

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

***Grants Online***



**Operational Analysis  
March 30, 2010**

## **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 Federal agency within the United States Department of Commerce that play a key role in monitoring and safeguarding the condition of the environment by supplying environmental information to the government and public, administering the use of coastal and marine habitats, and funding scientific research on topics including weather and water, ecosystems, climate, commerce, and transportation.

Grants Online provides a single, unified electronic grant processing solution that significantly reduces grant administration time and allows resources to devote their efforts to complex grant reviewing activities.

### **Key Benefits:**

Grants Online significantly reduces grants administrative time by consolidating disparate grants processing systems and transforming a manual and paper intensive system into an automated workflow solution.

<b>Post Deployment Results (2006 Study)</b>	
<b>Financial – 5 Year Analysis</b>	<b>Operational</b>
Total Cost of Ownership (TCO): \$7.8M	99%+ reduction in grant administration
Total Benefit Savings: \$16.3M	87% reduction in grant application entry time
Net Benefit Savings: \$8.5M	83% of applications processed through Grants.gov portal to Grants Online
Return on Investment (ROI): 90%	Single electronic grant file replaces application paperwork
Internal Rate of Return (IRR): 49%	
Payback: ~33 months (Q2 2006)	

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Results</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual and paper intensive processes created inefficiencies that led to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overextended resources attempting to process load of 300-400 paper applications at a given time</li> <li>• Frequent errors such as lost paperwork and incomplete applications</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unified electronic grants management tool:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamlined data entry requirements</li> <li>• Reduced errors through automated workflow</li> <li>• Increased focus of staff on grant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-standard business processes among NOAA’s grant program offices made it difficult to produce management reports</li> <li>• Disparate systems created unconsolidated, inaccurate, and unauditible grant information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacked integrated system to interface with online grants submission portal – Grants.gov</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">award analysis instead of administrative work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardized grant processing procedures across the organization improved reporting for management</li> <li>• Consolidated disparate grants processing system provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seamless interface to Grants.gov and legal systems</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## **Grants Online 2010 Accomplishments**

- Grants Online supports over 6000 registered users including over 1000 Federal Program Managers from the following Department of Commerce Bureaus:
  - Minority Business Development Administration (MBDA)
  - International Trade Administration (ITA)
  - National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)<sup>1</sup>
  - Office of Human Resource Management (OHRA).
- Established linkage between Grants Online and NTIA Post Award Monitoring System (PAM)
- Approximately 5000 grantees use the Grants Online system to manage their awards included ARRA grants.
- Upgraded Help Desk tracking system on 2/1/2010
- Improved Help Desk reporting process by optimizing reports
- Obtained Interim Authority to Operate (IATO) 3/30/2010. Scheduled for ITO by 4/29/2010
- Records Management – Grants Online documentation is being updated and on track for complete document updates by 9/30/2010.
- Fully automated production control reports
- 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
- Grants Online OMB Federal IT Dashboard rating “green”

## **Customer Results**

Grants Online realized significant customer growth in 2010 as evidenced by the increase in the number and nature of users. In 2009, the Grants Online system user base expanded from a base

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

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***

	<b>2008 Actual</b>	<b>2009 Actual</b>	<b>2010 Actual to Date</b>	<b>% Change 2009 to 2010</b>
Number of Users	3,715	4,123	+6,000	TBD
Number of DOC Line Offices using Grants Online system	7	13	13	TBD
Operational Availability	Not available	99%	99%	TBD
Training Sessions provided	5	9	3 (to date)	TBD

### ***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. All components are operational including network servers and IT infrastructure.

#### **Review Module:**

An ARRA funded project has been approved to develop a “review module” to be incorporated into Grants Online. The Project is expected to kick off in August 2010.

#### **PAM Interface:**

The NTIA has developed a Post Award Monitoring (PAM) system that links to Grants Online. NTIA is working to develop the system and anticipates a go live date of June 2010.

#### **CBS Interface:**

The Department of Commerce has been approved to develop an interface between the DOC CBS system and Grants Online which will allow for automated obligation of funds. Currently Federal

Program Officers or designees must log into the DOC CBS system to obligate funds. There are currently 2 full time FTE that key accounting strings into the DOC system. Upon completion of the interface, funds obligation will be automated via a CBS/Grants Online interface. Project planning expected to kick off in FY2010, kick off date to be determined.

## 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.	Review Module Approved, work to begin mid-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
2010	4.1 Management Integration Goal: Achieve Organizational and Management Excellence.	Customer Results	Service Accessibility	Service Availability	% of time Grants Online is available during normal business hours	90%	95%	TBD 09/30/2010
2010	4.1 Management Integration Goal: Achieve Organizational and Management Excellence.	Mission and Business results	Administrative Management	Help Desk Services	Customer Service and Satisfaction	None established	90% of tier 1 calls resolved within 4 hours	TBD 09/30/2010
2010	4.1 Management Integration Goal: Achieve Organizational and Management Excellence.	Processes and Activities	Financial (processes and activities)	Savings and Cost Avoidance	Reduce # of days to obligate and approve financial assistance awards	6-8 days to obligate and approve	1-3 days to obligate and approve	TBD 09/30/2010
2010	4.1 Management Integration Goal: Achieve Organizational and Management Excellence.	Technology	Efficiency	Interoperability	Interfaces with Commerce Business System	No current automated interface	50% complete with interface	TBD 09/30/2010

## ***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. The dashboard is updated monthly.

## ***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 03/30/2010 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 received an Interim Authority to Operate (IATO) on 3/30/2010 and expects a complete ATO by 4/29/2010. The system operation is 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 2013. The system is monitored via the approved NOAA1105 Continuous monitoring plan.

