



# Interagency Dispatch Optimization Pilot Project (IDOPP) Charter



## Background:

In 2008, the USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior completed and released the "Management Efficiency Assessment of the Interagency Wildland Fire Dispatch and Related Services" report. This assessment was specifically targeted at federal wildland fire dispatching, consequently all non-fire functions as well as state and local partners were excluded. The assessment identified areas for operational and organizational improvement, identified opportunities for dispatch to become more efficient and cost effective, and recommended further examination of several key areas. Agency leadership was briefed on the results of the assessment and agreed that the issues and recommendations should be addressed. However, no specific mechanism or plan was developed.

In 2009, the Interagency Interoperability Oversight Group (IIOG) examined the results of the 2008 assessment along with issues in law enforcement dispatch and dispatch for other field going personnel. As a result of these deliberations, IIOG agreed to sponsor the Interagency Dispatch Improvement Project (IDIP) Steering Committee, which is integrated across USFS/DOI programs and agencies that use dispatch services. The IDIP is chartered to provide leadership and direction to provide efficient and cost-effective interagency dispatch capability that meets the business needs of stakeholders at all levels through standards, integration, and interoperability.

The IDIP Steering Committee has decided to charter 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. This pilot project will cover two areas, California and the Southwest (Arizona, New Mexico, and west Texas), and will include federal, state, local, and tribal stakeholders. The name of this project is the Interagency Dispatch Optimization Pilot Project (IDOPP).

## Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to:

- Review and analyze current dispatching operations, organization, infrastructure, business processes, and governance to establish a comprehensive understanding of the issues and requirements for workload, workforce staffing, business practices, technology, funding, governance, interoperability, training, and qualifications needed to optimize dispatch operations in the future.
- Develop a methodology to optimize the dispatch workload and staffing mixes that considers relevant factors such as integrated business needs, co-location, operational requirements at various levels in organization hierarchy and locations to ensure that special requirements specific to certain operations are not missed in the process.
- Develop a range of alternatives that include a cost/benefit analysis to improve and optimize all aspects of dispatch services.
- Develop enabling technology architecture to support the organizational model(s) developed.
- Develop a "toolbox" of methodologies, national standards to address inconsistencies, applications, or other tools that other areas can use to analyze and optimize their dispatch operations.

## Project Scope:

The focus of the project is to improve program delivery of dispatch services while meeting the mission needs of the USFS, DOI, and other State/Local partners. It will focus on the following issues and potential areas for improvement:

- Dispatch Mission, Function, and Scope
- Governance
- Dispatch Workload/Staffing

- Dispatch Center Locations and Coverage
- Operational Standards
- Training Standards
- Technology/Equipment Standards
- Facility Standards
- Dispatch Center Typing

In examining the above issues, the project 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.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

**Project Sponsor(s):** Interagency Dispatch Improvement Project (IDIP) Steering Committee

**Bridge Team Co-Chairs:** Tom Speaks (Forest Supervisor, Cherokee National Forest) and Cindy Ott-Jones (Superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area).

**Customer(s):** Interagency Dispatch Service Users, Agency and Non-Agency Partners and Other Stakeholders

**Project Team(s):** To complete this project, a number of teams and oversight groups were deemed necessary. The following is a list of the teams and a brief statement that outlines their roles and responsibilities:

- **Oversight Support Team (OST):** This team will support the execution of the contract and provide oversight to meet Leadership's intent to increase dispatch efficiency in the selected pilot area(s).
- **Interagency Dispatch Optimization Pilot Project Bridge Team:** The IDOPP Bridge Team will be responsible for developing the overarching project plan, for ongoing project oversight, and for ensuring that the pilot project contributes to development of national-level solutions to improving dispatch services.
- **SW and CA Sub-Team Executive Oversight Groups:** The Sub Team Executive Oversight Groups will direct the Pilot Sub Team Leaders, review their reports and recommendations, and help direct implementation once solution decisions are made.
- **SW and CA Pilot Project Sub-Teams:** The Pilot Project Sub-Teams for CA and the SW will perform the bulk of the work needed to identify issues and analyze the data, and develop well documented and supported solutions to improve dispatch operations, staffing, and organizations in their area.
- **Contract Support Team:** The Contract Support Team will provide technical assistance to review prior agency studies; provide training of the analysis and methodologies used; develop a communications plan; assist in conducting information needs assessments, establish data sources; assist with research and analysis; help develop the "As-Is" situation; and support planning and project team meetings as needed.

### **Project Approach:**

The IDOPP will assess current business and organizational models, identify issues and user requirements, and develop specific approaches to improve and optimize dispatch services. It will also produce a set of

methodologies and assessment protocols for use in conducting optimization projects in other areas and recommendations for dispatch standards in the future. Alternatives to optimize dispatch services and operations will be developed that include cost benefit analyses. Preferred alternative(s) will be implemented to test and evaluate results. Lessons learned will be documented.

