Chairs will inform the EPA CIO and the Chair of the ECOS Data Management Work Group.