



## **Food and Agriculture Sector *Government Coordinating Council* Charter**

Adopted November 12, 2020

### **Article I – Official Designation**

This organization shall be known as the “Food and Agriculture Sector Government Coordinating Council,” herein after referred to as the “GCC” or the “Council.”

### **Article II – Mission and Purpose**

Presidential Policy Directive-21 (PPD-21) advances national policy for Federal departments and agencies to identify and prioritize the United States’ critical infrastructure, and to guard against efforts to undermine or exploit those sector assets. Federal departments and agencies will identify, prioritize and coordinate the protection of critical infrastructure. Federal departments will work with State, Local, Tribal and Territorial (SLTT) governments to develop a partnership with the private sector to leverage complementary resources within government, and between government and industry to ensure a more robust, resilient and secure sector. These identified critical infrastructures provide the essential services for American society; disruption could cause catastrophic health effects, mass casualties, negative impacts on economic well-being, or profoundly affect our national prestige and morale.

The designated Sector Specific Agencies (SSAs) for the Food and Agriculture Sector are the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The National Critical Functions are the “functions of government and the private sector that are so vital to the United States that their disruption, corruption, or dysfunction would have a debilitating effect on security, national economic security, national public health or safety.” Due to the interconnected nature of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors, impacts in the food and agriculture sector are felt beyond the ability to produce and provide agricultural products and human and animal food products; and the ability to conduct these activities are affected by events in other sectors such as transportation, chemical, and critical manufacturing. To support the maintenance of the National Critical Functions, in accordance with guidance provided by the Secretary of Homeland Security,

these agencies shall collaborate with all relevant partners to prevent, deter and mitigate all-hazard risks which may destroy, incapacitate or exploit the sector.

## **Article III – Objective and Scope of Activity**

### ***Objective***

The objective of the GCC is to support the Nation’s homeland security mission by providing effective coordination of agricultural security and food defense strategies and activities; policy review and development; and communication across government and between the government and the private sector. In addition, the GCC plays a coordination role with the other sector coordinating councils.

The GCC acts as the counterpart and partner to the private industry-led Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Council (SCC) to plan and coordinate activities so that appropriate prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery systems are available to ensure the resiliency of the Nation’s food and agriculture critical infrastructure, and the continued ability to provide agricultural products, human and animal food products, and secure associated supply chains.

### ***Scope of Activity***

The GCC will accomplish this objective through the following essential activities:

- **Ensure efficient, effective policy coordination on homeland security issues.** The GCC shall bring together diverse Federal and State, Local, Tribal and Territorial (SLTT) interests to identify and develop collaborative strategies that advance critical infrastructure protection. On an annual basis, the GCC shall identify needs/gaps in critical infrastructure protection plans, programs, policies, procedures, and strategies and leverage resources. Additionally, the GCC will ensure that strategies integrate roles, responsibilities, authorities and practices of GCC member organizations in support of coordinated preparedness and response to food and agriculture threats. The GCC leadership will also ensure coordination on these issues with the SCC.
- **Ensure efficient, effective communication concerning homeland security and emergency management issues.** While the focus is on critical infrastructure protection, the GCC will also function during events of national emergency or significance to coordinate and share information to augment existing emergency operation channels within Federal and SLTT governments and with industry. The GCC leadership shall also ensure that effective communication mechanisms exist with the SCC. The GCC may change the annual priorities based on emergent issues and homeland security concerns.
- **Share information concerning successful programs and practices.** The GCC shall facilitate the sharing of experiences, ideas, best practices and innovative approaches related to critical infrastructure protection. Recognizing the complex interactions between multiple sectors that are critical for the maintenance of the food supply chain, this facilitation will also include discussions related to interdependencies and coordination

with other critical infrastructure sectors. The GCC leadership shall coordinate with the SCC to ensure that both public and private successes are available for the sector.

## **Article IV – Membership and Member Representatives**

### ***Membership***

The membership will be composed of key representatives and influential leaders in food and agriculture safety/defense from Federal, SLTT governments, and academia. Representatives to the GCC shall be active members of their respective governmental agency/academic entity and be nominated by their leadership via written notification to the GCC Co-Chairs, as defined in Article V below. Official membership is conveyed once the GCC Co-Chairs acknowledge receipt of the nomination and submit the name of the member to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

