

Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response Standards, Protocols, Procedures

Document Section 6	Financial Policies and Procedures	Status: Complete
State Standard Number	6.5.0	
Standard Title	Prioritizing Capital and Other Spending	
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1. Purpose or Objective

The purpose of this standard is to establish a policy that will provide criteria and a process for determining how the Statewide Emergency Communications Board (SECB) allocates its funds and certain grants for interoperable communications, including the ARMER statewide communications system.

2. Technical Background

- **Capabilities**

Capabilities are based on the current version of the system backbone and/or compatibility with the system if applicable.

- **Constraints**

Subject to the availability of funds, vendor products, services, and other pertinent personnel, such as those at the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

3. Operational Context

The SECB is empowered by statute to set its budget for capital improvements to the system. Acting as the State Interoperability Executive Committee, (MSA 403.36, subd. 1g), the SECB also makes recommendations on the allocation and use of various grant funds. This standard provides a methodology for the SECB Finance Committee, Interoperability Committee (IOC), and Operations and Technical Committee (OTC) to make recommendations to the SECB in determining priorities and timing for such expenditures.

4. Recommended Protocol and Standard

The proposal for determining spending is comprised of three main evaluations. The first evaluation, "Project Scope," is a series of questions regarding the effect on the overall system. In this step, a proposed project will receive a pass, fail, or deferred result. The second evaluation determines a priority consistent with the adopted Investment Hierarchy

of the SECB and gives proposed projects a priority rating of 1-7. The third evaluation is the feasibility of the project to meet funding timelines and vendor capabilities.

All funding requests, whether from SRB allocated funds, grants, or other sources of funding the SECB has been asked to provide recommendations for, shall be reviewed by the Finance, Interoperability, and Operations and Technical Committees. The Committee Chairs shall determine the order of review. The committees will complete evaluations 1-3 on all projects. With respect to grant funds made available for interoperable communications, the Interoperability Committee will take primary responsibility for accepting proposals from various sources, developing those proposals, and completing the evaluations before reporting its recommendations to the other committees. The Interoperability Committee's recommendation may also include specific recommendations of how available grant funds should be allocated among the various proposals.

The last committee to review the funding proposals and the other committee recommendations shall be charged with reporting the item to the SECB. Disagreements between the committees will be discussed by the committee chairs and, if necessary, brought back through the process until a final consensus can be reached. If no consensus can be reached, the matter will be referred to the SECB for a final determination on the allocation of funds.

It should be understood that this procedure is a guide for allocating funding that is made available to the SECB for distribution to various units of government or eligible entities. Recommendations will be made with the emphasis that the funds made available to the SECB for allocation are dispersed in a manner that ensures the best possible use of funds to promote the ARMER System and provide for interoperability between users of the ARMER System and non ARMER System Users.

5. Recommended Procedure

Evaluation #1 - Project Scope

In this first evaluation, a proposed project must receive a yes answer to at least one of the following questions. If no "yes" is received, the project will still be forwarded to the OTC and listed as "Deferred". The OTC may consider the project if it is anticipated that the project will receive at least one yes answer within the time constraints of the available funding or provide a reason to the Finance Committee as to why they think a project should have received a "yes" response.

Questions:

- Does the project add needed capacity to the system?
- Does the project add needed coverage to the system?
- Is the project a required system change (as required by the legislature or a vendor)?

- Does the project improve identified system degradation?
- Does the project provide improved system reliability?
- Is the project an approved sub-system plan?
- Does the project provide needed interoperability?
- Has the project been requested by the OTC?
- Does the project meet the funding criteria for the source of funds?

Evaluation #2 – Investment Hierarchy

For those instances in which the legislature has directed funding for a specific purpose, has imposed explicit restrictions, or the Commissioners of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) or Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) have direct spending authority, this hierarchy will not apply. It is given that all investment decisions must be consistent with legislative direction.

In those cases where the SECB has explicit decision making authority or broad discretion in establishing spending priorities, this hierarchy should be used to provide direction and aid in decision making.

This investment hierarchy is intended to provide guidance and is intended as a tool in priority setting. The committee understands that this tool will not fit every investment scenario or decision process.

- Priority 1 – Backbone Infrastructure Construction
- Priority 2 – Operation and Maintenance of Existing Backbone Infrastructure
- Priority 3 – Local Enhancements (% Matching)
- Priority 4 – Major System Wide Improvements or Upgrades
- Priority 5 – Interoperability Projects consistent with the Statewide Communication Interoperability (SCIP) Plan
- Priority 6 – Programmed System Replacements
- Priority 7 – New Project Goals (i.e. Data, CriMNet, Communications Centers, 911, etc.)
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Evaluation #3 – Feasibility

In this evaluation, a project must demonstrate that it can be accomplished within any time constraints imposed by either the funding source or the availability of technology. A project must receive a yes to all of the questions below:

- Is funding available?
- Does the vendor have the capability to provide the product or meet the deadline?
- Are all prerequisites met? (i.e., frequencies available, software upgrades required, resources available, other standards or dependencies?)
- If applicable – Does MnDOT approve of the change to the backbone?

6. Management

The Chair of the SECB shall manage the administration of this standard.

This policy shall be reviewed for possible revision or cancellation as required.