eRA Project Team Meeting Minutes

Date:	Tuesday, June 22, 2004
Time:	9:00–10:00 a.m.
Location:	Rockledge 1, 5th floor conference room
Chair:	Jim Cain

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 13, 9:00 a.m., Rockledge 1, 5th floor conference room

Action Items

1. (Sheri Cummins) Distribute copy or link to the DEAS standard operating procedures.

2. (Izja Lederhendler) Follow-up on invitation to DEAS for eRA Project Team representation.

Attachments

❑ **Workflow (Steve Hughes, Natasha Globus, Changqing Zhen):**
   http://era.nih.gov/docs/WorkflowOverviewPresentation.pdf

Opening Remarks

Izja Lederhendler

❑ Izja reported that the deadline for Pioneer applications is Monday (6/28). He thanked the team for all their efforts in response to this important initiative. He asked the CGAP team to pay close attention to the Grants.gov side of the effort and make sure any lessons learned in that arena are also applied to CGAP.

   Sophonia Simms reported there have been some minor issues, but the team is working through them and they have spent a considerable amount of time working directly with applicants. Just over 200 applications are expected.

❑ Izja reported that the CIO-sponsored Independent Verification & Validation (IV&V) effort is well underway. Gartner will conduct an initial baseline assessment of each of the three identified NIH enterprise systems: NIH Business, Research, and Support System (NBRSS), Clinical Research Information System (CRIS), and electronic Research Administration (eRA). eRA is the first enterprise system of the three to be reviewed. They will be looking in the eRA processes via documentation review and will be conducting approximately 30 interviews. Izja asked that anyone who is invited to interview to make themselves available and to be frank and open in response to all interview questions. This is a friendly, non-adversarial process aimed at identifying potential issues so that improvements can be made.

❑ Izja reported that there is growing interest among NIH executive staff in a decision support system. Izja stated that the requirements for executive content are not clear and remain in early stages of definition. A high-level JAD of NIH leaders may be needed. He will update the team when additional information becomes available.

Division of Extramural Activities Support Update

Mary Fran Deutsch

Mary Fran Deutsch is the director of the Division of Extramural Activities Support (DEAS). Rather than running through a formal presentation, Mary held an informal discussion over the current ramping activities of her team.

Discussion points:

❑ DEAS is responsible for the MEO activities.

❑ Mary stated that eRA has an important role in DEAS activities. The approach DEAS is taking is to incorporate their needs into the eRA architecture and not to build yet another standalone system. She noted that DEAS has some immediate needs and that tools are being brought in to address them for the near-term.

❑ Paul Jordan is on detail from NIEHS and is serving as a technical advisor. Paul has been working with eRA and a fit/gap analysis between DEAS requirements and the eRA System is scheduled.

❑ Diane Martin is the director for the Division of Quality Assurance. Mary noted that timeliness is a key measure for her team and, therefore, system availability is critical. DEAS will be tracking down time as supporting information to their measurements.

❑ The DEAS management team includes three HUB managers:

  – Nora Salgado, Hub A Branch Manager

  – Renetta Washington, Hub B Branch Manager

  – Ken Davis, Hub C Branch Manager

❑ Nine Extramural Specialist supervisors have been hired with a good balance of grants, review, and program experience.

❑ Mary reported that the DEAS organization chart will be very large (largest in NIH). They will be interviewing over 300 candidates for about 250 GS 4/5/6 positions.

❑ DEAS is scheduled to start operations on September 3, 2004.

❑ Mary reported that the largest challenge her team faces is transitioning work load that is continuously in progress.

❑ A great deal of effort to date has been in the definition of a set of standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Action: **(Sheri Cummins) Distribute copy or link to the DEAS standard operating procedures.**

❑ Izja noted that the critical intersection between eRA and DEAS is through a common set of working procedures. He extended an invitation to Mary to appoint a DEAS representative to the eRA Project Team.

Action: **(Izja Lederhendler) Follow-up on invitation to DEAS for eRA Project Team representation.**

Workflow

Steve Hughes, Changqing Zhen and Natasha Globus

Changqing, Natasha, and Steve reviewed the attached presentation that describes the following aspects of Workflow:

- What Workflow is and why it is important
- Proposed Workflow architecture
- Technical requirements
- eRA approach to implementing Workflow

Presentation discussion items:

❑ With 27 ICs processing grant applications, it is expected that not all organizations follow the exact same processes. However, they do have many activities in common.

❑ Workflow is the infrastructure on which modules will sit.

❑ Representatives from HRSA asked how OPDIV needs would be incorporated into workflow. The team indicated that OPDIVs would be part of the business process reengineering (BPR) teams and would have the opportunity to take part in requirements generation. It was also noted that workflow provides greater flexibility in handling variations of processes.

❑ Steve reported that DEAS will be using SiteScape to address their immediate workflow needs. As Mary Fran Deutsch noted earlier, however, their long-term plan is integration with eRA processes. Paul and Steve are working closely to make sure both sides are taking steps to make that transition as smooth as possible.

❑ Pete Morton inquired about interactions with the NIH Business System (NBS) and other outside applications. Steve reported that he is working closely with Jack Jones and the are trying to stay within industry standards.

Open Discussion

Tom Tatham (CSR) raised a concern over the recent system slow downs that occurred during reviews. Tracy Soto reported that there have been some issues over the last several weeks and they have been monitoring the system. The longest delay identified via monitoring has been three hours. There has been a large increase in usage, much of which has been driven by CSR. The architecture team is looking at scalability issues. Data architecture changes are necessary to address the issue properly; adding more machines without architecture changes will have little impact. Jim Cain suggested that an update to the issue be provided at the next meeting.

Attendees

Bradley, Eileen (CSR)	Copeland, Zoe-Ann (OER)	Hahn, Marcia (OER/OPERA)
Bukowski, Maria (OD)	Cummins, Sheri (LTS)	Hausman, Steve (OD)
Burns, Amy (LTS)	Dutcher, Sylvia (Mitretek)	Hilton, Pam (HRSA)
Caban, Carlos (OER)	Faenson, Inna (OD)	Hughes, Stephen (OD)
Cain, Jim (OER)	Gaines, Patti (OER)	Ikeda, Richard (NIGMS)
Chicchirichi, David (OER)	Globus, Natasha (Ekagra)	Katzper, Linda (OD/DEIS)

Kinley, Teresa (CDC)   Patel, Kalpesh (Ekagra)   Snouffer, Anna (OD/OFACP)
Lederhendler, Israel (NIMH)   Ratnanather, Chanath (Z-Tech)   Soto, Tracy (OD)
Lynch, Peggy (IBM)   Salzman, John (OD)   Tatham, Thomas (CSR)
Martin, Diane (OD)   Seach, Jim (NCI/eRA)   Tucker, Jim (OER)
Milner, Tina (OER)   Seppala, Sandy (LTS)   Wehrle, Janna (NIGMS)
Morton, Larry (OER)   Shingler, Felicia (OER)   Zucker, Sherry (DEIS)
Morton, Pete (CIT)   Simms, Sophonia (OD)   Zhen, Changqing (IBM)
Moyer, Skip (AHRQ)   Sinnett, Everett (CSR)