Integrated Management Navigation System • Standard Accounting and Reporting System

I-MANAGE STARS Communiqué

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY **STARS** April 2004

Hot Topics

STARS Development Team completes Interface and Reports Programming

The STARS Development Team has been addressing several automated interfaces between STARS and other IT systems, including Travel Manager, EC Web, the Small Purchases System (SPS), and the Integrated Contractors. Each of these interfaces will pass data to and/or from STARS to keep all systems in sync and share the information necessary for processing. The interfaces are currently being tested to ensure they satisfy all technical requirements. Later, during STARS User Acceptance Testing in May and June, their accounting functionality will be tested.

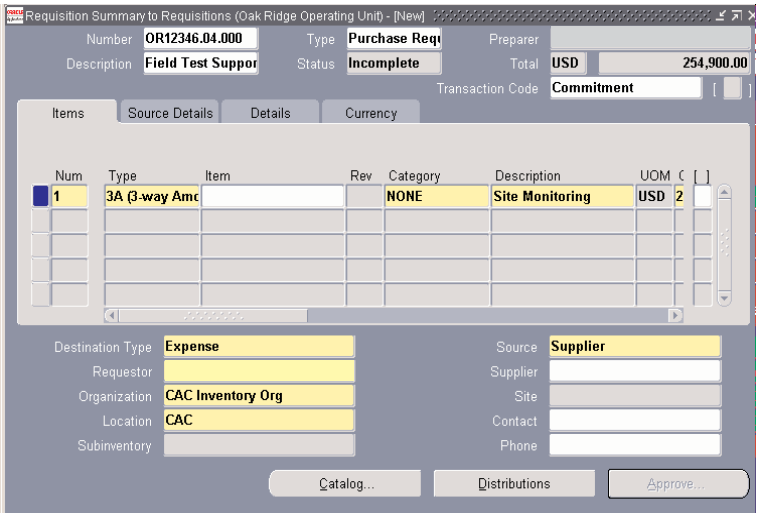
In addition to interfaces, the Development Team has been addressing STARS custom reports. The Design, Configuration, and Test Team began that effort by analyzing all Department of Energy reports to develop a list of the most critical and commonly used ones. Then the Development Team, which includes both federal and contractor staff, began programming the reports to capture and display the information necessary to support departmental accounting processes. "Providing useful reports is critical to ensure end-users have the necessary information to do their jobs," said Bryan Long (ME-13) Development Team Lead. The customized reports will be tested by functional subject matter experts during STARS User Acceptance Testing.

STARS User Acceptance Test Cases Incorporate DOE Business Processes

User Acceptance Testing (UAT) is usually the most comprehensive of the tests conducted in technology implementations. Where previous testing focused on individual processes within modules (Purchasing, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, etc.) or tightly related processes between modules called integration testing, UAT changes the focus to business processes. The intent of UAT is to determine if the STARS system adequately supports normal DOE business processes.

STARS User Acceptance Testing identifies test cases or activities that represent an end-to-end business function. A UAT test case usually involves activities in several STARS modules, but the entire test case is overseen by the module most directly affected by the successful outcome of that test. For example, the test case "Purchase of PNE Asset" should result in the creation of a new asset in the Fixed Assets module. Although the scenarios involved in that test case include General Ledger, Purchasing, and Accounts Payable in addition to Fixed Assets, it is the Fixed Assets team that owns the test case as a whole.

UAT Scenarios are the detailed steps required to perform a function within STARS. They list the screen navigations and data elements required to perform the function. Scenarios are small, easy-to-test functions; it takes several scenarios to create one test case. A scenario is contained in a single module, and is owned by that module. For example, the scenario "Enter a Requisition" describes the steps and data elements required to create a commitment within the Purchasing module, and is owned by the Purchasing module.



Testers will enter commitments on a STARS screen like the one shown above.

During UAT, the results of each scenario within a test case are evaluated against the expected results for that scenario, and assigned a "Met" or "Not Met" status. If the scenario executes as expected and produces the expected results, it is considered Met. If the tester encounters errors, or the results were not as expected, the scenario is assigned a Not Met. By using these detailed testing procedures, the User Acceptance Test ensures that all critical DOE business functions can be effectively measured in STARS.

Monthly Spotlight: STARS Accounts Receivable

Each month we highlight a new component of STARS or an upcoming activity that you may find interesting. This month we spotlight new features in the STARS Accounts Receivable module. Betty Heaslip (NNSA) leads the STARS Accounts Receivable Team.

Accounts receivable bills customers and collects monies due to the Department of Energy from federal, state, or local governmental agencies, and from labs and private firms. Accounts receivable also includes employee and former-employee receivables. The STARS Accounts Receivable (AR) module acts as a sub-ledger that contains detailed entries of bills, interest, adjustments to bills, administrative charges, and collections. The debits and credits in the sub-ledger are then posted to the general ledger.

STARS Accounts Receivable provides standardized reports. These reports make it easy to reconcile AR transactions, while still providing the same information we get today, including AR aging reports and listings of bills and collections.

STARS Accounts Receivable will bring many changes and standardizations to the way we process bills and collections. The AR functional and training teams recently completed a joint week-long session to design the AR training materials around 20 standardized processes that constitute the core of DOE AR procedures. These process-driven training materials will help new STARS users learn and perform all of the necessary AR business functions.

Another noticeable change between DISCAS and STARS is that STARS uses different terminology. For instance, STARS uses the term "AR invoice" instead of the term "customer bill." "Using the new terminology is easy once you learn the language," said AR Team Lead Betty Heaslip, "and all of the standardized processes will really help ensure consistency within the department."

Moving Forward

STARS Training

The STARS Implementation Team and the MEO Transition Team are partnering to ensure both the effective delivery of STARS training and adequate post-implementation support. The MEO Transition Team will identify the number of people anticipated to use each STARS module and the process roles they are expected to perform. Based on that information, the STARS Implementation Team will design instructional materials and a curriculum tailored to each group of STARS users. Once the curricula are complete, the STARS Implementation Team will schedule and provide training for a select group of MEO trainers in "train-the-trainer" sessions. In turn, the MEO trainers will provide role-based STARS training to the DOE end-user community. Training will be an integrated effort involving both the Implementation Team and MEO Team to ensure all required staff in the MEO, Residual Organization, and Program Offices are trained in STARS data entry or data query. In addition, the Implementation Team is defining requirements to provide the necessary post-implementation support to STARS users and will work with the MEO team to ensure the support personnel are put in place.

I-MANAGE STARS TIMELINE

April 2	End user responsibilities are defined in the system
April 19	User Acceptance Testing instance is deployed in preparation for UAT on May 3
April 26	Training instance is deployed in preparation for building classroom exercises
May 3	User Acceptance Testing begins
May 31	Procedures and navigations training materials are complete in preparation for Train the Trainer
June 25	Navigation tutorial is available on-line

STARS Project Information

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