



PROJECT AIM STATUS
UPDATE
April 1 – June 30, 2019

In the June 8, 2015, staff requirements memorandum (SRM) for SECY-15-0015, “Project Aim 2020 Report and Recommendations,” the Commission directed Project Aim’s 19 tasks to address the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s (NRC) need to improve efficiency and agility, as well as to right-size the agency, while retaining employees with the appropriate skills to accomplish its mission and streamline processes.

The staff continues to implement several tasks related to Project Aim. The most notable accomplishments for the period of April through June 2019 the completion of one mission support standardization and centralization task.

Task 5. Common Prioritization and Re-baselining

Task 5 involved the integrated prioritization and re-baselining of 150 agency work activities to be shed, de-prioritized, or performed with fewer resources. The main deliverable for this task was provided to the Commission in SECY-16-0009, “Recommendations Resulting from the Integrated Prioritization and Re-Baselining of Agency Activities.” The agency has now completed all 150 specific re-baselining activities.

Task 5 also involved providing the Commission with known changes in workload and longer-term efficiencies. This product was provided March 18, 2016, in SECY-16-0035, “Additional Re-Baselining Products.” The staff continues to make progress on the seven remaining longer-term efficiencies.

Task 14. Evaluate Consolidation of Regional Corporate Support Functions

In Task 14, the staff completed an evaluation of the support functions (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession Number ML16131A064) in the Division of Resource Management and Administration (DRMA) in each NRC region and identified process efficiencies that will yield savings through standardization or centralization of specific support functions over time. The deliverable completing this task was provided to the Commission through a Commissioners’ Assistants Note on June 6, 2016.

Though completed, the work on Project Aim Task 14 inspired a broader, follow-on effort to standardize and centralize mission support activities performed by DRMA and Program Management, Policy Development, and Analysis divisions in program offices and regions across the agency (ADAMS Accession Number ML17040A349). On May 11, 2017, the mission support standardization and centralization working group provided an agencywide implementation plan (ADAMS Accession Number ML17121A431) for 28 projects to centralize and standardize financial management, human resource, information technology/information management, and administrative functions. During this period, the staff made significant progress and closed one of the remaining seven mission support standardization and centralization tasks.

The staff designed a new fee billing validation process that improves accountability and control by adding management oversight and awareness concerning the use of the Enterprise Project Identifier (EPID) for capturing fee billable labor hours. The new process is streamlined, consistent and incorporates oversight by adding two new data elements (EPID Contact, and EPID Contact Supervisor) to the EPID record in the Reactor Program System and the Cost Activity Code System. Roles and responsibilities were created for fee billing coordination and validation staff to ensure they understand their role in the process and are accountable for fee billing validation work and its implications. Training on the new process was conducted from May through June 27, 2019 with an agency “go live” date of the new process of July 1, 2019.

Task 15. Transitional Plan for the Merger of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation and Office of New Reactors

In Task 15, the Commission directed the staff to develop a plan to merge the Office of New Reactors (NRO) and the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) at the appropriate time. A working group developed a business case for a merger, which included a description of projected efficiencies and challenges, and plans for the staff to address those challenges. The assessment also included an evaluation of leading resource drivers and proposed timing for a merger. The Project Aim deliverable was provided in SECY-16-0075 on June 8, 2016. In SRM-SECY-16-0075 the Commission approved the merger of NRR and NRO and directed the staff to complete the consolidation of the two offices by September 30, 2020. Subsequently, in SRM-COMKLS-18- 0003, “Fiscal Year 2020 Budget to the Commission,” the staff was directed to phase-in the NRR/NRO merger with the goal of completing it by mid-fiscal year (FY) 2020. Early in 2019, it was decided to implement the merger in October 2019.

Implementation activities are ongoing. The NRR/NRO merger implementation team was formed in January 2019 and has completed a series of activities focused on implementing an organizational structure based on the needs of the agency, feedback from the staff, and flexibility to organize around future work. This included: conducting listening sessions with staff to gain insights on merging the organizations; developing combined high-level workload and staffing projections for operating reactor and new reactor work through FY 2021; creating an eight division organizational model; and, conducting targeted staff and management meetings, including a joint NRR/NRO all hands meeting, and five office open door meetings. In addition, the NRC posted external communication on the planned merger and the projected organizational model in May 2019.

Pre-merger consolidations (PMCs) are tactical opportunities to consolidate staffing from NRR and NRO at the branch level, that readily match the necessary work with the onboard staff and/or supervision. PMCs for Instrumentation and Controls, Operator Licensing, and Human Factors Engineering were implemented in October 2018. The program support divisions from NRR and NRO completed an early merge in April 2019. This unified organization is focused on selecting and implementing best practices from both offices for resource management and administration. This has enabled NRR to manage staffing and financial planning as one office proactively ahead of the merger. Also, in April 2019, the NRO vendor inspection staff moved into the NRR Division of Inspection and Regional Support.

The merger implementation team is presently overseeing the coordination with other offices to identify requirements and deliver information that is needed to ensure the smooth

transition of our financial, travel, and acquisition systems during the transition to a merged office. The merger implementation team is also leading actions to reconcile processes and procedures from both offices and make updates to unify our operations ahead of the merger date. Regular open door meetings and newsletter communications will continue through the October 2019 merger effective date.