

NPSG Strategic Plan

October 10, 2007

Executive Summary

The National Predictive Services Group (NPSG) provides leadership and direction for Predictive Services. It consists of 11 members who represent the federal wildland fire agencies, the National Association of State Foresters, the National Weather Service, the Intelligence and Meteorology Working Groups (chartered under NPSG) and field managers. Through collaborative leadership, with input from user groups at all levels, the NPSG strives to continually improve the quality, accuracy, and relevance of decision support products provided through the multi-agency coordination system to fire managers and users nationwide.

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Introduction / Background

Intent, Approach Used and Expected Results

The National Predictive Services strategic plan is the umbrella document that provides an overarching strategic context for all activities of NPSG and Predictive Services. The strategic plan focuses on the development and implementation of decision support information and tools. The strategic plan was developed by the NPSG while initiating the program. A framework of what was deemed important by the steering committee was developed over the first few meetings and refined over time. The strategic plan grew from the original framework.

The NPSG strategic plan is designed to define specific goals and prioritize strategies that will guide all activities of Predictive Services in support of the wildland fire community. The National Predictive Services strategic plan provides the long-term framework and direction across agencies and business areas in support of the Predictive Services' vision and mission. This strategic plan consists of vision, mission, values (guiding principles), goals, objectives, critical success factors, barriers, strategies, and action plans. Strategies for each goal were prioritized by NPSG consensus (see appendix C). Action plans were developed for each of the top two prioritized strategies for each goal (see appendix D). Action plans will be carried out by special task groups including a NPSG liaison. The Predictive Services strategic plan will direct future decisions by acting as a guide to identify types of initiatives that fall within the scope of the overall mission of the program. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by NPSG members.

Current Situation

The NPSG is chartered under the National Federal Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB) and provides leadership and direction for Predictive Services. There are two working groups developed under the auspices of NPSG: the Meteorological Working Group (MWG) and the Intelligence Working Group (IWG). The Predictive Services strategic plan supports and addresses the mission and vision of the NPSG, MWG and IWG.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of Predictive Services in total that are likely to affect new initiatives within the strategic plan are listed below.

Strengths:

- Diverse leadership and experience
- Highly motivated membership
- Commitment to producing results and coordinating issues
- Ability to work well as a team

Weaknesses:

- Staffing the geographic area level of the program is inconsistent and more subject to budget fluctuations.
- Financial and human resources availability limit accomplishment of goals

Opportunities:

- Leveraging existing relationships to become partnerships creating new resources
- Achieve greater efficiencies through innovative technologies and training.
- Better delivery of firefighting resources through utilization of predictive services products.

Threats:

- Multi-agency environment with individual agency policies that may conflict with interagency program goals.
- Inconsistent supervision models in the various organizations can create conflicting direction.
- Loss of funding to accomplish goals and produce products.

Decision Making Process

The NPSG decision making process is a consensus in which each of the 11 members of the group (that represent the federal wildland fire agencies, the National Association of State Foresters, the National Weather Service, the Intelligence and Meteorological Working Groups and field managers) has a vote. All decisions are validated against the strategic plan to confirm the decision is within the scope of the overall mission of the program.

The Challenge

Coordination Center staffs, National MAC and Geographic Area Coordinating Groups enable the Predictive Services units to achieve priority goals as outlined in the strategic plan. The National Predictive Services Group will strive to maintain momentum in times of challenging budget climates. By managing the program through the strategic plan, core capability will be preserved and priority work will continue to be accomplished. The implementation of this strategic plan is the responsibility of NPSG, all Working Groups, task groups and Predictive Service staff

Strategic Management

Strategic management is a comprehensive and iterative process for directing and managing change over the long run. It positions the organization for success by leveraging strengths and opportunities while overcoming weaknesses, problems and threats.

The Strategic Management Model, provides a comprehensive overview of the components of strategic planning and strategic management and illustrates the relationship between those components. The strategic management process is a cycle of thinking, planning, acting, monitoring, and reviewing which feeds back into the beginning of the cycle.

The components of a strategy and its associated plans include:

- the vision and mission statements
- guiding principles
- goals
- objectives, critical success factors, and barriers
- strategies
- action plans (tactical plan for the implementation of the strategic plan)

The vision statement expresses the organization's highest aspirations for its strategic management efforts. The mission statement brings into focus the overall purpose of the organization. Goals identify broad, long-term aims that define accomplishment of the mission. Goals link "upward" to the mission and "downward" to strategic objectives.

