U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

AGENCY E-GOVERNMENT ACT IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

October 20, 2006

This report responds to the August 25, 2006, memorandum from Ms. Karen Evans to Chief Information Officers on the subject, "FY 2006 E-Government Act Reporting Instructions."

<u>Overview</u>

Per the guidance in the August 25 memorandum, this update highlights the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) overall accomplishments in implementing the E-Government Act and discusses the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS), the NRC's document and records management system, as an example of an internal agency-specific E-Government (E-Gov) initiative. Sections 2 and 3 of this update address the agency's process for determining which information should be made available on the NRC's public Web site and how information dissemination activities are coordinated with NRC's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) operations.

<u>Section 1</u>
Provide a brief overview of your agency's implementation of the Act, including a description of an internal agency-specific E-Government initiative.

1.a.   Provide a brief overview of your agency's implementation of the Act.

This section highlights the NRC's progress in implementing the E-Government Act under the following headings:

- compliance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance
- implementations completed/planned
- adherence to U.S. Department of Commerce standards
- electronic signatures
- Information Technology/Information Management (IT/IM) Strategic Plan
- service provisions for people without access to the Internet
- enterprise architecture
- project planning and execution

Compliance with OMB Guidance. The NRC has taken a number of steps to institutionalize guidance provided by OMB with regard to the E-Gov program. The Office of Administration has instructed the NRC's Contract Management Branches to use the SmartBuy contract vehicles as a first option for software acquisitions. The NRC has added an acquisition official from the Office of Administration to its Information

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Technology Business Council to ensure that agency investments in information technology (IT) do not overlap E-Gov initiatives. The NRC has provided OMB with its E-Gov implementation plan and on a quarterly basis reports progress on the plan as well as the status of its high risk projects. In addition, the NRC has provided OMB the baseline cost estimates for IT investments that are being modified, replaced, or retired because of the NRC's use of an E-Gov or Line of Business (LoB) initiative.

Implementations Completed/Planned. The NRC has completed migrations to E-Payroll, E-Clearance, Recruitment One Stop, and the Integrated Acquisition Environment; has established a working agreement with USA Services; is aligned with the business gateway and records management initiatives; and is establishing procedures to ensure that acquisitions and activities related to incident/emergency management and wireless programs/projects are coordinated with the SAFECOM and disaster management initiatives. The NRC obtains human resource and financial management processing services from the Department of the Interior, identified as a shared service provider by the Financial Management LoB and Human Resource LoB programs. The NRC is currently migrating to five additional initiatives, specifically E-Training, E-Travel, E-Rulemaking, Enterprise Human Resource Information, and E-Authentication. The agency also is participating with the Infrastructure Optimization, Security, Budget Formulation, and the Geospatial LoB. The NRC has reviewed and commented on E-Gov and LoB Exhibit 300s, as provided by program management offices.

Adherence to Department of Commerce Standards. The NRC documents its standards for IT/IM in the agency's Technical Reference Model (TRM). The standards required by the NRC's TRM are consistent and compliant with all mandatory and required standards in the Federal Information Processing Standards documents on the Web site published by the Secretary of Commerce.

Electronic Signatures. The NRC maintains an Electronic Information Exchange (EIE) program, which provides for the transmission of digitally signed electronic documents to the NRC over the Internet. After receiving information in this manner, the NRC can then electronically disseminate it directly to the agency's information systems. The NRC's EIE program plays a major role in enabling the agency to meet the Government Paperwork Elimination Act requirement to allow the public the option of transacting business electronically with the agency. The NRC's EIE infrastructure will be a component of the E-Gov E-Authentication federation.

The EIE handled approximately 87,000 electronic transactions in fiscal year (FY) 2006. The majority of these transactions involved receiving and routing digital fingerprints from nuclear power plants through NRC security personnel to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for criminal background checks. This procedure reduces the time required for processing from 1–2 weeks to 2 days. Use of the electronic information exchange for the transmission of licensing and adjudicatory documents to the NRC results in shorter processing times and reduced costs.

IT/IM Strategic Plan. The NRC developed the IT/IM Strategic Plan in response to Federal requirements in the Paperwork Reduction and Clinger-Cohen Acts, which, among other things, direct agencies to establish goals and measures of the contribution of IT/IM activities to agency productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, and service to the public.