### ***Member Representatives***

Official members named to the Council are director-level, or equivalent, representatives from:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture<sup>1</sup>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Food and Drug Administration<sup>2</sup>
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Department of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Defense
- U.S. Department of Interior
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Association of Food and Drug Officials
- Association of Public Health Laboratories
- American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture (MSP)
- National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials
- National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
- National Association of County and City Health Officials
- National Environmental Health Association
- National Plant Board
- New England States Animal Agricultural Security Alliance (NESAASA)
- Southern Agriculture and Animal Disaster Response Alliance (SAADRA)
- Intertribal Agriculture Council
- SLTT GCC
- Department of Homeland Security Centers of Excellence
- Other government entities or academic institutions, as approved by the GCC Leadership

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<sup>1</sup> USDA is one of two designated Sector Specific Agencies (SSAs) for the Food and Agriculture Sector

<sup>2</sup> FDA is one of two designated Sector Specific Agencies (SSAs) for the Food and Agriculture Sector

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The SLTT GCC is comprised of all non-federal entities of the GCC. SLTT GCC leadership will rotate between MSP, NESAASA, and SAADRA with two leaders (a chair and vice-chair) every two years.

The SLTT Co-Chair is responsible for coordinating SLTT participation in Food and Agriculture Sector activities. The Co-Chair is expected to be a state or local government official/employee who has active responsibility for policy, operations, or program implementation in the Food and Agriculture Sectors, thereby having experience and connections in the Food and Agriculture Sector and be willing to serve a two year term. This term may be amended by recommendations of the GCC Co-Chairs as circumstances warrant. In the event that the SLTT Co-Chair is no longer able to fulfill assigned responsibilities, a pre-designated alternate will serve in an acting capacity until the next Co-Chair is selected.

The GCC reserves the right to invite additional members as necessary to fulfill its mission.

## **Article V –Officers and Governance**

### ***Officers***

The GCC leadership will be jointly chaired by the SSAs (USDA and FDA). In addition, the additional GCC Co-Chairs will be:

- Director, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, DHS (or their appointed representative)
- SLTT GCC Representative
  - Note: the SLTT GCC also nominates a Vice-Chair who serves as an alternate to the SLTT GCC Co-Chair and is anticipated to fill the role of Co-Chair once the current Co-Chair completes their two year term. Both participate in GCC Leadership meetings.

### ***Governance***

The GCC leadership body will facilitate the decision-making process to improve preparedness of the sector using consensus-based methods. They will work in consultation with council membership to reach agreement on council business, and through this process, identify the steps by which each decision will be communicated to appropriate government or private sector entities. In the event consensus is not reached, GCC leadership will vote to reach an official decision.

Each member agency of the GCC may have one primary representative and one alternate representative for voting purposes. Both the primary and alternate may participate in all GCC meetings. Each member has the flexibility to have other representation at meetings other than the official alternates, but must clearly designate the representative's decision-making authority to the GCC Co-Chairs prior to the meeting.

The GCC may invite subject matter experts, non-voting participants drawn from any organization, to provide expertise on an ad hoc basis.

Recognizing the criticality of providing effective communication across the government and private sectors, members shall act as Sector communication liaisons for their respective agencies and organizations. As such, they shall accept the responsibility of passing information between the GCC and their respective agency and organization constituents. This established information flow is critical to support national communications and provide a national alert capability for the Food and Agriculture Sector and its diverse stakeholders. The membership will support and execute this responsibility.

## **Article VI – Meetings**

The GCC will meet on a monthly basis, primarily through conference calls, with additionally scheduled meetings and/or conference calls as needed. The GCC reserves the right to amend the frequency of the meeting and location to meet its mission.

### ***Principles of Participation***

- All members must be working towards the same goal and purpose of improving the Nation’s agriculture and food system.
- All members need to participate.
- Discussions and deliberations must recognize and take advantage of each member/organization’s strengths, skills and perspective.
- Results of GCC discussions and deliberations must be a coherent voice comprised of each member’s contributions.
- Each discussion shall be honest and forthright.

### ***Meeting Governance***

Discussion and deliberations must recognize and take advantage of each member’s and organization’s strengths, skills, and perspective.

1. The lead will canvass GCC members prior to the scheduled meeting for priorities and agenda topics.
2. The GCC will hold its discussion for a set amount of time or upon agreement/closure, bringing in subject matter experts as needed.
3. The lead member will ask for GCC agreement for continuation/completion /reconsideration for each agenda topic.
4. If substantial work effort is required through work groups, the lead member will appoint a GCC member to lead the work group.

