May 3, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: William D. Travers ***/RA/***
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF THE INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF ADAMS

My April 2, 2001 memorandum, forwarded the final results of the Harvard Computing Group, Inc. independent assessment of ADAMS to the Commission. The purpose of that assessment was to determine whether the agency is on an appropriate pathway to establish an electronic document management system to meet the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's long-term needs.

As noted in my April 2, 2001 memorandum, we also contracted with the Gartner Group, an independent information technology consulting firm, to perform a validation and verification of Harvard Computing Group, Inc. (HCG's) assessment to ensure that it (1) followed a rigorous and structured methodology, (2) was logically consistent with well-supported conclusions, (3) was topically complete in consideration of agency long-term needs, and (4) was balanced and "mainstream" in discussing alternative systems and software. The Gartner Group's report is attached.

Recommendations from the Harvard Computing Group (HCG) and Gartner Group (GG) follow.

1. HCG: Recommends that FileNET be maintained as the foundation for ADAMS to leverage cost, time, and effort expended to date. HCG did not find any compelling argument for switching application platforms at this time.

   GG: Concurs with the recommendation to remain on the current technical path for ADAMS.

   GG commented that the majority of ADAMS issues that have been identified are programmatic rather than technical and that NRC has identified an approach for addressing the technology issues by upgrading the existing systems without changing the fundamental FileNET platform that is in use.

2. HCG: Recommends that ADAMS should evolve as quickly as possible towards increased commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) functionality. However, HCG acknowledges that NRC requirements make full 100% COTS scenarios unlikely.

   GG: Has no specific comment on this issue.

Staff Note: The goal is to reduce dependence on custom-developed code as much as practical while recognizing that some code will remain to meet agency specific functional requirements or the requirements of the National Archives and Records Administration.

3. HCG: Recommends that "ADAMS should evolve as quickly as possible to ADAMS 5.0 functionality in order to engage and satisfy the needs of the user community."

   GG: See the comment under 1 above.

   Staff Note: HCG defines 5.0 as the "ideal state", that is, all identified functional requirements, including those newly identified as a result of HCG interviews, are met. This issue will be addressed as part of ADAMS 5.0, so that agency management can reach consensus on additional functionality that needs to be delivered, carefully considering associated costs, benefits, and risks.

4. HCG: Recommends that the NRC migrate to Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint in order to reduce existing usage and integration inefficiencies.

   GG: Has no specific comment on this recommendation but observes that there is no detail regarding the usage and integration inefficiencies suggested by the HCG report or how they will be addressed by a migration to Microsoft Office.

   Staff Note: Previous analysis (as presented to the NRC Executive Council on April 25, 2000) did not support a business case for adopting Microsoft as NRC's standard. The staff will update its analysis and revisit the issue in FY03.

5. HCG: Recommends the NRC utilize portal strategies to facilitate the transition from ADAMS 4.0 to 5.0 functionality.

   GG: Believes the benefits of portal products for NRC are overstated and that none of the implementation issues associated with portals are identified as risks.

   Staff Note: Agrees that portal technology should be considered for ADAMS 5.0 but that its benefits may have been overstated given the current lack of maturity of the technology.

In addition to the above, the Gartner Group offered the following comments on the HCG report:

1. While the methodology utilized was structured and rigorous, the methodology [i.e., the associated analysis] has not captured a meaningful view of NRC functional requirements.

2. The [HCG] report is focused on technology issues and makes no attempt to address the importance of programmatic issues that have been identified. These issues will impact successful deployment of document management at NRC regardless of the COTS product utilized or the category of product utilized (e.g., portal products).

The staff concludes that the recommendations and conclusions of the Harvard Computing Group and Gartner Group appropriately respond to the question of whether the agency is on an appropriate pathway to establish an electronic document management system to meet the NRC's long-term needs.

The current program to accomplish both near-term and long-term goals is set forth in the ADAMS Action Plan, issued September 26, 2000. No changes to the ADAMS Action Plan have been identified as a result of the HCG and GG studies. Recommendations one through three of the HCG Independent Assessment are directly addressed by the ADAMS Action Plan. Although not included in the ADAMS Action Plan, the staff has performed an analysis of migrating to the Microsoft Office suite and plans to re-assess those results in FY 03. As part of the migration to ADAMS 5.0, web-based options will be considered. This analysis will include movement to portal technology.

Attachment: As stated

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