



## White Paper: Unit Threshold for Conducting FPA-PM Analysis

September 20, 2004

**Issue:** The intent of this paper is to provide standard direction to guide whether the workload of some units needs to be analyzed in FPA-PM.

Among the participating five federal agencies there may be small units (e.g. parks, refuges, etc.) that would not immediately benefit from running Fire Program Analysis-Preparedness Module. Running the Preparedness module may not be cost effective or an efficient use of time. Some units are required to develop fire management plans, but have not historically received funding for fire management programs based on criteria set in current planning systems and agency policies. This Threshold process will assist in determining whether these small units should or should not receive funding.

**Recommendation:** All units that are required to have a fire management plan must be included in a Fire Planning Unit. Identification with a Fire Planning Unit is the first step in FPA implementation. However, if a unit receives less than \$25,000 annual fire funding (whether it be preparedness, fuels management, or other fire funded sources) or does not have plans to seek future fire funding on the local unit, that workload does not need to be included in the FPA-PM analysis.

**Rationale:** The rationale behind the \$25,000 threshold is to set criteria that are less than one full time equivalent (FTE). This threshold is intended to capture units that currently receive or may be eligible to receive relatively small sums of money for cache support, occasional fire projects, and other limited fire management activities. The workload associated with full fire management programs that generally consist of dedicated fire management personnel and fully staffed resources will be analyzed in FPA-PM. Large scale contracts and protection agreements and exchanges must also be fully analyzed.

**Approach:** Follow the process outlined below to determine if the unit's workload needs to be analyzed in FPA-PM.

### ***Planning – Requirements for Fire Management Plans***

1. Is your administrative unit required to have a Fire Management Plan for wildland fire?
  - If YES, your unit needs to be included in a Fire Planning Unit for FPA.  
(Continue to *Funding – Receiving Annual Fire Funding on the local unit.*)
  - If NO, your unit does not need to be included in a Fire Planning Unit and does not need to engage in FPA. (STOP)

### ***Funding – Receiving Annual Fire Funding on the local unit.***

1. Does your administrative unit currently receive annual fire funding (from all sources: e.g. preparedness, fuels management, etc.) greater than \$25,000 on the local unit?
  - If YES, your unit's workload must be analyzed as part of a Fire Planning Unit in the FPA-PM analysis.
  - If NO, proceed to question 2.
2. Does your unit want to - or think it should - receive annual fire funding (from all sources: e.g. preparedness, fuels management, etc.) of greater than \$25,000 on the local unit?
  - If YES, your unit workload needs to be analyzed in a Fire Planning Unit for FPA-PM.
  - If NO, proceed to question 3.

3. Does your unit currently receive less than or equal to \$25,000 of annual fire funding (from all sources: e.g. preparedness, fuels management, etc.) on the local unit?
  - If yes, you may continue to request funding of less than or equal to \$25,000 through your traditional agency processes, or participate in the more intensive FPA-PM process. If you choose to use the traditional process the request and justification must be documented at the agency's region or state level as follows:
    - Itemize the current fiscal year fire funding received.
    - Itemize the requested annual amount and provide a justification statement for each item.
    - No FPA-PM analysis is performed.

**Discussion:** Of the five participating wildland fire agencies, some units do not meet criteria for developing fire management plans. Further, some units are required to develop fire management plans, but have not historically received funding for fire management programs based on criteria set in current planning systems and agency policies. The intent of this paper is to determine if standard direction can be articulated to guide whether the workload of some units needs to be analyzed in FPA-PM.

FPA-PM represents a fundamental change in how the five wildland fire agencies have traditionally completed a fire program analysis to determine funding levels. FPA-PM now sets a stage for interagency fire management planning, particularly with the creation of Fire Planning Units (FPUs). In many cases, FPUs stretch over large geographic areas to include small units, resulting in FPUs with many partners and may be collaborating with each other for the first time.

It is important to note that it is NOT the intent of this guidance to exclude small units who are partners in an FPU. Every unit should have a voice in the FPU and a chance to comment on the process and issues that arise from FPA-PM even if their workload is not analyzed. As Phase II of FPA evolves – which includes all remaining fire program elements beyond Preparedness – small units not included in the FPA-PM analysis may become engaged, particularly in Fuels Management, Extended Attack and Large Fire Support. It is essential to engage all members of the FPU early in the process to develop the interagency relationships required for future FPA modules.

**Conclusion:** This paper provides direction that FPUs should follow in determining whether the workload of all partners in the FPU needs to be analyzed in FPA-PM. FPUs should use caution in how they implement this direction as the intent is NOT to exclude any agency unit regardless of size that wants to engage in the process of FPA-PM. It may be possible for partners in an FPU to assist with analyzing the workload of small units if there is adequate staff and reasonable logistics. The interagency relationships formed during the FPA-PM process will set the foundation for the future FPA modules that will need the participation of all units.

Furthermore, this approach does not guarantee that units will receive funding up to \$25,000. These funding requests must still be submitted through defined agency procedures and protocols.

**Decision:** The FPA project Steering Committee discussed this issue and agreed to the direction proposed in this white paper. The paper will be forwarded to the fire directors to be incorporated as FPA policy. This recommendation of a \$25,000 annual funding threshold (from all sources: e.g. preparedness, fuels management, etc.) and its consequences will be reviewed after the first year of the implementation process when changes can be made as needed.