# Federal Knowledge Management Initiative Backgrounder

The **Federal Knowledge Management Working Group**, over 700 Federal employees, contractors, academicians and interested members of the public, have mounted a campaign to enhance collaboration, knowledge and learning in the Federal Government by implementing formal knowledge management.

**Knowledge Management (KM)**, a discipline that uses management tools along with culture change, has been effective in the private sector. Some agencies have succeeded at KM, including **NASA** and the **US Army**, but there is **no formal Federal program**. There is no policy, standards or direction. There is no central clearinghouse of lessons learned or “what works.” Agencies and Departments must spend scarce consulting dollars to find their own way, “reinventing the wheel” in a wasteful duplication of effort. To fill this leadership void, the Federal KM Working Group presents an Action Plan for formal KM governance, with these goals:

1. **Establish a Federal Knowledge Management Center** to serve as a centralized resource for agencies in carrying out their own knowledge management efforts. The center will provide consulting and serve as a clearinghouse of Federal KM resources, such as software, expertise, and lessons learned.
2. **Establish a Federal CKO Position.** This person, the face of Federal KM, will coordinate with Federal departments to explain the benefits of sharing and collaborating across agencies.
3. **KM Governance.** Enact Government-wide Policies, Standards and Practices that specify the general direction and intent of Federal knowledge sharing efforts.
4. **Awareness Campaign and Web Presence.** To communicate the serious need for KM and distribute content “from those who know to those who need to know.”
5. **Build a Knowledge Sharing Culture in the Federal Government.** Change the Federal mindset from “need to know” to “need to share.”
6. **Train Federal Workers in KM Skills.** By learning KM competencies, they will also acquire a deeper understanding and appreciation of the value of knowledge sharing.
7. **Meet the Challenges of the Retirement “Age Wave.”** KM includes “knowledge retention,” an effort to reduce “brain drain” due to thousands of retiring baby boomers. The other side of the coin, today, is the Federal challenge in recruiting Generation Y employees, who have been raised on Web 2.0 and social computing tools.

The Federal KM Working Group (also known as KM.gov) utilizes a wiki maintained by NASA/JPL containing documents related to the Federal KM Initiative at this link: <http://wiki.nasa.gov/cm/wiki/?id=3907>

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