eRA Project Team Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, September 23, 2003
Time: 9:00–11:00 a.m.
Location: 6700 B Rockledge, Room 1205
Chair: JJ McGowan

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 14, 9:00 a.m., 6700 B Rockledge, Room 1205

Action Items

1. (Project Team) Provide recommendations for good epidemiological and statistical resources to participate on panel Dr. Zerhouni is forming.

2. (Tracy Soto) Present short overview of password policy changes at next Project Team meeting.

3. (Retreat Participants) Review email sent by Amy Burns regarding breakout group session assignments and pre-retreat homework.

Attachments

- ❑ NIMH STCCS Presentation (Cyndy Thoma): http://era.nih.gov/Docs/STCCS-Demo-09232003.pdf

- ❑ CGAP Status Update (Lana Diggs): http://era.nih.gov/Docs/CGAP_Status_09232003r1.pdf

- ❑ eRA Fall Release FY04 Highlights (Sherry Zucker): http://era.nih.gov/Docs/eRA_Fall_Release_FY04_Highlights%202.pdf

Project Report

JJ McGowan

JJ's meeting with Dr. Zerhouni on September 9 went very well. Dr. Zerhouni was especially interested in three items from JJ's presentation:

1. Co-Investigator tracking

2. Key Personnel specification

3. Scientific Coding

Dr. Zerhouni is interested in changing the paradigm for supporting co-investigators on research projects to give appropriate recognition on their scientific contributions to the project. He was also interested in refining the policy definition for "key personnel" and building into eRA the mechanisms to track key personnel through the lifecycle of a grant.

JJ will work with Dr. Belinda Seto and Dr. Larry Tabak on a half-day retreat with Dr. Zerhouni and a panel of experts to look at terminology issues and data that might be collected.

JJ alerted the team that Dr. Zerhouni is looking for recommendations for epidemiological and statistical resources to participate in a Blue Star Panel on knowledge and trend analysis.

Action: **(Project Team) Provide recommendations for good epidemiological and statistical resources to participate on panel Dr. Zerhouni is forming.**

Although Dr. Zerhouni had an intellectual interest in scientific coding, he did not want to expend financial and personnel resources on it at this time.

NIMH STCCS System

Cyndy Thoma

Cyndy Thoma, Requirements Engineer at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), presented the Status Tracking and Comments Capture System (STCCS) used to address the following NIMH business problems:

- ❑ Several competing processes for requesting supporting documentation for a grant application. A PI or an institution may receive multiple letters from various departments, each with a different letterhead and text., requesting support documentation. This can lead to confusion and possibly delay the award of a grant application.

- ❑ No NIMH-level tracking of what supporting documentation had been requested and what had been received for each grant application.

The system is fully RUP-, J2EE- and 508-compliant and includes many of the features needed by eRA (i.e., e-Notification, workflow, task management, comment tracking). All database tables reside within IMPAC II table space.

See attached presentation for additional detail on STCCS functionality, technical environment and requirements approach.

Cyndy walked the Project Team through several document and task scenarios demonstrating the flexibility of the system. The team was especially impressed with the level of customization that could be incorporated and the centrally controlled template structure for consistent documents.

JJ challenged the Project Team to think of ways that eRA can partner with ICs that have built systems that complement eRA's suite of tools and solve business issues not yet tackled by eRA. This will be discussed at the Retreat. By partnering with ICs that are consistently ahead of the curve with their in-house solutions, like NIMH, eRA can quickly build upon the current application suite for the benefit of NIH as a whole.

JJ noted that eRA has been looking at an overall e-Notification strategy and was not sure how the STCSS system would fit within that strategy.

CGAP Update

Lana Diggs

Lana, the eRA Analyst for CGAP and the recently appointed CGAP/Grants.gov coordinator, presented an overview and status update for the Competitive Grant Applications Process (CGAP) project.

Lana reviewed plans for the October pilot. A small number of grantees will submit their new or renewal R01 grant applications through a Service Provider or Grants.gov. eRA will accept the XML data stream and map the data into the eRA database. Notification of receipt will be sent to the PI and SO. The PI and SO will use the Commons Status interface to examine and verify the application. The PI and SO will agree to terms via Commons at which time the application will be accessible to Receipt and Referral.

Due to the timing of release schedules in relation to submission deadlines, eRA will use their testing and staging platforms to process pilot applications. Paper copies of the applications will be used as backup and all data sent to the pilot systems will be re-processed in production following the Fall release. Assurances have been made to pilot participants that participating in the pilot carries no risk—eRA personnel will carefully follow each application through the process.

See attached presentation.

