PROJECT PLAN FOR THE

INTERAGENCY DISPATCH IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT (IDIP)

June 2013

PROJECT PLAN FOR THE
INTERAGENCY DISPATCH IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT
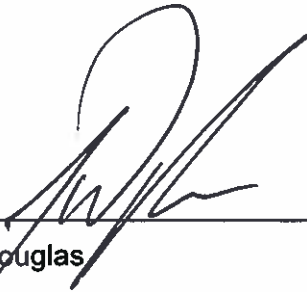# (IDIP)

Approved by:

signature

26 JUNE 2013

Tom Harbour

Date

Director, Fire and Aviation Management

US Forest Service

signature

June 26 2013

Jim Douglas

Date

Acting Director, Office of Wildland Fire

US Department of the Interior

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

A structured approach and a commitment to resilience are necessary to developing a long-term strategy toward improving safety, efficiency and cost effectiveness in the dispatch and coordination system. To that end the US Forest Service (FS) and Department of the Interior (DOI) recently conducted multiple assessments and studies assessing the dispatch organization, workforce staffing and governance, and information technology.

In 2008, FS and DOI jointly conducted a management efficiency assessment (MEA) of Wildland Fire Dispatch functions to identify whether efficiencies and cost savings are attainable through changes to staffing, organization, communication, technology application, and business processes. This assessment identified areas for operational improvements, identified opportunities for dispatch to become more efficient and cost effective, and recommended further examination of these areas. The 2008 MEA was specific to federal wildland fire dispatching. It excluded all non-fire functions as well as state and local partners.

In 2009, the Interagency Interoperability Oversight Group (IIOG) examined the results of the assessment along with issues in law enforcement dispatch and dispatch for other field going personnel. Following these deliberations, IIOG sponsored the Interagency Dispatch Improvement Project Steering Committee, a group integrated across FS/DOI programs and agencies that use dispatch services. The committee provides leadership and direction to provide an efficient and cost-effective interagency dispatch capability that meets the business needs of stakeholders at all levels through standards, integration, and interoperability.

The Steering Committee chartered the Interagency *Dispatch Optimization Pilot Project* (IDOPP) a pilot project encompassing two geographically-defined areas to take a detailed look at how to optimize dispatch operations, including dispatch for fire, law enforcement, and other field going personnel. The pilot covered two areas, California and the Southwest (Arizona, New Mexico, and west Texas), and included federal, state, local, and tribal stakeholders in those areas.

The *Management Efficiency Assessment of the Interagency Wildland Fire Dispatch and Related Services, Management Analysis of the Interagency Wildland Fire Dispatch Data Records,* and the IDOPP conducted by the FS, DOI, and state, local, and tribal partners, each presented alternatives intended to improve dispatching for fire, law enforcement, and resource management personnel. Thematic across these assessments were three recommendations for information technology consistency between the agencies and partners, standardized governance/funding including standard operations guidance, and a need for a staffing modeling methodology to determine workload-based staffing for the various dispatch offices.

The Interagency Dispatch Implementation Project (IDIP) charter provides the authority and sets the framework for establishment of three core working groups funded by the DOI and FS that will review the recommendations and execute projects that implement initial changes using the most cost effective methods. There remain additional dispatch improvement findings that the agencies will address in later implementation efforts.

To bring together the work of the three working groups, an IDIP Oversight Team will provide overall project management and ensure that the three sub-teams use consistent assumptions, approaches, and methodologies and produce comparable deliverables. The Oversight Team will provide a means to concurrently look at and compare dispatch workload and activities in the three project areas using one methodological approach. The Oversight Team will

consolidate the findings into a single report for each study topic that will serve as blueprints for implementation of dispatch improvement throughout the agencies and contribute to a template for future interagency dispatch optimization projects in other areas.

This plan outlines the activities that the teams will accomplish to conduct the initial Interagency Dispatch Implementation Project in the 18 months' time allotted. Its purpose is to serve as a planning document for the overall project process. As such, it defines the project's scope, assigns roles and responsibilities, provides a general project plan and budget, and proposes a communications approach with external and internal audiences. Products and results from the Project will be provided to wildland fire governance entities and agency management in the Forest Service and Department of the Interior for review, approval, and implementation as appropriate.

