

FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION
E-Government Act Report for FY 2007

This response represents the Federal Maritime Commission's ("Commission's") progress in implementing the E-Government Act, pursuant to section 202(g) of the E-Government Act of 2002 and OMB Memorandum M-07-20.

The Federal Maritime Commission began FY 2007 with a total of 124 FTEs, 5 of which are Presidential appointees. While the agency has slightly more FTEs than would qualify it to be termed a "micro-agency" (100 FTEs), it is extremely close to being defined as a micro-agency in terms of funding for, and the scope of, its information technology program. The following report should be considered within that context.

I. Implementation of Electronic Government Initiatives

The Commission continues to make steady progress in implementing the government's electronic government initiatives. The agency has a database integration task force which is concentrating efforts on the development of an enterprise-wide database system which will bring together information currently gathered on various databases. While we have not fully integrated agency databases, we have made available to employees within the agency these databases which will facilitate later integration.

Plans to convert paper forms to automated formats continue to be developed. In last year's E-Government Act report, the agency reported on its initiative to complete an electronic version for the submission of Form FMC-18, *Application for a License as an Ocean Transportation Intermediary*. In FY 2007, the Commission completed testing of the form and plans to introduce the option of electronic submission of Form FMC-18 to regulated entities on September 24, 2007. It would be the intent of the Commission in FY 2008 to make the electronic filing of Form FMC-18 the standard.

A. Describe how the initiative is transforming agency operations.

Although the optional electronic filing of Form FMC-18 will not "go live" before September 24, 2007, it is anticipated that this initiative will greatly enhance the operations of the Commission and expedite the approval of an ocean transportation intermediary's ("OTI") application for license. Through a template Form FMC-18, the applicant will furnish information which populates the database, rather than staff inputting information manually. Also, the electronic form will let the applicant know when information is missing; this will save the staff from having to make a request for such information and avoid delays while awaiting additional detail from the applicant. Electronic filing will lead to a more streamlined and efficient process for accepting and processing applications.

B. Explain how your agency maintains an ongoing dialogue with interested parties to find innovative ways to use information technology for the initiative.

For the past 3 months, the Commission has partnered with several regulated entities to test an electronic version of Form FMC-18; information and suggestions gleaned from that process provided the agency with guidance for finalizing the electronic form. The FMC is always open to comments from the industry regarding improvements to the initiative. In addition, licensing staff have exchanged views and information with the financial surety industry to explore automated filing processes for bonds (E-Bonding), and with Customs and Border Protection regarding interaction with the ACE/ITDS system. Further, when the Commission publishes its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in FY 2008 with the intent to make electronic filing the standard, the process will be open to public comment.

C. Identify external partners (e.g., Federal, State or local agencies, industry) who collaborate with your agency on the initiative.

The Commission's primary external partners on the Form FMC-18 initiative are those OTIs which seek licenses or have made business process changes subsequent to their initial licensing necessitating Commission issuance of a revised license, or entities authorized to file on behalf of an OTI. The form's functionality was tested with a small group of volunteer regulated entities; it is anticipated that the system will "go live" on September 24, 2007.

D. Identify improved performance (e.g., outcome measures) by tracking performance measures supporting agency objectives and strategic goals.

The automated Form FMC-18 was in its "testing" phase with external testers for several months. This process allowed FMC to "debug" any problems in advance of the use of the automated form by the public and to assess computer security of this automated information system. It is intended that the optional filing of the form electronically will be effective September 24, 2007. Therefore, it is too early to track any performance measures regarding this initiative. However, the Commission will track the percentage of applications received completed via electronic submission and completed paper applications, and the amount of time required to process a completed application filed either electronically or on paper. The completeness of an application would have an effect on the speed with which an application is processed, although other factors affecting processing time persist, e.g., availability of references.

E. Quantify the cost savings and cost avoidance achieved through implementing the initiative (e.g., by reducing or eliminating other investments in information technology).

As this initiative will not be formally implemented before September 24, 2007, the agency is not yet able to quantify any cost savings. However, cost avoidance on the part of the Commission's target audience is assumed, as applications eventually will more easily and quickly be filed. Cost savings were not the primary reason to undertake this initiative: the primary incentives were to comply with E-Government requirements and to employ technological improvements to make it easier for regulated entities to

comply with statutory requirements. However, in order to promote the use of the electronic filing option by the public and to facilitate transfer of OTI records from a paper-based format to a more convenient and accessible digital format, the Commission has decided to assess a lesser filing fee for those using the optional electronic filing method. A filing fee of \$250 will apply to new applicants for OTI licensing (down from \$825), and \$125 for existing licensees who might wish to use the optional electronic filing system to update their licensing records or to submit changes in the licensee's organization for which prior Commission approval is required (down from \$525). This results in immediate and significant cost savings to applicants in the U.S. transportation industry.

F. Explain how this initiative ensures the availability of Government information and services for those without access to the Internet and for those with disabilities.