### ***Decision Making***

Council members will make decisions through a consultative process, encouraging the exchange of information and points of view, and will strive for consensus. Although any member may disagree with a decision, other members will strive to understand and resolve disagreements. Dissension will be recognized, and reasons clearly understood by all other members when a member absolutely cannot agree. When there is dissension, the Council may nevertheless move

forward and take action to fulfill obligations of members of the Council. GCC leaders/members will strive to provide deliverables in a timely manner, even when less than full agreement is reached.

The Council recognizes that each member represents a government entity or organization with inherent legal authorities and parameters within which they must operate. At times, these authorities may restrict a member's ability to provide agreement on a decision. These inherent legal authorities must be clearly articulated and understood by the Council as the basis for dissent and the inability to enter into consensus.

### ***Quorum***

In the event that a decision needs to be made by vote, a quorum for decision-making is defined as consisting of at least one representative from each of the two SSAs (USDA and FDA), DHS, a SLTT member, and three (3) other GCC member organizations.

## **Article VII – Recordkeeping**

Recordkeeping responsibilities, to include the development of meeting notes, reside with the SSA Co-Chairs. Meeting summaries are available upon request by members. Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council (CIPAC) meeting records shall also be maintained by the DHS Secretariat.

## **Article VIII – Communications**

The GCC is a coordination council that guides policy across Government agencies. Decisions and information discussed and shared in GCC meetings should not be distributed outside of the GCC, as it may have policy implications. GCC information should not be divulged until it has been formally released. A current e-mail distribution list of Council members will be maintained and dedicated for official Sector activity use only. Only the Co-Chairs may use this list.

## **Article IX – Working Groups and Special Committees**

### **Establishing Work Groups**

The Council may establish work groups to conduct substantial investigation, research and development, which cannot be achieved by a regular session of the Council. The GCC must provide the group a specific and clear charge, time limit, and deliverable as part of initiating the work group. The group's representation will be determined by the scope of the topic. Each group will include a GCC member to lead the activity and maintain continuity and consistency.

## **Article X – CIPAC Membership and Representation**

### ***Council Participation in CIPAC***

As explained in the CIPAC Charter, the Secretary of Homeland Security established the Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council (CIPAC) in March 2006 and exempted the CIPAC from the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

CIPAC facilitates interaction between government officials and representatives of the community of owners and/or operators for each of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors defined by PPD-21 and identified in current version of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP). When participating in CIPAC activities, the Council will comply with all requirements defined in the CIPAC Charter and guidance issued by the CIPAC Designated Federal Officer (DFO) within the CIPAC Executive Secretariat.

The Food and Agriculture Sector GCC, in coordination with the Sector's SCC, participates in CIPAC activities as appropriate. For example:

- Joint GCC/SCC Meetings
- GCC and SCC Leadership Meetings

### ***CIPAC Member and CIPAC Member Representative***

CIPAC membership is defined in the CIPAC Charter. GCC membership shall be in compliance with CIPAC Charter requirements. GCC member organizations shall automatically be a CIPAC Member upon notification from the Council Chairperson to the CIPAC DFO via [CIPAC@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:CIPAC@cisa.dhs.gov).

A CIPAC Member may have more than one CIPAC Member Representative. The Member Representative's name and contact information shall be added to the CIPAC Attendee Roster upon notification to the CIPAC DFO by the Council Chairperson via [CIPAC@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:CIPAC@cisa.dhs.gov). The procedures for maintaining a CIPAC Member Representative list within the Council are as follows:

- To appoint duly authorized member representatives to participate in CIPAC activities, organizations shall provide the GCC Co-Chairs with the representative's name and contact information in written form. The Co-Chairs shall provide this information to CIPAC Executive Secretariat for transmission to DFO on behalf of the Sector leadership.
- The CIPAC Executive Secretariat, in collaboration with the Co-Chairs, shall maintain a current GCC member roster and periodically update the CIPAC DFO with member information in order to maintain a compliant CIPAC Attendee Roster.

## **Article XI – Amendments**

Amendments to the GCC Charter may be authorized with two-thirds of member consent and the presence of quorum.

## Article XII – Approval

This Charter will be approved with two-thirds of member consent and the presence of quorum.



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### GCC Co-Chair

LeeAnne Jackson  
*Health Science Policy Advisor  
U.S. Department of Health and Human  
Services  
Food and Drug Administration  
Center for Food Safety and Applied  
Nutrition*



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### GCC SLTT Chair

Jeff Turner  
*Director of Emergency Management  
Texas Animal Health Commission*



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### GCC Co-Chair

Michelle Colby  
*Chief  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of Homeland Security  
National Security Division*



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### GCC SLTT Vice-Chair

Becki Slater  
*State of Wisconsin  
Department of Agriculture, Trade, and  
Consumer Protection*