

Charter of the EarthCube Liaison Team

PREAMBLE

The EarthCube Liaison Team is charged with linking the activities of the wider-EarthCube effort to relevant organizations and initiatives globally. This charter defines the scope of team activities and interests, and the processes through which the team will pursue its goals. Because team participation is voluntary, this charter is designed to minimize management overhead and focus on efficient operation.

1. Mission and Goals of the Team

EarthCube's mission is to enable geoscientists to address the challenges for understanding and predicting a complex and evolving Earth system by fostering a community-governed effort to develop a common cyberinfrastructure to collect, access, analyze, share and visualize all forms of data and resources, using advanced technological and computational capabilities.

The mission of the EarthCube Liaison Team is to act as a liaison to cyber-initiatives, collaborations, agencies, associations, private enterprises and other efforts and programs external to the NSF core constituency of academic geoscientists. This may include national and international activities in other scientific and technical domains, as well as the private sector, the education sector, and operational geoscience agencies. The Team will provide a steady implementation strategy for proactive outreach to ensure EarthCube is connected to the right external partners, and to ensure that work undertaken by Standing Committees and Working Groups leverages existing initiatives and avoids duplication.

Consistent with this overall mission, the goal of the team is to establish partnerships, affiliations, and connections to external organizations and initiatives. Managing and maintaining formal and informal relationships (revisiting agreements as needed)

- Facilitating Standing Committee and Working Group engagement and collaboration with external organizations and initiatives
- Reaching out to potential collaborator
- Supporting other activities as deemed relevant by the Liaison Team and greater EarthCube community.

2. Team Process

The processes outlined here provide a foundation for team operations. These processes are flexible and may be adapted as necessary.

2.1 Membership

Membership is by registration on EC Liaison Team Workspace. Registration requires name, organization affiliation, and working e-mail address (mandatory) to be reconfirmed on an annual basis.

2.1.1 Participation

Participation in the team is on a volunteer basis. Since EarthCube is an NSF initiative, and since a significant amount of research and cyberinfrastructure is supported by NSF through a variety of projects and programs, volunteers may join this team to participate in activities that are beneficial to the projects that actively support them. In addition, since EarthCube is designed to broadly benefit all areas of geosciences research and cyberinfrastructure, volunteers from the broader community may be interested in pursuing synergistic activities through this team. Because of the different circumstances of each member, different degrees of commitment and activity can be expected. The committee will set up mechanisms to accommodate different levels of effort and to encourage commitments to critical activities (e.g., chair positions).

2.1.2 Active Membership

Members are expected to participate in one or more of the Team activities annually to remain active in the Team. Inactive members will need to re-register for membership annually. Membership registration and meeting attendance will be recorded in a member register to track participation.

2.2 Leadership

Two co-Chairs, one who is the Representative to the Leadership council and another who chairs the team meetings will have equal and joint responsibility for operation of the Team.

2.2.1 Selection of Leadership

Nominations for co-Chairs may be submitted by any team member. Current co-Chairs shall assure at least one nomination for each incoming leadership position.

2.2.2 Voting

Co-chairs shall be elected by plurality of Team members registered on the EarthCube website and who participate in the vote.

2.2.3 Elections

Elections will be held electronically for a one-week period and will be closed for voting on the first of November for terms starting on January 1 of the following year. If a co-chair is unable to carry out his/her duties, or resigns the position, elections of a co-chair to complete the term of office will be carried out electronically.

2.2.4 Terms of Office

Team co-chairs shall serve for a term of one year starting on January 1. A co-chair may serve for a maximum of 2 consecutive terms. Terms of office in this committee should be compatible with the service terms for the Leadership Council election cycle, when appropriate.

2.3 Operations

2.3.1 Meetings

The Team will hold virtual meetings at least quarterly. Meeting announcement and agenda will be posted on the EarthCube web site and via e-mail at least five business days in advance of the meeting. All meetings shall be open to any interested party. Minutes of the meeting will be recorded by the EC staff or other assigned party and will be available within two working days of the meeting. Minutes shall be available for comment and changes for five days after posting. A list of action items will be maintained by the EarthCube office staff.

2.3.2 Decision Making

The preferred means of decision making will be operational consensus. Where such cannot be achieved, a vote may be taken on items posted on the original agenda with a decision taken with a majority of voters present (i.e. plurality).

2.3.3 Fiscal Responsibility

Proposals can be put forth to the team to cover LT relevant expenses including but not limited to Type 2 Working Groups, meeting expenses etc. Financial expenditures of up to \$1500 can be approved by agreement of the co-chairs. All other expenditures require distribution of the proposal and announcement in the next meeting agenda and decided upon by the means outlined in 2.3.2. Members of the LT (including co-chairs) may recuse themselves of participating in budget and other fiscal decisions as appropriate (e.g., this may be necessary depending on member affiliation). In the case that a co-chair is unable to participate in budget and other fiscal decisions of up to \$1500, the co-chair that is able to participate will choose an active member of the team to make this decision with them.

2.3.4 Compensation

Team membership is voluntary and not subject to compensation for time. Travel expenses will be reimbursed by request as EC governance funds are available, at the discretion of the EC Leadership Council.

2.3.5 Working Groups

Formal working groups require an approved proposal with objectives, statement of work and timeline (see Appendix 1 for link to guidelines and questionnaire, and evaluation criteria). Proposals are approved by the EC Governance Leadership Council. Workgroup timelines may be revised if necessary.

2.3.6 Communications

The Team shall make available communication mechanisms such as EarthCube websites, newsletters, meeting minutes and/or other mechanisms that the Team deems necessary to keep the Team members and the broader EarthCube community informed of Team activities and management. Such communications will facilitate transparency of decisions and actions by the Team.

- Communicate news and developments between external communities and the EarthCube community

- Recommend ways to leverage external capabilities and efforts

2.3.7 Interface with other Governance Structures

The Team may assign volunteer members to provide a working interface with another Committee, Team or other EC Governance structure. Liaisons will report at the Team meetings of any activities of another group that significantly impact the Team activities. This will complement the formal channels of communication through the Leadership Council.

2.3.7 Revision of this Charter

This charter is a living document that can be amended or adjusted at any formal meeting of the team by a majority of the active members of the team.

3. Review Process

- The EC Governance Leadership Council will review Team operations annually, or at request of the Leadership Council.
- Team co-chairs will review progress of Team sponsored working groups semi-annually.
- This charter and any associated documents shall be reviewed at least annually at an early Summer meeting of the Team.
- Following review and approval of working group proposals by the Liaison Team, the proposal shall be reviewed by the EC Governance Leadership Council within two weeks of submission from the Liaison Team. Reviews shall be done according to guidelines cited in Appendix 1 of this document.

Appendix 1: Working Group Review General Decision Logic

- [Working group proposal guidelines are at this link.](#)
- The review will either accept a proposal to be sent to the LT for approval and funding, return to the proposers for modification, or reject the proposal.
- If the proposed activity is deemed out of scope of the team, detracting from other team priorities, or in conflict with existing team activities, it can be rejected with explanation.
- Proposals returned for modification are encouraged to adjust their scope of work and operations, as appropriate, to address the review comments and recommendations
- If a proposal does not respond to the current working group proposal guidelines it will be returned without review but with guidance on a revised submission.
- Budgets should be examined for their reasonableness and their utility in fulfilling the proposed work. The LT will determine the availability and priority of funding.