

Core Expectations for Network Program Management

Background

This document is part of a series of guidance documents that will establish [Core Expectations](#) for multiple aspects of the Inventory and Monitoring Division (IMD). All IMD programs will undertake program reviews over the next several years. An expected outcome from network reviews will be to identify where networks require adjustments or additional support (e.g., administrative support, quantitative support) to meet the Core Expectations for Network Program Management outlined below. The reviews may also necessitate further refinement of this guidance document.

Network Program Managers are responsible for defining achievable timelines and balanced portfolios for their teams. This document is designed to serve as a tool to guide network planning and program management. While it may serve as a general orientation to new Network Program Managers (NPMs), more detailed guidance and support should be sought from the Regional Program Manager (RPM) and one or more mentors, such as other NPMs from the same or different regions or retired NPMs, through initiatives like [New Solutions](#) and [Phased Retirement](#).

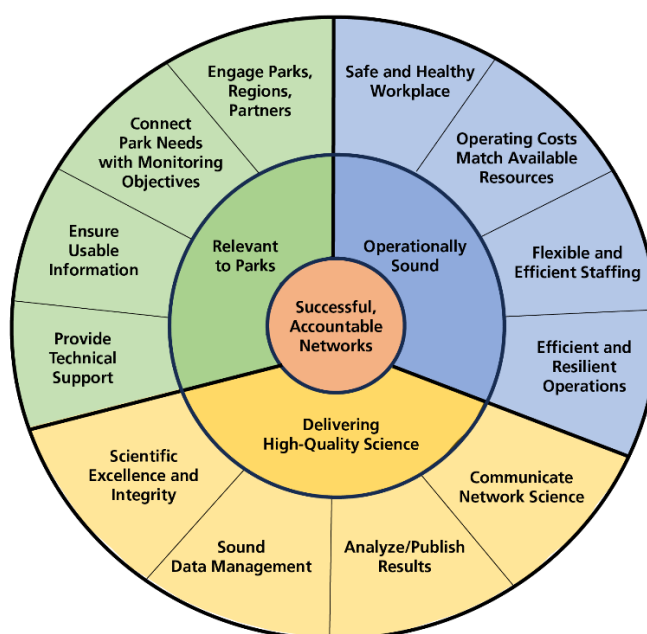


Figure 1. This diagram illustrates Core Expectations for Network Program Management graphically. The inner circle is a successful, sustainable network, and the rings radiating from the center detail the responsibilities of a network, with increasing detail as they extend out. Network accountability forms the foundation of all circles and is integral to a successful network. The amount of time devoted to each section will vary by network and by year. The diagram can be a useful framework for visualizing how the roles of everyone in a network contributes to its success and how a Network Program Manager balances these responsibilities.

Core Expectations for Network Program Management

1. Ensure network is operationally sound

- Provide a safe and healthy workplace that fosters employee retention. Follow a Network Safety, Health, and Wellness Plan and ensure staff have reasonable workloads and appropriate safety training, supplies, and equipment.
- Accomplish all required elements of the science information life cycle for every implemented vital sign, or other studies, within operating costs that do not exceed available resources (base funding, partner funding, in-kind contributions by parks and partners) over an identified time period (e.g., 5-year projection).
- Maintain a flexible and efficient staffing plan with reasonable workloads.
 - Implement effective performance management and provide opportunities for staff professional development and training, as appropriate and feasible.
 - Use the annual workplan to establish expectations commensurate with capacity for the work portfolio in the coming year.

2. Maintain efficient and resilient operations through short- and long-term strategic work planning

- Strategize how to position network financially for sustainability. Anticipate what changes will have to be made and when.
- Explore partnerships, shared positions and resources, and other initiatives with networks or parks if beneficial to accomplishing network goals.
- Provide program administration (e.g., QuickTime, charge card, budget management).
- Leverage partnerships and agreements with internal and external partners.
- Introduce operational flexibility with an awareness of its impact on workloads and monitoring goals (e.g., changes to operational cycles, protocol implementation, pausing field work to complete analyses or evaluate impact, sample size).
- Leverage data collected by others as appropriate.

3. Deliver high-quality science

- Ensure scientific excellence and integrity.
- Follow sound data management practices.
- Perform appropriate analyses and publish results.
- Communicate our science.

3. Ensure relevance to parks and partners

- Create opportunities for dialogue and build relationships with park and regional staff and partners.
- Ensure a connection among park science-information needs, monitoring activities, and network products and activities.

- Ensure information is usable by parks by staying current with technologies and delivering timely information in an effective and engaging manner (e.g., story boards, data visualization, resource briefs, presentations, web articles, technical reports, journal articles).
- Provide strategic technical support, as long as the network is on track to meet [Core Expectations for Vital Signs Monitoring](#) (e.g., helping parks generate inventory and assessment ideas and proposals, fill gaps in monitoring, provide responses to management questions and/or proposals).

4. **Maintain accountability and foster reciprocity**

- Networks are accountable to the board of directors and/or steering or technical committee as outlined in the network charter, fostered by open and two-way communication with parks.
- Networks and IMD leadership, including the IMD Central Support Office and regional program managers, are accountable to each other. IMD leadership provides the overall strategic guidance and direction needed to ensure accountability and effective performance among all networks. Regional Program Managers oversee and ensure networks are following guidance and meeting Core Expectations. Networks provide feedback and seek support when needed.
- Engage in program reviews and correspondingly amend monitoring plans as appropriate.