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CONSULTING GROUP

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EDA Business Process Review

Final Report

April 2020

For Official Use Only



Agenda

Executive Summary

Project Approach

As-Is Process Challenges

- Theme 1: Core Business Process Variability & Efficiency
- Process Enablers
 - Theme 2: Workforce Management
 - Theme 3: Supporting Capabilities
 - Theme 4: Data Quality and Access
 - Theme 5: Knowledge Management

Culture and Organizational Factors

Recommendations

Next Steps

Censeo was contracted to complete a Business Process Review for EDA



Project Scope

A comprehensive study of key **EDA business processes** through analysis of the **EDA's headquarters, regional offices, and stakeholders/customers** to best augment the administration's **efficiency and efficacy**.

Censeo Responsibilities

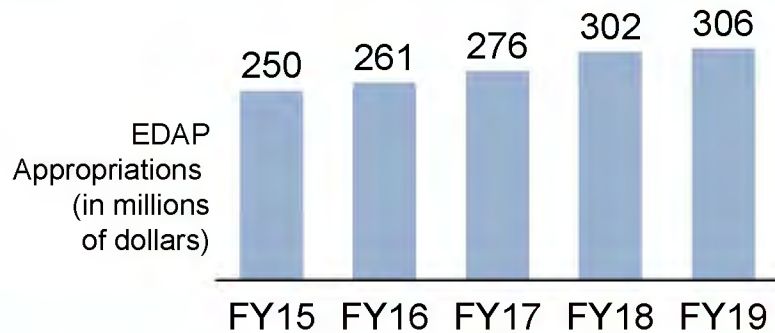
- Interview staff, customers, stakeholders
 - **50% of EDA Headquarters staff (100% of leadership)**
 - **75% of each Regional Office staff (75% of leadership)**
 - **75% of customers and stakeholders jointly identified by Censeo and the Project Manager**
- Perform an extensive quantitative and qualitative review of materials provided by the EDA
- Develop recommendations for increasing EDA's capacity to achieve its mission



EDA has a substantial impact in communities throughout the US

Funding Trends

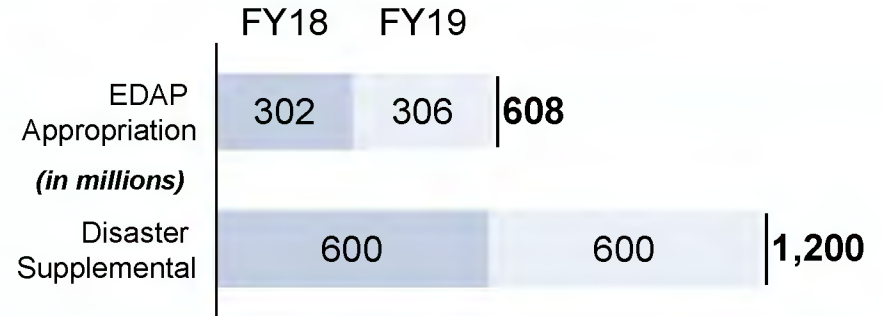
Regular funding has moderately increased...



Source: FY15-19 Annual Reports

Disaster Funding Trends

...but spiked with 2 instances of disaster funding



Source: EDA FY 18-19 Disaster Supplemental NOFO

People

EDA staff are passionate about EDA's mission...

Highest Percent Positive

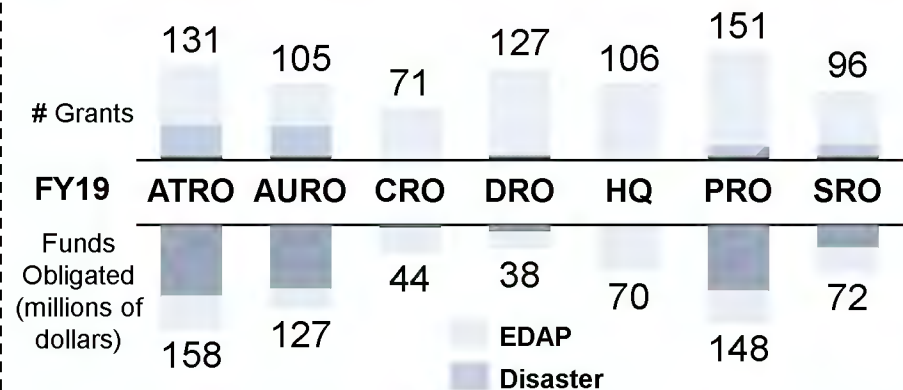


- 95.5% When needed I am willing to put in the extra effort to get a job done. (Q.7)
- 93.5% I am constantly looking for ways to do my job better. (Q.8)
- 89.3% The work I do is important. (Q.13)