The Commission's new electronic Form FMC-18 will comply with the requirements of section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act for access by people with disabilities. Additionally, agency addresses, telephone numbers and fax numbers are included on the Commission's website for those who do not wish to provide information via the Internet, but contact the Commission directly or via regular mail. Further, agency staff routinely provide briefings around the country for industry groups to advise of compliance matters, which is an opportunity for those without Internet access to receive information.

G. Explain how the project applies effective capital planning and investment control procedures.

Under the Commission's CPIC process, the agency's senior executives, serving as the CPIC Control Board, evaluated the project to automate Form FMC-18 to ensure that it fell within the goals of the agency and supported the needs of internal and external users. Although the automation of Form FMC-18 did not fall within the threshold of a "major" IT investment, it was presented to the CPIC Control Board by the Chief Information Officer for review and approval of funding and staff resources, with a final approving decision from the Chairman of the agency.

II. Agency Information Management Activities

As requested by OMB Memo 07-20, the FMC provides the following links to the location of information on the FMC website:

A. Your agency's Information Resources Management (IRM) Strategic Plan.

Due to the small size of the agency, the IRM strategic report is a part of the overall agency strategic plan. Current and historical strategic plans are available on the FMC website at <http://www.fmc.gov/reading/FMCStrategicPlans.asp>.

B. Final determinations, priorities, and schedules. Also include your agency's information dissemination product catalogs, directories, inventories, and any other management tools used to improve the dissemination of and access to your agency's information by the public.

The Commission is a very small agency, and its commitment to making information available and accessible depends on the pace at which it can automate, such as via scanning, or converting data into accessible databases. However, information which can be made available is posted quickly. There is no backlog of information waiting to be posted to the Commission's Internet. Therefore, no priorities or schedules have been developed, as information is posted as required within a day or two of the request. However, to formalize the process, the agency's Information Management Specialist has developed standard operating procedures to streamline and ensure continuity for posting material to the website. For example, items that are of particular interest to participants in docketed proceedings are posted to the website in several locations, while at the same time e-mailed to interested parties.

C. Your agency's FOIA handbook, the link of your agency's primary FOIA website, and the website link where frequent requests for records are made available to the public.

The Commission's Secretary is responsible for public information and the FOIA and Privacy Acts. Thus, the agency's information dissemination activities are closely coordinated with the FOIA operations in order to improve both access to and dissemination of information to the public. Finally, the FOIA improvement plan details several improvements the agency intends to make in its FOIA program and information dissemination process.

The FOIA program is fully integrated into the agency website, which provides a broad platform for information dissemination. Through the website, FOIA requestors can learn what information is available through FOIA, what information is available without a FOIA request, and how to file a FOIA request. Several different types of contact information (e.g. phone, e-mail) are prominently displayed. In addition, all of the information is cross-linked throughout the website in various areas to make it more accessible to the user.

In addition, the Commission has set up a FOIA Requestor Service Center. The Office of the Secretary dedicated a special phone number exclusively for FOIA requests. This line is monitored by employees who have received FOIA training and are able to best respond to requests. In order to assure the highest quality of customer service, the agency has also named a FOIA Public Liaison. This person is available for any person who is not satisfied with the way a FOIA request was handled.

Finally, in last year's report we indicated that we were going to address the creation of FOIA frequently asked questions, posting more frequently requested information, creating a FOIA reference guide (handbook), and simplifying the posted FOIA instructions. To this end, draft FOIA frequently asked questions are presently under review, and the frequently requested information posted to the website is periodically verified and updated. While we intended to complete the forgoing items

discussed in our last report in 2007, some staffing changes set this schedule back; we hope to complete these items before the next reporting period.

- D. A list of your agency's public websites disseminating research and development (R&D) information to the public, describing for each whether the website provides the public information about federally funded R&D activities and/or provides the results of Federal research.**

The agency does not fund Federal R&D activities.

- E. An inventory describing formal agency agreements (e.g., contracts, memorandum of understanding) with external entities (e.g., partnerships with State and local governments, public libraries, industry and commercial search engines) complementing your agency's information dissemination program, briefly explaining how each agreement improves the access to and dissemination of government information to the public.**

The Commission has no formal arrangements with external entities. However, informally we are aware that the industry we regulate and the trade publications that follow our activities in their own respective publications, either link to our webpage or copy verbatim information posted on our website.

- F. An inventory that describes your agency's NARA-approved records schedules or the link to the publicly-posted records schedules, and a brief explanation of your agency's progress to implement NARA Bulletin 2006-02. For the brief explanation please report the number of systems for which a record schedule was submitted to NARA in FY 2007 and the number of systems still requiring records schedules.**

The Commission currently is undertaking an agency-wide review of all its records schedules, particularly with regard to implementing the appropriate disposition schedules for its electronic information systems. In FY 2007, proposed records schedules for four electronic systems were submitted to NARA; one has been approved, and the other three are under review. It is the FMC's intention to submit the records disposition schedules for the remaining three identified electronic systems in FY 2008. The link for the current agency records disposition schedules is:

<http://www.fmc.gov/bureaus/RecordsDispositionSchedule.asp>.