



**National Science and Technology Council (NSTC)  
Committee on Science (COS)  
Interagency Working Group on Scientific Collections**

**CHARTER**

**I. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION**

The Interagency Working Group on Scientific Collections (IWGSC) is hereby established by action of the Committee on Science (COS) of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). The IWGSC operates under the guidelines established by NSTC for an interagency working group.

**II. PURPOSE**

Recognizing that object-based collections<sup>1</sup> provide the fundamental infrastructure for contemporary and future scientific advancements, the IWGSC will address the scientific, environmental, societal, and national security needs for such collections, including an assessment of current collections resources; an evaluation of requirements to maintain and further develop these resources, including workforce needs, an assessment of how to integrate and optimize current resources, and an evaluation of gaps and research and development needs. In addition, the IWGSC will work to further international cooperation in collections activities and issues.

**III. GOALS**

The primary goals of the subcommittee are:

- (1) To evaluate the state of object-based scientific collections at, supported by, or used by U.S. Federal agencies or in federally supported activities;

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<sup>1</sup> Object-based scientific collections for the purposes of this Working Group are those collections which have been accumulated and stored primarily for research purposes rather than historical or artistic purposes. These collections include such things as ice cores, rocks and fossils, meteorites, animals and plants, tissues, and marine biological samples.

- (2) Foster the coordination of collections activities across the Federal agencies; and
- (3) Increase government and public awareness of the importance and uses of collections.

#### **IV. FUNCTIONS**

The IWGSC will conduct an initial survey of the scope and breadth of collections of interest to the working group.<sup>2</sup> In carrying out its functions, it might also:

##### **Survey and Research**

- Identify the resources and requirements for long-term stewardship of these collections, both within the government and with external stakeholders, including continued review and assessment of existing and emerging societal benefits, infrastructure and capacity building, and international cooperation.
- Identify research and development needs for ensuring long-term stewardship of scientific collections.
- Develop and periodically assess the state-of-the-art in collections management, storage, utilization, and digitization practices and procedures.
- Develop periodic assessments of the state of U.S. scientific collections, as well as periodic reports to the Committee on Science on progress and recommendations.

##### **Planning**

- Establish processes for planning, developing, and managing integrated cross-agency collections activities that include;
  - Identification of existing and needed collections resources, the requirements for stewardship, and related research and development;
  - Prioritization of collections investments to include agency roles, assessment of scientific and societal impact,
  - Review and develop mechanisms and metrics to validate quality, relevance, and performance of collections investments,
  - Standards and practices for collections information systems and their interoperability for management and scientific purposes.
- Develop a coordinated strategic plan to identify, maintain and use Federal and Federally supported collections and to further collections research.

##### **Outreach and Workforce**

- Identify education/workforce requirements for ensuring appropriate long-term stewardship of scientific collections.
- Establish a process for outreach to, and interaction with, regional, state, and local entities.

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<sup>2</sup> Of the larger domain of scientific collections, this IWG will focus on object-based collections, including the data and information associated with those collections. Part of the scoping exercise will be to better frame the universe for this IWG, without prejudice to other collections that are not included, be they databases or of primarily cultural interests.

- Identify public and private (including commercial) collections networks and international systems that can be utilized in achieving a sustainable collections enterprise.
- Establish a process for outreach to and interaction with external stakeholders, consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

The IWGSC will also formulate draft U.S. positions and coordinate participation in international collections activities as appropriate.

The Working Group may seek advice from the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) and will recommend to the Director of OSTP or the Committee Co-Chairs the nature of additional private advice needed to accomplish its mission. The Working Group may interact with and received ad hoc advice from various private-sector groups and individuals as consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

#### **V. CHAIRS AND MEMBERSHIP**

IWGSC Co-Chairs are senior government officials. The current Co-Chairs are U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service and the Smithsonian Institution. IWGSC membership consists of representatives from COS and other NSTC member agencies and from other Federal government entities, as appropriate.

#### Membership

The following departments and agencies are represented on the IWGSC:

Department of Agriculture (Co-Chair)  
Smithsonian Institution (Co-Chair)  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Energy  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Department of the Interior  
Department of Transportation  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
National Institutes of Health  
National Science Foundation

The following organizations in the Executive Office of the President shall also be represented on the IWGSC:

Office of Science and Technology Policy  
Office of Management and Budget

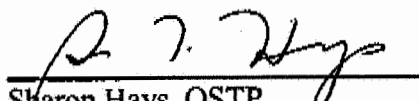
**VI. TERMINATION DATE**

Unless renewed by the Co-Chairs of COS, the IWGSC shall terminate on March 31, 2009.

**VII. DETERMINATION**

We hereby determine that formation of the COS Interagency Working Group on Scientific Collections is in the public interest in connection with the performance of duties imposed on the Executive Branch by law and that such duties can best be performed through the advice and counsel of such a group.

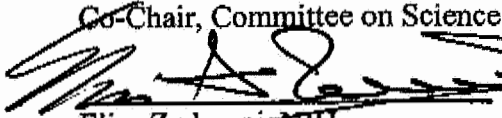
Approved:

  
Sharon Hays, OSTP  
Chief of Staff

6.7.06  
Date

  
Arden Bement, NSF  
Co-Chair, Committee on Science

6/7/06  
Date

  
Elias Zerhouni, NIH  
Co-Chair, Committee on Science

6/8/06  
Date