Source: 2018 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

Grants

...and work hard to disburse substantial grant funds



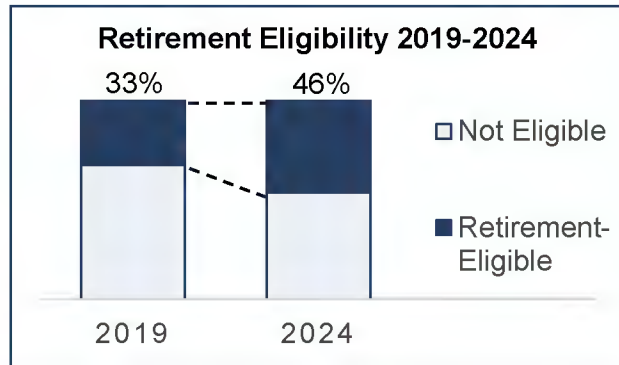
Source: FY19 Status of Funds (EDAP and Disaster)



EDA faces several fundamental challenges to continued impact

Retirement Eligible Staff

Forty-six percent of staff are eligible to retire within 4 years



Source: JJA Workforce Analysis (as of July 20, 2019)

Threats of Closure

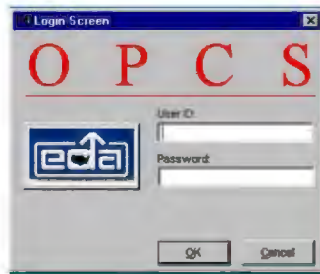
The bureau remains under threat of closure

*"The Budget eliminates the Economic Development Administration (EDA) which provides hundreds of small grants for projects with **limited measurable impacts**, saving taxpayers \$300 million per year. The projects use taxpayer dollars on multiyear projects that **frequently fail to deliver** on promised jobs or private investment."*

Source: OMB Budget of the U.S. Government FY2021

Technology Challenges

Core enabling technology is generations out of date



Source: Grants Online Manual (2018), OPCS Manual (2002)

Increasing Load

And disasters create large, unpredictable spikes in workload

*"Due to the slow hiring process, we had to **ramp up with our existing capacity** to successfully disburse the disaster funds"*

*"Staff have **5 to 6 times a normal workload** because we're not hiring people fast enough to keep pace with the increased workload"*

Source: Interviews with EDA Staff

To continue its impact in the face of challenges, EDA must take measures to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and agility



Increase efficiency



- **Widespread inefficiencies** are experienced throughout EDA through a proliferation of workarounds, workload imbalances, and a lack of management tools
- **Distributed management compounds the effect** of inefficiencies

Improve operational effectiveness



- Lengthy, sometimes **ineffective hiring** cycles reduce effectiveness
- Managing around **out of date, inadequate systems** reduces time available to make impact
- **Reliable data** is difficult to access for support or operational and strategic decision-making

Adapt to the new normal



- Increasing frequency and size of **supplemental appropriations** are the “new normal”
- Efficiency and operational effectiveness challenges cause an **inadequate capability to scale** effectively and adapt

Censeo identified process challenges and other factors affecting EDA's business processes



Primary Focus of Our Study

Core Business Process Challenges

1. **Process Variability & Efficiency** – High variability & inefficiencies exist in EDA's core business processes

Process Enabler Challenges

2. **Workforce Management** – Roles are not optimally defined, allocated, or balanced
3. **Supporting Capabilities** – The capabilities directly supporting EDA's grants staff and processes are ineffective
4. **Data Quality and Access** – Critical information is not readily available to staff and leadership to day-to-day operations or decision-making
5. **Knowledge Management** – Inadequate structures exist for knowledge capture, distribution, and use



Culture & Organizational Factors

Organizational Culture – EDA's siloed culture has an adverse impact on efficiency and risk

Strategic Alignment – EDA has undertaken significant change via efforts without sufficient coordination and varying buy-in