Developed by the Office of Information Services (OIS) with the assistance of an IT/IM strategic planning group (composed of representatives from eight major headquarters offices and two regional offices), the plan received approval from the IT Senior Advisory Council, the Chief Information Officer, and the Executive Director of Operations. The plan is the result of a facilitated process involving internal stakeholders within OIS and other offices.

Close coordination with the NRC's Office of the Chief Financial Officer was maintained to ensure that the IT/IM Strategic Plan is properly related to the NRC Strategic Plan. The plans will be fully aligned after completion of the NRC Strategic Plan revision, scheduled for late 2007.

The plan's main components are an agencywide IT/IM objective, vision, and six goals with associated strategies, measures, and example means. These elements will serve as the roadmap for the NRC's IT/IM program over the next several years and will drive decisions about the agency's IT/IM investment portfolio.

The IT/IM Strategic Plan is posted on the NRC's Web site at http://www.nrc.gov/who-we-are/it-im-strategic-plan.pdf.

Service Provisions for People without Access to the Internet. The NRC maintains a Public Document Room (PDR) where members of the public can read copies of NRC publicly available records. In addition, individuals can order copies in person or by telephone. The PDR has a toll-free number (800-397-4209) to assist members of the public who do not have Internet access. The PDR can provide bibliographies based on subject searches of the public databases to give users an idea of the documents that are available. The PDR also has a copy service. The PDR commonly refers people to the nearest public library for further assistance because most public libraries now have Internet access.

Enterprise Architecture. The NRC continues to make progress in embracing enterprise architecture concepts and methodologies. The agency formed an enterprise architecture team to ensure the timely coordination and completion of business-driven plans aligned with the Federal Enterprise Architecture for both the short and long term. The NRC is implementing business outreach activities through its Enterprise Architecture Communication Plan. The agency is populating an automated enterprise architecture tool to capture and document its enterprise architecture and to identify patterns and aid decisionmaking for IT investments. This tool will be available through a Web-based interface. The NRC emphasizes enterprise architecture in its IT systems development life cycle and has completed an integrated policy and process known as the Project Management Methodology (PMM) (discussed below under Project Planning and Execution). The Information Technology Senior Advisory Council, comprising senior business managers, plays an important role in linking IT investment decisions to the agency's mission and goals. An enterprise architecture readiness assessment provided useful information that has enhanced the agency's business strategic planning for IT and enterprise architecture implementation efforts. These continuing accomplishments in enterprise architecture enable the building of better NRC business models that will provide the understanding necessary for the NRC to effectively solve business problems and provide better, more efficient IT services.

Project Planning and Execution. The NRC project manager has a single guide to meet both internal and external requirements. The PMM consolidates existing NRC

management directives and supporting processes for enterprise architecture, capital planning and investment control, systems development life cycle management methodology, and infrastructure development process models into one directive and handbook with an associated Web site, automated tool, and established processes. Besides fully integrating the consolidated policies and processes, the PMM guide includes checkpoints for associated processes such as IT security and records management.

1.b.   Provide a brief overview of your agency's implementation of the Act, including a description of an internal agency-specific E-Government initiative.

a.   Describe how the initiative is transforming agency operations.

ADAMS was the first enterprise-wide electronic record-keeping system in the Federal Government and has been recognized by the Government Accountability Office as a best practice. ADAMS has been fully operational since 1999 and has transformed the NRC's operations.

ADAMS replaced two legacy systems and introduced a combination of policies, processes, and tools to manage most NRC official records electronically. NRC employees and contractors use ADAMS to organize, process, and manage agency documents, and search for and retrieve agency records. In 2003, a web-based search engine was deployed which has been a significant step in NRC's web based information dissemination E-Gov strategy, i.e. to simplify the process for the public in searching for and accessing documents in the Publicly Available Records System (PARS) of the ADAMS library.

