

FINANCE OFFICERS' PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

The FOP is a professional accounting organization made up of Departmental Financial Officials and Bureau Finance Officers. The primary purpose of the FOP is to provide: (1) a means of managing and rapidly implementing the financial recommendations of the NPR and the Department's CFO Council; and (2) a structure through which Finance Officers develop agreements, consensus, and priorities on improvements in systems, operations, services, and information. The goal of the FOP is to coordinate, cooperate, and participate in the short and long term improvement of the Department's Financial Management Program while promoting efficiencies that reduce costs and improve service. (Refer to **Appendix A** for the FOP roster.)

Mission

The FOP's mission is to:

- Provide leadership in developing financial management strategic direction.
- Plan, implement and manage financial management initiatives.
- Ensure linkages across administrative support functions.
- Advance sound financial policies and practices.
- Champion the establishment of a partnership relationship with program managers.
- Encourage collaborative efforts across the DOI financial community.
- Promote consensus within the DOI finance arena and establish priorities.
- Foster information sharing within the Department of the Interior both to and from the CFO Council and PFM.
- Provide a structure for communicating the accomplishments of the DOI financial management community.
- Establish operating structures to address data stewardship, management of systems and other initiatives.

The FOP recognizes that financial management encompasses the full range of administrative disciplines: Accounting, Budget, Acquisition, Property, and Information Resources Technology. To effectively accomplish its goal, the Partnership will reach out to these

disciplines to form expanded Partnership teams to address the overall complex financial management challenges.

The recommendations of the FOP are made through the Director of PFM to the CFO Council. The FOP organization consists of one representative from PFM (the Deputy Chief Financial Officer's representative) and one representative from each bureau (Finance Officer). Meetings are held on a regular basis.

The FOP uses Project Action Teams (PATs) to address/carry out its initiatives, activities, etc. The FOP selects PAT leaders and staffs them from the bureaus, Administrative Service Centers (ASCs) and PFM. In general, the PATs manage the projects (action items) and are accountable to the FOP through their representatives for the completion of assignments.

The FOP is a fully participatory organization consisting of one representative from PFM (the Deputy Chief Financial Officer's representative) and one representative from each bureau (the Finance Officer). The FFS-SAB operates under its charter but reports to the FOP. The SACAT also functions under the FOP. The work of the SAB and SACAT covers both the FFS and ABACIS bureaus. The FOP selects the PAT Leaders (usually volunteers). The PAT Leaders select their team members from the bureau nominations. The Finance Officers to whom the PAT Leaders report are the accountable managers for their respective Project Action Items. The FOP periodically reviews the progress of each PAT.

Administration

The Chairperson is responsible for the direction and administration of the FOP as follows:

- Develop and maintain a Management Action Plan (MAP) for the activities of the PATs.
- Coordinate and facilitate the exchange of management information necessary for the FOP to track each project.
- Facilitate and influence the activities of the PATs and any special teams, in cooperation with the Accountable Finance Officer, the SAB, and the SACAT. Prepare and distribute periodic reports or summaries of activities.
- Represent the FOP at CFO Council meetings.
- Assist in obtaining the resources necessary to carry out PAT team objectives.
- Schedule meetings, develop and distribute agendas, conduct meetings, prepare meeting minutes as appropriate and distribute to each FOP representative.
- Solicit comments and recommendations from FOP representatives.

- Present reports and recommendations made by the FOP to the CFO Council through the Office of Financial Management (PFM).

Selection of High Priority Projects

The FOP reviews recommendations presented by the CFO council, PFM, or the bureaus. The FOP prioritizes the projects and recommends project initiative teams to PFM. Upon approval of a project, a Project Action Team prepares a Project Scope Statement which defines the project objectives, target completion dates, dependencies and assumptions, and major milestones.

Formation of Project Action Teams (PATs)

Members of the FOP volunteer to manage one or more of the high priority recommendations. In each of these cases, a member of the responsible Finance Officer's staff is assigned the responsibility to lead the PAT. The FOP also assigns some of the recommendations to the SAB and SACAT.

Members of the FOP nominate key staff to participate on the various PATs. The Team Leaders are provided with information regarding each nominee's relevant skills and experience and are empowered to select the members of their PAT.

Project Management

The hierarchy for project management is illustrated below:

- CFO Council
 - Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget and Finance/Office of Financial Management
 - Chair, Finance Officers Partnership
 - Finance Officers' Partnership Representatives
 - Project Action Team Leaders
 - Project Action Team Members

The accountable manager for a PAT is the FOP representative to whom the PAT Leader reports. Ultimately, the Chair is responsible for reporting the progress and accomplishments of each of the PATs to the CFO Council through the Office of Financial Management. The accountable FOP representative is responsible for ensuring that the Team Leader who reports to him/her has adequate resources to successfully complete the project on time and that identified resource problems are immediately reported to the FOP for resolution. Revised dates for deliverables must also be reported immediately with an assessment regarding the impact of such revisions on the project end date.

Administrative Service Centers' Participation

The Washington and Denver ASCs also develop Management Action Plans as appropriate.

Project Action Teams (PATs)

The FOP's original Management Action Plan addressed 15 PATs for immediate action. A brief discussion of each of these PATs (numbered PAT #1 - PAT #15) is provided below. In addition, since the publication of the original MAP, seven new PATs have been added. A brief discussion of each of these new PATs (numbered PAT #16 - PAT #22) is provided below.

PAT #1: Rocky Mountain Bankcard System (RMBCS) Interface

- **Project Objective:** Develop, test, and implement a standard payment interface in the Department's FFS applications for VISA credit card transactions from RMBCS.
- **Status:** Software development completed in FY 1996. Software has been installed in the six FFS bureaus as of the end of FY 1997.