External Factors – Factors somewhat outside of EDA's control affect grants process efficiency

Recommendations were developed to address the identified challenges



Challenges

Primary Focus of Our Study

Core Business Process Challenges

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Recommendations

Eliminate widespread inefficiencies

Implement strategic workforce management

Mitigate ineffective operations support

Improve data quality, access, and use

Leverage IT Modernization efforts



Each recommendation comprises several improvement opportunities (1 of 2)

Recommendations

Eliminate widespread inefficiencies

Implement strategic workforce management

Mitigate ineffective operations support

Improve data quality, access, and use

Leverage IT Modernization efforts

Improvement Opportunities

1.1

Reduce variability of and streamline technical review and assistance to promote consistency and effectiveness

1.2

Reduce variability of and streamline merit review to promote consistency and minimize risk

1.3

Implement measures to improve and standardize award through closeout subprocesses

1.4

Ensure consistent standards of customer service through standardized documentation and guidance for communicating with grantees and applicants

1.5

Develop standardized tools (e.g. trackers, checklists, letter generators) for commonly performed tasks to improve consistency of outputs and reduce administrative burden

1.6

Define and implement consistent standards for approvals and routing to increase efficiency and minimize risk

1.7

Consistently leverage community partners to scale impact

3.1

Centralize standard workarounds to reduce inefficiencies

5.1

Establish standard file naming conventions and folder structures to facilitate knowledge capture, information-sharing, and cross-region transitions

5.3

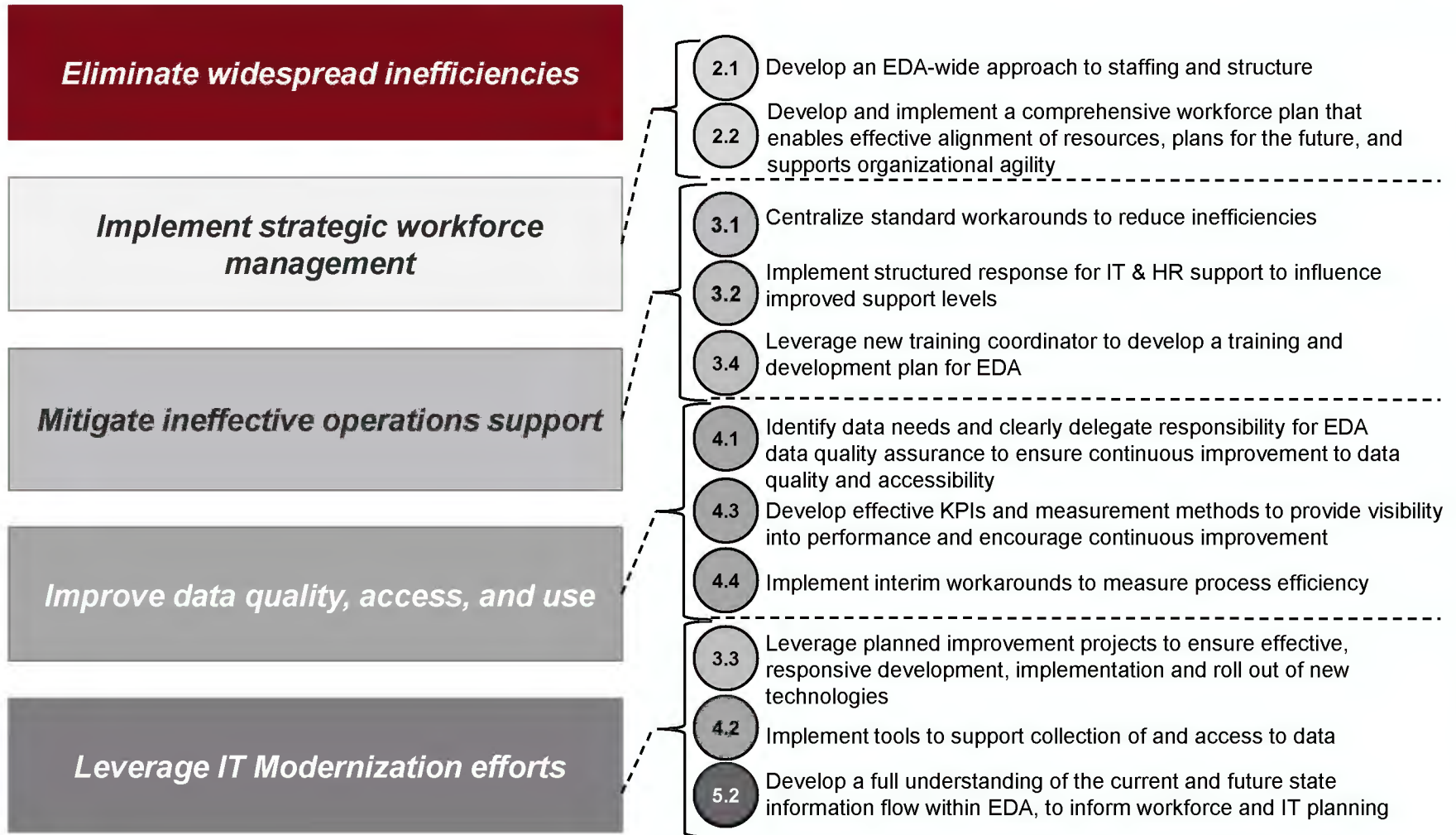
Establish lessons-learned pathways and practices for the agency