## ***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 by 9/30/2010 as part of a market research effort and to review other Grants management solutions available in the market place and Federal arena. Continuous market surveillance is practiced to keep abreast of new and emerging market solutions regarding electronic grants management.

As of 3/30/2010 there is no other know commercial off the shelf solution that contains automated grants life cycle management required by Department of Commerce bureaus.

## ***Financial Performance Review***

FY2010 financial performance is tracked using a spend plan and other tools. 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

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### Overall Rating

7.5

[Show Calculations](#)

### Investment Information

**Agency Head**  
Gary F. Locke

**Agency**  
Department of Commerce

**Agency CIO**  
Suzanne Hilding

**Bureau**  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**Investment Phase**  
Operations and Maintenance

**Description**  
NOAA awards over \$1 billion dollars in grants annually. The NOAA Grants Online Project is providing a more..

**Prime Contractor(s)**  
I M SYSTEMS GROUP INCORPORATED more

**FY2009 Spending** \$1.5 M    **Investment End Date** 09/30/2010

- [View Performance Metrics](#)
- [View Agency Exhibit 300](#)
- [View Reports](#)

**Cost**

Variance from Planned

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

**Schedule**

Average Days Late per Milestone

0 30 60 90

**Evaluation**

By Agency CIO

1 2 3 4 5

ITDB – NOAA/OCIO/NOAA Grants On-line

### Cost Summary: FY 2009

Milestone	Planned Cost (\$M)	Actual Cost (\$M)	Actual Cost Variance
01/31/2009 MS-167617	~0.5	~0.5	< 10%
01/31/2010 MS-167629	~0.5	~0.5	< 10%
02/07/2005 MS-167620	~0.5	~0.5	< 10%
02/16/2005 MS-167621	~1.5	~1.5	< 10%
02/21/2007 MS-167625	~2.5	~2.5	< 10%
02/28/2006 MS-167622	~0.5	~0.5	< 10%
08/16/2008 MS-167626	~0.5	~0.5	< 10%
09/30/2008 MS-167619	~0.5	~0.5	< 10%
09/30/2010 MS-167624	~0.5	~0.5	< 10%
10/25/2008 MS-167627	~0.5	~0.5	< 10%

Source: Exhibit 300 Submission (as of June 28th, 2009)

Displaying Records: 1 - 10 of total 14 records First << Prev | 1 | 2 | Next >> Last

Current Year     Future Years     Previous Years    Go [Show All Records](#)

Number of Milestones: 14    Investment Start Date: 11/15/2004    Investment Completion Date: 09/30/2010

Total Planned Costs: \$9.7 M    Total Actual Costs: \$8.1 M    Cost Variance: 0.11 %

## ***Innovation to Meet Future Customer Needs***

Grants Online PMO staff meets 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 and to improve the user’s computing experience. The Grants Online team interprets often competing and conflicting

2010 Grants Online Operational Analysis

– 8 –

March 30, 2010

requirements and proposes sound solutions and options to meet internal and external customer needs.

### ***Number and Types of Users***

The Grants Online system supports over 6,000 users including Federal grants management staff and grantees who use the system to provide progress reports regarding their grants. The Grants Online PMO expects the customer base to continue to expand as the Department of Commerce consolidates grants management systems. System usage has also significantly increased due to the high volume of Department of Commerce ARRA grants.

### ***Planned Maintenance Actions***

The Grants Online system is expected to operate in FY2010 with no significant development, modernization, or enhancement initiatives. ARRA enhancements will be managed in large part by other bureaus although some maintenance support will be provided by NOAA using existing resources.

System usage have increased with the addition of NTIA users and ARRA grantees using the system to process ARRA grants.

### ***Annual Training***

<b>Session</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
OAR CI Workshop	January 14, 2010	Completed
NTIA Post Award Workshop	January 21, 2010	Completed
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Overview	March 19, 2010	Completed
Grants Management Division (GMD) conference 3 day labs	April 15-17, 2010	Completed
CI Admin Overview	April 14, 2010	Completed
Booz Allen Hamilton (BAH) NTIA Lab	April 26, 2010	Completed
Grants Online FPO 3 day training	May 25-26, 2010	Not Started
Grants Online FPO training – Pacific Islands	August 1-7, 2010	Not Started
Grants Online FPO 3 day training	August 17-19	Not Started

Additional training and workshops will be scheduled and provided as required.

### ***System Interfaces***

- National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) Post Award Monitoring System - June 2010
- Grants Notification System (GNS) interface enhancement – TBD
- Minority Business Development Administration (MBDA) Post Award Monitoring System – TBD
- Commerce Business System (CBS) interface – TBD

Begin work on the NOAA/ Department of Commerce linkage of the Grants Online system to the Commerce Business System (CBS) system to allow for the automated processing of funding

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 standard 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.