



Interagency Interoperability Oversight Group



April 6, 2011

TOPIC - Implementation of the Intent of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Interagency Recognition of Security Controls and Credentials

BACKGROUND – In November 2010, the USDA and DOI signed the MOU to recognize and accept each other's security credentials. This MOU was intended to remove barriers to interoperability. Security professionals in USDA, FS, DOI and its Bureau's have done very little to implement (change procedures and processes) to implement the intent of the MOU.

Knowledge of the MOU is spreading informally both inside the IT community and among our customers. The field expects that many of the barriers they have been facing (dual training, etc.) should instantly go away. However few if any changes have actually occurred. Therefore we have a piece of paper with little or no affect for our customers in the field. This is a source of frustration and disappointment.

KEY CAPABILITIES NEEDED – The following list includes many but likely not all capabilities needed which should now be permissible under the MOU once internal security processes and procedures are modified.

- Allow for cross-network authentication (Access Authentication) including sharing employee profile information between DOI and USDA-FS.
- Sharing peripherals (printers/plotters) between DOI and FS users in the same office.
- Elimination of the need for completing HSPD-12 annual training requirements for both departments when an employee has a need for access to both networks.
- Eliminate the procedure which requires other agency Federal employees to be listed in the "NEIS" database used by the FS to track all non-FS employees entitled to use the FS Network.
- Eliminate the need for dual network and cabling in offices that share workspace for DOI and FS employees. Allow DOI employee to connect DOI computer to FS Network for VPN access to DOI network, and vice versa.
- Facilitate physical access for both DOI and USDA employees with proper credentials from employing agency.
- Allow FS or DOI employees to reciprocally perform O&M activities on either network, radio system, etc.
- Provide an interagency collaborative tool for sharing documents and other information (such as Sharepoint). The field has needed this for years. There is no viable solution known.
- Access to FS and DOI networks for non-Federal partners who need access based on interagency cooperative partnerships (such as State and Private Forestry for fire and incident management).

RECOMMENDED SOLUTION – Resources need to be directed and dedicated to implement the intention of the MOU. The work includes modifying processes, security validation, knowledge documentation revisions, implementation, communication to the field and possibly funding if new processes require any software or hardware changes. IIOG CIO's may want to consider a forming a "Strike Team" of interagency security specialists and others involved in credentialing employees re HSPD-12 (such as human resources in the FS). This short-duration team specifically focused on quickly modifying these processes and procedures would be the most effective way to quickly implement the intent of the MOU. In addition:

- CIOs at FS, DOI and USDA to communicate the existence of the MOU and provide direction to appropriate staffs to support the implementation of the intent.
- Identify dedicated staff in each Department/Agency with the skills, dedication, authority and time to make the changes necessary (strike team concept)
- Ensure that solution/implementation activities are coordinated so to "do no harm" to other Department/Agency efforts (strike team approach would ensure this).

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