The strategic objectives within each goal state the specific outcomes expected to be accomplished. They provide an overall sense of what exactly is desired without outlining the specific steps necessary to achieve that end. They are specific and measurable targets for accomplishment. Objectives link "upward" to goals, link "downward" to critical success factors, barriers and strategies.

Strategies are the identification of broad activities required to achieve an objective, control a critical success factor, or overcome a barrier. These strategies are then prioritized and action plans are developed to implement them.

Predictive Services Program Framework

VISION

Future

MISSION

Purpose

VALUES

Guidelines

GOALS

What

OBJECTIVES

Target

ACTION PLANS

Who/What/When...

NPSG Strategic Plan

The NPSG Vision

Wildland fire management emphasizes safety, cost containment, efficiency, and ecosystem health through the proactive use of Predictive Services decision support products.

The NPSG Mission

The Predictive Services Program supports the wildland fire community and others with information and decision support products.

The NPSG Values (Guiding Principles)

- **SAFETY** – We promote the protection of the health and safety of employees and the lives, property, and natural resources of all people in the United States.
- **COOPERATION** – We define our business practices by listening to our cooperators. We address our needs and the needs of others through collaboration.
- **ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP** – We value initiative and flexibility in leadership throughout all levels of our organization. We target our efforts toward the work that matters most.
- **INNOVATION** – We respond to changing needs locally and nationally. We share information with each other and with our cooperators. We seek out, introduce, and evaluate new practices; both our successes and failures contribute to our professional expertise.

- **EMPOWERMENT** – We support empowering individuals to achieve program goals.
- **INTEGRITY** – We promote informed and credible decisions. We champion and strive to improve quality data, appropriate analysis, and well supported decision making.
- **EFFICIENCY** – We strive to use science-based and appropriate methods to accomplish our goals. We support validation of our products and the use of standard practices to streamline operations.
- **PRIDE IN SERVICE** – We take pride in our mission, our program, and the unique skills of each individual.

The NPSG Goals

Goal 1 – Products and Services

Relevant decision support tools are available to support user needs.

Objectives

- Improve the data infrastructure that supports the integration of Predictive Services and the Wildland Fire Program
- Product Development and Evaluation Team is in place
- Specific tools are developed to support user needs
- Maintain accurate data
- Provide standardized fire potential, observations and predictions
- Local products are in alignment with national standards
- Products and services meet the need of the users
- Remain knowledgeable in emerging technology and use appropriately

Critical Success Factors

- Quality Data
- Climate, weather, fuels, fire danger, situational and resource status information is integrated
- Performance standards are in place and used
- Data standards are in place and used
- Availability of products to all agencies

- Based on best science
- Products must be relevant
- Critical events are anticipated and communicated

Barriers

- Individual agency policies (e.g. security, data standards)
- Resource availability
- Different agency standards
- Best science not well defined or agreed upon
- Predictive Services is not the data steward for data used in decision support products

Strategies

- Establish and implement performance standards for products and services
- Develop and implement a user assessment process
- Establish and implement data quality standards
- Develop and implement a periodic review process
- Develop and implement a product validation process
- Establish and implement a well defined process for technology transfer
- Establish priorities and initiate/support tool development efforts
- Develop products that utilize best business practices
- Develop a plan/process to influence the data quality of data we do not control
- Establish a continuous improvement process to assess and make modifications to the products and services provided by Predictive Services

Goal 2 –Use of Products and Services

The timeliness and effectiveness of fire management decisions are increased through the use of Predictive Services.

Objectives

- Fire management is trained in the use of Predictive Services products and services
- Workload spikes are anticipated and the opportunities for mitigation are identified
- Proactive resource allocation are commonly implemented
- Firefighter situation awareness is improved
- Risk analysis is used to guide tactical decisions
- Cost benefits of the Predictive Services program are quantified and understood

Critical Success Factors

- Fire management is aware of and knows how to use the products and services of the Predictive Services program
- Maintain users currency in the available technology
- Understand enterprise to determine where the solutions fit
- Accurately assess and predict weather, fuels, critical resource shortages (and Goal 1)
- Funding to implement technology transfer
- Acceptance of products

