

Interagency Dispatch Optimization Pilot Project (IDOPP)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Answers

What is the Interagency Dispatch Optimization Pilot Project?

The Interagency Dispatch Optimization Pilot Project (IDOPP) will take a detailed look at how to optimize dispatch operations and business practices for fire, law enforcement, and other field going personnel.

Who is sponsoring the pilot project?

In 2009, the Interagency Interoperability Oversight Group (IIOG) examined the results of recent dispatch assessments and issues related to wildland fire management, law enforcement, 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 chartered the pilot project as a means to help provide efficient and cost-effective interagency dispatch capability that meets the business needs of stakeholders at all levels through standards, integration, and interoperability.

What areas were identified to be included in the pilot project?

The pilot project will cover two areas; California and the Southwest (Arizona, New Mexico, and west Texas).

What agencies and partners will be included in the pilot project?

The project will include federal, state, local, and tribal agencies and stakeholders. Federal agencies will include USDA Forest Service and the following DOI bureaus - NPS, FWS, BLM, and BIA.

What are the goals of the project?

The overall purposes of the Interagency Dispatch Optimization Pilot Project are to identify:

- Implementable organizational configurations for optimizing integrated interagency, multi-functional dispatching in the two selected areas;
- Methodologies, business needs, user requirements, management issues, questions to be answered, and tools for use by others to optimize dispatch services elsewhere;
- Principles and standards to help dispatch efficiently meet business needs and address user requirements that include:
 - Mission needs/requirements
 - Technology/equipment
 - Facilities – location, coverage, etc.
 - Workload – workforce, staffing, etc.
 - Business practices and operational standards
 - Governance.

Who will manage the project and how will it be organized?

California and the Southwest will each have an executive oversight group to ensure within-area leadership support for implementation. Each area will also have a sub-team of subject matter experts (SMEs) from various agencies and program areas who will do the majority of work needed to identify key issues and data needs, conduct analyses, and develop well documented and supported solutions that can be implemented and piloted to improve dispatch operations.

A Bridge Team will provide overall project management, ensure that the two sub-teams use consistent assumptions, approaches, and methodologies, and produce comparable deliverables. The Bridge Team will also integrate the findings and recommendations from the two sub-teams into a final report.

How were the members of the Bridge Team selected?

The Bridge Team's role is to help develop the overarching project plan, provide ongoing project oversight, and to ensure that the pilot project contributes to development of national-level solutions to improving dispatch services. The Bridge Team is co-chaired by two line officers (one from the USFS and one from NPS). Other representatives were selected from a cross-section of the affected program areas (wildland fire, law enforcement, radio/telecom, etc) and agencies. The two pilot area Sub-Team Leaders both serve on the Bridge Team. The person selected to be the Bridge Team Coordinator helped to lead the Efficiency Assessment Study that was completed in 2008 (which was strictly limited to wildland fire dispatch for federal agencies) in order to provide continuity between that effort and this pilot project.

How will the project be conducted?

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 geographic 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.

Will a data call be required?

Yes. The IDOPP teams anticipate the need to develop a data call that will be distributed to dispatch, law enforcement, and possibly other personnel in California and the Southwest for completion.

What are the project deliverables?

Phase One Deliverables

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

Phase Two Deliverables

- 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).

Phase Three Deliverables

- 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.

Will solutions for the different pilot areas need to be the same?

No. Even though both geographic area Sub-Teams will work under direction provided by the same project plan, we fully expect different solutions will be recommended and implemented in California and the Southwest based on their distinct differences. We do not expect this endeavor to result in "cookie cutter" solutions. However, we do expect there to be some overarching or cross-cutting issues that could be improved by establishing national standards or policies.

Will contractors be utilized to support the project?

Yes. Management Analysis, Incorporated (MAI) will provide consultants to support the project, conduct data calls, assist with research and analysis, conduct cost/ benefit analysis of alternatives, and assist with writing and editing of reports.

What is the timeframe for the project?

The project was launched in January 2011 and will take approximately 18 months from initiation to completion.

How is the project being funded?

The IDOPP is not funded by a single agency. The USFS is funding contract consultant support for the project. Participating agencies are responsible to fund personnel salaries, travel, and other project-related costs at levels decided upon by each agency.

Where can I find out more information about the project?

The project website is: <http://www.iio.gov/idopp.php>

You can find information about the project charter, project plan, timeline, project team membership and status reports on the webpage.

Is there a way I can submit questions or comments about the project?

Yes. You can email: IDOPPInbox@fs.fed.us