

Charter of the Exchange Network Leadership Council (Council) and its sub-group the Network Operations Board (Board)

Background

The State/Environmental Protection Agency Information Management Workgroup (IMWG) approved the *Exchange Network Business Plan* (Business Plan) in December 2004/March 2005. The Business Plan proposed the re-alignment of current Network and Standards governance into a new organization, the Exchange Network Leadership Council (Council). This Council is designed to provide high level leadership and direction for the Network. This charter also establishes a primary sub-group of the Council, the Network Operations Board (Board), whose focus is on supporting the operational “day to day” issues of running the Network.

This charter identifies roles, responsibilities, and composition of the Council and Board. The IMWG, through its approval of this charter, hereby commissions these groups.

The Council and Board are designed to replace and integrate the functions of the Environmental Data Standards Council (EDSC) and Network Steering Board (NSB). The re-organization addresses specific governance and management requirements identified in the Business Plan as not being sufficiently met by the current governance organization. These requirements are seen as especially critical to both the continued (and anticipated) growth of the Network and its transition from initial implementation into an operational system. These requirements are:

1. Aligning Network activities with the Network vision and the business needs of Network Partners.
2. Ensuring implementation of one interoperable Network by strengthening the leadership and coordination of our individual and collective efforts.
3. Strengthening coordination and management of common Network Web services and Flows.
4. Improving our collective ability to manage Network technical issues and operations, on an ongoing basis, by establishing a dedicated joint group (the Board) focused on them.
5. Better integrating and managing the core concepts and technologies of standards, Nodes, and XML to improve the design and operation of Partner Flows.

Mission

The Council is the leadership of the Exchange Network. The mission of the Council is to provide support and leadership, establish policy, strategic direction and planning; working to ensure that adequate resource needs are anticipated and plans developed for securing them; and connecting the Network to broader communities of interest.

The Board will oversee operation of Exchange Network. The mission of the Board is to; establish and maintain operational procedures, standards, and guidance; manage shared services and infrastructure; manage data standards and format development; manage the development and implementation of Network Web services and Flows; expeditiously, impartially, and judiciously resolve all Network Partner implementation and operational issues; and elevate issues to the Council as appropriate.

Management Relationships

The Council will provide direction to the Board and the Coordinator. The Council will develop its strategic direction and priorities and task the Board to manage their successful implementation and operation. The Coordinator will work with the Board and Partners and provide regular reports to the Council

Subgroups of the Council and Board

The Council and Board are authorized to establish standing and ad-hoc subgroups as needed to organize and execute their responsibilities. The Business Plan describes two recommended Board subgroups, the Network Technology Group (NTG) and the Network Partnership and Resources Group (NPRG). The Board will likely delegate portions of roles and responsibilities described below to its subgroups. Given the workload of the EDSC and NSB subgroups, the Board should identify and charter its subgroups immediately.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governance Function	Responsibilities of the Council	Responsibilities of the Board
<p>Provide leadership and direction towards the common vision of the Network and its components.</p> <p><i>Division of Responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>Council will establish Network priorities and direction.</i></p> <p><i>The Board will either oversee implementation of the priorities directly or support Partners in implementation.</i></p>	<p>Interpret and deliberate the vision of the Network and our collective progress towards it. Articulate and use this interpretation to guide Council decisions on behalf of the Network Partners.</p> <p>Identify and prioritize major Network joint investments areas and activities and delegate work.</p> <p>Oversee Board development of the Exchange Network Project Plan and Network performance measures.</p> <p>Provide a forum for deliberation and, where possible, resolution on Network policy issues. This may include issues identified by the Council itself, or elevated to it via the Board.</p>	<p>Act as clearinghouse and final arbiter for all Exchange Network operations and technical issues. Board may elevate selected issues to the Council as merited by their magnitude and breadth of the decision</p> <p>Create and maintain the Exchange Network Project Plan.</p> <p>Develop and implement Network performance measures.</p>
<p>Work with Partner communities of interest to establish and document clear objectives, opportunities, and plans for using the Network to achieve specific goals.</p> <p><i>Division of Responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>Council will promote and provide executive outreach to communities of interest. Board will engage and support the communities of interest identified by the Council.</i></p>	<p>Identify, prioritize, and outreach to, communities of interest (new and existing), about their high level strategies for using the Network. Promote and support these communities in documenting these strategies in Network Data Area Strategies (NDAS)</p> <p>Track and use the outputs from the NDAS to identify broad needs and issues to guide Network priorities.</p>	<p>Per the priority areas identified by the Council, engage communities of interest in establishing NDAS. This may include supporting the convening of such groups, developing a template for these strategies, or other activities.</p>
<p>Develop, maintain, and promote data standards.</p> <p><i>Division of Responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>Council will prioritize, commission, and (through the Board) support the development/maintenance of needed standards. Board will manage individual standards development as well as oversee the ongoing support required for their maintenance, supporting infrastructure and continued evolution.</i></p>	<p>Prioritize, commission, and (through the Board) support the development/maintenance of needed standards</p> <p>Formally approve new and revised standards.</p> <p>Promote, at an executive level, the development and adoption of standards, especially by the communities of interest identified above.</p>	<p>Manage and support individual standards development efforts by providing resources, direction, and coordination.</p> <p>Oversee the maintenance, supporting infrastructure, and continued evolution of existing standards.</p> <p>Manage the data standards comment review, approval, and publication process.</p> <p>Promote and monitor application of standards in Partner Flow development.</p>
<p>Identify and develop needed specifications,</p>	<p>Identify, prioritize, and commission major</p>	<p>Manage the development and maintenance of needed</p>