Barriers

- Communications technology
- Very diverse audience with a different need for detail
- Don't have a strategy or program aimed at marketing our products
- Predictive Services does not have expertise in communication, communication planning and marketing
- Inflexibility of change and modifications within the training system
- Perception that this is a top down program

- Perception that the field needs are not being met

Strategies

- Integrate Predictive Services into wildland fire management training and operational policy and procedures
- Assess current product and service capability of Predictive Services
- Develop and implement process for technology transfer
- Develop and implement a communication plan
- Incorporate decision science in fire management processes
- Perform a cost benefit analysis
- Enterprise architecture
- Develop and implement a marketing plan
- Develop requests for resources to augment staffing requirements as needed
- Engage training as a strategic partner

Goal 3 – Partnerships

Predictive Services actively partners with cooperating agencies, internal programs, academia, research, and private sector.

Objectives

- Leverage relationships with other entities to accomplish objectives and goals
- Nurturing partnerships
- Accomplish objectives and goal with the help of other entities

Critical Success Factors

- Time to coordinate and work together
- Criteria for partnerships – know who is out there
- Understand what difference partners can and cannot bring to the table
- Understand what Predictive Services can and cannot bring to the table they can't
- Identify the common ground (good) for both partners
- All partners benefit from the relationship
- Understand the issues/concerns that the partners may bring to the table

Barriers

- Poorly defined issues/problems
- Undefined expectations
- Lack of knowledge about Predictive Services
- Partners only willing to participate in what they want to – picking and choosing
- Competition – conflict of interest
- Perceived threat

Strategies

- Foster relationships with increased outreach
- Develop and implement partnership plan

Goal 4 – Infrastructure

Organization structure, staffing, technology and resources are in place to ensure the success of the Predictive Services program.

Objectives

- Organization structure and governance is in place
- All resource requirements for the Predictive services program are satisfied
- Technology needs are satisfied for Predictive Services staff
- Information Technology support for Predictive Services is met
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) support for Predictive Services is met
- Adequate capability and structure is in place to meet the expectation and requirements of the community
- Fuels, fire danger, fire analysis skills and talent are available to meet program needs

Critical Success Factors

- Information Technology (IT) needs are identified
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) needs are identified
- Interagency support for the program
- Agency directors are committed to supporting, deploying and utilizing coordinated Predictive Services organization

Barriers

- Agency network issues
- Conflicting/different/inconsistent agency policy
- Lack of shared vision of Predictive Services throughout the organization has resulted in complex relationships and inconsistent expectations

Strategies

- Develop, implement and codify a Predictive Services Handbook
 - Standard Operating Procedures or Operating Procedures

