Topic:

Training for Fire Program Analysis (FPA).

Introduction

Fire Program Analysis training is a fundamental component for project implementation and success.

Assumption

Training will be accomplished through a variety of methods with an emphasis on self-paced Internet-delivered modules, interactive web broadcasts (webinars), white papers and technical papers, and Geographic Area workshops. Learning areas will be:

- Understanding how the FPA system works,

- Understanding the FPA modules and their assumptions and limitations,

- Preparing data for input into the FPA system, and the implications of detail and accuracy.

FPA stakeholders at all levels should encourage fire planning staff and line officers to read FPA-related documents and utilize FPA communication outreach and training products.

Constructive and timely feedback to the Project to enhance training content will be important.

Discussion – FPA Training Methods

FPA training methods emphasize a combination of self-paced learning modules available on the Internet, webinars and targeted workshops. Technology-oriented training methods allow a student to move rapidly through familiar concepts, and focus on new concepts and review as needed.

Communications Outreach

Monthly FPA Newsletter - Information published at regular intervals (weekly during system implementation) to clarify system functions, explain software enhancements or procedural changes, provide tips to work around software issues, and provide links to updated training materials.

FPA Listserv – Provides general notifications to FPA users about the availability of updated information related to the system. This includes white papers and technical documents that describe system modules, or how users can best prepare for system implementation. It is essential that users read these documents and interact with their partners and FPA geographic area-coordinating group to plan for implementation.

TechNews - Provides information published at regular intervals (weekly during system implementation) to clarify system functions, explain software enhancements or procedural changes, provide workarounds to software issues, and display links to updated training materials.

System Embedded Help

The system contains built in reference sufficient for many users. Features include:

- A hierarchical system menu that leads users by highlighted menu items through tasks to accomplish specified objectives,

- Each menu item is described in pop-up (mouseover) text available for every menu item in the system,

- Users can access a complete Help menu at any time during a system session,

- Users can print each topic to a local printer,

- The Help menu will contain links to the FPA Glossary, Internet delivered lessons, printable step-by-step schematics, and documents supporting concepts and system use.

Self-Paced Internet-Delivered FPA Training

Guides users step-by-step through the FPA system. This type of training targets users requiring how-to training in a self-paced environment. An FPA Users Guide provides further support for understanding how the system works.

In early 2008, FPA will provide a learning series that describes FPA business process flow. FPA will post each module on the FPA website (http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/.) The first FPA system self-paced training modules will be available in June 2008.

Webinars

FPA will provide a limited number of webinars about topics that are best understood through hands-on demonstrations or stepping through a variety of procedures. In these situations, an FPA telephone bridge and Microsoft LiveMeeting will be used to support user's learning and application of the FPA system. No LiveMeeting licenses will be required to participate in these sessions, just Internet access.

Occasionally, FPA may offer a webinar to resolve system-use issues for individual or small groups of FPUs. Individuals or groups should contact FPA in advance to schedule a webinar so that FPU planners, GA Leads, or FPA Team members with the most subject matter understanding are available to participate in the session.

Workshops

> **Spring 2008**: FPU level workshops hosted by Geographic Area FPA coordinating groups may be offered in the spring of 2008, emphasizing data preparation. FPA Project staff will attend the workshops to promote understanding of the system.

> **Fall 2008**: FPA will offer at least one additional FPU-level workshop for each Geographic Area. These workshops will focus on refining input data, forming options and investment alternatives, interpreting reports, and refining options and alternatives to meet line officer requirements.

A workshop for regional/state and national level system users hosted by the FPA Project may be needed to support these users' understanding and utilization of the system. The emphasis in these workshops will be on applying FPA outputs to business decisions.

FPA Help Desk

The FPA Help Desk will be available to set up users' system logon access and provide support about FPA-specific issues. The FPA Help Desk will forward any unresolved cases to FPA staff for resolution.

Considerations

Lessons learned from the first phase of FPA, and from industry-wide releases of new information technology systems indicate that problems always show up when implementing a new system. These problems will be uncovered incrementally as more users enter data into the system, apply testing to system outputs, and calibrate inputs and settings to arrive at acceptable investment alternatives. Solutions to these problems may result in updates to the underlying system that incorporates critical corrections. Because the FPA system has been designed to isolate the user interface from the underlying modules, planners should experience a very stable user experience with few to no changes during this first planning season. Any updates will only be done after due consideration to the value to be gained versus the impact on the users. FPA will inform users through TechNews and alert notices on the FPA system login page about any updates and system workarounds.

Conclusion

The FPA Project believes the adult learning methods described in this paper will provide fire planners and their staff both broad and specific understanding of how the FPA system works. Training modules and built-in system help will provide planners knowledge they need to most effectively use FPA to model investment alternatives at the FPU level based on the their impact on fire behavior. Internet-based training delivery has been selected by the Project as the most appropriate method to make users familiar with the new system, and provide specific training on how to prepare data for the modules in FPA.

FPA, through TechNews, FPA Listserv, and the FPA training web site (http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/Training/), will continue to update the field about training topics as modules are released and workshops are scheduled.

Review History:

Date	Initials	Change Summary
February 4, 2008	BE	Edits completed.
February 04, 2008	DKS	Suggested edits.
January 31, 2008	KSH	Edit.
January 28, 2008	BE	Incorporated reviewer edits from Bonnie and Mike
January 25, 2008	BW	Comments and edits
January 9, 2008	BE	Initial Draft