ACCELERATED REVIEW PROCESS ITS LESSONS LEARNED

The following lessons learned from the Accelerated Review Process (ARP) address the internal operation of the ARP that involving the interactions between the Licensee's review staff and the NRC review staff. For this purpose the ARP lessons learned are grouped as Ground Rules for conducting a TS Conversion Review. ITS Conversion Ground Rules need to be established to provide a baseline for efficient exchange of information between the NRC and Licensee and also to capture the lessons learned from previous efforts.

The following list of expectations/lessons learned should be considered when creating a working agreement between the NRC and the Licensee:

ITS Conversion Ground Rules ·

1. <u>Review Times for RAI's</u>- A reasonable time expectation for posting/answering/closing questions in the database should be agreed upon. This should include details associated with:

    a. An acceptable response time by the licensee,
    b. An acceptable response review time by the NRC,
    c. The expectation on timely closure for those questions that are responded to satisfactorily,
    d. For those questions that require additional information from the licensee, the expectation on review and response should also be considered,
    e. Precedence/ Past precedence/repeatability should be considered when establishing expectations on review times and effort.

    For those responses or closure resolutions that are taking too long, based on the previously agreed upon guidelines, an issue resolution panel should be engaged. The panel, consisting of NRR management, Licensing and TS Conversion PMs, Reviewers (only on specific technical items) and Licensee personnel, should identify individual positions and provide solutions/success paths for RAI response delays.

2. <u>BSI Definition</u>- Changes which are in addition to the direct conversion of CTS to ITS have been labeled "Beyond Scope Issues." The current guidance on defining a "BSI" can be found in NEI 96-06. It describes potential "beyond scope" or licensing basis changes as those that are both different from than the CTS and the STS.

    NEI 96-06 also provides guidance on the acceptability of including beyond scope issues in the conversion. It supports that those changes which are in addition to the direct conversion of the CTS to the ITS but which may be included within the scope of an ITS conversion application include incorporation of Generic Letter line item improvements (including extending surveillance frequencies to 24 months in accordance with Generic Letter 91-04), incorporation of generically approved topical reports, i.e., AOT-STI, and generically approved risk based changes.

Changes which are considered beyond the scope of an ITS conversion application, and therefore may result in delays in the review and approval of the application, include plant-specific risk based changes, and power uprate.

It is appropriate for NRC STS Section reviewers to obtain when required technical assistance, which is not a BSI, including concurrences from other NRR Sections and Branches, however, the responsibility for issue identification as non BSI technical assistance and their closure should remain in the NRC assigned reviewer for the associated TS Section. Some of these technical assistance requests were misidentified as BSIs in order to track the assigned Technical Branches review and the completion of the task. This resulted in TS Conversion charges being charged against the BSIs.

DLPM's method to correct this is for the Technical Branch reviewer to charge his work for technical assistance to the TS Conversion TACs and use the TRIM system to track the reviewers completion. The TS Conversion reviewer would monitor this technical assistance work.

TSS's method to correct the mis-charging is to use a TAC for each unit which is issued and monitored by TSS. With this method the charges would be separated from the TS Conversion TACs. The TS Conversion reviewer would also monitor this technical assistance work.

Closure of BSIs is the responsibility of the Licensing PM. A mutual understanding, of the beyond scope concept, is required by both the Licensee and NRC to ensure the correct identification of beyond scope issues. The ultimate transfer of review responsibility for the issue in question is to the NRC licensing PM for the facility conversion, with appropriate NRC technical support staff.

3. BSI Schedule Impact- When a licensee submits an ITS conversion that includes precedent setting BSIs or unapproved TSTFs, the licensee assumes they will be approved; consequently the review of those BSIs and TSTFs may potentially control the schedule. Previously established conversion guidance permits only those BSIs that are not precedent setting and approved TSTFs to be incorporated into the conversion. Therefore, during the acceptance review and/or initial public meeting, an effort should be made to identify any precedent setting changes incorporated in the proposed license amendment. Precedent-setting BSIs unapproved TSTFs and outstanding LARs subsequently identified during the staff's review should be removed from the conversion and reviewed in a parallel path outside of the ITS Conversion review. Each BSI element should receive individual schedule milestones that support the ITS conversion schedule milestones for completion.

4. <u>BSI Reviewers</u>- A BSI review can be very complicated and time consuming. An NRC BSI Project Manager and BSI technical reviewers should be assigned and made part of the NRC review team during the initial public meeting. They should be trained with the team during the initial review and be informed of the precedent/non-precedent discussions. The BSI review and the conversion review need to track parallel paths for a timely completion for the entire license amendment review.

5. <u>BSI Communication/Expectations</u>- During the informal RAI process supporting BSI issues, the issue resolution process may stall due to poor communication/information exchange. As a result, the original issue is sometimes lost or misunderstood. It is important that the Q&A process maintains a keen focus on identified issues through out the issue resolution process. The licensing PM should work closely with the licensee and the staff to ensure that the review focuses on the issues identified by the BSI..

6. <u>BSI Reviewer Questions-</u> Reviewer's questions should fully describe the potential issues/concerns and stay within the scope of the conversion. Reviewer's questions have sometimes tended to be very narrow in scope and have led to additional rounds of questions to fully address the potential issue/concern. In turn, this can cause a gradual loss of focus on the original issues/concerns, excessive to redundant review, and an inefficient use of staff and licensee resources and time.

   A recommendation, especially for the less experienced reviewers, is that questions be screened by a more senior reviewer prior to being placed on the web page. Alternatively the appropriate the NRC STS Section reviewer, the TS Section conversion lead or the licensing Project Manager could review each BSI-reviewer question before it is added to the question data base via the web page. This approach will help the NRC Project Manager and the TS Section conversion lead maintain the expected quality standards and awareness of issues as they develop.

7. <u>More Restrictive Changes</u>- Consistent application of requirements/justification to include more restrictive changes in an ITS Conversion is required. Inconsistent application of requirements to adopt more restrictive changes has been experienced in recent conversions. This inconsistency has resulted in an inefficient use of resources and tends to shift the focus from more important justifications to proposed changes that could very well be optional for the licensee. During the RAI oversite discussed in 6. inconsistency in the application of requirements/justifications for more restrictive changes should be identified and addressed.

8. <u>Removal Of Brackets</u>-NEI 01-03, Writers Guide for the Improved Technical Specifications, provides guidance for removal of bracketed items in the STS. There has been an inconsistent level of detail required to justify the removal of

brackets and the replacement of information inside the brackets. Licensee and
NRC Project Management need to agree on specific acceptable criteria for bracket
removal and information replacement. During the RAI oversite discussed in 6.
inconsistency in the application of requirements/justifications for the removal of
brackets should be identified and addressed.

9. <u>Weekly Management Calls</u>- The weekly management calls were very effective.
The frequency of the calls need not be rigidly defined as weekly. The frequency
of the calls should be varied to satisfy the requirements of the review.

10. <u>Identification of Unresolved Review Items</u>- Communications for the list of
resolving the unresolved review items identified in the data base decreased when
the number of unresolved items was about ten. Communications with TSS needs
to be maintained during the period of less than 10 unresolved items.

11. <u>Control and Tracking of Hours</u> - The quarterly billing numbers provided to the
licensee are received by the licensee four to six weeks after the quarter ends. The
licensing PM should provide these numbers monthly to the licensee.

12. <u>Communications</u> - During the TS Conversion review the licensee should maintain
two paths of communications with NRR; one path with the Licensing PM and the
other with TSS