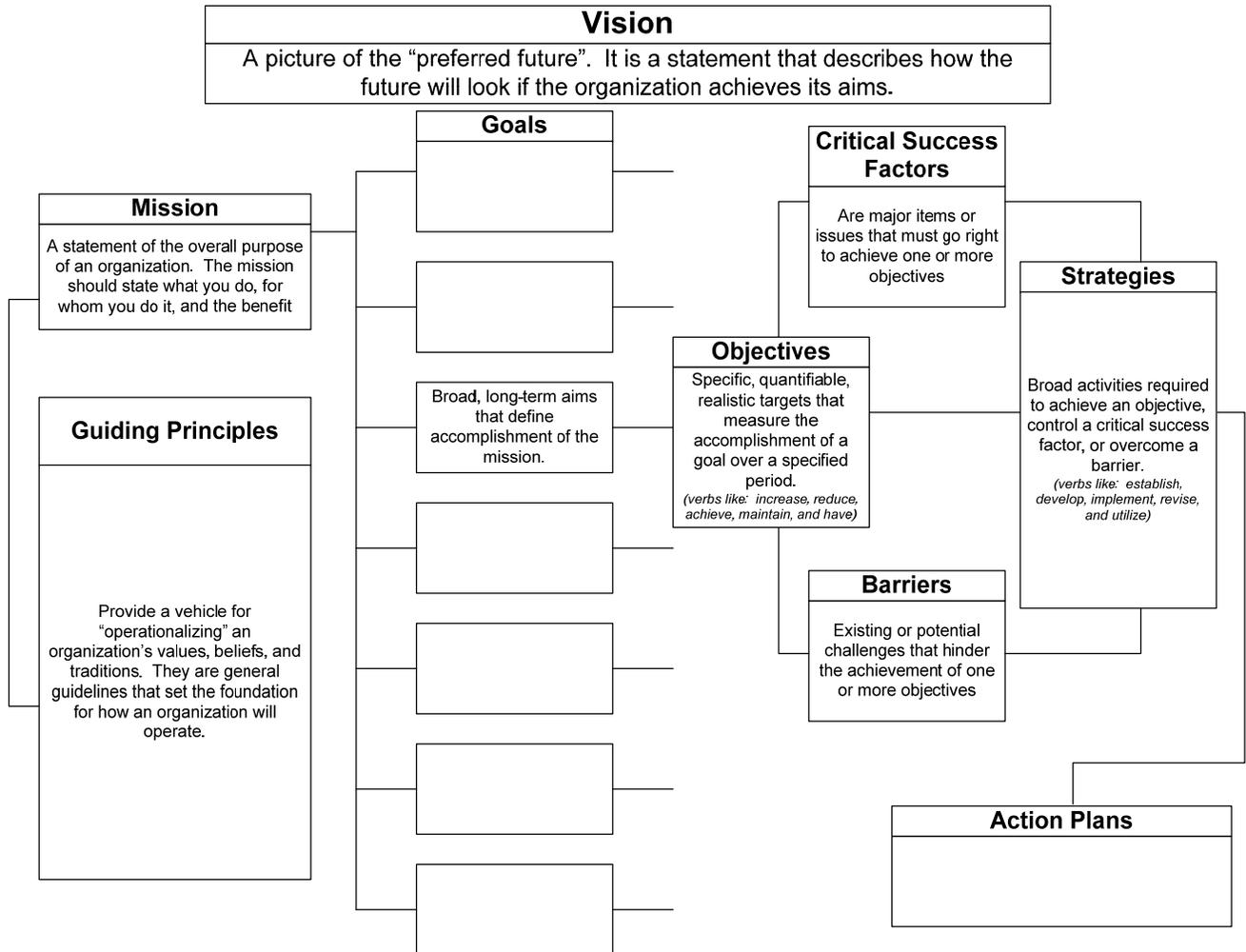
- Structure – lines of authority
- Provide proficiency for Predictive Services personnel
- Develop staffing and funding requirements for the program based on workload analysis
 - Staffing
 - Funding
 - Support (technology)
- Develop and implement annual operating plans
- Develop and implement a training plan for Predictive Services