<p>guidance, and best practices.</p> <p><i>Division of Responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>Council and Board will work together to identify and prioritize guidelines, specifications, or other products. The Council will be responsible for commissioning development of major new revised products, for development by the Board. Board will manage development, and maintenance of products</i></p>	<p>specifications, guidance, and best practices. Examples of “major” products/revisions would include fundamental changes to the specifications for a “Node” or consideration of data formats beyond XML, these would require decisions of the Council.</p> <p>Deliberate and resolve policy issues on the evolution/application of these products elevated to the Council.</p>	<p>major specifications, as directed by the Council.</p> <p>Identify, prioritize, and manage minor revisions, enhancements and additional products as needed.</p> <p>Deliberate and resolve policy issues on the evolution/application of these standards and specifications and elevate selected issues to the Council as merited by their magnitude and breadth of the decision</p> <p>Identify major findings/trends in standards/format and specifications and use these to inform the Board and Council on needed directions and priorities.</p>
<p>Plan and Coordinate the design, development, and documentation of major Network Flows to support their implementation by Partners.</p> <p><i>Division of Responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>Council will identify and allocate funds for priority Flow design/documentation projects, and receive reports on their status and issues.</i></p> <p><i>The Board will oversee implementation and resolve day-to-day issues.</i></p>	<p>Identify priority Network Flows and Flow design/documentation projects.</p> <p>Ensure that the high-level design of Flows is consistent with strategic direction of the Network.</p> <p>Proactively engage and reach out to Senior Program leadership to ensure that programmatic interests are represented.</p>	<p>Oversee and manage implementation and resolve day-to-day issues of priority projects as directed by the Council and requested from Network Partners.</p> <p>Establish and Maintain guidance for Flow development, design, and implementation, e.g., Flow Configuration Documents and implementation guides.</p> <p>Oversee and engage Flow teams by participating in goal setting, providing resources and support, and providing a forum for issue resolution.</p>
<p>Inform, influence, and coordinate <i>Partner</i>Flow planning and implementation.</p> <p><i>Division of Responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>Council promotes and provides guidance to resolve Flow implementation issues.</i></p> <p><i>Board tracks and manages Partner Flow implementations and associated operational issues.</i></p>	<p>Receive and deliberate reports on Flow implementation statuses.</p> <p>From the statuses identify trends and implications that bear on the future strategic direction of the Network.</p> <p>Provide a forum for deliberation and resolution on Network Flow policy issues.</p>	<p>Track, publish, and resolve joint and individual Partner Flow statuses and issues and commission/delegate needed additional work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Partner implementation to ensure the highest practical level of interoperability. <p>Assess Flow statuses, individually and across the Network to identify opportunities and challenges that merit attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate and if possible resolve outstanding operational issues • Ensure that issues identified in flows are linked back to appropriate groups. • Assure adequate technical assistance to implementers.
<p>Oversee and manage the shared Network infrastructure, including the Website, security services, registry/clearinghouses, and other</p>	<p>Establish priorities and resource allocation for needed/existing services.</p>	<p>Planning, implementation, and operation and maintenance of the Network shared infrastructure e.g., operation and maintenance of XML registries.</p>

