

**National Fire Plan Review
Acquisition and Assistance Management Review Questionnaire**

Responding Location/Response Coordinator:

Bureau: ____ (FS, BIA, BLM, FWS, NPS)

Response level: ____

- a) Bureau/Service headquarters
- b) Region or equivalent level
- c) field unit (park, forest, refuge, etc.)

Geographic Area Coordinating Center (GACC) #: ____ (if applicable)

GACC Name (if applicable)

Sub-geographic Area (if applicable)

Name of Response Coordinator

Organizational Unit

Street Address

City, State,

Zip Code

Telephone

Fax

Internet e-mail address

Date Submitted

(Response due January 10, 2001. Response should be via the automated questionnaire at <http://www.doi.gov/pam/wfp/>. The user ID is: nfpreview. The Password is: nfp1849)

Purpose. The purpose of this questionnaire is:

1. To gather information to assess the adequacy of Departmental and bureau guidance on wildland fire contracting and assistance and the level of field knowledge of Congressional and Departmental intent.
2. To assess the extent that contracts have been awarded for hazardous fuels treatments and burned area rehabilitation, to local entities, or with entities outside of the local area who hired a significant percentage (at least 51%) of local people.
3. To assess the extent that cooperative agreements/grants have been awarded to assist local communities to develop local capability to plan and implement hazardous fuels reduction and burned area stabilization/rehabilitation activities, and monitor those activities.
4. To assess the adequacy of Departmental and bureau data collection on contracting and federal assistance funded by the wildland fire program.
5. To identify and promote best practices among the bureaus and regions in terms of inter-bureau and inter-agency cooperation and related process efficiencies and/or cost reductions.

After analyzing the information from questionnaire responses and conducting interviews at selected sites, the review team will recommend actions to further increase interagency cooperation and to continue to increase contracting and assistance to local communities in FY 2002.

Introduction. The FY 2001 DOI and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, Public Law 106-291 provided substantially increased funds for the wildland fire program and authorized the use of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements to accomplish fuels reduction, rehabilitation, restoration treatments, training and monitoring of these activities on Federal land or on adjacent non-Federal land that benefits resources on Federal land. These authorities are provided: “. . . notwithstanding Federal Government procurement and contracting laws.”

The greatly expanded Hazardous Fuels Management and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Programs place primary emphasis on community and environmental protection, stabilization, and rehabilitation of burned areas and on community assistance programs that may be used to develop local capability and homeowner education. Costs for community assistance programs may be shared. Enhancement of local small business employment opportunities in rural communities and best value practices may be taken into account in selecting sources for contracts and agreements.

In conducting fuels reduction, stabilization, and rehabilitation treatments, local contractors should be used whenever possible. Contracting sources include:

- local private, nonprofit, or cooperative entities;

- Youth Conservation Corps crews or related partnerships with State, local, and non-profit youth groups;
- small or micro-businesses; or
- other entities that will hire or train a significant percentage of local people to complete the contract work.

Definitions: For your information, the definition of key terms follows:

Hazardous fuels treatments include application of prescribed fire, mechanical removal, mulching, a combination of these methods, and application of chemicals.

Burned area rehabilitation is designed to prevent further degradation of resources following wildland fire through (1) short-term stabilization activities, including seeding and planting vegetation, to protect life and property, protect municipal watersheds, and prevent unacceptable degradation of critical natural and cultural resources, and (2) longer-term rehabilitation activities to repair and improve lands unlikely to recover naturally from severe fire damage.

The January 2001, interagency joint policy memorandum included policies applying to fuels reduction, rehabilitation, and restoration contracts in the FS, the BLM, the NPS, the FWS, and the BIA. The policies, strategies, and models for community assistance agreements and rural fire assistance agreements apply to the four bureaus in the DOI. The FS will use its authority other than Public Law 106-291 to provide community assistance through the State Foresters.

A separate review team will assess the extent to which Wildland Fire Agencies have implemented the policy and strategies to assist rural and volunteer fire departments through grants and cooperative agreements under Interior's \$10 million pilot authority. Therefore, the Rural Fire Assistance Program is not included in this questionnaire and review.