Fall Deployment

Sherry Zucker and Scarlett Gibb

Scarlett reported that planning for the Fall release has been a *painful* process. Resource and time pressures resulting from the pending re-compete have forced some difficult decisions regarding the type and amount of functionality that can be safely delivered this Fall.

To free-up resources to complete the massive documentation effort underway by the development team and to minimize risk associated with rolling out new functionality in a time of transition, the eRA management team has reduced the scope of the Fall release. The bulk of the release will focus mainly on maintenance and a few mandated items (e.g., CGAP, password policy).

Sherry reviewed the attached presentation that highlights items that remain within the scope of the next release.

Action: **(Tracy Soto) Present short overview of password policy changes at next Project Team meeting.**

JJ noted that during this transition time many contractors are making some important personal choices and the risk of resource turnover is very high. He cautioned that the reviewed list of functionality targeted for the Fall is still subject to change.

Sherry reported that Web QT, which is currently in pilot, was presented at the Commons Working Group (CWG) meeting over the weekend and was very well received. It is envisioned that Web QT can be a common interface for both internal and external users. Patti Gaines, the eRA Analyst for Web QT, recently sent out an email to eRA Advocates soliciting personal participation and the participation of users within their designated groups in a Web QT focus group. Sherry urged Advocates to participate in the focus group that will be the first in eRA to include both internal and external users. Contact Patti Gaines at gainesp@od.nih.gov for additional information.

eRA Project Team Retreat Update

Amy Burns

The eRA Project Team Retreat—*Resetting the Vision*—will take place October 9–10, 2003, at the Harbourtowne Golf Resort & Conference Center in St. Michaels, MD.

Amy reviewed the details of an email sent to all retreat participants regarding breakout group session assignments and pre-retreat *homework.*

Action: **(Retreat Participants) Review email sent by Amy Burns regarding breakout group session assignments and pre-retreat homework.**

JJ mentioned that prior to the breakout sessions he would lead a discussion on eRA drivers and priority setting.

Jim mentioned that the client/server to J2EE migration team would be challenged to look for creative ways to balance new development with completing the migration activity in 2004.

General Discussion

Jim Cain reported that, effective immediately, Paul Markovitz has been reassigned from the DEIS Project Management Office (PMO) to report directly to Jim in DEIS OD. Paul will bring with him all of the planning responsibilities that have been in the PMO office. Planning activities are always important but need special attention now with the pending re-compete and the process changes the project is undertaking. This change allows Paul and his team to focus on planning activities while maintaining the critical tracking functions within PMO.

Jim noted that the management team is maintaining an extensive risk list with mitigation strategies to provide system stability throughout the transition period. However, despite best effort, the transition period may still bring adverse effects to users and he asked for patience as the team works through any issues that may surface.

Re-Compete Update

Four key areas are part of the pending re-compete:

1. **Integration (Includes: Analysis, Architecture, and Integration Testing)**
   Status: Contract awarded to IBM Business Consulting Services. Jim introduced Mike Anderson who will serve as the IBM project manager. Mike and three senior staff members are in the process of getting up to speed on the project.

2. **Operations**
   Status: Contract awarded to RN Solutions.

3. **Design and Development**
   Status: Request for quotes has been sent.

4. **User Support**
   Status: Request for quotes has been sent.

Attendees

Austin, Patricia (OER/COB)	Choi, Ruth (NIMH)	Copeland, Zoe-Ann (OD/OER)
Burns, Amy (LTS/COB)	Chuang, Enoch (NIMH)	
Caban, Carlos (OER)	Collie, Krishna (RN Solutions)	Cummins, Sheri (LTS/COB)
Cain, Jim (OER)		Diggs, Lana (OER)

Fadeley, Vickie (OER/OPERA)
Gaines, Patti (OER)
Gibb, Scarlett (COB)
Hausman, Steve (NIAMS)
Koshy, Maria (OER/OPERA)
Lederhendler, Israel (NIMH)
Markovitz, Paul (OER)
Martin, Carol (NHGRI)

McGowan, JJ (NIAID)
Morton, Larry (OER)
Newburgh, Janet (CSR)
Ratnanather, Chanath (Z-Tech)
Seppala, Sandy (LTS/COB)
Shingler, Felicia (OER/COB)
Silver, Sara (Z-Tech)
Sinnett, Everett (CSR/OD)
Skinner, Andrew (NIMH)

Snouffer, Anna (OD/OFACP)
Soto, Tracy (OD/DEIS)
Thoma, Cyndy (NIMH)
Tucker, Jim (OER)
Van Brunt, Virginia (LTS)
Walker, Catherine (OER)
Zucker, Sherry (DEIS