

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Office of the Chief Information Officer**

Grants Online

2009 Operational Analysis

Operational Analysis Objectives

This operational analysis describes the capability and operational status of the Grants online system as a key operational asset. The analysis is also used in part to monitor the architecture of the Grants Online system for continued viability, its ability to meet customer and stakeholder needs, and its ability to meeting Department of Commerce (DOC) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) strategic and business needs.

Project Description and System Summary

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is a science-based federal agency within the Department of Commerce with regulatory, operational, and information service responsibilities. In fiscal year 2009, the NOAA grants management division processed 2,136 awards to support research and conservation initiatives coordinated by state and local governments, non-profits, and colleges and universities using the Grants Online system. Award funds totaled over \$1.174 billion we awarded to over 800 grant recipients.

The Grants Online system was developed to serve as NOAA's automated grants management system with the following goals:

- To provide a single unified electronic grant processing and administrative solution
- To provide NOAA with a direct interface to "Grants.gov" and compliance with Public Law 106/107
- To provide NOAA corporate standard business processes that contribute to a more efficient and effective use of grants management resources
- To benefit a "Corporate" NOAA by:
 - Reducing effort and time involved in the grants process
 - Allowing Program Managers to focus on results
 - Enabling Administrative staff to devote their time to rigorous cost and technical analysis of grants

Grants Online 2009 Accomplishments

- Grants Online usage was expanded to include the following Department of Commerce Bureaus:
 - Minority Business Development Administration (MBDA)
 - International Trade Administration (ITA)
 - National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)¹
 - Office of Human Resource Management (OHRA).
- Established linkage between Grants Online and NTIA Easygrants
- Approximately 800 grantees use the Grants Online system to manage their awards. Grants Online has recorded over 164,000 user logins in 2009.
- Maintained system stability, accessibility, and maintainability by way of formal change control process.

¹ NOAA provides grant processing services and support for select American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants

- The Grants Online system is operating within +/- 10% of cost, schedule, and performance thresholds in compliance with requirements outlined in OMB Circular A-11, Section 300

Customer Results

Grants Online realized significant customer growth in 2009 as evidenced by the increase in the number and nature of users. In 2009, the Grants Online system user base expanded from a base of seven NOAA “line offices” to thirteen “line offices” that now includes line offices within the Minority Business Development Administration (MBDA), DOC Office of the Secretary, Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM), the International Trade Administration (ITA), and National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA). On 8/28/2009, under the authority of the Economy Act, 31 U.S.C § 1535, the NTIA established an Interagency Agreement with NOAA for provision of services regarding grants management support for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants leveraging the Grants Online automated system.

There is significant interest in establishing an interface to the Department of Commerce Business Systems (CBS) financial system and subsidiary systems to allow automated obligation of funds.

Customer Dashboard

	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	% Change 2008 to 2009
User Logins	155,094	164,724	5% increase
Number of Users	3,715	4,123	11% increase
Number of DOC Line Offices using Grants Online system	7	13	86% increase
Operational Availability	Not available	99%	
Training Sessions provided	5	9	80% increase

Gap Analysis

The Grants Online system is currently operating at “full service” indicating Grants Online is providing full functionality and services to include automated workflow functional capability and help desk support and all redundant components are operational to include network servers and IT infrastructure. One known gap exists with regard to the merit review functionality. This gap will be addressed in FY2010.

Performance Measures

The Grants Online goals are under review and are expected to be revised for FY2010 and beyond. The following performance measures were recorded in the BY2011 OMB Exhibit 300 submitted in September 2009.