Next Steps

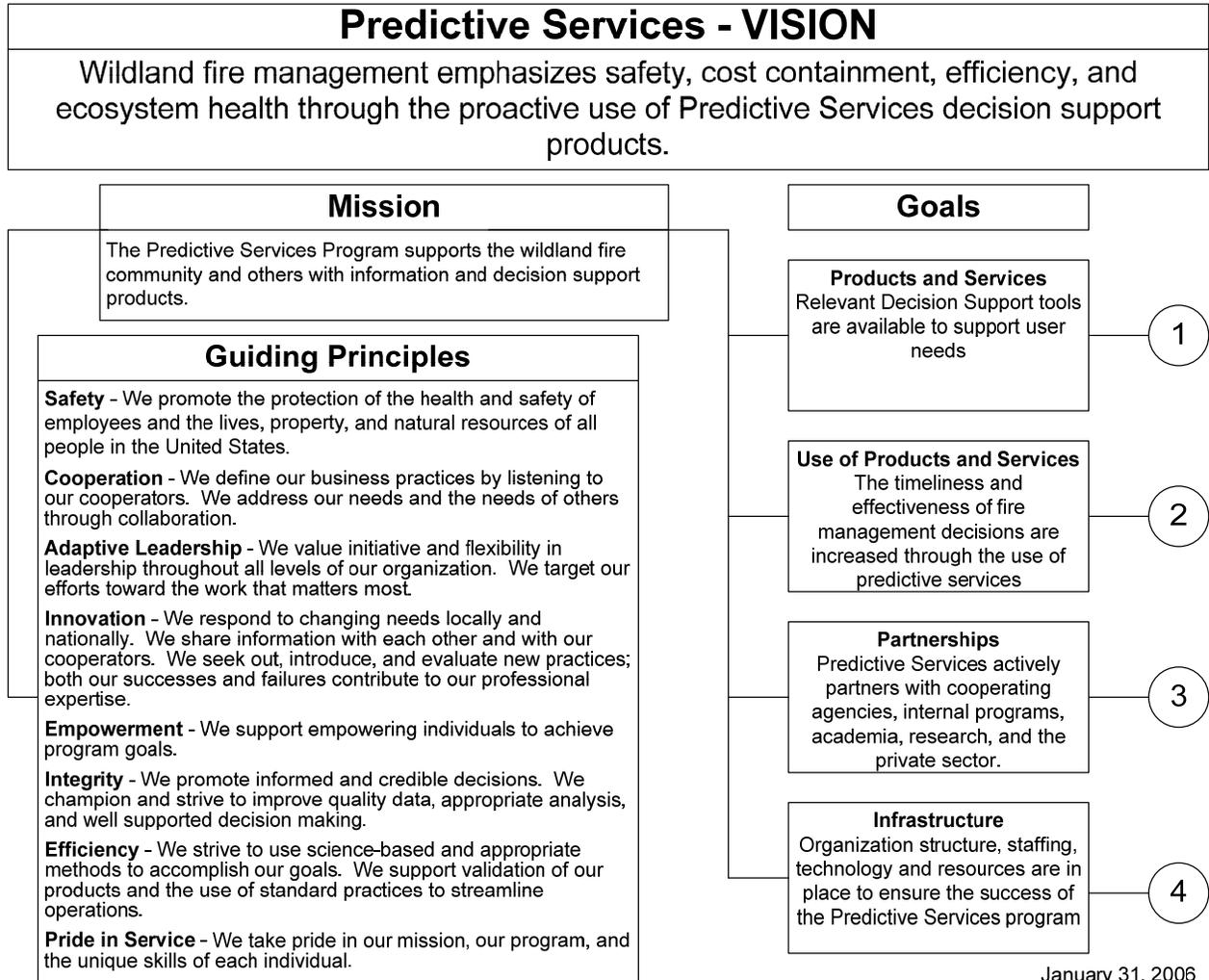
Once the current action plans are in place and work in these areas have been accomplished, the next steps of the Strategic Plan will be to revalidate and prioritize the remaining strategies and develop action plans. Progress should be assessed and new priorities established at the time of the annual review.

Appendices

Appendix A – Strategic Planning Definitions



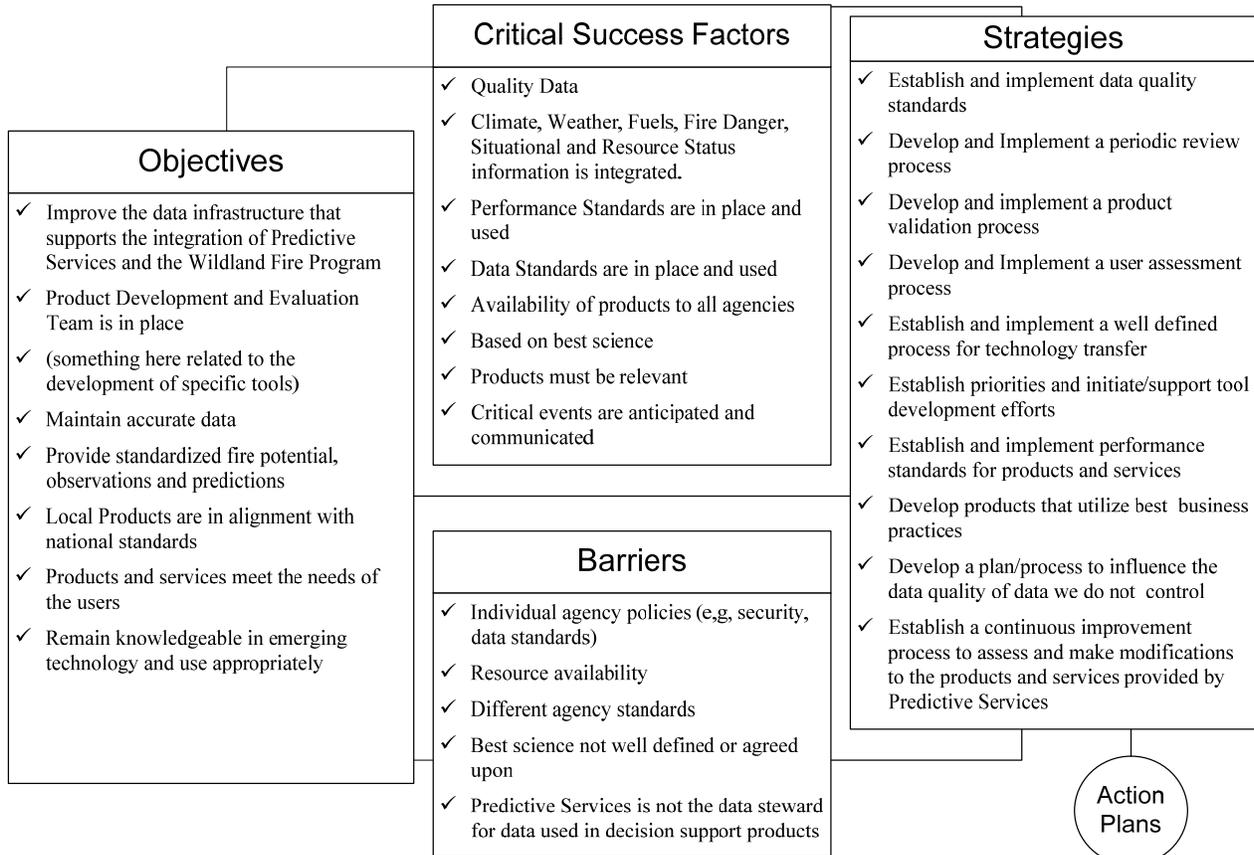
Appendix B – Predictive Services Framework



