

OPTIONS FOR PROVIDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO LICENSING SUPPORT NETWORK ADVISORY REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS

A number of Licensing Support Network Advisory Review Panel (LSNARP) members expressed the desire for more information on search engine software and/or “cloud”-based services prior to providing further views on the viability of the proposed Licensing Support Network (LSN) replacement options. The discussion below outlines several possibilities that would exist for obtaining additional material on those subjects, should the Commission direct such action.¹

1. Obtain a Contractor-Provided Analysis

The process for initiating a contract to obtain an independent analysis of these subjects would be structured in a two-phase approach.² The first phase would be to issue a request for information (RFI). The RFI would define the high-level requirements for the analysis and seek information from the vendor community as to vendor capabilities and rough costs to conduct that analysis. The responses back from the RFI would be used to develop a more detailed statement of work (SOW) and government cost estimate. The second phase would be to issue a request for proposal (RFP) that obtains cost and technical proposals for the work defined in the SOW and then to execute the contract. The resulting contractor analysis would be publicly available so that its results could be presented to the LSNARP.³

¹ The implementation of either of the options discussed below is premised on a Commission determination that, prior to any Commission decision regarding an LSN replacement/reconstitution option, opportunities should be afforded to generate information on these items and for LSNARP review and input regarding the generated information. In addition, these information-generation options cannot be fully implemented until additional NWF monies are appropriated and received.

² To address concerns expressed by several LSNARP members at the February 2018 meeting about whether the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel (ASLBP)/Office of the Secretary (SECY)-led working group’s options paper reflected a sufficiently independent expert analysis of the options available, see Feb. 28, 2018 Transcript at 89–93, 130 [hereinafter 2/28/18 Tr.] (<https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1806/ML18067A313.pdf>), an independent, third-party analysis of the cloud-based options and search engine possibilities and how those options compare with the LSN Library could be sought.

³ Identifying the appropriate source to generate and analyze the information sought would be one of the activities undertaken during the initial RFI phase of the contracting process. In exploring a possible contracting process, the ASLBP/SECY-led working group looked into generating this information using the agency’s existing contract with Gartner Consulting, which specializes in providing ratings and reports regarding information technology (IT) systems and software. While Gartner indicated it could conduct a study, it also advised that the contents of the study, other than an executive summary, vendor evaluation criteria, and assessment factors, would have to be treated as non-public, proprietary information. This approach would be inconsistent with the longstanding practice of having LSNARP/Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings open to the public and any LSNARP/TWG-generated reports/minutes, including information provided to the LSNARP/TWG for its consideration, made publicly available. See Oct. 13, 1999 Transcript at 23–24 [hereinafter 10/13/99 Tr.] (<https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1512/ML15127A152.pdf>).

Also considered was the use of a Department of Energy (DOE) laboratory to generate this information. It is unclear, however, to what extent DOE’s status as a party to the proceeding could affect the willingness of the LSNARP members seeking the information to view what might be provided by such a laboratory as sufficiently independent.

The RFI phase includes development of the high-level requirements in sufficient detail so that vendors can provide a meaningful response, administrative and legal review, posting of the RFI, and review of responses. If the contracting process can be expedited, it is estimated that the RFI phase for this option would take approximately 13 to 19 weeks to complete and approximately 400 full-time equivalent (FTE) hours (approximately \$50,000) for agency staff activities. The RFP phase would be broken up between the solicitation phase and award phase. The solicitation phase is estimated at approximately 22 to 26 weeks and approximately 600 FTE hours (approximately \$75,000) for agency staff. The estimate of the post-award contractor activities would be more definitive after receipt of the RFI response,⁴ but it is anticipated that the analysis would take eight months to complete at a contract cost of between \$400,000 and \$500,000. During this period, approximately 720 FTE hours (approximately \$90,000) would be needed for contract-related activities by agency personnel.⁵

We note also that to expedite this process using current Nuclear Waste Fund (NWF) monies, it would be possible for the RFI phase to be authorized and completed separately using current NWF funds, so as to have that three to five months of work completed and allow the RFP phase to be implemented immediately if additional NWF monies are appropriated for HLW adjudication restart.

Below is a summary of the estimated costs for the contractor analysis option:

RFI Phase FTE Cost (400 hours):	\$50,000
RFP Phase FTE Cost (600 hours):	\$75,000
Post-Award Costs:	
Contract Cost:	\$400,000 to \$500,000
FTE Cost (720 hours):	\$90,000

Total NWF Fund Expenditures for Contractor Analysis Option: \$615,000 to \$715,000

Unclear as well is whether a college or university, such as the University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV), could fulfill this role. Previously, through a DOE-funded cooperative agreement, UNLV provided IT support to the LSNARP (and its predecessor, the Licensing Support System Advisory Review Panel). This effort included generating information on search engines, which was provided to the LSNARP and its TWG in 1999 when the system configuration for the LSN was first being considered. See 10/13/99 Tr. at 149–67; [LSNARP TWG] Minutes (Oct. 12, 14-15, 1999) at unnumbered p. 11 (<https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML0329/ML032960057.pdf>).