Questionnaire Outline:

- I. Wildland Fire Contracting Policy
- II. Geographic Area Coordination, Cooperation and Organization
- III. Interagency Policies, Model Contracts and Community Assistance Agreements
- IV. Hazardous Fuels Treatment
- V. Burned Area Rehabilitation
- VI. Barriers to Contracting
- VII. Contracting Team Capacity
- VIII. Vendor Outreach
- IX. Community Assistance/Contractor Capacity
- X. Data Reporting and Analysis

The above outline may lend itself to breaking up the report to appropriate local team members to develop proposed response in hard copy before entering the final answers on the web site provided.

I. National Fire Plan Contracting:

1. How aware are your line management officials of Congressional intent that wildland fire fuels treatment and burned area rehabilitation, including contracts for monitoring activities, be contracted to:

- local private, nonprofit, or cooperative entities;
 - Youth Conservation Corps crews or related partnerships with State, local, and non-profit youth groups;
 - small or micro-businesses; or
 - other entities that will hire or train a significant percentage of local people to complete such contracts.
- a) very aware b) somewhat aware c) hardly aware d) somewhat unaware e) totally unaware

2. How aware are your resource program specialists and managers of Congressional intent that wildland fire fuels treatment and burned area rehabilitation including contracts for monitoring activities, be contracted to the above entities?

- a) very aware b) somewhat aware c) hardly aware d) somewhat unaware e) totally unaware

3. How aware are your fire management officials of Congressional intent that wildland fire fuels treatment and burned area rehabilitation including contracts for monitoring activities, be contracted to the above entities?

- a) very aware b) somewhat aware c) hardly aware d) somewhat unaware e) totally unaware

4. How aware is your local management team of the policy memorandum titled “Joint Implementation of Wildland Fire Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 Department of the Interior (DOI) Appropriations Act through Procurement Contracts, Grants, or Cooperative Agreements” that was signed in January 2001 by the Wildland Fire Agency Bureau Heads?

- a) very aware b) somewhat aware c) hardly aware d) somewhat unaware e) totally unaware

5. How supportive is your line management of contracting for hazardous fuels treatment projects?

- a) very supportive b) somewhat supportive c) neutral d) not supportive e) opposed to contracting out

6. In your view, should the Department-level policy and guidance on hazardous fuels treatment and burned area rehabilitation contracting and assistance to implement the National Fire Plan be revised or expanded in FY 2002?

Yes ___ No ___

7. If yes, what do you suggest? _____

8. Do the fuels management, and fire management officials support contracting for hazardous fuels reduction?

Yes ___ No ___

If not, what are the reasons for lack of support? _____

9. Do the resource program staff support contracting for hazardous fuels reduction?

Yes ___ No ___

If not, what are the reasons for lack of support? _____

10. Does your unit have a "best practices" process or idea to propose for broad use in support of the National Fire Plan community assistance effort?

Yes ___ No ___

11. If yes, please summarize: _____

II. Geographic Area Coordination, Cooperation and Organization:

Eleven geographic areas and sub-areas were established to provide an interagency approach for wildland fire suppression. The same infrastructure is now being used, with sub-geographic areas added, for fuels treatment contracting. The sub-geographic areas, the lead agencies and lead Contracting Officers were determined locally based on the following criteria in the joint policy memorandum.

- the workload (number of contract projects) within the sub- geographic area;
- the size of the area (e.g., State, regional, drainage, etc.);
- the total dollar amount of all contract projects within the area;
- the pool of capable local vendors;
- jurisdiction/Congressional District;
- Contracting Officer availability and supporting resources;
- Contracting Officer's dollar warrant limit must be equal to or higher than the total dollar amount of each contract to be awarded; and

1. For purposes of hazardous fuels treatment, what is your estimate of how effectively the lead agency Fuels Specialist and Contracting Officers in the four Interior Bureaus and the U.S. Forest Service coordinated in your geographic area in FY 2001? ____

- a) very effectively b) somewhat effectively c) hardly effectively
d) somewhat ineffectively e) totally ineffectively

2. What is your expectation of geographic area coordination in your area in FY 2002?

- a) very coordinated b) somewhat coordinated c) hardly coordinated
d) somewhat uncoordinated e) totally uncoordinated

3. Is your judgment for FY 2002 based on: ____

- a) increased management attention
b) increased knowledge level of federal participants
c) demands/increased knowledge of local communities
d) other, please specify: _____