January 31, 2006

Appendix C – Predictive Services Goals

Predictive Services Goal 1 – Products and Services
 Relevant Decision Support tools are available to support user needs.



Action Plans

January 31, 2006

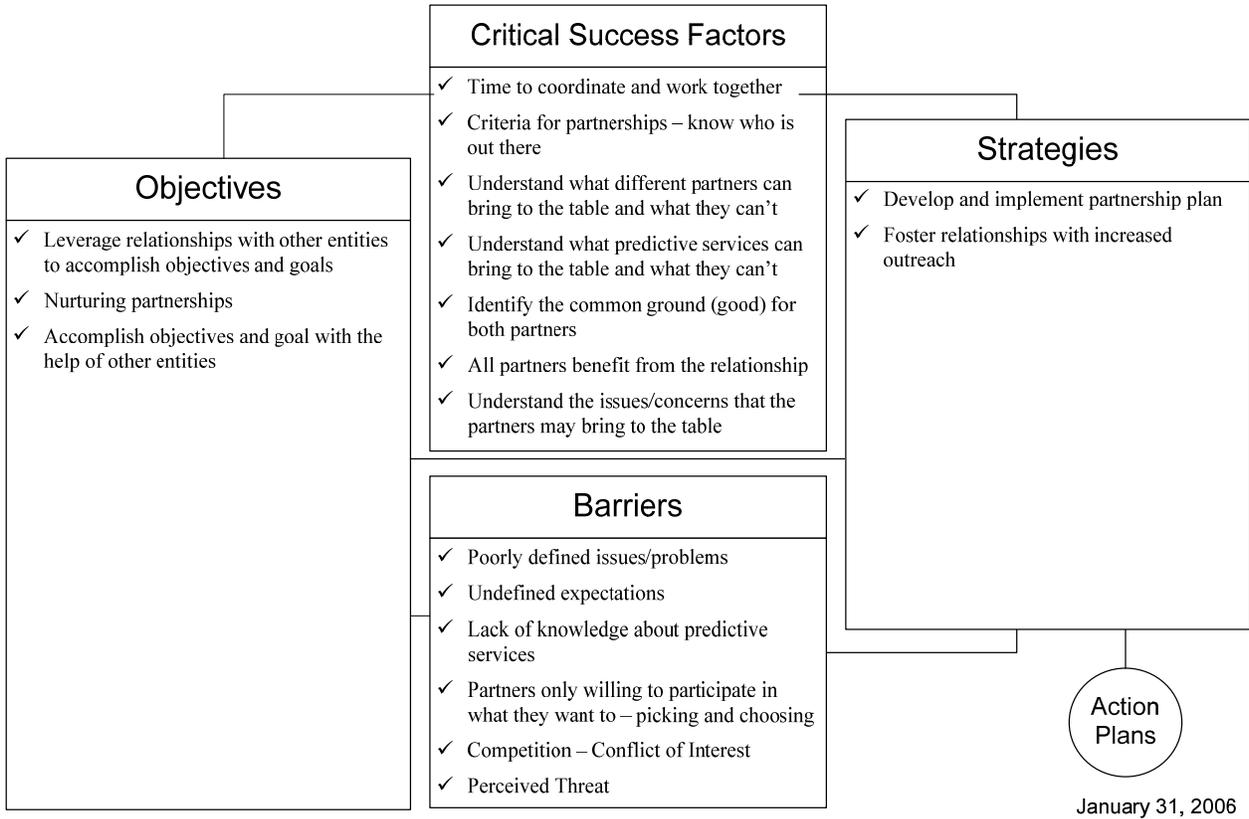
Predictive Services Goal 2 – Use of Products and Services

