

**Association of State FloodPlain Managers**  
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**Conference Call:** FEMA-Washington and ASFPM

**Subject:** Map Modernization

**Date:** August 21, 2003

**Participants:** FEMA, Washington – Mike Howard, Mary Jean Pajak, Allyson Lichtenfels, Dee Woodard, Ann Flowers, Fred Sharrocks  
FEMA, Region VI – Jack Quarles  
FEMA, Region V – Lee Traeger  
ASFPM – Alan Lulloff and Mark Riebau

### **I. Status of Procurement of National Mapping Contractor**

No change from last report. FEMA still anticipates contract award prior to the end of the fiscal year.

### **II. FY03 Spending Plan**

FEMA provided a document titled: “FY 2003 Budget Decisions Overview”. This document summarizes the analysis that was conducted to select projects for FY03. A copy is attached.

### **III Development of “State Business Case”**

FEMA sent out draft documents for review and comments. Comments were requested by August 15<sup>th</sup> so that the document can be finalized by the end of the August. The following issues raised through the comment process were discussed:

- FEMA is discussing how to best assist States that are unable to prepare a business plan. For States that have decided not to, regardless of their capability, FEMA will be developing recommendations in the next month how that might affect study priorities and budgets;
- ASFPM indicated that it is difficult for States to prepare their business plans without FEMA's business plan. ASFPM suggested that the guidance should contain a clearer vision statement. FEMA developed a draft Map Modernization plan in April, 2002, however this document was never finalized. Revised criteria were established in Atlanta, however the States need the associated performance measures to develop their State Map Mod Business Plans. FEMA indicated that revised GPRA goals have been

submitted to DHS and OMB but are not yet available for comment. This is one of the issues that FEMA National will be discussing with Region staff next week.

- ASFPM indicated that States also need some indication as to the amount of funding for flood map modernization that will occur in their state. For example, if this is a \$1 billion initiative an average State should see \$20 million for map modernization occur in that state (including work done by the national contractor). All counties want FEMA to fund detailed studies on all of their streams. This is unrealistic, given funding limitations. If state allocations were established (with baseline for FIRM quality) States could establish the appropriate amount of detailed studies in their state and could provide the full funding, 2/3 funding, 1/3 funding scenarios requested in the guidance.
- States may use funds obtained through a CTP to contract with private companies or regional agencies to perform FIS elements, including hydrologic and hydraulic analyses, DFIRM production, or other elements of a FIS;
- The current approach proposes that State business plans will be approved by the Regions with concurrence by FEMA National to assure consistency between Regions and to assure approval by OMB;

#### **IV CTP Agreements**

- ASFPM indicated that some regions are requiring separate Mapping Activity Statements and quarterly financial reporting statements for each product while other Regions are allowing a comprehensive Mapping Activity Statement and quarterly financial reports for the State. FEMA National indicated they would be discussing the reporting requirements with the Regions next week.
- States thought that FEMA was switching to a performance based process for CTP but are being told that currently, the performance-based approach applies only to contracts.
- States have heard that engineering QA/QC will switch to a self-certification process. FEMA National indicated that Engineering QA/QC will continue. Regions will be provided a number of options: State delegation, IDIQ contractors or the National Contractor

#### **V. Miscellaneous**

1. Plans are in place to obligate all FY03 Map Modernization funds.
2. FEMA National will be meeting with all FEMA Regions in August to develop consistent criteria for developing CTP agreements, standards for State Business Plans, and formulating plans for FY04 priorities.
3. Coastal studies will be initiated in FY04.

## **Background**

Fiscal year 2003 was a major transition year for the NFIP Flood Hazard Mapping Program. The FY 2003 funding level for program was 250% of the previous year and 400% of the level of the recent past. Although planning for Map Modernization had been ongoing for some time, the considerable uncertainty about what the funding level would be for 2003 substantially limited FEMA's ability to finalize FY2003 plans. Congress did not pass the FY2003 budget until mid-February, nearly five months into the fiscal year. Once the budget is passed and signed, there are additional steps that must be taken for OMB to release the funds to the Departments and Agencies and for the Departments to develop a spending plan. Until the budget was finalized, the flood mapping program continued to be funded at the substantially lower FY2002 level which was only sufficient to keep essential services operating. Indeed, at times the expectation was that this could be the funding level for FY2003 and some difficult choices would be required to fulfill all of the obligations of the mapping program.