<p>resources.</p> <p><i>Division of Responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>Council will establish priorities and/or resources for shared infrastructure and services.</i></p> <p><i>Board will oversee, manage, and resolve technical policy issues for the shared Network infrastructure.</i></p>	<p>Oversee (through reports of the Board) Partner usage and satisfaction with services.</p>	<p>Monitor and coordinate the Network Help Desk</p> <p>Regularly monitor and evaluate evolving or emerging technologies/ technical standards and the application and implications of these technology/ technical standards on current Network practice.</p>
<p>Communication and outreach to the Network community and targeted potential Partners.</p> <p><i>Division of Responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>Council will establish the timing and direction of major partner additions/ Network expansions.</i></p> <p><i>Board oversees day-to-day communications and outreach.</i></p>	<p>Identify and prioritize outreach to new potential Partners, especially for new Federal agencies or other constituencies.</p> <p>Establish a mechanism to regularly and explicitly connect the Exchange Network to the broader environmental information management community, i.e., like the IMWG or its successor.</p> <p>Proactively outreach to Program offices and assess the overall success of the Network in engaging them.</p>	<p>Oversee and manage outreach activities as directed by Council.</p> <p>Operate and Maintain Exchange Network Website.</p>
<p>Develop and maintain Network resources strategy and budget and identify current and possible future funding sources and opportunities for the long-term sustainability and growth of the Network.</p> <p><i>Division of Responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>Council is responsible for establishing high-level priorities and associated funding levels. Board is responsible for implementing the priorities and allocating resources to assure their completion.</i></p>	<p>Maintain annual Network Operating Budget.</p> <p>Commission and oversee cost projections for the “Network build-out” and “Network Operations & Maintenance.”</p> <p>Develop a long-term funding strategy.</p> <p>Create, maintain, and periodically update Exchange Network Business Cases.</p> <p>Ensure alignment of current Network priorities with the Exchange Network Grant Program.</p> <p>Work with the Board to develop recommendations to USEPA on how other grant programs could support and be supported by the Network.</p>	<p>Advise and report to the Council regarding resource expenditures and requirements.</p> <p>Manage/oversee the work requested, of its subgroups, by the Council.</p>

Operating Procedures and By-Laws

Membership/ Organizational Structure

The Council and Board have the responsibilities to proactively engage with and ensure transparency to, the States, EPA, Tribes, Territories, and other Partners in their decisions. The Council and Board members are responsible for soliciting and representing the interests of their respective constituencies. The Council and Board will establish decision-making procedures that include soliciting input from affected parties.

Council

The Council will consist of 11 representatives: five from EPA, five from State/territory environmental or health agencies, and one Tribal representative. All Council representatives must be senior members of their agencies. A representative from the EPA Office of Environmental Information (OEI) and a State representative with an enterprise-level perspective will serve in the capacity of Council co-chairs.

The remaining four EPA representatives¹ should provide a mix of program and regional perspectives. Three should represent the programs, with an emphasis placed on diverse representation from Air, Water, Waste, and Enforcement. The final EPA representative will be a regional delegate. The State delegation² should reflect the heterogeneity of the constituency; therefore, the primary emphasis is placed on geographic distribution of representatives.

Council Position	Tenure
EPA Co-Chair (OEI)	Specific Position within OEI, no specified tenure and term limit
State Co-Chair	3 year term, two term limit
EPA At-Large (Regional Representative)	2 year term, one term limit
EPA At-Large (Program)	2 year term, two term limit
EPA At-Large (Program)	2 year term, two term limit
EPA At-Large (Program)	2 year term, two term limit
State At-Large	2 year term, two term limit
State At-Large	2 year term, two term limit
State At-Large	2 year term, two term limit
State At-Large	2 year term, two term limit
Tribal At-Large	1 year term, four term limit

The Council will meet at least six times a year with at least two times in person. Council delegates are expected to attend at least four of the six meetings. Should a delegate miss more than two meetings per year, he/she should consider relinquishing their position on the board. Meetings for the Council must be scheduled at a minimum of four months in advance.

¹ Ultimate authority for member selection exists within the EPA and circumscribes the description contained herein. However, the description and structure defined in this Charter should be honored.

² Ultimate authority for member selection exists within the existing State organizations and circumscribes the description contained herein. However, the description and structure defined in this Charter should be honored.

Board

The Board will consist of ten representatives: four from EPA, four from State/territory environmental or health agencies, and two rotating at-large representatives. The Board will have one EPA and one State co-chair, and both must be directors or managers within their agencies. The membership of the Board should directly overlap with its subgroups in order to empower the subgroups and provides a direct line of authority and decision-making.

Representatives will serve the terms listed below, although initial representatives may serve slightly modified term limits to assure council stability.

Board Position (Background)	Tenure
EPA Co-Chair (Manager)	2 year term, no term limit
State Co-Chair (Manager)	2 year term, no term limit
EPA Subgroup Co-chair	no term limit
EPA Subgroup Co-chair	no term limit
State Subgroup Co-chair	no term limit
State Subgroup Co-chair	no term limit
State At-Large (Data Standards Specialist)	no term limit
EPA At-Large (Data Standards Specialist)	no term limit
At-Large (Rotating Expert)	1 year term, two term limit
At-Large (Rotating Expert)	1 year term, two term limit

The Board will meet monthly with at least two times in person. At least one of the in person meetings of the Council and Board should coincide every year.

Decision Making

All decisions are made through member voting. The Council quorum is seven members with no less than three EPA and three State representatives. The Board quorum is six with a minimum of two State and two EPA members. Each member has one vote and a majority vote (of those present) is required to make a decision.

As identified in the business plan, every 2-3 years, the Council and the Board must analyze and assess the effectiveness of the joint governance. The Council should commission an independent management review to include a qualitative evaluation of how the governance groups achieve the functions outlined in this charter, how effective the governance groups have met the Network's goals and objectives, and how the performance of the governance can be improved.

Revisions Adopted by Exchange Network Leadership Council on December 14, 2006