Fiscal Year	Strategic Goal(s) Supported	Measurement Area	Measurement Category	Measurement Grouping	Measurement Indicator	Baseline	Target	Actual Results
2009	4.1 Management Integration Goal: Achieve Organizational and Management Excellence.	Customer Results	Timeliness and Responsiveness	Response Time	Peer Reviews within Grants Online.	Determine whether it is cost effective and feasible to add Peer Review functionality to the Grants Online system.	The addition of Peer Review functionality to Grants Online might assist NOAA Federal Program Officers in completing their grant reviews in a more timely and cost-effective manner.	To be addressed in FY 2010
2009	4.1 Management Integration Goal: Achieve Organizational and Management Excellence.	Mission and Business Results	Administrative Management	Facilities, Fleet, and Equipment Management	Continuous improvement	Conduct a survey of all Grants Online users to determine how the Grants Online system or processes can be modified to better serve the user community.	Adopt and implement at least 5 Grants Online system improvements to assist the user community.	100% complete

Strategic and Business Results

The Grants Online project directly supports strategic and business goals to include NOAA's Strategic Goal for Organizational and Management Excellence by providing a system to automate grants processing transactions via an electronic platform.

The Grants Online also supports the Department of Commerce Management Integration Goal to achieve organizational and management excellence by providing an approved, consistent, automated grants management process for NOAA, MBDA, ITA, and NTIA grants program offices.

Grants Online supports the "expanded electronic government" goal as defined in the President's Management Agenda. Specifically the Grants Online system meets e-government requirements relating to e-grants, e-signatures, and "easy to access" citizen-centered services by linking to "single points of access" to Grants application portals to include Grants.gov and Easy Grants..

Grants Online cost, schedule, and performance is reported by way of the OMB Exhibit 300 and the Federal IT Dashboard. As of 12/30/2009 the Grants Online system variances for cost,

schedule, and performance were within +/- 10% threshold established by OMB. Application availability was measured at 99% System availability

Reviews

The Grants Online project is reviewed annually by the NOAA Information Technology Review Board (NITRB) and the Commerce Information Technology Review Board (CITRB) as part of annual capital planning and investment control activities. The NITRB and CITRB reviews consist of comprehensive reviews of the status of Grants Online maintenance deliverables and associated cost, schedule, and performance factors. Grants Online is also reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) by way Exhibit 300 reviews and Federal IT Dashboard review and scoring. As of 12/31/2009 the OMB assigned rating for cost, schedule, and performance is “green” indicating the investment meets expectation performance. See section titles “Financial Performance Review” for graphs and information extracts from the Federal IT Dashboard.

IT Security

The Grants Online system is certified and accredited consistent with requirements contained in NOA 212-13 (08/06/90) and Office of the Chief Information Officer Information Technology Security Policies. The Grants Online system is due for recertification and accreditation in FY 2010. The Continuous monitoring plan is also in review and revision and is scheduled for completion in FY2010.

Cost Benefit Analysis

The initial cost benefit analysis was conducted as part business justification for development of the system. The last update to the CBA was applied in FY2006. A new cost benefit analysis will be conducted in FY2010 as part of a market research effort and to review other Grants management solutions available in the market place and Federal arena.

Currently there is no other know solution that contains automated grants life cycle management required by NOAA.

Financial Performance Review

Beginning in FY2010 financial performance will be tracked using a new costs account tool. A new “spend plan” project artifact is in development to use as a tool for estimating planned spending and for input into the annual budget process as well as the annual capital planning process. The tool will include annual contract, FTE, equipment, software, and other costs associated with supporting the grants online asset. The tool will also aid report generation by recording budget object class, fully burden FTE salaries, contracts, and other expenses. Additional Project Artifacts will be reviewed and upgraded.