The timeliness and effectiveness of fire management decisions are increased through the use of predictive services

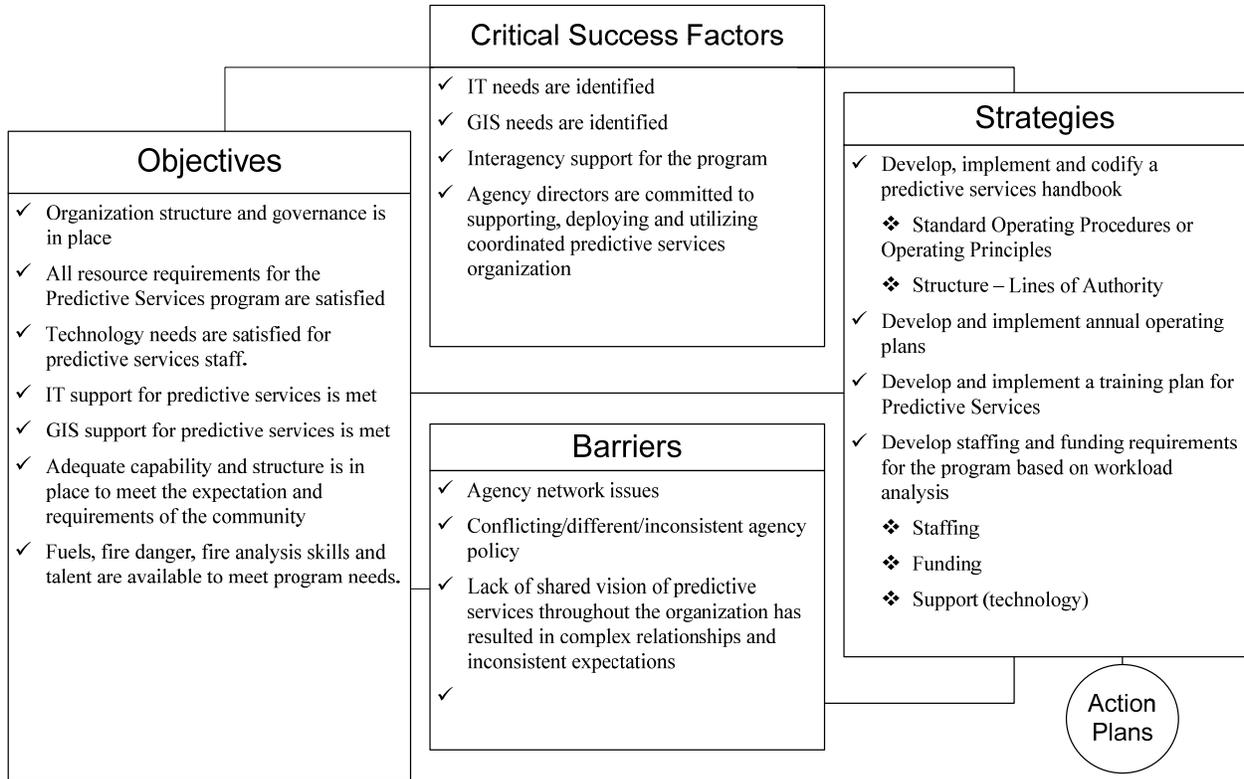


Predictive Services Goal 3 - Partnerships

Predictive Services actively partners with cooperating agencies, internal programs, academia, research, and the private sector.



Predictive Services Goal 4 – Infrastructure
 Organization structure, staffing, technology and resources are in place to ensure the success of the Predictive Services program



January 31, 2006

