Environmental Information Exchange Network

Exchange Network Governance Activity Summary

July 2012

CONTENTS

This summary details the month's activities of the Exchange Network Governance: Exchange Network Leadership Council (ENLC), Network Operations Board (NOB), Network Technology Group (NTG), and the Network Partnership and Resources Group (NPRG). It also contains information related to other Governance-sponsored activities this month (i.e., Integrated Project Team Meetings, Task Force Meetings, Open Calls, Regional and National Meetings, etc.). For more information on the Exchange Network Governance, please visit: http://www.exchangenetwork.net/about/network-management/.

Exchange Network Leadership Council

The ENLC convenes a call every sixth Thursday from 3:00-4:30pm ET. There was no call scheduled for July.

Next Call: August 9, 2012

For more information on the ENLC, please visit: http://www.exchangenetwork.net/about/network-management/exchange-network-leadership-council.

Network Operations Board and Virtual Node IPT

The NOB convenes a call on the second Tuesday of each month from 12:00-1:00pm ET.

July 31, 2012

PARTICIPANTS:

Roy Walker, Bruce Jones, Jason Payne, Greg McNelly, Kurt Rakouskas, Connie Dwyer, Lucy Reed, Chris Clark, Glen Carr , Joe Wilson, Chuck Freeman, William LaBar

ACTION ITEMS:

- Ross Strategic will circulate the updated draft Virtual Node Charter to the NOB and Virtual Node IPT along with an email describing the path forward and call schedule for the IPT.

SUMMARY:

Virtual Node IPT Charter

The group reviewed and discussed the changes to the Virtual Node IPT Charter. The IPT will be a Task Force of the NOB and its meetings will take the place of regular NOB calls for the next few months. Comments provided were entered directly into the draft Charter and the updated version will be circulated to the NOB and IPT in early August.

Four primary deliverables were established in the Charter and will drive the timing of future calls. They are:

1. A Project Plan that covers activities through the end of January 2013.
2. Call and Meeting Summaries. Action items will be circulated via email. Call and Meeting Summaries will be included in the monthly EN Governance Activity Summaries.
3. Questionnaire to solicit feedback from Partners and identify topic areas requiring more detailed discussions. The responses will inform the structure of the calls and help determine when additional staff should be brought into discussions.
4. Virtual Node Guidance and Recommendation document.

Comments and Questions:

- The Guidance and Recommendation should include information on resource management (i.e., How much is this going to cost from an FTE/dollar perspective for all Partners?)
- IPT members will provide the information that feeds into the Guidance and Recommendation document to better understand the feasibility of Virtual Node.
- Once the IPT completes their discussions and the final products are delivered to the NOB, the ENLC and the NOB will have the responsibility of determining how to move forward.
- The Guidance should include the potential concerns from virtual node users up front (e.g., impacts to relationships between the node and local data management systems inside a firewall; data security issues for information sent through a virtual node).
- The IPT will consider outbound flows from the virtual node. This could mean that all EPA flows would require outbound flows as part of their services in the next major update.
    - It may be helpful to have staff from program offices participate. If there is a business case, then there may be reasons for an EPA program to migrate to a virtual node.
    - EPA is working on migrating program offices to a central node, which may be a good model as it parallels this effort.
    - This would not have to be a “migration” but an additional set of services coming out of the new platform to handle services from a virtual node.
- The timing of scoping documents and the grant application process may mean that draft documentation should be made available to a broader audience earlier to help inform grant applications.

Next Steps/Schedule:

- The Virtual Node IPT Kick-off Call will occur during the next NOB call on August 28, 2012.
- Calls will then occur approximately every two weeks.
- IPT participants will need an alternate for calls they cannot attend.
- Ross will update the draft Charter and circulate it to the NOB and Virtual Node IPT.
- An email will go out to the full group describing the process and call schedule along with the draft Charter.

Next Call: August 28, 2012

For more information on the NOB, please visit: http://www.exchangenetwork.net/about/network-management/network-operations-board.

For more information on the Virtual Node IPT, please visit: http://www.exchangenetwork.net/virtual-node-ipt/.