ADAMS maintains the official records of the agency and manages their disposition. ADAMS meets all of the requirements established by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) for an electronic record keeping system. This means that the electronic documents in ADAMS can be relied on as the agency's official records in lieu of paper. On April 1, 2000, NRC terminated paper record keeping for the records identified to be stored in ADAMS and began to rely on the electronic ADAMS documents as the official agency records. ADAMS keeps most of the official agency records of all newly created or received NRC unclassified programmatic and administrative records that were maintained in paper record keeping systems before April 1, 2000, except for unclassified Safeguards information and records determined to be inappropriate for electronic maintenance.

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

There are several ways that the NRC maintains an ongoing dialogue with parties interested in ADAMS. Since July 2001, the NRC has had an ADAMS user group for interested members of the public who use ADAMS on a routine basis. Though the user group, participants can learn about new releases and upgrades of the ADAMS software and can communicate with NRC staff about their ADAMS experiences and provide suggestions and comments for making ADAMS more accessible and easier to use. The ADAMS Public User Group tested the Web-based interface for accessing documents in the PARS library before its deployment. A listserv function is currently under development to augment the activities of the group and provide faster communication to ADAMS users.

c.   **Identify external partners (e.g., Federal, State, or local agencies, industry) who collaborate on the initiative.**

The NRC connects with its external partners through user surveys. The agency released the results of the first ADAMS Public User Satisfaction Survey to the public via the NRC's public Web site (http://www.nrc.gov) in May to June 2004. The objective of the survey was to evaluate public user satisfaction with ADAMS and identify areas for improvement. The two largest groups were NRC licensees (39.5 percent) and nuclear industry representatives (16.2 percent). The remaining individuals represented law firms, consultants, researchers, the media, and others (e.g., Federal and State governments, private citizens, intervener groups). A second survey was posted on the NRC Web site in February to March 2006. The survey will be repeated periodically in order to monitor progress toward making ADAMS a more useful and effective document access tool.

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

A key performance measure that supports the NRC's objectives and strategic goals is related to the dissemination of information to the public. Since the deployment of ADAMS, publicly available documents are now released in days rather than weeks. The goal is to have 90 percent of nonsensitive, unclassified regulatory documents received by the NRC released to the public by the sixth working day after the document is added to the ADAMS main library.

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

There are distinct advantages for the public in having ADAMS. In terms of cost savings to the public, ADAMS is a model of cost avoidance. Instead of having to come to an NRC office or a public library to view and obtain copies of documents, members of the public can retrieve and view documents using their Web browser at their convenience. The public can save, download, or print documents free of charge rather than pay for reproduction, resulting in a cost avoidance to the public of thousands of dollars in contractor reproduction costs. Because it is Web-enabled, ADAMS allows the NRC to interact with the public in a more timely and efficient manner than with paper documents.

In addition, ADAMS serves as the hub of NRC's IT/IM Meta-System. The Meta-System provides the computing infrastructure and business processes supporting NRC's licensing functions. As reported in the 2004 Agency E-Government Update, (December 6, 2004), significant cost savings are projected for the Yucca Mountain High Level Waste Licensing proceedings through the infrastructure provided by the IT/IM Meta-System (previously called the High Level Waste Meta-System). NRC expects to realize additional cost savings for the new reactor license review activities through the use of the IT/IM Meta-System. For example, in July of 2006 the Office of Information Services delivered an automated solution to electronically capture, profile, and process the public

comments received with regard to the new reactor licensing activities. This system, with ADAMS at its core, is capable of processing in excess of 4000 email comments per day. This volume of comment processing would historically have required weeks of staff effort.

The NRC is currently in the process of developing and testing a solution for the automation of all document processing aspects of Combined License Applications for new reactors. This system will reduce burden associated with the submission of applications and improve the efficiency of the NRCs review efforts. As part of this solution, a streamlined license review process, providing easy navigation between related documents and ensuring the integrity of the license submissions at all times will be provided.

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 NRC does have service provisions for people without access to the Internet. The NRC maintains a PDR where copies of NRC publicly available records can be read. Copies can be ordered in person or by telephone. The PDR has a toll-free number (800-397-4209) to assist members of the public who do not have Internet access. The PDR can also provide bibliographies based on subject searches of the public databases to give users an idea of the documents that are available. The PDR has a fee-based copy service. It is not uncommon to refer people to the nearest public library for further assistance since most public libraries now have Internet access.

