

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

Grants Online



**Operational Analysis
June 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.

Results For 2006 Study (post deployment)	
Financial – 5 Year Analysis	Operational
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)	

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

Non-standard business processes among NOAA’s grant program offices made it difficult to produce management reports		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased focus of staff on grant award analysis instead of administrative work
Disparate systems created unconsolidated, inaccurate, and unauditable grant information		Standardized grant processing procedures across the organization improved reporting for management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacked integrated system to interface with online grants submission portal – Grants.gov 		Consolidated disparate grants processing system provides:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seamless interface to Grants.gov and legal systems

Grants Online 2010 Accomplishments (to date)

- 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)¹
 - 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.
- Upgraded Help Desk tracking system on 2/1/2010.
- Obtained IT Security Authority to Operate (ATO) 6/29/2010.
- 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

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 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).

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

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	2010 Actual to Date	% Change 2009 to 2010
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	4 (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 and all redundant components are operational to include network servers and IT infrastructure.

DOC Bureau Migration to Grants Online:

A business process reengineering effort is underway for Department of Commerce grant making offices to determine grant processing best practices. The purpose of the effort is to determine how best to leverage best practices and determine the feasibility to migrate to “one” DOC grant processing solution. The target date to complete the study is unknown at this time.

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 06/30/2010 the OMB assigned rating for cost, schedule, and performance is "green" indicating the investment meets expectation performance. A FY2012 Commerce IT Review Board (CITRB) overview was provided on June 23, 2010. See section titles "Financial Performance Review" for graphs and information extracts from the Federal IT Dashboard.

IT Security

The Grants Online system received an Authority to Operate (ATO) on 6/29/2010. 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 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. Continuous market surveillance

is practiced to keep abreast of new and emerging market solutions regarding electronic grants management.

As of 6/30/2010 there is no other know commercial off the shelf solution that contains automated grants life cycle management required by Department of Commerce bureaus. The Grants Online system will be considered to serve as the DOC “back end” solution to the OMB E-Grants initiative.

Financial Performance Review

FY2010 financial performance is tracked using a spend plan and other tools. A new “spend plan” project artifact has been developed 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 includes 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. Federal IT Dashboard status as of this operational analysis:



Innovation to Meet Future Customer Needs

Grants Online PMO staff meet frequently 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 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 number of users is expected to increase as additional staff are trained and new accounts are created for ARRA or other grantees. Grants Online usage has significantly increased due to the high number of Department of Commerce ARRA grants.

Planned Maintenance Actions

The Grants Online system is expected to operate through FY2010 with no known significant development, modernization, or enhancement initiatives. Incremental updates are applied as required.