Network Technology Group

The NTG convenes a call on the second Thursday of each month from 12:00-1:00pm ET.

The July 12, 2012 NTG call was cancelled.

Next Call: August 9, 2012

For more information on the NTG, please visit: http://www.exchangenetwork.net/about/network-management/network-technology-group.

Network Partnership and Resources Group

The NPRG convenes a call on the first Thursday of each month from 2:30-4:00pm ET.

July 5, 2012

PARTICIPANTS:

Tom Beierle, Ken Blumberg, April Hathcoat, Jonathan Jacobson, Michael Kaufman, Jurgen Koch, Greg McNelly, Darcy Peth, Virginia Thompson

ACTION ITEMS:

- Ross Strategic and the Co-Chairs will draft and distribute an EN Alert to solicit new NPRG State or Territorial member volunteers.
- Ross Strategic will send the NPRG a draft email that they can use to contact their respondents from the Performance Measures survey.
- NPRG members will contact the respondents in the Performance Measures survey.
- Salena Reynolds will reach out to appropriate respondents as needed to draft new EN success stories.
- Jurgen Koch will inform the NPRG if any EN topics are selected for SXSW Eco.
- Jurgen Koch will distribute the revised communications diagrams he created to the NPRG.

SUMMARY:

NPRG Membership

- The NPRG is seeking two new State or Territorial government members. Ross Strategic will work with the Co-Chairs to distribute an EN Alert to solicit volunteers.

Performance Measures Survey Follow-up

- The NPRG discussed responses from dissatisfied users in the 2012 Performance Measures survey. The NPRG went through the list of respondents, and a member agreed to reach out to each of the dissatisfied users. Members agreed to reach out to their respondents via phone or email in time to report back on the results during the August 2, 2012, NPRG call. During these conversations, NPRG members should focus on determining the resolution path for the respondents' identified issues.

EN Communications

- Jurgen shared with the group that SXSW Eco will take place in October 3-5, 2012, in Austin, Texas, and could present a good opportunity for a presentation on the EN. SXSW Eco is associated with the larger conference that takes place in March and emphasizes both music and technology. Jurgen submitted three EN-related topic proposals: Phase 2 of the EN, the OECA E-Reporting rule, and a topic on international work with the EN and non-profits. Jurgen noted that he will attend the conference regardless of whether any of the EN-related topics are selected.

- Virginia suggested that the NPRG develop a one-page handout for distribution at program-related national and regional meetings. Jonathan said that Salena is working on a handout like that with Creative Marketing Resources, the firm that is developing a rebranding effort for the EN.
- April noted that increased communication between EPA Regional EN Coordinators and everyone within their Regions would be beneficial. Regions could hold quarterly calls to serve as a forum for informal communication. The NPRG could assist with this effort by hosting open calls with a Regional focus.
- Jurgen said that the communications diagrams he created for each flow of Phase 1 of the EN should continue to be useful even now as the EN shifts into Phase 2, and noted that he has been updating and maintaining those diagrams. He agreed to distribute the updated diagrams to the NPRG. One use of the diagrams is for individuals to learn who they should talk to when they have a specific question about the EN. Tom suggested that it could be useful to have the diagrams serve as a resource for EPA's Regional Coordinators to communicate with their Regions.

Next Call: August 2, 2012

For more information on the NPRG, please visit: http://www.exchangenetwork.net/about/network-management/network-partnership-and-resources-group.

Drinking Water Integrated Project Team

Starting in September, the DW IPT convenes a call on the second Thursday of each month from 1:00-2:30pm ET.

August 2, 2012

ACTION ITEMS:

- Pravin Rana will circulate the full pilot summary report to the IPT by the middle of August. This will include detailed information on cost, license options, etc., along with lessons learned and next steps.
- Doug Timms will provide an updated DET.

SUMMARY:

Altova MapForce® Pilot Summary

Pravin Rana provided a quick summary of the results found from the Altova MapForce pilot test with the five participating States. A full report of the findings from the pilot will be available and circulated to the IPT in two weeks.