PAT #2: IDEAS/FFS/ABACIS/Property Systems Interface and Electronic Commerce

- **Project Objective:** Determine the most cost-effective means of interfacing/integrating data between the IDEAS and the accounting and property systems, and analyze the effects of Electronic Commerce (EC) initiatives on these systems.
- **Status:** Final recommendations of cost-effective means of interfacing/integrating data between the acquisition and financial accounting system were completed. Interface is being adapted and will be implemented during FY 1998.

PAT #3: Automated Travel Management Software

- **Project Objective:** Implement a travel management software package for use by all DOI bureaus that will meet bureau, Departmental, and regulatory requirements.
- **Status:** Project objective redirected to the DOI Travel Re-engineering Lab initiatives see PATs #18 and #22 which are briefly discussed later in this Appendix.

PAT #4: Automated Teller Machine Usage for Travel Advances

- **Project Objective:** Implement a cost effective, Department-wide Automated Teller Machine (ATM) travel advance program by expanding the American Express ATM usage for obtaining travel advances.
- **Status:** Completed.

PAT #5: American Express Credit Card Interface

- **Project Objective:** Develop an automated FFS interface for airline ticket costs processed by American Express.
- **Status:** Completed. Interface strategy that was developed was not feasible and the project was terminated.

PAT #6: Standard Payment and Certification Processes

- **Project Objective:** Develop streamlined, standard, and cost-effective payment and certification processes for small purchases, contract purchases, and employee travel reimbursements.
- **Status:** Completed

PAT #7: Statistical Sampling

- **Project Objective:** Develop a training package and provide training for all bureaus on proper statistical sampling concepts and procedures for use in auditing financial records.
- **Status:** Completed.

PAT #8: Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel Consolidation

- **Project Objective:** Determine the viability of standardizing, re-engineering, streamlining, and consolidating the PCS functions with the objective of reducing FTEs and improving customer service.
- **Status:** Completed. PCS processing is available from DOI's Denver Administrative Service Center (DASC) upon request by the bureaus.

PAT #9: Remote Data Entry (RDE)

- **Project Objective:** Document the current remote data entry (RDE) practices throughout the Department, determine which documents are candidates for RDE, and develop standard RDE packages for use by the bureaus.
- **Status:** Completed.

PAT #10: Joint Testing of FFS Software Releases/Standardization of FFS System Processing Controls and Options

- **Project Objective:** Standardize systems settings and options across bureau lines; develop standard test plans, schedules, and test cases; and conduct common tests to help eliminate duplicate bureau testing.
- **Status:** Completed.

PAT #11: Quality of American Management Systems (AMS) Software Releases/ Software Enhancement Procedures

- **Project Objective:** Improve the quality of the software delivered by AMS, and improve software enhancement procedures by identifying and documenting standard procedures and processes for submitting requests for enhancements and/or problem reports to the SAB for review and approval.
- **Status:** Completed.

PAT #12: Employee Debt Collection Processes

- **Project Objective:** Re-engineer and improve the overall effectiveness of the employee debt collection process.
- **Status:** Completed. DOI's Denver Administrative Service Center is scheduled to provide this service to DOI bureaus beginning in FY 1998.

PAT #13: Feasibility of Consolidating and Standardizing Non-Program (Non-Employee) Delinquent Debt Management

- **Project Objective:** Determine the feasibility of consolidating the management of specific types of delinquent debt within Interior.
- **Status:** Completed. Project objective was preempted by the passage of the Debt Collection Improvement Act (DCIA) of 1996. All DOI bureaus will be transferring their debt collection to the Department of the Treasury's consolidated debt processing services effective FY 1998.

PAT #14: Processes for Adjustments/Redistributions and Reconciliations

- **Project Objective:** Examine the reasons for adjustments/redistributions and reconciliations, and identify processes that may be automated.
- **Status:** Completed.

PAT #15: FFS Table Clearing/Archival Process

- **Project Objective:** Develop and implement an automated table clearing process in FFS, and research data archival and retrieval technology for implementation in the Department.
- **Status:** Scheduled for completion in FY 1998.

PAT #16: Labor Cost Interface

- **Project Objective:** Develop specifications, program, test, and implement an FPPS standardized labor cost interface in all bureaus utilizing FFS.
- **Status:** Scheduled for completion in FY 1998.

PAT #17: Vision:Flashpoint

- **Project Objective:** Promote the use of Vision:Flashpoint as a tool to modernize the current mainframe version of FFS.
- **Status:** Completed and available for bureau implementation upon bureau request to the DOI Washington Administrative Service Center-West.

PAT #18: Automated Travel System

- **Project Objective:** Determination of an automated travel system requirements, acquire and/or design and development of a system.
- **Status:** Decision has been made to modify and pilot the existing Department of Justice automated travel system and make a recommendation to DOI regarding DOI wide use and implementation.

PAT #19: Electronic Invoices

- **Project Objective:** Investigate the feasibility of expanding electronic invoicing capabilities with selected vendors, and develop any appropriate accounting system interface processes.
- **Status:** In Progress

PAT #20: Rocky Mountain Bankcard--Daily Pay

- **Project Objective:** Modify the RMBCS interface to accept and process daily invoices.
- **Status:** Proposals and recommendations being considered. To be completed in FY 1998.

PAT #21: Financial Management Performance Indicators

- **Project Objective:** Develop a common set of performance indicators to evaluate relevant outputs, service levels, and outcomes of financial management functions in Interior bureaus.
- **Status:** In Progress. To be completed in FY 1998.

PAT #22: Travel Lab Recommendations

- **Project Objective:** Participate in the implementation of the travel process changes identified by the DOI Travel Re-engineering Lab.
- **Status:** Completed.