



National Plant Diagnostic Network

Governance Committee Report

January 2007

Governance Committee Report

Since the inception of NPDN in June 2002, the Network has been managed by an operations committee composed of individuals from the land grant universities, federal agencies, state departments of agriculture, and at times industry. It was recognized early on that to become sustainable, NPDN would require a formal process of governance. Consequently, a process was undertaken to develop rules of governance by which the NPDN would operate that ensured efficient function, established mechanisms for decision making, and provided for the transfer of leadership.

This was accomplished through a long series of communications that included face-to-face meetings, conference calls, and exchanges of emails. Drafts were authored, edited, discussed, and approved by members of the NPDN Operations Committee and NPDN Executive Committee. Because of the federal source of funding for the Network, input was sought from those with knowledge of the many legal issues regarding committee memberships and Network relationships with outside entities.

NPDN GOVERNANCE: PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

The National Plant Diagnostic Network will operate by rules of governance established and approved by the NPDN operations committee with input from individuals and agencies to ensure compliance with federal regulations. An NPDN Executive Committee will review and amend the rules of governance as needed to ensure continued and effective operations of the Network. The NPDN governance structure will be composed of an NPDN Council, NPDN Executive Committee, and an NPDN Operations Committee.

NPDN ADVISORY COUNCIL

Membership: The NPDN Advisory Council will be composed of representatives of stakeholders, partners, members, and customers (see Appendix A for descriptions and definitions of terms). NPDN Advisory Council members will be designated by their respective organizations with concurrence by the NPDN Executive Committee and serve for a period of three years (off set terms to ensure continuity). The core council will have a maximum membership of ten; the council can add members as needed to address critical Network issues. The NPDN Advisory Council will appoint a secretary.

Responsibility: To develop a broad vision for the National Plant Diagnostic Network. To serve as a liaison and to facilitate communication between NPDN and agencies and organizations involved in agricultural biosecurity. To provide the guidance necessary to keep NPDN focused on its mission, to prioritize issues, and to identify potential partners and customers.

Authority: The NPDN Advisory Council will provide guidance only. The NPDN Operations Committee will have final authority over operations and funding.

Reporting: The NPDN Advisory Council will report to the Executive Committee of the National Plant Diagnostic Network. The NPDN Council will generate and deliver an annual assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the NPDN Executive Committee.

Meetings: The NPDN Advisory Council will meet in person annually (or as needed to address critical issues) and conduct quarterly conference calls. Minutes of all meetings and conference calls will be provided to the NPDN Executive Committee within one week of the meeting.

NPDN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Membership: The NPDN Executive Committee will be composed of the NPDN Regional Directors, National Database Repository Director, CSREES National Program Leader to NPDN, and chaired by a member of the committee.

Committee Responsibility and Authority: The NPDN Executive Committee will serve as an interface between the Network and the NPDN Council, ensure the effective operation of the NPDN, and will guide its evolution to maintain NPDN as a key component of the national plant bio-security infrastructure. The NPDN Executive Committee has the authority to appoint ad hoc, temporary, standing, or new permanent committees to facilitate Network function or to address critical Network issues.

The NPDN Executive Committee has the responsibility and authority for issues of governance. The NPDN Executive Committee will be responsible for developing, ratifying, and amending NPDN policy. The NPDN Executive Committee will appoint a temporary NPDN Policy Committee to draft an NPDN policy manual that will guide NPDN function and activities. The NPDN Executive Committee will be responsible for developing and implementing a ratification procedure.

Responsibility and Authority by Office:

1) NPDN Executive Director: The NPDN Executive Director is nominated from the NPDN Executive Committee and is elected by the NPDN Operations Committee to serve for a period of two years. The appointment shall commence at the NPDN summer annual business meeting. The NPDN Executive Director has the responsibility and authority to ensure that operations of the NPDN are conducted in a timely, efficient, and effective manner. The NPDN Executive Director has the authority to implement decisions made by consensus vote of the NPDN Operations Committee or by majority vote of the NPDN Executive Committee. The NPDN Executive Director has the responsibility to represent and advocate for NPDN.

