ePM CONNECTION

How is Your Project Team Using ePM?

Region 1 has been an early adopter of ePM. In fact, the Andover IRS project was one of the first to create a project record in ePM. The Regional Management for the Office of Design and Construction has been a strong force in pushing the use of ePM for Capital projects in their region with positive results.

Andover IRS team has entered 360 potential change orders (PCOs) in ePM, 89%of which have been closed. Additionally, 986 RFI's have been entered, 99% of which have been closed.

Bangor-Smith project team has created 345 submittal packages, of which 91% have been reviewed and closed using the automated workflow process.

WELCOME Nick Gicale as the new Project Manager for the ePM National Program! Nick joins the ePM Team from R5 where he was a Design and Construction Project Manager. As an early user of the system, he became familiar with the challenges involved in utilizing ePM for team collaboration and information workflow. Nick brings valuable experience to lead this team in continuing the push of ePM for project management and reporting.

The ePM Community offers its sincere thanks and appreciation to Ray Wilson of R7 for his leadership in implementing ePM over the past year. The time and effort that Ray has given has helped make ePM a part of the daily life of GSA Design and Construction Offices nationwide.

THANK YOU!

Inaugural Industry Round Table

Early this November, GSA hosted the inaugural "ePM Industry Roundtable" call with contractors using ePM. The Roundtable was an opportunity for contractors to provide input and make suggestions about the project management system.

With almost 20 contractors in attendance, GSA was able to collect valuable feedback and to identify consistent themes of concern. The five topics below were highlighted the most:

- *Integration with third-party applications;*
- *Change request process;*
- *Improvement in reporting capabilities;*
- *Delays in security approvals; and*
- *Mobile applications.*

Integration with third-party applications
Contractors voiced the need for integration with other industry software currently used such as Vela, Prolog, Expedition, etc. Meridian representatives, participating on the call, logged the requests from the contractors. The Proliance developers are reviewing and determining the feasibility of the requests.

Change request process
Contractors inquired about what happens to requests for system improvements after they are submitted to Central Office. An official Change Request process is in place to capture and explore user suggestions. The Change Control Board (CCB) meets on a weekly basis to review all change requests. The status and/or update for each change request is managed on a SharePoint site. All RSA's and Trainers have access to the SharePoint site where they can look up the status at any time. GSA is working to improve communication about changes to the users. If your team has a permission or workflow change request, please coordinate with your regional ePM team for resolution.

Improvement in reporting capabilities
Several Roundtable participants expressed interest in improving the compilation and reporting of data stored in ePM. The best strategy for contractors is to collaborate with their RSA or Trainer to set up a Register View that organizes information based on project need. A Register View can be shared with a project team and improves project communication. Although Cognos Reporting is in its infancy stage, project-specific reports are being developed based on need. There are, however, existing reports (such as Project Fact Sheets) that can assist the project team with communicating project information to management. To learn more about these reports, contact your RSA. Reminder: Cognos is for internal GSA only.

Delays in security approvals

Delays associated with ePM access was a problem area for the subcontractors attempting to use ePM in the past. Given that ePM is hosted on GSA servers, all ePM users must go through the HSPD-12 security process in order to access the site. For contractors experiencing delays in obtaining user clearance, there is an ePM Waiver process that can be initiated after the user has cleared the fingerprinting phase. Utilizing this process typically requires a couple of weeks.   In the event a contractor is experiencing prolonged delays or problems, please contact epminfo@gsa.gov for resolution.

Mobile applications

With recent advances in technology, more mobile devices are being used on design and construction projects. The Roundtable participants were interested in learning more about developments in ePM's ability to work with mobile devices. GSA is working with Meridian in exploring ePM interfacing capabilities with devices like tablets, iPads and other mobile devices. We to have that capability in the 2012 calendar year.

The first Roundtable was successful and it highlighted areas that still need improvement. If you would like to participate in this next Industry Roundtable, please send an email to epminfo@gsa.gov to be added to the list.

ePM Quick Tip:

Reduce your clicks to open a schedule

When clicking on a schedule it is possible to skip the schedule document all together and enter directly into the Gantt view. In the schedule register change the "Open As" drop down box to Collaborative Gantt and click Apply before attempting to open the schedule document.
Another option is to check the box next to one or several schedules and use Tools > Open Selected in Collaborative Gantt.

ePM Resources:

ePM Support
epmsupport@gsa.gov
1 (866) 367-7878

ePM Login Site
https://epm.pbs.gsa.gov/proliance

GSA User Resources
http://insite.pbs.gsa.gov/epm

Training Videos and Quick Reference Guides
http://www.meridiansystems.com/epminfo

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FY12 Measures Reporting

The purpose of establishing measures and project metrics is to identify warning signs that a project may be in trouble before it's too late. Both the Capital Projects and Small Projects programs have project milestones and other on-schedule/on-budget indicators to monitor how well projects are staying on track.

FY12 marks the start of ePM as the source of data for measures reporting for Capital Projects. Select regions have already used the Customer Milestones schedule data in calculating the Small Project's Project Delivery measure in FY11. Capital Project measures like the Cycle Time Measure will use five milestones: RFP Issued, Design Complete, Construction NTP, Substantial Completion, and Rent Start from the PM Schedule. Project teams have been asked to make sure those data points are current.

Reduce Data Calls

Teams can avoid data calls and interruptions by updating their project data at regular intervals. New Central Office user communities are looking to ePM for project status and general information. The Office of Portfolio, Budget and Finance, Design and Construction, and Facilities Management Services Programs are examples of business lines that employ ePM to view Detailed Project Fact Sheets, Financial Obligations, and Schedule dates regularly. Project teams are encouraged to keep their information current.