ICBS-R Frequently Asked Questions
11/03/2004

What is the ICBS system?
The "Interagency Cache Business System" is an inventory management system designed for use by the NFES National Interagency Support Caches. ICBS is an Oracle Forms ® application and was first implemented in 1999. It is currently supported by the Forest Service National Information Systems Team (NIST) based at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho.

ICBS supports the key cache business processes (e.g. receiving and issuing supplies; managing an inventory; filling resource orders; documenting shipping arrangements; tracking accounting information; making sales to government customers; producing standard reports; etc.).

Why does the current ICBS application need to be "re-engineered?"
The three key reasons for re-engineering ICBS are:

- To move to a system architecture that will allow the application to be used at local area caches so that the overall national cache inventory system can be utilized more efficiently;
- To meet essential cache business needs (e.g. improved reporting, ability to interface with other systems, etc.)
- To exchange data with the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS)

Which caches will be expected to use the re-engineered application?
All national, local area and remote caches are within the implementation scope of the ICBS-R Project. Initial action/attack ("local caches") are <u>not</u> targeted for using the re-engineered application.

What is a national cache?
According to the NFES Cache Management Plan (please see ICBS-R "Project Reference Materials" link on project website), a national cache (also sometimes called a geographic area cache):

- Is the primary servicing Cache for a specific established Geographical Area as defined in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide.
- Serves multiple customers across governmental, agency, administrative and geographical boundaries.
- Follows established NFES standards in operating procedures (SOP), refurbishment and kit configurations.

There are eleven national caches in the NFES system, including two satellite cache locations of the Northwest Area Cache.

What is a local area cache?
According to the NFES Cache Management Plan, a local area cache:

- Provides direct support to more than one agency and generally covers more than a single administrative management unit within a Geographic Area. Boundaries are determined by the cooperating agencies and agreements.
- Follows established NFES standards in operating procedures (SOP), refurbishment and kit configurations.

The NWCG Fire Equipment Working Team (FEWT) has designated twenty-one current local area caches.

What is a remote cache?

According to the NFES Cache Management Plan, a remote cache:

- Is a cache established on a temporary basis, to meet extraordinary supply logistics needs. As an extension of a national cache, the servicing cache provides program oversight.
- Is managed by qualified personnel from national caches.

What is an initial attack/action cache?

According to the NFES Cache Management Plan, an initial attack/action cache (also called a "local cache"):

- Generally provides single agency support to one administrative unit. It may provide interagency support based on local agreements.
- Cache inventory mainly is restricted to local use only and is not generally available for large-scale mobilization.

Initial attack caches are not within the implementation scope of the ICBS-R Project.

Is the application re-engineering work being done in-house or by a commercial vendor?

Application re-engineering will be completed by a commercial software development/ integration vendor with continuous collaboration with an interagency group of government cache subject matter experts (SMEs).

Will the new system be built, or will a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) application be modified to meet the needs of the cache community?

All federal departments and agencies are required to evaluate and consider COTS (and Government off-the-shelf GOTS) applications before building any new information technology systems. For that reason, the ICBS-R design solicitation is open to both approaches: develop from scratch or COTS/GOTS approaches.

Any COTS/GOTS application would need to meet the needs of the cache community as defined in the ICBS-R charter; support current cache processes; and resemble the current ICBS application to facilitate acceptance within the cache community. If the re-engineered system is developed from scratch, the current ICBS will be used as the basis for the new version.

Will the re-engineered system resemble the current ICBS application?

The re-engineered application will be based on current cache processes and resemble the current application as much as possible. Moving to a more centralized architecture; AIT

technology; and exchanging data with ROSS and other systems will require some changes to the current ICBS screens and processes. Cache SMEs will work with system design/development personnel to ensure that the re-engineered system is straightforward operate and is similar to the current system.

When is the re-engineered application going to be ready to use?
The project schedule calls for design, development and testing to occur over the course of 2005, with implementation beginning early in 2006. Depending on how soon the design and development contracts can be awarded and how long the work takes, this schedule could be delayed. The project is considering various alternatives for phased development and implementation.

Will training in the re-engineered application be offered?
The ICBS-R Charter requires the project to develop formal and online system and user training. A comprehensive implementation plan will be developed during the construction phase of the project in 2005.

How will the re-engineered application be tested?
The system developer will be required to develop and implement comprehensive configuration management and testing plans. Cache SMEs will provide realistic scenarios and "real life" input for these plans and will follow very structured testing procedures prior to releasing the software.

Similar structured Beta testing will be conducted onsite at several cache locations to ensure the application is ready prior to release to the field.

Will data in the current ICBS system be migrated to the re-engineered system?
The project does plan to migrate existing ICBS data to the re-engineered system. The exact mechanism for this is unknown at this point. Data migration alternatives will be narrowed down once a system architecture is selected.

Will data in other inventory systems be migrated to the re-engineered system?
The project does plan to migrate existing data from InProTrak (used at the Alaska Incident Support Cache) and from Cache Tracker (used by several local area caches). The exact mechanism for this is unknown at this point. Data migration alternatives will be narrowed down once a system architecture is selected.

What other systems will the re-engineered system interface or exchange data with?
The ICBS-R Charter requires the re-engineered system to exchange data with the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) and with the BLM's Collection and Billing System (CBS). Our charter further requires the new system to have the capability to share finance, accounting and property management data with external systems.

Will the re-engineered system involve bar code or other types of scanning?
Optional use of Automated ID Technology (AIT) is a requirement of the re-engineered application. A task group of cache SMEs is developing recommendations for AIT

standards in the areas of: labeling/tagging; hardware; processes, etc. The AIT Task Group will work with representatives of other projects and organizations (e.g. Incident Base Automation Project, GSA, DLA, etc.) to ensure that ICBS-R AIT is compatible with other systems in use or being developed for use in the fire/incident arena.