4. Do you believe more training is appropriate to promote coordination among the five bureaus/services?

Yes ____ No ____

5. In your view, what is the best way to promote and increase coordination?

III. Interagency Policies, Model Contracts and Community Assistance Agreements:

Contracting and community assistance policies, strategies, model agreements, and vendor outreach plan were prepared by an interagency team to speed the contracting process and improve service and interagency collaboration. The policy and tools are posted on the web at <http://www.fireplan.gov>

1. How aware is your management team of the policies, strategies, model agreements, and vendor outreach plan?

a) very aware b) somewhat aware c) hardly aware d) somewhat unaware e) totally unaware

2. Do the policies, strategies, model contracts and agreements, and vendor outreach plan meet your needs?

Yes ___ No ___

3. If not, why? _____

4. Did you use the model performance-based contracts for fuels treatment or burned area rehabilitation?

Yes ___ No ___

5. If not, why? _____

6. Did you use the model community assistance cooperative agreements to develop local capability to plan and implement hazardous fuels reduction activities, and train and monitor those activities in FY 2001?

Yes ___ No ___

7. If, yes, how useful were the model contracts? _____

a) very useful b) somewhat useful c) not useful

8. If not, why? _____

9. Do you have suggestions on making the model contracts more useful? Specify:

10. Did your unit award any Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts for the fuels treatment in FY 2001?

Yes ___ No ___

11. If not, why? _____

12. If, yes, how useful were the IDIQ contracts? _____

a) very useful b) somewhat useful c) not useful

13. Did your unit award any Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts for the burned areas stabilization/rehabilitation in FY 2001?

Yes ___ No ___

14. If not, why? _____

15. If, yes, how useful were the IDIQ contracts? ___

a) very useful b) somewhat useful c) not useful

16. Do you have suggestions on making the model contracts more useful? Specify:

17. Did these awards authorize ordering by other agencies?

Yes ___ No ___

18. If not, why? _____

19. Does your organizational unit intend to use the model contracts, cooperative agreements, or vendor outreach plan in FY 2002?

Yes ___ No ___

20. If not, why: _____

IV. Hazardous Fuels Treatment:

1. Did your organizational unit meet its acreage target for hazardous fuels treatment work in FY 2001?

Yes ___ No ___

2. If not, why? _____

3. If not, what % of your target did you attain? ___%

4. Congressional intent is that we will contract hazardous fuels treatment work. How much did your organizational unit contract for hazardous fuels treatment work in FY 2001 as a % of total acres treated? ___%

5. For your organizational unit, what overall levels (as a % of total acres treated) of hazardous fuels treatment do you expect to be done by contracting?

FY 2002 ___% FY 2003 ___% FY 2004 ___% FY 2005 ___% FY 2006 ___%

6. Were you aware in FY 2001 of the Congressional intent to build contracting capacity among local vendors to complete hazardous fuels reduction work, particularly in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

Yes ___ No ___

7. For your organizational unit, what are the total number and dollar amount of the cooperative agreements/grants awarded to assist local communities to develop local capability to plan and implement hazardous fuels reduction activities, and monitor those activities?

Number: _____ \$ _____

8. Are you using the local area labor force in Wildland Fire Program efforts?

Yes ___ No ___

9. If not, why? _____

10. If yes, how:

- a. ___ Hiring local contractors
- b. ___ Hiring other contractors who are required to hire 51% or more locally
- c. ___ Hiring federal workers locally
- d. ___ Using local prison labor
- e. ___ JOB Corps
- f. ___ Youth Conservation Corps
- g. ___ Non Profits
- h. ___ Other (specify: _____)

9. What was the primary method in FY 2001 of employing local labor in your geographic area? ___

(Use codes from question 8 above).

V. Burned Area Stabilization/Rehabilitation:

(Geographic area designations do not apply to burned area rehabilitation. Please forward this portion of this questionnaire to appropriate field offices for all of the five Wildland Fire Agencies operating in your geographic area and ask them to respond appropriately to you so that their answers can be compiled into your response.)