Each recommendation comprises several improvement opportunities (2 of 2)

Recommendations

Improvement Opportunities





Improvement opportunities to address each challenge have been assessed for impact

Measures of Impact

Efficiency (E1)



How successfully resources are used in agency operations

- Generally quantifiable in terms of rates of output per input
- Allows the agency to consider how well it leverages resources, and to plan and adjust based on changing circumstances

Efficacy (E2)



The ability of the organization to fulfill the mission

- Generally quantifiable in terms of output measures
- Quantifies how well EDA fulfills its mission and stewards federal funds

Risk (R)



Potential for a negative outcome that results in significant impact to the agency

- Includes financial, reputation, organizational, human resources, legal, and/or political risk, and to adjust based on changing circumstances
- Can be more difficult to quantify and is subjective; requires effective management to balance appropriate risk tolerance

Improvement opportunities were assigned ratings for Efficiency, Efficacy, and Risk based on anticipated impact

Limited potential to positively impact efficiency, efficacy, and/or risk



Significant potential to positively impact efficiency, efficacy, and/or risk

In the following pages, we explore process challenges, improvement opportunities, and recommendations



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Our BPR approach addressed four core components that support EDA's successful business process execution



1 Process Workflow



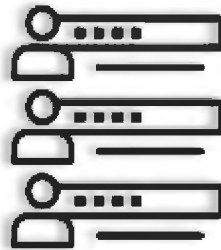
Eliminate the unnecessary steps, touchpoints, and handoffs that result in bottlenecks, rework, and additional contributors to process time. **Streamline and standardize execution** to better support objectives

2 Process Performance



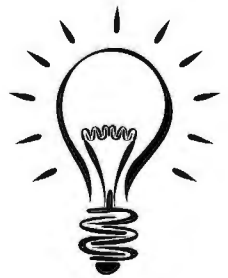
Measure key performance indicators to ensure that the process is performing as expected. Examine metrics to ensure alignment with objectives. Adjust process parameters as needed to meet targets

3 Workforce Capabilities



Improve efficiency of process execution via improvements in resource competency, allocation, utilization, and other capability issues

