



CHARTER  
of the  
BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM INFORMATICS  
WORKING GROUP OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS  
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND SUSTAINABILITY  
NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

**A. Official Designation**

The Working Group on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Informatics (BioEco) is hereby re-established by action of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainability (CENRS), Subcommittee on Ecological Systems (SES).

**B. Purpose and Scope**

BioEco serves as a forum to improve coordination of Federal biodiversity and ecosystem informatics activities and products. Biodiversity and ecosystem informatics includes the range of activities from developing information content through to delivery in support of decision making. To support this breadth of informatics coverage, BioEco addresses the systems, standards, information services, and technologies needed to enhance the development, delivery, integration, application, and accessibility of information. BioEco includes a social science component that relates to the application of biodiversity and environmental information in support of human health and wellbeing.

**C. Functions**

- 1) Increase communication, coordination, and efficiency of Federal activities in biodiversity and ecosystem informatics;
- 2) Support science, technology, and innovation for sustainability through improved biodiversity and ecosystem information systems, standards, and services;
- 3) Leverage and enhance Federal, private sector, and international information on biodiversity and ecosystems through encouraging mutual data access and interoperability;
- 4) Facilitate the integration and utilization of biodiversity and ecosystem knowledge to inform decisions, and the gathering of new knowledge, including the socio-economic and geophysical data required for ecosystem valuation and decision support;

- 5) Serve as the interagency coordinating body in support of EcoINFORMA<sup>1</sup>, an initiative that participating agencies are implementing to facilitate effective interoperability and mobilization of national scale data sets for sustaining environmental capital; and,
- 6) Provide advice on policies and opportunities related to biodiversity and ecological informatics, as required by the SES, CENRS, and/or the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

BioEco will coordinate with, and address the needs of, other relevant CENRS Committees and working groups on biological, ecosystem, and environmental capital informatics.

#### **D. Membership and Structure**

The following NSTC departments and agencies are represented on the BioEco Working Group:

Department of Agriculture;  
Department of Commerce;  
Department of Defense;  
Department of Energy;  
Department of Health and Human Services;  
Department of the Interior;  
Department of State;  
Department of Transportation;  
Environmental Protection Agency;  
U.S. Agency for International Development;  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration;  
National Science Foundation; and  
Smithsonian Institution.

The following organizations of the Executive Office of the President are also represented on BioEco:

Office of Management and Budget, and  
Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Cooperating departments and agencies shall include other such Executive organizations, departments, and agencies as the SES Co-chairs may, from time to time, designate. There will be two BioEco Co-chairs from different agencies, and an Executive Secretary, appointed by the SES Co-chairs.

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<sup>1</sup> EcoINFORMA is the Ecoinformatics-based Open Resources and Machine Accessibility initiative recommended by the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST 2011) to ensure that Federal agency data relevant to biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as the socio-economic and geophysical data required in support of ecosystem valuation and decision-support, are published in machine-readable, interoperable format to facilitate research engagement by public, private, academic, and other stakeholders, and to support policy- and decision-making at Federal, state, and local levels.  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast\\_sustaining\\_environmental\\_capital\\_report.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast_sustaining_environmental_capital_report.pdf)

**E. Private-Sector Interface**

BioEco, in consultation with SES, may seek advice from members of the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology to secure appropriate private-sector<sup>2</sup> advice, and will recommend to the SES, CENRS and/or the President’s Science Advisor the nature of any additional non-Federal advice needed to accomplish its mission. BioEco may also interact with and receive *ad hoc* advice from various private-sector groups consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

**F. Termination**

Unless renewed by the Co-chairs of the SES Subcommittee prior to its expiration, BioEco shall terminate no later than March 31, 2017.

**G. Determination**

I hereby determine that establishment of the Working Group on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Informatics is in the public interest in connection with the performance of duties imposed on the Executive Branch by law and those duties can best be performed through the advice and counsel of such a group.

Approved:

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Anne Kinsinger  
Co-Chair of the CENRS - SES, and  
Associate Director for Ecosystems  
United States Geological Survey

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Date

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Jimmy Reaves  
Co-Chair of the CENRS - SES, and  
Deputy Chief for Research and Development  
USDA Forest Service

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Date

<sup>2</sup> The Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., as amended, does not explicitly define “private sector,” but the phrase is generally understood to include individuals or entities outside the Federal government such as, but not limited to, the following: non-Federal sources, academia, State, local or Tribal governments, individual citizens, the public, non-governmental organizations, industry associations, international bodies, etc.