

Interagency Standardized Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS) Update

April 27, 2015

Background

As part of the Interagency Dispatch Implementation Project (IDIP) effort, an interdisciplinary team (IDT) is developing a long-term interagency Standardized Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) solution. Forest Service and Department of the Interior (DOI) units and their state partners currently use WildCAD, Selkirk, Alturas, and other commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software in nationwide dispatch operations for wildland fire response. The various COTS CAD systems lack standardization and interoperability, leading to increased dispatcher training needs, system inefficiencies, duplicative efforts, an increased potential for errors, prospective safety issues and higher overall costs. In addition, current COTS CAD software in use is not compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, something required of all government operated Information Technology (IT) systems.

In April 2015, the Forest Service issued a pre-solicitation notice for a contract of up to three years of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) on WildCAD, the predominant system in use. This O&M contract will allow DOI and the FS to continue dispatch operations using WildCAD until an optimal and fully compliant CAD capability is in place.

Interagency Interdisciplinary Team

The IDIP established an IDT that includes dispatch subject matter experts (SME) and representatives from various agencies with fire responsibilities, and assigned the team to follow the process necessary to procure a CAD capability that meets interagency mission needs. The team will gather information to establish functional requirements for dispatch operations while improving consistency and compatibility, and will develop appropriate data standards for CAD. Using the criteria and approval submission process established by the Wildland Fire Information and Technology (WFIT) Executive Board, the team will develop a business case, acquisition plan and investment proposals for interagency CAD capability for leadership review and approval.

This project is procurement sensitive and requires confidentiality from each team member to ensure integrity in the procurement process and compliance with Federal Acquisition Regulations. Participation on the project, whether as an IDT member, a technical advisor, a labor union or program representative or an agency leader, requires submission of and compliance with a signed non-disclosure agreement.

Recent Activities

The IDT held a web meeting it called the "CAD Carnival" during the week of April 6, which gave the team an opportunity to learn about different systems and to begin the market research necessary to the CAD effort. The web meeting included user demonstrations of several systems in use across various agencies and it gave participants a concise look at features, capabilities and pros/cons of the systems. Notes from the presenters and IDT team members and recordings of the web meetings document each system's characteristics and provide a record that the IDT can revisit as necessary as the project moves forward.

Next Steps

The first face-to-face IDT meeting is in Boise the week of May 25. At that kickoff meeting, the IDT plans to conduct an information needs assessment, develop draft requirements and initiate a Request for Information.

Comments, Questions and Suggestions

The Interagency CAD IDT encourages interested people to submit questions, comments and suggestions regarding the project to idip@fs.fed.us. The team will consider all suggestions and will develop, keep updated and post to the website a "Comments and Frequently Asked Questions" document once the project is underway. The IDIP web page is at: <http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/WFIT/applications/IDIP/index.shtml>.

Contacts

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