1. Did your organizational unit meet its acreage target for burned area rehabilitation in FY 2001?

Yes ___ No ___

2. If not, why? _____

3. If not, what percentage of its targets did you attain? ___%

4. Congressional intent is that we will contract out a significant percent of stabilization/rehabilitation work. How much did your organizational unit contract for burned area rehabilitation in FY 2001 as a % of total acres rehabilitated?

Total acres rehabilitated _____ Rehabilitated by contract _____ %

4. For your organizational unit, what overall levels (as a percentage of acreage restored) of burned area rehabilitation do you expect to be done by contracting?

FY 2002 ___% FY 2003 ___% FY 2004 ___% FY 2005 ___%

VI. Barriers to Contracting:

1. What do you perceive as the barriers to contracting fuels treatment work? (check all that apply).
 - a. No Department-level policy
 - b. Inadequate Bureau/Forest Service-level guidance and direction
 - c. Desire to perform the work in-house
 - d. Inadequate or untrained resources/program staff to manage the contracts
 - e. Inadequate or untrained contracting staff
 - f. Contracts not available to place timely orders
 - g. Little or no local vendors who are trained and capable of performing prescribed fire, mechanical or chemical treatments
 - h. Lack of clear annual personnel performance measures/guidance
 - i. Lack of fire and resources program management support/interest.
 - j. Lack of goals and plans to contract.
 - k. Lack of goals and plans to award cooperative agreements/grants with local communities to build capability.
 - h. Other (specify: _____)

2. Which of the above is the most prominent barrier for your organizational unit? _____
(Use codes from question above).

3. What is being done to remove these barriers.

4. When will the barriers be overcome? FY 2002 ___ FY 2003 ___ FY 2004 ___

5. What do you perceive as the barriers to contracting out ESR work? (check all that apply).
 - a. No Department-level policy
 - b. Inadequate Bureau/Forest Service-level guidance and direction
 - c. Desire to perform the work in-house
 - d. Inadequate or untrained resources/program staff to manage the contracts
 - e. Inadequate or untrained contracting staff
 - f. Contracts not available to place timely orders
 - g. Little or no local vendors who are trained and capable of performing prescribed fire, mechanical or chemical treatments
 - h. Lack of clear annual personnel performance measures/guidance
 - i. Lack of fire and resources program management support/interest.
 - j. Lack of goals and plans to contract.
 - k. Lack of goals and plans to award cooperative agreements with local communities to build capability
 - h. Other (specify: _____)

6. Which of the above is the most prominent barrier for your organizational unit? _____
(Use codes from question above).

7. What is being done to remove these barriers?

8. When will the barriers be overcome? FY 2002 ___ FY 2003 ___ FY 2004 ___

VII. Contracting Team Capacity:

1. Does your organizational unit have adequately staffed and trained contracting teams to be successful in supporting the hazardous fuels reduction and rehab programs? Yes ___ No ___

2. Did your organizational unit hire/train additional contracting personnel for the fuels and rehab program in FY 2001? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, how many? ___

3. Will you hire more in FY 02? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, how many? ___

4. Did your organizational unit hire/train additional fuels specialists for the fire program in FY 01? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, how many? ___

5. Will you hire more in FY 02? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, how many? ___

6. Did your organizational unit hire contracting specialists or purchasing agents through a contract (temp services) for such services to support the program in FY 01?

Yes ___ No ___ If yes, how many? ___

7. Do you intend to do this in FY 02? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, how many? ___

8. Did you hire/train additional Contracting Officers' Representatives (CORs) for the fuels and rehab program in FY 2001? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, how many? ___

9. Do you plan to hire/train additional Contracting Officers' Representatives (CORs) for the fuels and rehab program in FY 2002? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, how many? ___

10. Does adequate capacity exist in your contracting and fuels program offices for substantially increased hazardous fuels program contracting workload, given your responses above on new hires and training?