SCOPE

The focus of the overall project is to improve program delivery of dispatch services while meeting the mission needs of the FS and DOI, as well as state, local, and tribal stakeholders. The working groups will assess the current business and organizational models, identify issues and user requirements, and develop implementable alternatives to improve customer satisfaction and mission delivery while improving program efficiency and cost effectiveness. They will review current policy and identify where standardization and clear direction can result in increased efficiency and improved safety.

The initial Interagency Dispatch Implementation Project will focus on the following issues and potential areas for improvement:

1. Computer Aided Dispatch Standardization (CADS)
- Address Forest Service CIO concerns in order to allow DOI and the FS to continue to operate CAD systems currently in use until a replacement CAD capability is in place.
- Gather information to develop functional requirements for dispatch operations (e.g., radio consoles, telephone systems/sets, computer system capability, software suites/licensing, and printers) while improving consistency and compatibility. Develop appropriate data standards for CAD.
- Using the criteria and approval submission process established by the Wildland Fire Information and Technology (WFIT) Executive Board, develop business case and investment proposals for CAD for review and approval.
- Upon approval for proceed with an investment interagency CAD capability provide ongoing dispatch business support and engagement for implementing the investment decision.

2. Interagency Dispatch Operational Guidance (IDOG)
- Review the structure, funding policies, decision processes, and delegation of authorities used to manage dispatch operations to determine opportunities for improved efficiency and effectiveness. Address how to organize governance structures and processes for shared (agency/program) dispatch operations to include such issues as membership, authorities, roles and responsibilities, decision processes, and funding.

- Review operational practices, business processes, and standards across agencies and program areas to assess where changes might increase operational efficiency while effectively meeting mission requirements.
- Establish clear accountability and continuity of operations regarding dispatching governance and policies.
- Develop an interagency dispatch operations guide (IDOG) based on the workgroup findings. The IDOG will support the intent of the Interagency Strategy for the Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy to provide consistent application of interagency policy, staffing and management through common terms, procedures, governance and operational standards for dispatch centers.

3. Dispatch Staffing
- Review all dispatch workload (regular as well as expanded) to determine optimal hours of operation, staffing, and organizational structures to meet current and projected requirements.
- Update, redesign or create a new workload analysis program that will calculate appropriate workload-based staffing for dispatch centers, geographic and national coordination centers.
- Identify and implement changes to initiate appropriate workload levels, define areas of responsibility and identify logical consolidations for consideration.

In examining the above issues, the IDIP will address these cross-cutting issues:
- Safety of field going personnel and the public;
- Risk management;
- Sustainability in operations;
- Eliminating unnecessary facilities and infrastructure;
- Opportunities to share dispatch services, personnel, and facilities among multiple program areas;
- Processes for reconciling and adjudicating competing priorities; and,
- Relative roles and functions of geographic area coordination centers and local dispatch centers.

TIMELINE

The IDIP will take approximately 18 months to complete, although Leadership may implement some short-term actions within 12 months.

Project Time Lines: The working groups will work under the following general timelines to accomplish this work for each sub-project within IDIP:

- Information & Technology CAD Working Group: July 2013-January 2015, 18 Months.
- Governance and Guidance Working Group: August 2013-December 2014, 16 Months.
- Staffing Working Group: August 2013-December 2014, 16 Months.

The teams will accomplish the sub-projects in three major phases:
- The initial phase of each sub-project will address common elements, mission requirements, the scope and function of dispatch services and will document the "As-Is" situation for each. This phase will include background research, information needs assessments and data calls as necessary to support later analyses.

- Phase two will use the results of the initial phase to develop specific approaches to improve and optimize dispatch services in the three project areas, based on the issues and considerations identified specific to the sub-project. Analyses will support recommendations for management decisions.
- Phase Three will develop methodologies and measures for implementation planning, procurement and execution, and will conclude once implementation is complete.
- The agencies will conduct post-implementation performance monitoring to ensure results commensurate will projections.

