

NPAC TWG BW Detection Focus Group Charter

Overview

Advances in Biological Weapons (BW) development resulting from the nefarious misuse of biotechnology and microbial genetics pose significant threats to national and international security. The challenge of detecting and monitoring BW has increased, highlighting the need for efficient and effective tools that provide timely and accurate information to support decision-makers.

Mission

The Non-Proliferation and Arms Control Technical Working Group (NPAC TWG), was created by Presidential Directive (PDD-27) in 1994. The mission of the NPAC TWG is to promote and facilitate the coordination of non-proliferation research and development (R&D). The BW Detection Focus Group (BWDFG) was created by the NPAC TWG to coordinate R&D investments across the Federal government related to the detection of biological weapons. The BWDFG evaluates existing technologies, highlights gaps where research is needed, and promotes collaboration among U.S. Government agencies currently funding programs related to BW detection.

Functions

In order to accomplish this mission, participants meet monthly to

- Exchange information and coordinate Arms Control and Nonproliferation BW-detection R&D activities
- Advise agencies on Nonproliferation and Arms Control BW-related R&D priorities
- Facilitate the conduct of cooperative interagency BW-detection related programs
- Review Nonproliferation and Arms Control BW-detection related R&D programs and identify overlaps and gaps
- Host presentations on emerging commercial technologies that could be leveraged to support BW detection

Organizational Structure

The chair of the BW Detection Focus Group, appointed by the NPAC TWG, is generally a member of a government agency involved in BW detection R&D activities. Each U.S. Government agency that participates designates a representative for the Core Focus Group. Volunteers and interested parties, as well as agency representatives who are not able to attend monthly meetings may be considered "Members for Tech Watch." The BWDFG is composed of U.S. Government agency representatives as well as scientists employed in National Labs, defense contractors, and Federally Funded R&D Centers.

Core member agencies currently include: DOD – OSD, DIA, DTRA, USA, USAF, USN, DARPA; DHS; DOS; DOE; EPA; FBI; ODNI; CIA; USDA; HHS – NIH, CDC.