Section 2

Describe your process for determining which information the agency intends to make available on your agency's public Web site and the Internet, as required by Section 207(f)(2) of the Act.

The NRC makes as much information as possible available to the public relating to the agency's health and safety mission. The NRC intends to automatically make information publicly available if it is anticipated to be of interest to the public without waiting for someone to file a FOIA request. An internal NRC management directive specifies the categories of documents that the staff is to make publicly available. Using this guidance, the NRC makes approximately 200 to 300 documents publicly available each day.

a.   **Describe your process for determining which Government information the agency intends to make available and accessible to the public on the Internet and by other means.**

The NRC's policy for making information available to the public is described in Title 10, Section 2.390, "Public Inspections, Exemptions, Requests for Withholding," of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR 2.390) (http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/cfr/part002/part002-0390.html), which was available for public comment during the rulemaking process. It was last updated on

January 14, 2004. The agency's practice for releasing information is described in Management Directive 3.4, "Release of Information to the Public." NRC documents made public are accessible in the public library of ADAMS (http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html), which is available from the NRC Web site (http://www.nrc.gov). By conducting an ADAMS Web search (http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html), stakeholders can search all full-text documents with the Web-based search engine. The NRC's Electronic Reading Room page (http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm.html) has links to ADAMS and to other pages that list the most frequently requested documents (see Basic References (http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/basic-ref.html) and Document Collections (http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/)). Parties to NRC hearings have convenient access to hearing-related materials through the NRC's Electronic Hearing Docket (http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/ehd.html) and the High-Level Waste Hearing Docket (http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/ehd.html#2) pages.

The NRC Web site is designed to (1) increase openness by providing information that enhances the ability of stakeholders to participate effectively in the regulatory process, (2) broaden the public's understanding of the NRC's mission, goals, and performance, and (3) make doing business with the NRC easier by enhancing access to agency information and making tools available for conducting business electronically.

The goal of enhancing participation in the regulatory process is served by the NRC Public Involvement page (http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve.html), which has links to pages with opportunities to learn about public meetings, comment on proposed rules and draft documents, request agency enforcement actions, participate in hearings, and ask the NRC to change or establish a regulation. Members of the public may also comment on proposed rulemaking actions through the Federal E-Rulemaking Portal at http://www.regulations.gov.

The goal of broadening the public's understanding of the NRC's mission, goals, and performance is addressed by the sections of the agency's site on Who We Are (http://www.nrc.gov/who-we-are.html), What We Do (http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do.html), Reactors (http://www.nrc.gov/reactors.html), Materials (http://www.nrc.gov/materials.html), and Waste (http://www.nrc.gov/waste.html). Information about specific regulated facilities is provided in the other main section of the site, the Facility Information Finder (http://www.nrc.gov/info-finder.html).

The goal of conducting business electronically is addressed by the agency's Electronic Submittals Page (http://www.nrc.gov/site-help/eie.html), which stakeholders can use to submit documents electronically to the NRC. As mentioned above, the NRC also has electronic hearing dockets.

b.   Include a copy of the priorities and schedules for making your information available and accessible.

In most cases, NRC documents are available to the public on the sixth working day after

the document was entered into ADAMS. The 6-day time frame for releasing internally generated documents is based on NRC's experience that if release times are "shorter" recipients sometimes do not receive the document before the document is available to the public.

For documents addressed to the NRC, the 6-day release time allows the agency to review a document to ensure that it does not contain proprietary, privacy or other sensitive information that should not be made public.

Certain documents will still be excluded from this policy, and can be released either sooner or later than the 6-working-day goal. For example, NRC documents addressed to external persons or organizations may be released earlier when the NRC has verified that the addressee has in fact received the document. Press releases will be put out for immediate release.

c.   Explain how and when such final determinations, priorities, and schedules were available for public notice and comment.

The NRC published this information for comment in the *Federal Register* on April 16, 2001 (66 FR 19610). The original period for comments, April 16, 2001, through July 16, 2001, was extended to September 14, 2001, by notice dated May 16, 2001 (66 FR 27045).

d.   Provide the link where final determinations, priorities, and schedules can be found on your principal Federal agency public Web site.

