eRA Project Team Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, March 9, 2004
Time: 9:00–10:30 a.m.
Location: Rockledge 1, 5th floor conference room
Chair: Israel Lederhendler

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 23, 9:00 a.m., Rockledge 1, 5th floor conference room

Action Items

1. (Pete Morton) Forward list of known IRDB quality issues to Izja Lederhendler, Jim Cain, and Tim Twomey.

2. (Scarlett Gibb, Zoe-Ann Copeland) Provide a high-level overview of what is included in the Task Order and how it relates to eRA priorities.

3. (Tim Twomey) Determine what changes are necessary to prepare eSNAP for a full-production roll-out and report back to the team at the next meeting (3/23/2004).

Attachments

❑ eSNAP Status (Tim Twomey): **http://era.nih.gov/docs/eSNAP_Status_Update_03-09-2004.pdf**

❑ Checklist Status (Cathy Walker): **http://era.nih.gov/docs/Checklist_Status_Update_03-09-2004.pdf**

Remarks and Project Update

Israel (Izja) Lederhendler

The new governance process has taken affect (i.e., budget control). eRA will now interface with the Extramural IT Working Group a sub-committee of the IT Working Group. The Extramural IT Working Group is chaired by Louise Ramm and its membership includes Al Graeff, Norka Ruiz Bravo and others. The first eRA budget presentation for fiscal year 2005 to the ITWG will take place March 31. A solid justification is critical for securing the increased funding level requested by eRA. Izja has been working with Bill Risso, Jim Cain, Scarlett Gibb, Zoe-Ann Copeland, Robert Lagas and other key individuals for that meeting. Izja had to put aside many other activities to prepare for this important meeting and thanked the team for their continued patience as he progresses through the steep learning curve of this new role.

During the first meeting of the Extramural IT Working Group, Louise Ramm asked the committee members what their eRA priorities were. The priorities raised by the committee were in-line with the priorities identified and planned for by the eRA team.

Electronic receipt of grant applications topped both the committee and the Project Team's priority list.

Data quality was the second priority of the committee. The topic of data quality encompasses many different areas and Izja has asked for clarification from the committee. The Project Team

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members agreed that issues related to duplicate profiles were the largest data quality concern for their user communities. Jim Cain indicated that no other data-quality issues have been escalated to his attention. Tim Twomey reported that other minor data quality issues have been identified and added to the development work list, including some IRDB data-quality issues. Pete Morton concurred with Tim's assessment and indicated he had a list of known IRDB issues that he could forward.

Action: **(Pete Morton) Forward list of known IRDB quality issues to Izja Lederhendler, Jim Cain, and Tim Twomey.**

Izja pointed out that one reason for requesting increased funding is to cover unfunded mandates, such as, Knowledge Management (KM), Most Efficient Organization (MEO), Roadmap initiatives (e.g., Pioneer Awards), and co-investigator/key personnel. As these initiatives surface, eRA is often asked to provide product development within an expedited timeframe and there is no slack built into current plans to accommodate these new and shifting priorities.

Eileen Bradley noted that at a recent Extramural Programs Management Committee (EPMC) meeting, Wally Schaffer talked about forming a committee to start looking at co-investigator/key personnel. The new committee has not yet met, but Eileen Bradley and Marcia Hahn will represent eRA. These requirements will help determine the level of effort needed to support the co-investigator/key personnel initiative.

Izja reported that progress has been made in supporting the Pioneer Awards initiative. Jim Cain informed the team that three separate activities are currently in progress:

1. Scarlett Gibb and Carol Alderson are creating Pioneer Award-specific instructions for the application package. These instructions will detail exactly what is expected for each entry in the application.

2. The system-to-system interface between Grants.gov and eRA is being looked at, but is not a critical path item. Although creating a data stream between the systems is ideal, manual entry (transparent to the users) is a fall-back scenario for the initial round of Pioneer Awards given the small number of applications targeted.

3. Sherry Zucker and eRA analysts have been working with David Armstrong to chart the Pioneer Award business processes and determine if eRA can accommodate them.

David Wright reported that the Request for Quote (RFQ) for the Commons Expansion Task Order (TO) went out on Monday (3/8/2004) and responses are expected by Friday (3/12/2004). The TO, which covers approximately nine months of development, includes the construction of a grantee "Closeout" module and other Commons enhancements. Tim Twomey added that in addition to the enhancements covered in the TO, maintenance releases for Commons to address bug fixes and minor enhancements will take place throughout the year and that two already have been deployed this year.

Action: **(Scarlett Gibb, Zoe-Ann Copeland) Provide a high-level overview of what is included in the Task Order and how it relates to eRA priorities.**

Steve Hughes reported that the Architecture team continues to work with CIT on the Single Sign-on initiative. Steve explained that the bulk of the implementation effort falls in two areas: *authentication* and *authorization*. Authentication determines whether or not a particular user is known to the system and authorization determines what activities an authenticated user is allowed

to perform once access to the system is gained. Izja told the team that communicating the steps needed to take place, challenges faced, and incremental progress made is critical to justify the timeframe needed to accomplish the task.

David Wright reported that organizational hierarchy has two components: internal and external. The external component is part of the Commons Expansion TO.

Izja re-emphasized that there is a strong spotlight on eRA. He would like to continue to touch upon the status of key initiatives at each Project Team meeting.

