FINANCE OFFICERS' PARTNERSHIP

The Finance Officers' Partnership (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 (see 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, Personnel/Payroll, 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 Financial Management (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.

High Priority Projects and Project Action Teams

The FOP reviews recommendations presented by the CFO Council, PFM, or the bureaus. The Washington and Denver ASCs also develop Management Action Plans as appropriate. The FOP prioritizes the projects and recommends project initiative teams to PFM. Upon approval of a project, a Project Action Team (PAT) prepares a Project Scope Statement which defines the project objectives, target completion dates, dependencies and assumptions, and major milestones.

The FOP's original Management Action Plan (MAP) addressed 15 PATs for immediate action. Since the publication of the original MAP, seven new PATs have been added. Of the 22 total PATs, 16 (or 73 percent) have been completed to date. The 22 PATs are identified in the various initiatives discussed in other chapters and appendices in this report.

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.