Although the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was not officially formed until March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003, when the FY 2003 budget was passed the transition office for DHS was already in place. For the first time ever, FEMA had an additional level of budget oversight. Further, because this was the first year of full funding for Map Modernization, the methodology for distributing funds was updated to align with the consensus reached with stakeholders and to maximize performance for the program. These factors resulted in delays in distributing funds for FY2003 Map Modernization projects.

In early February, the Flood Mapping program held a meeting in Atlanta with program stakeholders to prepare for the decisions that would need to be made regarding the FY2003 budget once it was enacted. Participants included representatives from state, regional and local government, the Association of State Floodplain Managers, the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies, and FEMA headquarters and regional staff. This meeting developed a consensus that if Map Modernization was funded in FY2003, the program would need to focus initially on the highest risk areas in order to demonstrate the importance of the program. The participants agreed on a set of criteria to use to guide the budget decision-making process. These criteria formed the basis of the Flood Mapping Program's FY2003 budget decisions. This overview describes the process and the methodology used to make the budget decisions.

### *Data Compilation*

To prepare for making decisions regarding the distribution of funding under Map Modernization in FY 2003, the Hazard Mapping Division in the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA) collected and compiled a significant amount of data from various sources into one comprehensive database. Sources of data included:

- Status of studies and mapping projects currently in progress. These data were provided

by the Mapping Coordination Contractors (MCCs), and included proposed delivery dates, study format, communities involved, and more.

- Data collected by the Census for every county in the United States including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands (total of 3,146 counties in 53 “states”). Data included 2000 population, number of housing units, non-negative population growth, land area and more.
- Insurance data at the county level was also compiled from various sources within FIMA. Data included number of flood policies, number of claims, number of repetitive flood loss properties and claims, number of flood disaster declarations, number of mapped flood panels, and more.
- Flood map plans developed by FEMA’s Regional offices in coordination with the states (the “State Plans”). These state plans were developed in September 2002 to meet specific objectives at the time they were developed. The data included recommendations for funding specific studies at the county level, the potential cost of such studies, and the proposed delivery date of final map products.
- Information on Early Implementation projects. This information was developed by FEMA’s Regional offices and highlighted projects that could be delivered in a short timeframe. This information was compiled in March 2003.
- Information collected during a meeting in Atlanta in February 2003 that outlined what factors FEMA should consider when targeting areas for updated flood maps. These criteria included:
  - ◆ High population density
  - ◆ High growth areas
  - ◆ High risk areas: history of repetitive loss/claims/disasters
  - ◆ NFIP policy base
  - ◆ Leverage existing data
  - ◆ Accuracy and adequacy of products
  - ◆ Comprehensive watershed approach

## Ranking

Using the database developed, the Hazard Mapping Division ranked each county in the nation from 1-3,146. The ranking was accomplished by focusing on quantifiable numbers that reflected the criteria developed in Atlanta. Primarily, the data used came from Census, the flood insurance program, and disaster response data (specific data elements were: population, growth, housing units, policies, claims, repetitive loss properties and claims, and flood disasters). The percentage each county contributes to the national total was calculated for each data element and added across the elements. Those values were then totaled for the nation and ranked from highest to lowest.

For example: Miami-Dade County, FL makes up 0.79% of the nation’s population, 1.05% of the population moving into areas chose to move there, they make up 0.73% of all housing units nationwide. Miami-Dade County makes up 7.86% of the flood policy base, is responsible for 3.51% of the claims filed, has 2.53% of the repetitive loss properties and 1.94% of the repetitive loss claims. They also make up roughly 0.08% of the declared flood disasters nationwide. Adding these percentages totals 18.49%. Those same computations were done for all 3,146 counties nationwide. They were then sorted from highest to lowest and assigned ranks from 1 to

3,146.