Introductions

Izja introduced Craig Jordan, who will be serving as an independent liaison between eRA and the Extramural Program Management Committee (EPMC).

eSNAP Status

Tim Twomey

eSNAP allows a grantee organization to review and update non-competing grant data and submit a progress report electronically following the SNAP (Streamlined Non-competing Award Process) guidelines. The attached presentation highlights key eSNAP functionality and provides eSNAP statistics.

Effective January 1, 2004, the eSNAP pilot was expanded from Commons Working Group (CWG) members (and a few motivated institutions) to all Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) members. Tim provided a copy of the February 5, 2004, announcement, which can be found at http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-04-024.html.

Additional discussion points:

❑ As part of the eSNAP pilot, NIH is testing potential changes in certain SNAP progress report business processes. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) information is not requested upfront with eSNAP. To verify continued compliance despite the process change, the team must gather the information on a quarterly basis. If the data shows continued compliance, the team will have a good case to go to the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) and the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) to request a permanent process change to eliminate the collection of those dates as part of the progress report. If compliance is not verified by the data, the old process of requesting the dates upfront will be reinstituted.

❑ Jim Cain mentioned that eRA missed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goal last year to make eSNAP available to all institutions. He would like to be able to announce that this goal has been met, given there is no *technical* reason to hold back. Marcia Hahn indicated that the policy issues should not be a deterrent to opening up eSNAP to everyone.

❑ Before granting eSNAP access, NIH requires that the participating institutions agree to test the new business practices through an up-front agreement. To eliminate the labor-intensive process for setting up new institutions, Tim is looking into a Commons change that would provide control to organizations for whether or not eSNAP is enabled. This

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change would include an electronic agreement to test the new business practices. Tim believes it would be feasible to put the self-registration functionality by summer.

Action: **(Tim Twomey) Determine what changes are necessary to prepare eSNAP for a full-production roll-out and report back to the team at the next meeting (3/23/2004).**

❑ Large organizations have requested the ability to send the IACUC and IRB data from system-to-system via a data stream.

❑ Mike Loewe stated that from a user's perspective it is difficult to leverage the electronic processes until everything related to the Type 5 is available in the grant folder electronically (e.g., grants management checklist, program checklist).

Checklist Status

Cathy Walker

Grants Management and Program had a requirement to maintain checklist items within the eRA Systems. As a shared requirement with potential benefit to other modules (Review), the Checklist functionality was created. Checklists include standard and customizable items for ICs. Cathy reviewed the attached presentation that includes key functionality, timeline, pilot, and future direction information for Checklist.

Additional discussion points:

❑ Izja suggested that buy-in from Program can be driven by Grants Management Officers (GMOs).

❑ Once workflow is incorporated, the checklist functionality will provide significant time savings.

❑ IC Admin role controls the creation of the customized checklists.

❑ A policy initiative would be required to define different sets of required items based on activity or type. eRA can accommodate any lists but is not in a position to define the content of additional lists.

Advocate Updates

Receipt & Referral

Ellen Liberman

Receipt and Referral (R&R) is an established, high-volume application that handled 52,000 applications in 2002 and 75,000 applications in 2003.

Several R&R activities are currently underway. First, the team is working on the integration into CGAP and the development of processes that are compatible with electronic submission. The current process is driven by paper from data entry through break-out group assignment. The process needs to be adapted to electronic processes.

The second activity involves integrating R&R into eRequest. Once assignments are made about 10–15 percent of the applications flow back to R&R for corrective action (e.g., wrong

assignment, transfer between Initial Review Groups). Currently R&R is working on the development of the electronic ARA and 901, two of many documents to be incorporated into the eRequest system.

Attendees

Armistead, Allyson (LTS/COB)
Bradley, Eileen (CSR)
Burns, Amy (LTS/COB)
Caban, Carlos (OER)
Cain, Jim (OER)
Cox, Michael (OER)
Cummins, Sheri (LTS/COB)
Dutcher, Sylvia (Mitretek)
Frahm, Donna (OER)
Freeman, Anthony (AHRQ)
Gains, Patti (OER)
Gibb, Scarlett (COB)
Hahn, Marcia (OER/OPERA)
Hartnett, Libby (HRSA)
Hausman, Steve (NIAMS)
Hughes, Stephen (OD)
Ikeda, Richard (NIHMS)

Jordan, Craig (NIDCD)
Katzper, Linda (OD/DEIS)
Kinley, Teresa (CDC)
Lederhendler, Israel (NIMH)
Liberman, Ellen (NEI)
Loewe, Michael (NINDS)
Lynch, Peggy (IBM)
Martin, Carol S. (NHGRI)
Morton, Pete (CIT)
Moyer, Skip (AHRQ)
Patel, Kalpesh (Ekagra)
Petrosian, Arthur (CSR)
Ratnanather, Chanath (Z-Tech)
Sachar, Brad (Oracle)
Salata, Kalman (CSR)
Salzman, John (OD/OER)
Seppala, Sandy (LTS/COB)
Silver, Sara (Z-Tech)

Simms, Sophonia (OD)
Snouffer, Anna (OD/OFACP)
Soto, Tracy (OD)
Taylor, Jean (SAIC)
Thomson, Alastair (Blueprint Technologies)
Tucker, Jim (OER)
Twomey, Tim (OD)
Van Brunt, Virginia (LTS)
Walker, Catherine (OER)
Wehrle, Janna (NIGMS)
Williamson, Pamela (Perot)
Wright, David (OPERA)
Zettler, Chris (Blueprint Technologies)
Zhen, Changqing
Zucker, Sherry (DEIS)