Yes ___ No ___

11. If not, when will this be corrected? FY 2002 ___ FY 2003 ___

12. Is there a strong working partnership between the contracting staff and wildland fire program staff? Yes ___ No ___

13. If not, why? _____

14. Is there a strong working partnership between the contracting staff and resource program staff? Yes ___ No ___

15. If not, why? _____

VIII. Vendor Outreach:

1. How aware is your line management of the vendor outreach plan at www.fireplan.gov? ___
a) very aware b) somewhat aware c) hardly aware d) somewhat unaware e) totally unaware

2. How aware is your organizational unit of the vendor outreach plan at www.fireplan.gov? ___
a) very aware b) somewhat aware c) hardly aware d) somewhat unaware e) totally unaware

3. Has your organizational unit done any outreach to the private sector to determine that capacity exists among local, small businesses to meet the contracting out requirements of your fuels treatment and ESR programs?
Yes ___ No ___

4. If not, why? _____

5. If yes, how?
___ a. Bureau small business specialists
___ b. Departmental Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
___ c. U.S. Small Business Administration specialists
___ d. Pre-bid conferences
___ e. Commerce Business Daily (CBDNet) or FedBizOpps announcements
___ f. local media ads
___ g. small business trade associations
___ h. all of the above
___ i. none of the above
___ j. Other (Specify: _____)

6. If yes, what type of outreach have you found most successful? __, __, __
(use letter codes from question above in response)

7. Which type of outreach do you plan to use in FY 2002?
___ a. Bureau small business specialists
___ b. Departmental Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
___ c. U.S. Small Business Administration specialists
___ d. Pre-bid conferences
___ e. Commerce Business Daily (CBDNet) or FedBizOpps announcements
___ f. local media ads
___ g. small business trade associations
___ h. all of the above
___ i. none of the above
___ j. Other (Specify: _____)

8. Are you aware of the assistance authority that can be used to build external contracting capacity for fuels treatment and ESR work? Yes ___ No ___

9. Is your organizational unit using this assistance authority? Yes ___ No ___

10. If yes, how much \$ _____
For what purpose? _____

11. If not, why? _____

IX. Community Assistance (Grants and Cooperative Agreements)

1. Did your unit use grants and cooperative agreements to assist local communities to develop local capability as described in the National Fire Plan?

Yes ___ No ___

2. If not, why? _____

3. Did your unit use the model grants and cooperative agreements posted on the National Fire Plan website?

Yes ___ No ___

4. If not, why? _____

5. How effective did you find the models?

a) very useful b) somewhat useful c) hardly useful d)not useful

7. If not, why? _____

8. Before you awarded NFP-funded individual or block grants in FY 2001, did your unit complete Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation for the proposed action?

Yes ___ No ___

9. If not, why? _____

10. Was the consultation process a barrier to completing NFP assistance actions?

Yes ___ No ___

11. If yes, why? _____

12. Should there be more Department-level guidance for wildland fire assistance programs, including ESA Section 7 consultation requirements?

Yes ___ No ___

13. Does your unit have a "best practices" process or idea to propose for broad use in support of the National Fire Plan community assistance effort?

Yes ___ No ___

14. If yes, please summarize: _____

X. Adequacy and Consistency of Data Reporting:

Contract Action Reporting:

The current automated procurement system/procurement data reporting system was modified in FY 2001 to add a single, specific code to the agency implementation of the SF-279 report form to provide reporting capability on contract actions and orders in support of the National Fire Plan. Reports and data are available through your bureau or Departmental procurement data contact points.

1. Does the system, as it now exists, meet your needs to appropriately identify fuels treatment work and burned area stabilization and rehabilitation work completed by contract and to obtain statistical data, including appropriate program breakouts, on contract awards in this program?

Yes ___ No ___

2. If not, what do you suggest be changed? _____

3. Is any part of your National Fire Plan contracts data collected manually (outside the procurement system):

Yes ___ No ___

4. If yes, why: _____

Federal Assistance Reporting:

Agency feeder system to the current Federal Assistance Award Data System (FAADS) reporting system were modified in FY 2001 to require a specific code to designate an assistance action as funded by the National Fire Plan and to thus enable us to obtain statistical data on completed work in this program. Reports and data are available through your bureau or departmental FAADS contact point.

5. Was all of your National Fire Plan related grant and cooperative agreements data properly reported into the Federal Assistance Award Data System (FAADS)?

Yes ___ No ___

6. If not, why? _____

7. Is any part of your National Fire Plan assistance data collected manually (outside the FAADS system):

Yes ___ No ___

8. If yes, why: _____

9. Is the single FAADS code adequate to identify assistance actions under the program?

Yes ___ No ___

10. If not, what do you suggest be changed?