The project will be accomplished in three major phases:

- Phase one will address common elements, mission requirements, and the scope and function of dispatch services.
- Phase two will use the results of phase one to develop specific approaches to improve and optimize dispatch services in the two areas based on the issues and considerations described in Section 2 (Scope) of the Project Plan.
- Phase three will develop a set of methodologies and principles for use in conducting similar optimization pilot projects in other geographic areas, and a preliminary set of national-level principles and standards to guide dispatch services and operations in the future.

### **Project Deliverables:**

Deliverables are associated with each of the three major phases of the project.

#### **Phase 1:**

- Descriptions of mission needs and requirements for dispatch services; and,
- Scope and functions of dispatch services.

Each sub-team will develop these products. The Bridge Team will review and approve a standardized list of each for use by two geographic areas in phase two.

#### **Phase 2**

- Alternatives for improving delivery of dispatch services based on the results of phase one and addressing the issues and considerations in Section 2 (Scope) of the Project Plan;
- Recommended standards and criteria for staffing, operations, facilities, and other elements necessary to implement improved dispatch services;
- Recommended governance approach; and,
- Summary of approach and methodology used to develop alternatives (e.g., data collected and analyzed, evaluation criteria).

Each sub-team will develop these products. Alternatives for improving and optimizing dispatch services will include an analysis of how the alternatives address the issues and considerations found in Section 2 (Scope) of the Project Plan, pros and cons for each alternative, cost estimates, and anticipated benefits. The Bridge Team will review the alternatives for consistency with the overall project purpose and scope and will recommend revisions as necessary or appropriate.

#### **Phase 3**

- Proposed national principles, standards, criteria, etc. that can be used to guide improved dispatch services and operations nation-wide, including description of further analysis or data needed; and,
- Proposed methodology for conducting optimization analyses in other areas.

The Bridge Team will develop the phase three products.

### **Assumptions:**

- The project covers the mission requirements for dispatch services of the USFS and the DOI and associated interaction and interface with other partners such as state, local, and tribal governments and other federal agencies.
- The mission requirements include, but are not limited to, wildland fire, law enforcement, other land management functions, and administrative support.
- All team members have ownership of their individual study processes and team assignments.
- All team members and those responding to data requests commit to meeting proposed timelines.
- Supporting data for this study is available, auditable, and accurate.
- Budget and resource capacity is available to meet the desired timelines and objective.

- The project will receive full commitment from interagency partners and stakeholders (e.g., other federal, state, county, and local entities) to assist in describing the as-is situation, identifying issues, framing solutions, and implementing selected alternatives.

**Risks:**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Contingency Plan</b>
Competing priorities for time and commitment of project personnel	Obtain strong commitment of team members and their supervisors	Delay of project target completion date
Personnel changes during project impact team membership or project oversight forcing delays	Identify alternates and be prepared to move in other team member(s) to fill the gap	Reset or delay project completion date until adequate resources are on board
Lack of interagency support or agreement to implement pilot project findings	Request out-year funding for implementation. Ensure interagency partners are involved in analysis and supportive of solutions developed to frame implementation alternatives throughout project	Revisit implementation alternatives and find solution(s) that best work for all partners involved

**Project Facilities and Resources:**

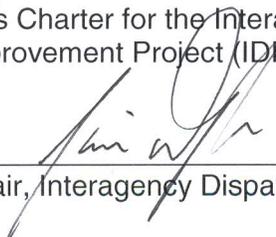
- Funding: USFS to provide sufficient funding to complete the project
- SW and CA to provide leadership and SMEs for their Sub Teams and Executive Oversight Groups
- Agency and program leaders to sponsor line officers and program area leadership positions to the Bridge Team to provide project oversight and management.
- A Bridge Team Leader to coordinate the pilot project through completion.
- Agency Executive Leadership to implement recommendations and findings.

**Performance Measures:**

- Objective measurements:
  - Develop project plan and document requirements, objectives and milestones.
  - Complete analysis and project deliverables on time.
  - Identify guidelines, standards, tools, and alternatives to improve dispatch efficiency and develop cost benefit analysis for the recommended solutions.
  - Implement preferred alternative(s)
  - Establish performance measures in pilot areas to monitor for success
  - Improved dispatch capability and reduced costs
- Subjective measurements:
  - Successful interagency partner and stakeholder communication and involvement in solution development
  - Post implementation use of lessons learned, standards, or tools from pilot project to guide future dispatch optimization efforts.

**Approval:**

This Charter for the Interagency Dispatch Optimization Pilot Project is approved by the Interagency Dispatch Improvement Project (IDIP) as written.

  
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 Chair, Interagency Dispatch Improvement Project

Jan. 14, 2011  
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 Date