



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

NWCG Tasking Memorandum TM-23-007

October 30, 2023

TO: Ben Curtis, Incident Strategic Alignment Process Task Team Lead
FROM: Shane McDonald, Chair NWCG Executive Board
SUBJECT: Standards Development for the Incident Strategic Alignment Process: Strategic Risk Assessment and Strategic Operations

Tasking and Deliverables: This memorandum tasks the Incident Strategic Alignment Process (ISAP) Task Team to develop National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards to ensure strategic thought process and alignment of management actions is occurring between Agency Administrators (AAs), fire management organizations, and Incident Management Teams (IMTs) throughout the duration of an incident.

To help align this project with ongoing efforts to implement Complex Incident Management (CIM) and Incident Performance and Training Modernization (IPTM), the due dates below were developed. Therefore, the NWCG Executive Board tasks the ISAP Task Team to:

- Develop ISAP standards which outlines process and procedures for IMT use. Consider the inclusion of guidelines for when to use the process and how it scales depending on incident complexity. Utilize the following existing products to inform these efforts and consider adoption as NWCG standards. **Due May 2024.**
 - ISAP User Guide
 - SRA Excel Product Form
 - ISAP Terminology and Definitions
- Work with the NWCG Geospatial Subcommittee to develop and update a national standard template for the strategic operations map. **Due May 2024.**
- Evaluate Command and General Staff position task books, Incident Position Descriptions, and associated curriculum to ensure the inclusion and alignment of appropriate strategic planning tasks and language. Make recommendations to the appropriate NWCG position stewards (committee or subgroup) on needed changes. **Due May 2024.**
- Determine the need for an ISAP oversight body to ensure consistent evaluation, adjustment, and communication of the process, products, and procedures into the future. **Due May 2024.**
- Develop and/or improve existing curriculum to support adoption of ISAP. Consider the following:
 - Identify and recommend methods to address skills gaps related to Strategic Operations for the Operations Section Chief and other NWCG positions identified as critical to the process. **Due May 2024.**
 - Evaluate existing NWCG courses and provide recommendations on needed content changes. Consider the following courses and identify others, as relevant, for inclusion of

ISAP elements: M-580, Fire in Ecosystem Management; S-300, Extended Attack Incident Commander; S-404, Safety Officer; S-482, Strategic Operational Planning; S-495, Geospatial Fire Analysis, Interpretation and Application; S-520, Advanced Incident Management; S-590, Advanced Fire Behavior Interpretation; Complex Incident Management Course (CIMC); as well as the basic and advanced level IMT courses under development. **Due January 2025.**

- Evaluate existing NWCG courses M-581, Fire Program Management, An Overview and M-582, Fire Program Management, Leading Complex Fire Programs to determine the viability of inclusion of ISAP content in these courses specifically targeting Agency Administrators. **Due January 2025.**
- Identify business needs for technology to support implementation of the standards. Specifically, consider the following two applications. **Due October 2024.**
 - AGOL Strategic Planning Spatial tool (currently in pilot for 2023 with an adoption goal of 2025, along with defining future ownership of this service).
 - ISAP: SRA/StratOps ArcGIS StoryMap (to be used as an education and awareness tool).

In addition, the NWCG Executive Board expects the Task Team to actively consult with the Data Management Committee (DMC), Risk Management Committee (RMC), Training Delivery Committee (TDC), Incident and Position Standards Committee (IPSC), NWCG Training Development Program, and Incident Workforce Development Group (IWDG). Additionally, the Task Team should coordinate with the Course Steering Committees for S-495, S-520, M-582, S-590, basic and advanced IMT, and CIMC (along with other stakeholders/stewards as needed in the process).

The NWCG Executive Board expects the Task Team to brief out on the progress of this effort as needed, but at a minimum quarterly. Jim Shultz will serve as the NWCG Executive Board Liaison to this team.

Background: In 2017, the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) issued a tasking to address risk communication strategy for incident management. Existing IMT tools and processes were evaluated, and best management practices were developed. The strategic risk assessment process was initially piloted in 2021, to field test the best management practices developed on incidents with IMTs and AAs. In the fall of 2021, operations subject matter experts (SMEs) began incorporating tools and techniques used to develop the most successful strategies on large fires. These efforts joined after recognizing the interrelationship between risk and quality planning.

In 2022, twenty-nine IMTs field tested ISAP officially with SME coach support. Fifty-seven socialization presentations were provided to over 3,300 interagency participants, focusing on IMTs, and AAs. Additionally, an interagency train-the-trainer session was delivered to over 50 attendees. Successes, challenges, improvements, and other general feedback was captured throughout both seasons to further evaluate the benefits and effectiveness of the process.

ISAP has proven to be an intuitive, repeatable process that provides durable products for large fire strategy development and risk planning. It brings acceptable risk, risk ownership at the appropriate levels, and increased communication between IMTs and AAs.

Contact: For questions, please contact Jim Shultz, NWCG Executive Board Member, at jim_shultz@nps.gov.

Attachments:

ISAP products can be found at: [Incident Strategic Alignment Process \(ISAP\) \(arcgis.com\)](http://arcgis.com).

Distribution:

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