2) NPDN Deputy Director: The NPDN Deputy Director is nominated from the NPDN Executive Committee and is elected by the NPDN Operations Committee to serve for a period of one year. Assists NPDN Director in assigned tasks. Acts in supportive role to NPDN Director, with no specific authority except as delegated by NPDN Executive Director.

3) NPDN Immediate Past Director: Provides guidance and support to ensure continuity. Acts in a supportive role with no specific authority except as delegated by NPDN Executive Director.

4) NPDN Executive Committee Secretary: Provides administrative support and documentation of NPDN activities for the NPDN Executive Committee and the NPDN Operations Committee. Acts in a supportive role with no specific authority except as delegated by NPDN Executive Director. NPDN Executive Committee Secretary is appointed by the NPDN Executive Committee.

5) Other Members of the Executive Committee: Support the NPDN Executive Director by attending meetings and conducting tasks as directed by the NPDN Executive Director.

Reporting: The NPDN Executive Committee serves as the top reporting entity for NPDN and will be responsible for interim and final reports to the USDA regarding funding and cooperative agreements.

Meeting: Meets quarterly by conference call or as needed to address critical Network needs.

NPDN POLICY COMMITTEE [TEMPORARY]

Membership: The NPDN Policy Committee will be composed of members of the NPDN Operations Committee and the NPDN Executive Committee. Subject matter experts may be enlisted as needed to address critical Network issues. A chair of the committee will be designated by the NPDN executive committee.

Responsibility: The NPDN Policy Committee will be responsible for drafting the initial NPDN policy manual upon which Network functions and activities will be based.

Authority: The NPDN Policy Committee will have the authority to solicit input as needed from all NPDN members to help draft the NPDN policy manual.

Reporting: The NPDN Policy Committee reports to the NPDN Executive Committee. The NPDN Policy Committee will publish to the NPDN portal new policies, changes, and amendments to existing NPDN policies and notify NPDN committees and members by e-mail of all such changes.

Meeting: The NPDN Policy Committee will convene annual conference calls or as needed to address critical Network issues.

NPDN OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Membership: The NPDN Operations Committee will be composed of the NPDN Executive Committee, an Associate Director from each of the five NPDN regions plus one representative from each of the following agencies: USDA-CSREES National Program Leaders (Plant Pathology, Homeland Security, Entomology/IPM), NPDN Committee Chairs, five at large state representatives (one per each NPDN region, NPDN Regional Center states not eligible, 3 year term), APHIS Designee, Regional IPMC Director (3 year term), State Department of Agriculture representative (3 year term), Extension Disaster

Education Network, representative (3 year term), Chair of the NPDN Advisory Council, and at large members as needed to address critical issues (see Appendix C for descriptions and definitions of terms).

NPDN Operations Committee members will be designated by their respective organizations with approval by the NPDN Executive Committee and serve for a period of three years.

Responsibility: The NPDN Operations Committee is responsible for the development, implementation, and maintenance of programs necessary to fulfill the NPDN mission. The NPDN Operations Committee is responsible for the preparation and execution of the USDA- CSREES cooperative agreement, the submission of funding requests, and the compilation of reports of accomplishments.

Authority: The NPDN Operations Committee has the authority to develop and implement annual plans of work, set priorities, devise implementation strategies, and allocate resources required to carry out NPDN operations. Non-consensus decisions are made by majority vote of NPDN Executive Committee.

Reporting: The NPDN Operations Committee will issue an annual report to the NPDN Steering Committee detailing progress made toward NPDN objectives and identifying critical Network issues.

Meeting: The NPDN Operations Committee will convene semi-annual planning and evaluation meetings. The NPDN Operations Committee will convene conference calls monthly or as needed to address critical issues. A quorum shall consist of 60% of the current designates to the NPDN Operations Committee.