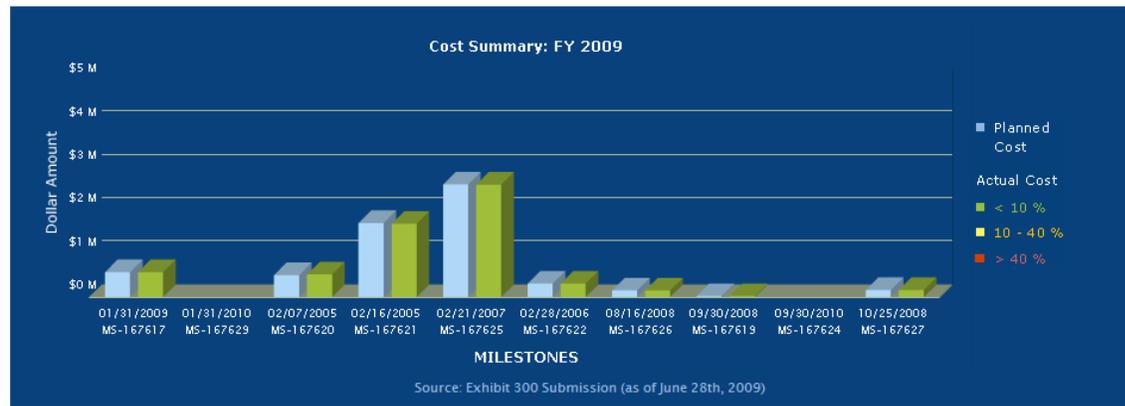
Contractor invoices are reviewed on a monthly basis as are FTE costs. The Project Manager submits updates for the Federal IT Dashboard on a monthly basis. Financial performance indicators as displayed on the Federal IT Dashboard are shown as follows:

INVESTMENT DASHBOARD

ITDB – NOAA/OCIO/NOAA Grants On-line



ITDB – NOAA/OCIO/NOAA Grants On-line



Displaying Records: 1 – 10 of total 14 records
 Current Year Future Years Previous Years First << Prev | 1 | 2 | Next >> Last
[Show All Records](#)

Number of Milestones: 14
 Total Planned Costs: \$9.7 M

Investment Start Date: 11/15/2004
 Total Actual Costs: \$8.1 M

Investment Completion Date: 09/30/2010
 Cost Variance: 0.11 %

Innovation to Meet Future Customer Needs

Grants Online project staff meeting as required with system stakeholders, customers, and subject matter experts to review and discuss innovative, state of the art technologies and best practices to ensure continued compliance with federal and departmental mandates. The Grants Online team interpret often competing and conflicting requirements and proposes sound solutions and options to meet internal and external customer needs.

Number and Types of Users

The Grants Online system supports approximately 4,123 users including Federal grants management staff and grantees who use the system to provide progress reports regarding their grants. Approximately 408 users were provided with user accounts for Grants Online in 2009. The number of users is expected to increase as additional staff are trained and new accounts are created for ARRA or other grantees.

Planned Maintenance Actions

The Grants Online system is expected to operate in FY2010 with no significant development, modernization, or enhancement initiatives. System usage is expected to increase with the addition of NTIA users and ARRA grantees using the system to process ARRA grants. In addition, annual user training and workshops will be provided. The Grants Online helpdesk will upgrade from “WebCIMS” to “HEAT” as the HelpDesk tracking system to improve the process of tracking and reporting customer service requests and to generate helpdesk statistics such as customer response time and automatic customer notification of ticket creation and closures.

NOAA and the Department of Commerce is pursuing linkage of the Grants Online system to the Commerce Business System (CBS) system to allow for the automated processing of funding obligations. NOAA will also provide assistance to the NTIA by providing an interface to the NTIA Post Award Processing System (PAM) and MBDA’s Performance Management System (PMS) to allow these bureaus to track grant progress reports and other post award activity.

Upgrades are planned for the interface between Grants Notification System (GNS) to Grants Online to capture Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (OLIA) actions in GNS and record in the workflow history of Grants Online.

Grants Online will be expanded to automate the periodic reports used by internal customers. There are currently over 40 canned reports that are manually generated and distributed by the Production Control staff on a weekly or monthly basis. Additional efforts are planned to automate the processes for generating monthly USASpending reports.

The Grants Online system will be recertified and accredited in FY2010. Project staff will be trained and certified as required by OMB and DOC.