- The pilot States included a mix of SDWIS versions and SDWIS-free States.
- Three of the five States were able to submit data via CDX to EPA with confirmation that data were received.
- EPA recommendations include:
    - Installation - MapForce can be installed with minimal assistance.
    - Connecting to the SDWA 4.0 XML File - Pilot States were able to connect their data source (the source system) to the XML File with assistance from New York and the contractor. This process will become easier for users that have made the connections before.
    - Proficiency in Using Altova MapForce - Following the Pilot, two of the five States responded they were proficient, while three responded that they were "somewhat proficient" but may require additional support.

    - Mapping Completeness and Time to Map to the SDWA 4.0 XML File - The XML file has approximately 450 data elements. The elements are grouped into three categories: Inventory, Actions, and Sample Data. Each category is further broken down into sub-categories. All of the Pilot States did not complete mapping every sub-category although the level of mapping within each category was sufficient to estimate the prospective effort to estimate how much support may be required if MapForce is widely distributed to other reporting agencies.
        - In terms of time for learning MapForce and mapping the data, three States provided estimates ranging from 55 hours to 100 plus hours. One State did not respond and the other State indicated that 8 hours were spent on mapping. The contractor mapped all data elements and also provided technical assistance and spent approximately 300 hours in the process.
    - XML File Transmission to EPA - The final step in the Pilot was to test whether States could successfully transmit their file to EPA via the CDX; pass XML structure validations; and have the file submitted over the CDX and placed in the SDWIS NGN Test Node folder. One State successfully transmitted the XML file on their first try (the participant was the State's Node Administrator). One State required several attempts and assistance from contractor staff. One could not successfully transmit the file and the remaining two did not attempt to submit the XML file.
    - Recommendation from Pilot States: All States recommended that MapForce is very effective and recommend making this tool available to other States (with training to gain proficiency with the tool). None of the States suggested other alternatives to MapForce.
- Pilot State perspectives:
    - The ideal person to conduct mapping should be someone who has expertise with the source data and some technical proficiency to use MapForce.
    - Support costs will be factored into the final recommendation taking into account the budget constraints at both EPA and the States.
        - The goal is to describe the use of the tool for other purposes to OEI to justify the cost of training and support.
    - The staging tables used by the CDC Tracking program make a lot of sense (using SQL to develop) to help QA the data prior to submitting to EPA. Other States with SQL experience will probably find this step helpful.
    - The tool seemed to empower IT staff with a lot of independence.
    - States that were not able to submit XML to EPA were constrained by their own Node firewall/security issues that would have taken too much time to address during the pilot.
    - States that did submit were able to reuse their Node or a test Node-Client they had set up previously.
    - It will be very helpful for programs to have the contact information for their Node Administrator when going through this process. This information is available on the Exchange Network web site.

EPA Data Warehouse

Pravin provided an update on the EPA Data Warehouse, where CMD will ultimately reside. EPA is working on development in parallel with the SDWA pilot process. The module for compliance samples was deployed in June 2012 and the module for violations data should be completed in August. Version 1.0 of the complete system should be ready for testing in early September. Once Version 2.0 is deployed, approximately a month after Version 1.0, the system will be ready to accept data.

Doug Timms is editing the DET based on the lessons learned from the pilot and the information gathered during the finalization of the Data Warehouse. An updated DET will be distributed to the IPT as soon as it becomes available. The expectation is that changes will continue through the Data Warehouse testing process with a more stable version of the DET released in October.

Kansas' Multi-Partner EN Grant

Jonathan Haynes provided an overview of the multi-partner Exchange Network grant awarded to Kansas. The grant is to develop tools for migrating compliance monitoring data directly to a cloud-based database and to create a reporting portal where data owners can choose to share the data with other Partners.

Kansas is interested in participation from Territories, Tribes, EPA Regional Offices, laboratories, and others that are interested in joining Louisiana, New York, and Indiana and possibly Georgia and Idaho. Participation from a Tribe and Territory would be especially helpful in rounding out a guidance committee of prospective data owners. For more information, contact Jonathan at: JHaynes [at]kdheks.gov.

Next Call: September 13, 2012

Phase 2 Task Force

The Phase 2 Task Force convenes a call every other Thursday from 2:00-3:30pm ET. The Task Force held three calls in July.