NPDN PROGRAM AREA COMMITTEES

Membership: Each NPDN Program Area Committee (Appendix D) has a chair, vice chair, and secretary. Members include at least one representative and one alternate from each region and the National Plant Disease and Pest Database. The chair of each NPDN Program Area Committee is a member of the NPDN Operations Committee. If an NPDN region has a regional committee for the same purpose as an NPDN Program Area Committee, the chair of the regional NPDN committee should also be a member of the NPDN Program Area Committee with the same function (e.g., a regional training committee chair will serve on the national training committee).

Responsibility: Each NPDN Program Area Committee has responsibility to direct the committee's operations and procedures, maintain web updates on committee activities and products, develop and revise committee mission statements, document committee activities, and make recommendations on NPDN policy to the NPDN Policy Committee.

Authority: Each NPDN Program Area Committee has the authority conduct operations delegated to that committee by the NPDN operations committee. The NPDN Program Area Committee can make recommendations to the NPDN policy committee on NPDN policies.

Reporting: NPDN Program Area Committees will report to the NPDN Executive Committee. On July 1st of each year, NPDN Program Area Committees will prepare and deliver to the NPDN Executive Committee and NPDN Operations Committee an annual report of accomplishments and critical issues.

Meeting: NPDN Program Area Committees should convene quarterly conference calls and meet as needed to address critical Network issues.

NPDN REGIONAL NETWORKS

Membership: Each NPDN regional network will have a regional director and the supporting structure deemed necessary to fulfill the NPDN mission. All regional staff will be appointed by the host institution. The director of each regional network will serve on the NPDN Executive Committee. Regional network staff may serve on NPDN Committees at the discretion of the host institution and the NPDN Executive and Operations Committees.

Responsibility: The responsibility of each NPDN Regional Network is to fulfill the mission of the National Network. NPDN Regional Networks will provide diagnostic data to the national repository and information necessary to compile reports of accomplishments and other reports as requested.

Authority: NPDN regional networks will have the authority to execute the annual plans of work and to manage regional network affairs to ensure the completion of Network objectives.

Reporting: Each regional network will establish a reporting system appropriate to the needs of that region. Member states will comply with the established reporting system.

Meeting: Each regional network will meet at least once per fiscal year to establish plans of work consistent with the national plan of work, to report on progress, and to discuss issues important to the region. The annual regional meeting will be convened at a location to be determined by the regional center. Additional meetings may be convened to address critical issues as they arise or to provide training.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITION OF TERMS

Customer: An individual, agency, or organization that utilizes the physical or intellectual services and results of the National Plant Diagnostic Network. Examples: USDA-APHIS (NIS, PPQ, CPHST, PHP, SPHD}, Law Enforcement (FBI, DHS CBP), NAHLN, State Departments of Agriculture, Industry (ASTA, chemical, advising/consulting), USDA-ARS (FDWRL).

Member: An individual, agency, or organization that directly contributes to fulfilling the mission of the National Plant Diagnostic Network. Examples: NPDN Leadership (Executive Director, At-Large Regional Director), CSREES National Program Leaders (Plant Pathology, Homeland Security, Entomology), Sea Grant and Land Grant (1862, 1890, 1994) Institutions (diagnosticians, specialists, and administrators), State Departments of Agriculture (diagnosticians and administrators), Private company laboratories.

Partner: An individual, agency, or organization that works with the National Plant Diagnostic Network in fulfillment of the NPDN mission. Examples: Extension Disaster Education Network, Integrated Pest Management Centers, National Animal Health Laboratory Network, Scientific Societies (APS, ESA, CSSA), State Departments of Agriculture (individual?, NASDA?), Industry (ASTA, chemical, advising/consulting), USDA-ARS (FDWRL).

Stakeholder: An individual, agency, or organization who has a vested interest in the success of the National Plant Diagnostic Network. Examples: USDA-APHIS (NIS, PPQ, permitting, CPHST, PHP, SPHD}, CSREES, LGU (Experiment Station Directors, Extension Directors, NUSALG,), Law Enforcement (FBI, DHS CBP)