The county rankings were then aggregated into “deciles.” Each county was assigned a number from 1 to 10 (314 counties per decile). For purposes of FY 2003 funding, specific emphasis was placed on counties in the top decile.

### **Study Categories**

Several study categories were identified. “DFIRM Upgrades” is a category of studies recently or soon to be completed that can be delivered in the new DFIRM specification with a view tool for use at the community level. This is the product FEMA has developed as the foundation for the future of flood hazard identification. “Pipeline Studies” are in-house studies actively being worked on. Many are fully funded, however, many are in need of additional resources to bring them to completion. It was determined that these studies should continue if they were in top decile counties because they already have had a significant amount of FEMA resources dedicated to them. Further, many of them can be delivered much more quickly than newly initiated studies. “Other Federal Agency” work was determined to also be an area of focus. As a result several ongoing studies involving other federal agencies were funded. “Other Compelling” projects was a category created to capture earmarks and other high profile projects. “Early Implementation” projects are proposed new study starts that were determined to have fairly quick turn around.

In general, the early implementation and other compelling work can be thought of as “new” work; whereas the other federal agency work, pipeline studies, and DFIRM upgrades can generally be viewed as ongoing work that is nearing completion.

### **DFIRM Upgrades**

A number of recently- or nearly-completed studies were found to be in a format readily convertible to the February 2002 DFIRM specification such that they could be delivered to local governments using a recently developed “beta” version of a flood map view tool. A field of 385 potential counties where DFIRM 2002 products could be delivered was identified. The criteria used to narrow the field included: must be a county within the top 5 deciles (ranked within the top 50% of all counties nationwide), must be a “full” community product, and the product must be deliverable in preliminary or effective format by the end of FY 2003. This narrowed the field from a total of 385 candidates to 132. The total estimated cost to complete the work is approximately \$6 million.

### **Pipeline Studies**

In-house work or “pipeline studies” were defined as those where the MCC had either been funded to initiate processing, or had already received a completed study contractor or CTP mapping package. A significant amount of work was determined to fall within this category (398 counties). Over half of this work (277 counties) was insufficiently funded and could not be completed without additional resources. The top decile was consequently fully funded (71 counties). The total estimated cost to deliver this work is approximately \$10 million.

## **Other Federal Agency Work**

Recognizing the importance of work being performed by Other Federal Agencies, it was decided to continue several projects with the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Geological Survey that had been initiated in FY 2002. Five studies in the top decile counties were funded at a total estimated cost of \$425k.

## **Other Compelling Reasons**

Earmarks and high profile studies that had compelling reasons to fund were given consideration under this category. Studies needing funding in this category include New York State (earmark), North Carolina (strong CTP), West Virginia (earmark), Wisconsin (CTP), Louisiana (earmark), and Colorado (CTP). The total cost for these efforts is estimated at approximately \$15 million.

## **Early Implementation Projects**

After funding had been allocated for the above categories, there was approximately \$45 million remaining. Of that total, \$15 million was designated for the Early Implementation Projects with the most potential for providing quick benefits. The remaining \$30 million was distributed to the Regions using the “Atlanta” factors noted above to determine the percentage to each Region. Guidance for selecting projects was provided to the Regions in a memo from Anthony Lowe dated May 14, 2003.

## **Conclusion**

Studies specifically selected to receive funding in 2003 are generally highly ranked with regard to the Atlanta factors, can be quickly turned around and delivered to state and local governments, and/or have other fairly compelling reasons to move forward. The total value of projects specifically identified is approximately \$46 million. This funding will result in mapping products being delivered to roughly half the nation’s population and roughly half the flood policies in force. The Regional offices have been asked to verify that the projects specifically identified are still valid. An additional \$30 million is being distributed to the Regional offices and will be targeted at the nation’s highest ranking counties (top 20%) based on the criteria developed in Atlanta.