

Guide for the Submission of Innovative Ideas for Product or Process Improvement

Key Points

- The Innovation Proposal document package, at a minimum, must contain the following items:
 - Innovation Proposal Questionnaire
 - Implementation and Safety Narrative
- Receipt of proposals will be acknowledged via electronic or written communications.
- The submission of the Innovation Proposal documentation package may constitute a public disclosure. Please check with the US Patent and Trademark Office for information and timelines. (www.uspto.gov)
- The submission of the Innovation document package is entirely voluntary.
- The Equipment Technical Committee or the US Forest Service is not responsible for the cost incurred in the preparation of proposals
- Materials submitted to the ETC through the Innovation Proposal process may not be returned.
- Funding for further development of a concept or product is not available through the Forest Service Technology & Development Program
- The ETC or cooperating agencies may already be working on the same or a similar idea that it may already know of from another individual or organization.

Introduction

This procedure outlines the process for submitting innovative ideas to improve wildland fire fighter safety, operating efficiency and reducing cost. The National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) encourages the submission of innovative ideas or product proposals (collectively, Innovation Proposal) that will contribute to its mission. The Equipment Technology Committee (ETC) is chartered under NWCG and is responsible to receive and review these proposals as part of the innovation and program lifecycle process. ETC will review innovative proposals to determine whether the innovation can be practically implemented into wildland fire suppression, prevention, or rehabilitation operations.

Innovative ideas include new technology, significant improvement to existing products or new application of existing technology. Feedback to assist the proponent to develop the concept, idea or product further will be provided when appropriate. However, this does not imply interest or endorsement of the idea, concept or product.

Submission of Innovative Proposals

ETC will consider innovation proposals from individuals, organizations, and manufacturers. There are no specific dates for the submission of Innovation Proposals. Receipt of proposals will be acknowledged via electronic or written communications.

Innovation Proposal document packages should be emailed (preferred) or mailed to the attention of Ralph Gonzales:

ralph.gonzales@usda.gov

444 E. Bonita Ave

San Dimas, CA 91773

Multiple submissions of an Innovation Proposal to other ETC members or cooperating agency offices are not necessary. A proposal may be applicable to other programs. This central receipt point is familiar with the other areas of interest and tries to ensure that each proposal is sent to potentially interested programs.

The proposals will be reviewed fairly and objectively by subject matter experts available to the ETC. The proposer will be notified of the results of the review.

The submission of the proposal package constitutes a public disclosure and may affect the application of a patent. Please refer to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (www.uspto.gov) for more information. The disclosure of an Idea to ETC does not establish a confidential relationship or obligate ETC and cooperating agencies to treat the idea (or any related materials) as secret or confidential.

What to Submit

The Innovation Proposal is the document package intended to persuade ETC, and other qualified members of the scientific and engineering community who review and advise on the proposed work, that the project represent a worthwhile approach to the investigation of an important, timely problem. Each proposal should be self-contained and written with clarity and thoroughness. The Innovation Proposal document package, at a minimum, must contain the following items:

- Innovation Proposal Questionnaire
- Implementation and Safety Narrative

The Innovation Proposal Questionnaire serves as a base document for the proposal.

It is used to assess which program area it is most applicable to. The Innovation Proposal Questionnaire form is in Appendix A of this document.

An Implementation and Safety narrative, no more than 500 words, should be included to identify the following:

- Objectives

- Implementation. How the proposed idea could be implemented operationally.
- Safety and training requirements

Additional documents such as technical drawings, artist sketches, or product brochures should also be submitted. Concepts must be validated by test results and test methods. Prototypes or product samples may be requested later as part of the evaluation process.

ETC is not responsible for the cost incurred in the preparation of proposals. USDA Forest Service and cooperating agency employees must submit proposals through the Fire and Aviation Steering Committee.

Review Process

The innovation proposal document package will be reviewed to determine if further evaluation is warranted. The review panel consists of subject matter experts within the Technology & Development Program and other cooperating agencies. The review panel will recommend one of the following:

- a. No further action – The product does not meet agency needs, is not a new product, or application of an existing product, or implementation is beyond the scope of the agency.
- b. Evaluate as part of product lifecycle – The product can be included in a current specification and will be evaluated as part of the lifecycle to improve products covered in that specification.
- c. Evaluate product under the Technical Services program. The product meets an immediate need and will be evaluated further.
- d. The product meets a need; however, further development beyond the authority of ETC through this program is needed. The proposal may be referred to Small Business Innovation Research for consideration if the submitter is looking for funding assistance. Funding for further development of a concept or product is not available through the Forest Service Technology & Development Program.

Appendix A

Innovation Proposal Forms

Innovation Proposal Questionnaire

Manufacturer/Proposer Contact Information		
Name:	Phone:	
	Cell Phone:	
	Email:	
	Date:	
Address:	Item Name:	

Item Description: (describe the product, include any links to applicable website)

Implementation & Safety Statement Attached? <input type="checkbox"/>	Attachments included? <input type="checkbox"/>
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Category*: (Choose one: Fire/Smoke Detection, Fire Ignition, Suppression, Monitoring, Incident Support, Firefighter Health, Safety, & Personal Equipment, and Mitigation)			
Is it currently being used?		Is the item reusable or could be refurbished and reused?	
Where is it currently being used?			
Who is currently using the product?			
Is there a patent or patent pending?			

* See definition of categories on next page

Email completed form to: Ralph Gonzales, ralph.gonzales@usda.gov

File no: (to be filled by administrator): _____

Definition of Categories

DETECTION – Fire or smoke early detection equipment (including aircraft) or software. This category may include technologies using video, near infrared or infrared devices intended for early detection of a wildland fire.

IGNITION – Equipment (including aircraft), chemicals or explosive used to ignite wildland fuels as an operational strategy in the fire suppression effort.

SUPPRESSION – Equipment, chemicals, explosives or aircraft used to suppress wildland fire.

MONITORING – This category includes equipment, software, weather devices, aircraft or resource tracking equipment used to monitor, watch or track.

INCIDENT SUPPORT – Equipment or software to assist in the management of an incident.

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH, SAFETY, & PERSONAL EQUIPMENT – This category includes Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), fire fighter nutrition, hygiene or accessories.

MITIGATION – Equipment (including aircraft), chemicals, and weather devices intended to prevent or reduce the negative effects or risks associated with wildland fires.