Title 10, Section 2.390, of the *Code of Federal Regulations* can be found on the Internet at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/cfr/part002/part002-0390.html. The link to priorities and schedules is at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/news/2000/00-083.html. More details about information the NRC releases to the public are given on the Internet at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/faq.html.

e.   Identify progress to date for permitting searching of all files intended for public use on the Web site, displaying search results in order of relevancy to search criteria, and providing response times appropriately equivalent to industry best practices.

The NRC's search engine for both its Web site and ADAMS organizes and displays search results in order of relevancy to search criteria, and responds in less than 2 seconds.

Section 3

Describe how your agency's information dissemination activities are coordinated with its FOIA operations in order to improve both access to and dissemination of Government information to the public. Your description must include a link to your agency's

Information Resources Management Strategic Plan and FOIA Improvement Plan.

To facilitate public access to NRC information, the FOIA program places the records for many closed FOIA requests in PARS, where the public can access them without a FOIA request; some records are not placed in PARS for privacy reasons. More than 2500 FOIA requests and documents are publicly available in PARS as a result of FOIA requests. The NRC maintains an index of closed FOIA requests on the NRC FOIA Web site, http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/foia/closed-request.html. This index provides access to all closed FOIA requests by FY from 1998 through the present. The index specifies which closed requests are publicly available and which are not. The NRC's goal is to link publicly available documents directly to the index so an individual seeking to review a case can directly access documents in PARS.

The NRC provides public access to records, without a FOIA request, under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(1) and (a)(2) on its Web site at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/foia/foia-request.html#access. The links on this page take viewers to document collections in ADAMS pertaining to agency rules, opinions, orders, records, and proceedings. Documents in these collections are automatically made publicly available as a matter of agency procedure.

The NRC FOIA Web site, http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/foia/foia-request.html, provides information about the NRC's FOIA program, including, in its section on Executive Order 13392, a link to the NRC FOIA Improvement Plan at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/foia/executive-order.html.

Ensuring openness is a key goal of the NRC's Strategic Plan for FY 2004–2009. The NRC Strategic Plan can be found on the NRC Web site at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1614/v3/index.html. The recently published NRC IT/IM Strategic Plan for FY 2008–2012 is located at http://www.nrc.gov/who-we-are/it-im-strategic-plan.pdf and provides the future path for NRC IT/IM efforts.

You must also describe specifically how you are fulfilling your responsibilities under three provisions of the Act:

a.   **Section 207(d), "Categorizing Information."** The NRC categorizes information according to established procedures developed by the agency and implemented through the use of templates that delineate how specific profile information is to be captured in the agency electronic recordkeeping system. This searchable profile information is maintained in the two libraries or collections searchable under the ADAMS Find capability. To find categories of information, users can perform simple searches by words or phrases, or advanced searches using Boolean operators or Concept and Pattern searches.

b.   **Section 207(e), "Public Access to Electronic Information."** The NRC manages its records, including electronic records, consistent with 44 U.S.C. Chapter 31; 44 U.S.C. 3506; 36 CFR Chapter XII, Subchapter B, "Records Management"; and OMB Circular A-130, paragraphs 8a1(j) and (k) and 8a4. The NRC is working to develop a NARA-

approved records schedule for all records existing in electronic systems, which will be implemented by September 30, 2009. NRC Management Directive 3.4 provides guidance to agency staff for releasing information.

c.   **Section 207(g), "Access to Federally Funded Research and Development."** The NRC primarily funds Federal research and development activities through the national laboratories (Sandia National Laboratory, Argonne National Laboratory, Idaho National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, and Brookhaven National Laboratory) and through colleges and universities.

The NRC participates in the RAND Research and Development in the United States (RaDIUS) database that tracks the research and development activities and resources of the Government. Results from some NRC-sponsored research are available at http://Science.gov, a gateway to authoritative selected science information provided by U.S. Government agencies.

The NRC generally documents research that it sponsors in a Nuclear Regulatory publication (NUREG) or other report. Once a research report is completed, it is reviewed to ensure that the contents can be released to the public. A listing of publically available research reports is available on the NRC's Web site at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/; NUREGS and other research documents can also be accessed through ADAMS at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html.