Revised Framework for AHPS Web Development

Introduction

Aspects of the current framework have resulted in inefficient progress in implementing AHPS Web pages. At the July 2006 ARC meeting in Kansas City, OHD and OCWWS were given an action item to develop a more streamlined process. This document describes the new framework.

Evolution of AHPS Web pages will continue to be based on overlapping (12 month) phases, where the first part of each phase will focus on prioritization of (high level) requirements and development of a work plan. During the latter part of each phase the contractor will execute the work plan. Regions will continue to have substantial input into the selection/prioritization of requirements, will provide input to the work plan and review mock ups prior to initiation of formal contractor development. They will also continue to support implementation issues at field offices and Web farms.

The new framework features more detailed requirements definition to allow the contractor to better focus on development. Key outcomes of the new framework include more efficient use of contractor time and reduced burden on the Regions. Contractor efficiency will be achieved by better initial definition of requirements, rapid prototyping with the creation of mock ups to allow review and comment before development actually takes place, and more streamlined deployment and implementation at Regional Web farms.

Requirements definition will be accomplished in large part by increased coordination among OHD, OCWWS and the contractor to specify more detailed requirements. Before the contractor develops mock ups, the Regions will have the opportunity to provide input on the detailed work plan.   Increased coordination in requirements definition will lead to less interaction needed with the Regions during the development phase.

Table 1 lists the major tasks included in the new framework. The table also specifies a schedule for the Phases VI and VII. Future Phases will use essentially the same schedule. Each task is discussed below.

Table 1. Major tasks for AHPS Web development

		Phase VI	Phase VII
A.	Gather requirements	1-21 Oct	1-21 Apr
B.	Prioritize	22 Oct - 7 Nov	22 Apr - 7 May
C.	Refine requirements	8 Nov - 14 Dec	8 May - 14 Jun
D.	Contractor develops mock ups	15 Dec - 15 Feb	15 Jun - 15 Aug
E.	Feedback on mock ups	16 Feb - 2 Mar	16 Aug - 2 Sep
F.	Final work plan/mock ups	3-30 Mar	3-30 Sep
G.	Development	1 Apr - 14 Aug	1 Oct - 14 Feb
H.	Implementation	15 Aug - 30 Sep	15 Feb - 30 Mar

See Appendix A for a Gantt chart version of these schedules.

Table 2 provides a chronological listing of task responsibilities of all parties.

Table 2. Time allocation for AHPS Web development

	OCWWS	OHD	Regions	Contractor
Jan				D., G.
Feb	E.	E., H.	E., H.	D., G., H.
Mar	E., F.	E., F., H.	E., H.	H.
Apr	A., B.		B.	G.
May	B., C.	C.	B.	G.
Jun	C	C.		D., G.
Jul				D., G.
Aug	E.	E., H.	E., H.	D., G., H.
Sep	E., F.	E., F., H.	E., H.	H.
Oct	A., B.		B.	G.
Nov	B., C.	C.	B.	G.
Dec	C	C.		D., G.

A. Gather Requirements

Collection of requirements is essentially the same as the current framework. OCWWS will summarize new requirements received from user comments and NWS input. This will be combined into a list of existing, unmet requirements. The consolidated list will be provided to the Regions for review and prioritization.

B. Prioritize

Regions will assign a priority to each requirement on the consolidated requirements list. Priorities will range from 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest). A ranked list based on averaging Regional and OCWWS priorities will be provided for the Regions to review. There will be an optional conference call to adjust priorities if any Region requests such a call.

C. Refine Requirements

OHD and OCWWS will work with the contractor to analyze the highest priority requirements and develop a work plan that best utilizes our limited AHPS & Water Resources Program resources. Regions will have the opportunity to comment on the detailed requirements included in the work plan before the contractor provides time estimates and develops mock ups. OHD/OCWWS will provide the contractor with a work plan that reflects Regional input and will provide the Regions with a disposition of their comments (as we now do with policy) explaining how they were used to modify the work plan.

D. Contractor Develops Mock-ups

Using the work plan, the contractor will develop specific time estimates for the highest priority tasks. This effort will include tasks that can be reasonably completed during the upcoming phase. If, in the opinion of the contractor, combining some lower priority tasks with work on high priority tasks would result in more efficient use of contractor time, the contractor will provide a proposed course of action to OHD and OCWWS. Based on evaluation of the proposal, OHD and OCWWS will advise the contractor on whether to include these lower priority items. Once the candidate tasks for the upcoming phase are clearly specified, the contractor will create mock ups (i.e. Power Point) demonstrating the visual rendering of the requirements.

E. Feedback on Mock-ups

Regions will be provided with the mock ups for review. Regions will review this material and provide comments to OHD/OCWWS.

F. Final Work Plan

OHD/OCWWS will review the Regional comments and attempt to address them to the best of our ability. In some cases, not all features/suggestions may be included in the final work plan/initial delivery of a Web page/resource.   The Regions will be provided a revised (final) work plan for the phase as well as final mock ups and a disposition of comments (again, as we do with policy). OHD/OCWWS will provide the contractor with the final work plan that reflects Regional input.

Features that are not included in the final work plan for the current phase will be retained in the requirement list for consideration in subsequent phases.

G. Development

The contractor will coordinate, as necessary, with the NWS Net Team and develop code, scripts, etc., necessary to meet requirements specified in the final work plan and in accordance with Regional and/or OCIO policies.

H. Implementation

Prior to implementation of a phase, the contractor will send out working code for the Regions to test, and to identify and address any bugs. Testing protocols will conform to applicable Regional and/or OCIO policies.   Implementation will focus on technical issues associated with integration of new features on the Web farms. As necessary, Regional HSDs will coordinate with field offices.

As a result of better initial requirements definition, the large number of hours currently expended to better define and refine requirements during implementation should be essentially eliminated. This will result in considerably better use of the contractor's time as well as reduce demands on Regions and OHD.