WORKPLANS

Each Working Group will develop a proposed work plan showing principal tasks, milestones, and deliverables. The Work Plans will be approved by the Steering Team. Target dates for work plan submission are:

- Information & Technology CAD Working Group: August 2013.
- Governance and Guidance Working Group: September 2013
- Staffing Working Group: September 2013

BUDGET

There is no funding set aside for support to the IDIP. The FS is providing technical and analytical support to the IDIP. Participating agencies are responsible to fund personnel salaries, travel, and other project-related costs at levels decided upon by each agency.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To maximize efficiency of time and resources, personnel involved in the IDIP teams should operate as cohesively as possible. Workload to complete the project is shared by all, with each person applying the strength of his or her skills and experience to meet the requirements.

Below is a description of the roles played by the various individuals and teams involved in the IDIP. Groups will also call upon other Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) as necessary to provide input into the project and serve in an advisory capacity.

Steering Team: A management Steering Team composed of Ron Bertsch, FS Assistant Director for FAM Planning & Budget; and Jim Douglas Acting Director, DOI Office of Wildland Fire and Senior Advisor Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services Policy, Management and Budget, provide leadership perspective and accountability to executive leadership for the IDIP. Susie Stingley-Russell, Center Manager, National Interagency Coordination Center serves as the overall liaison between management and Interagency dispatch personnel.

Oversight Team: An Oversight Team will direct and guide the IDIP in the absence of support contractors. They will provide technical assistance to the team; ensure compliance with applicable requirements; facilitate support to the study team by the Steering Committee and others; track the budget; coordinate communication related to the study, and provide or coordinate technical and logistical support to the core working groups as needed. The oversight team includes Robert Kuhn, Planning & Budget Specialist and National Program Lead for FAM studies; Betsy Walatka, the Strategic Planning and Performance Accountability

(SPPA) staff management studies lead; and Laura Hill, FS FAM Information Technology Advisor. The Oversight Team will recruit and select Core Team members and Advisory Group members.

Core Teams: The IDIP Core Team members, also known as members of the working groups, develop options for management consideration on the various aspects of the project, and are representative of various organizational levels and units across the Agencies.

Advisory Group: Advisory Team Groups, consisting of SMEs, information technology specialists and stakeholders within the agency provide support to the Core Team as needed. Specialty advisors such as human resource and acquisition management staff will also assist as needed.

In order to ensure coordinated participation in the IDIP effort by all involved parties, the various teams have specific roles and responsibilities.

Overall IDIP Coordinator, FS WO – Robert Kuhn

- Responsible for the overall coordination of the IDIP to ensure timely and successful completion.

Oversight Team Responsibilities

- Commit time to the IDIP effort
- Provide overall project management
    - Integrate management perspective and input
    - Integrate stakeholder interests
    - Provide policy direction and guidance to the Core Team throughout the project
    - Coordinate development of data collection database(s)
    - Oversee budget
    - Remain apprised of IDIP progress and monitor milestone adherence
    - Coordinate or provide technical and logistical support to teams as required
- Coordinate internal and external communications
    - Coordinate formal and informal communications including web updates and formal correspondence
    - Assist with or conduct leadership briefings
- Assist in preparation of all project deliverables
    - Assist in data collection and analysis
    - Compile and edit Core Team reports
- Act as liaison on Human Resources issues and Conduct Civil Rights Impact Analysis

Core Team/Working Groups Responsibilities

- Commit time to the IDIP effort
- Provide technical expertise
- Develop "as-is" situation description
- Participate in information needs assessments for desired end state
- Collect data and assist in data analyses
- Review, revise, and comment on reports

- Participate in briefings
- Complete all assigned tasks and remain within budget
- Other duties as assigned

Advisory Team Responsibilities

- Serve as technical resources for IDIP Teams
- Comprised of specialized Subject Matter Experts
- Provide additional perspective and "reality check" reviews

Union Representative

- Representative assigned by National Federation of Federal Employees
- Interface with bargain-unit employees on union issues as they relate to the IDIP effort.
- Interface with management on negotiable items as the working groups propose organizational changes.
- Provide union perspective to the study.
- Provide approved updates to union stewards and employees.

REPORTING

- The Coordinator and Oversight Team will provide periodic reports, no less frequently than quarterly, to the Steering Team. These reports will include status of progress based on the approved work plans and proposed remedial or mitigation actions needed.
- The Oversight Team will establish reporting requirements as necessary for Core Teams/Working Groups.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The work products of the IDIP will be provided to appropriate wildand fire management governance entities and agency management in the Forest Service and Department of the Interior for review, approval, and implementation.