⁴ For instance, the work involved in preparing a report on possible “cloud”-based service providers may be focused by the fact that any provider would need to be FEDRamp certified, which is likely to narrow substantially the provider services that would need to be analyzed. See 2/28/18 Tr. at 17, 29.

⁵ In short, this process, including the RFI, RFP, and post-award activities, could take in excess of 18 months to complete. This can be contrasted with a procurement under a non-expedited process in which the RFI phase would take approximately 16 to 24 weeks to complete and require approximately 400 FTE hours (approximately \$50,000), while the solicitation phase is estimated at approximately 36 to 48 weeks and approximately 480 FTE hours (approximately \$60,000) and the execution phase would be estimated to take up to 32 weeks to complete at a contract cost of between \$400,000 and \$500,000. During the execution period in such a procurement, approximately 800 FTE hours (approximately \$100,000) would be needed for agency personnel.

2. Obtain an LSNARP TWG Analysis

A second option would be to have the LSNARP chairman convene an LSNARP TWG to conduct research on, and prepare a report regarding, the search engine and “cloud”-based services matters about which several LSNARP members indicated they wanted additional information.⁶ LSNARP member participation in this effort, which might include an initial LSNARP meeting to gather input and set expectations regarding the TWG’s responsibilities, TWG meetings to discuss and develop the report, and an LSNARP meeting at which the report is presented and member views are obtained, would require 8 to 10 months and agency resources, including costs for travel,⁷ meeting facilitation, and agency staff participation hours, in the range of \$145,000 and 1800 FTE hours (approximately \$225,000).⁸ Below is a summary of the estimated costs for the TWG analysis option:*

Travel, Contract, Facilitator, Transcripts:	\$145,000
FTE Cost (1800 hours):	\$225,000
Total NWF Fund Expenditures for TWG Analysis:	\$370,000

⁶ This would be a somewhat different approach than was utilized for obtaining LSNARP input recently regarding the possible reconstitution or replacement of the LSN, in which an ASLBP/SECY-led working group generated options information, see NRC, Reconstitution/Replacement Options for the [LSN] (rev. 4 Feb. 22, 2018) (<https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1734/ML17347B671.pdf>), or for the original LSN system configuration, in which the LSN Administrator generated the three options for initial LSNARP and TWG consideration, see Memorandum to Potential LSN Participants from Daniel J. Graser, LSN Administrator, at 1 & attach. at 12-1 to -4 (Oct. 13, 1999) (LSN compliance assessment guidelines describing three technical alternatives for LSN implementation) (<https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML9927/ML992720028.pdf>). It assumes LSNARP members have in-house, or would be willing to obtain, sufficient expertise regarding “cloud”-based systems and search engines that such a report could be generated without needing additional outside contractor support, like that previously provided to the LSNARP by UNLV. See supra note 3.

⁷ It is anticipated that meetings to obtain LSNARP input on the information development process and to present the final analysis would be conducted using web conferencing technologies, while the LSNARP TWG meetings to discuss the analysis would be held in-person in the Las Vegas, Nevada area.

⁸ Regardless of whether the information-generation options discussed above can be implemented now, given the current lack of sufficient funding, or later if new HLW monies became available, see COMSECY-18-0015, at 4-5, it nonetheless is possible to envision other opportunities for LSNARP information-generation activities. If, for instance, the Commission were to decide that, under the circumstances, Option 2 to employ the existing LSN Library as the replacement for the LSN should be implemented without the type of information-generation activities outlined in this enclosure, an opportunity could be afforded for additional LSNARP member input, via an LSNARP meeting (either in-person or using web conferencing technologies) or otherwise, regarding other useful features that might be added, if practicable, to the current LSN Library search engine. This effort, which could be conducted in tandem with OCIO work to implement an ingestion system for adding new documentary material to the existing LSN Library database, likely would need to include time to meet or otherwise interact with LSNARP members, gather requirements, develop change request plans, implement the changes, and review the changes with LSNARP members. While overall the cost of such activities is difficult to assess because it depends, in significant part, on how many implementable changes were sought, a rough estimate is that it would require, including travel and agency staff participation hours, approximately 4 to 6 months and \$375,000, along with 700 FTE hours (approximately \$87,500). The majority of the time and cost associated with such an effort would be tied to development, implementation, and testing of changes that might be requested by the LSNARP members.

*NRC expenditures only. Does not include LSNARP member participation costs, including costs to obtain expertise to evaluate search engine and “cloud”-based options.