July 3, 2012

PARTICIPANTS:

Andy Putnam (Co-Chair), Jonathan Jacobson(Co-Chair), Bruce Jones, Dennis Murphy, Greg McNelly, Dwane Young, Joe Wilson, Ken Blumberg, Mike Beaulac, Kurt Rakouskas, Alison Kittle, Chuck Freeman, Steve Newman, Rob Willis, Megan Parker

ACTION ITEMS:

- Rob Willis and Kurt Rakouskas will brainstorm a definition for EN "Partner".
- Rob Willis and Kurt Rakouskas will incorporate the written comments and comments from the call into the Phase 2 Implementation Plan.
- Kurt Rakouskas and Rob Willis will identify items that need to be included in the glossary for the revised version of the Plan.
- Phase 2 Task Force members will send their top 5 EN training/curriculum ideas to Kurt Rakouskas and Megan Parker prior to the next call.

SUMMARY:

Review of Changes to Phase 2 Implementation Plan Goals

- The Phase 2 Task Force reviewed changes made to the wording and content of the Goals and location of some of the strategies positioned under the Goals in the Phase 2 Implementation Plan. The following changes were made:
    - Deleted Goal 3 - The strategies focused on communication and system modernization. The communications strategies are now under Goal 2 and the system modernization strategies are under new Goal 3.
    - Deleted Goal 4 - Technology currency seemed to be a part of all other Goals. The strategies were redistributed.
    - Renamed Goal 1
    - Added Goal 2: "Increase Awareness and Relevance of Exchange Network" - There was a need to make sure the Plan explicitly addressed outreach and relevance to programs.

- Added Goal 3: "Increase Partner Capacity to Share Timely, Useful, and Relevant Environmental Information."
- Added Goal #4: "Provide Adequate Resources to Sustain the Exchange Network."

Detailed Review of Goal 1

- The Phase 2 Task Force reviewed written comments and discussed changes to Goal #1.

July 24, 2012

PARTICIPANTS:

Andy Putnam (Co-Chair), Bruce Jones, Ken Blumberg, Kurt Rakouskas, Greg McNelly, Chuck Freeman, Glen Carr, Dennis Murphy, Rob Willis, Megan Parker

ACTION ITEMS:

- Task Force members will review Goal 2 and its strategies to see if they are the right ones and if there are any additions needed and provide written comments prior to the next call.
- Task Force members will provide their top 5 EN training/curriculum ideas to Kurt Rakouskas and Megan Parker.
- Chuck Freeman will determine possible action items to better engage data flow managers.
- Ken Blumberg will think about how the Regional Coordinators could reach out to regional programmatic staff.
- Kurt Rakouskas and Rob Willis will contact Joe Wilson, Alison Kittle, and Dwane Young to determine if there are any existing opportunities where programs are engaging Partners to talk about specific data-related issues.
- Chuck Freeman will follow up with Alison Kittle on her written comments in the plan related to EPA CDX QA services' potential support for e-reporting.
- Rob Willis and Kurt Rakouskas will incorporate the comments into the Plan.

SUMMARY:

- Task Force continued their discussion of Goal 1.

July 31, 2012

PARTICIPANTS:

Andy Putnam (Co-Chair), Jonathan Jacobson (Co-Chair), Dennis Murphy, Bruce Jones, Ken Blumberg, Kurt Rakouskas, Glen Carr, Rob Willis, Megan Parker, Greg McNelly

ACTION ITEMS:

- Task Force members will review Goal 3 and its strategies to see if they are the right ones and if there are any additions needed and provide written comments prior to the next call.
- Rob Willis and Kurt Rakouskas will incorporate the comments into the Plan.
- Kurt Rakouskas will discuss creating a more defined, direct connection for program liaisons with EN Governance with Joe Carioti, Kristen Gunthardt, and Alison Kittle.
- Chuck Freeman and Jonathan Jacobson will discuss a staffing structure that could facilitate coordination among EPA programs and OEI.

SUMMARY:

- The Task Force reviewed written comments discussed changes to Goal 2.

Next Call: August 14, 2012