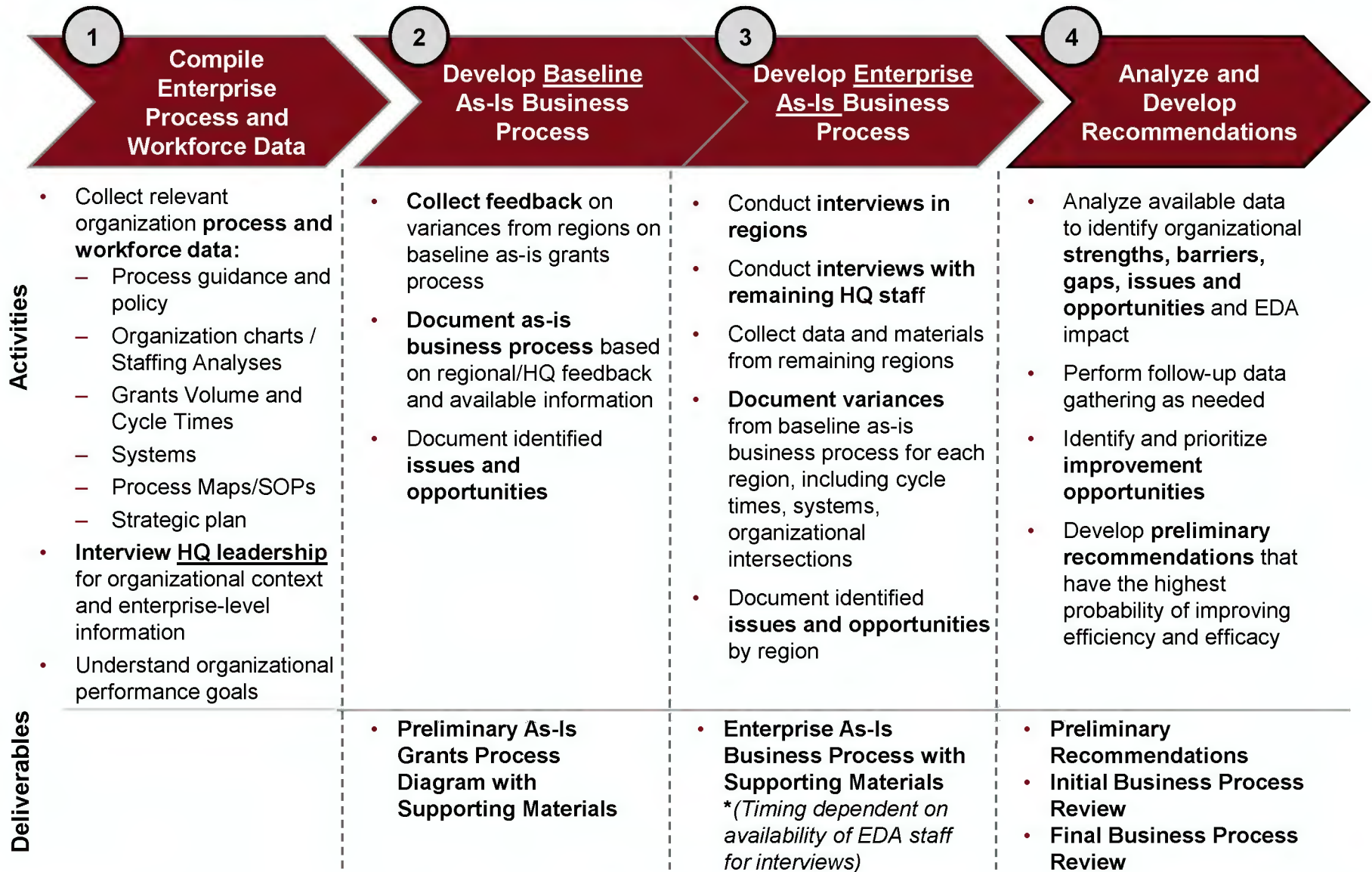
4 Organizational Enablers



Support the workforce with required IT, HR support, governance, culture, and other enablers to ensure process efficiency and effectiveness



This document provides a review and recommendations for improvements in effectiveness and efficiency



To conduct our business process review, we interviewed 200 staff and stakeholders and reviewed 460 documents



Individuals Interviewed			
Region	Dates	Target	Actual
ATRO	10/7/19 – 10/10/19	16	19
CRO	11/12/19 – 11/14/19	13	14
PRO	12/10/19 – 12/12/19	18	20
HQ Staff	10/2019 – 2/2020	35	47
AURO	1/14/20 – 1/16/20	17	20
DRO	1/27/20 – 1/30/20	14	18
SRO	2/25/20 – 2/27/19	20	27
Stakeholders	2/2020 – 3/2020	49	35
Total		182	200

Interview Topics

- Background and experience with EDA
- Work processes
- Best practices
- Workarounds
- Tools / Systems
- Pain points / Issues
- Opportunities for improvement

Items Reviewed

Data files	176
Manuals and guidance	139
Spreadsheets/checklists	140
External reports	5
Total Items	460

In spite of multiple studies in recent years, staff were forthcoming with information



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As-Is Process Challenges

Theme 1: Process Variability & Efficiency



Process Variability & Efficiency

Highly variable and inefficient process execution across EDA results in inconsistent outcomes and customer service



Key Findings

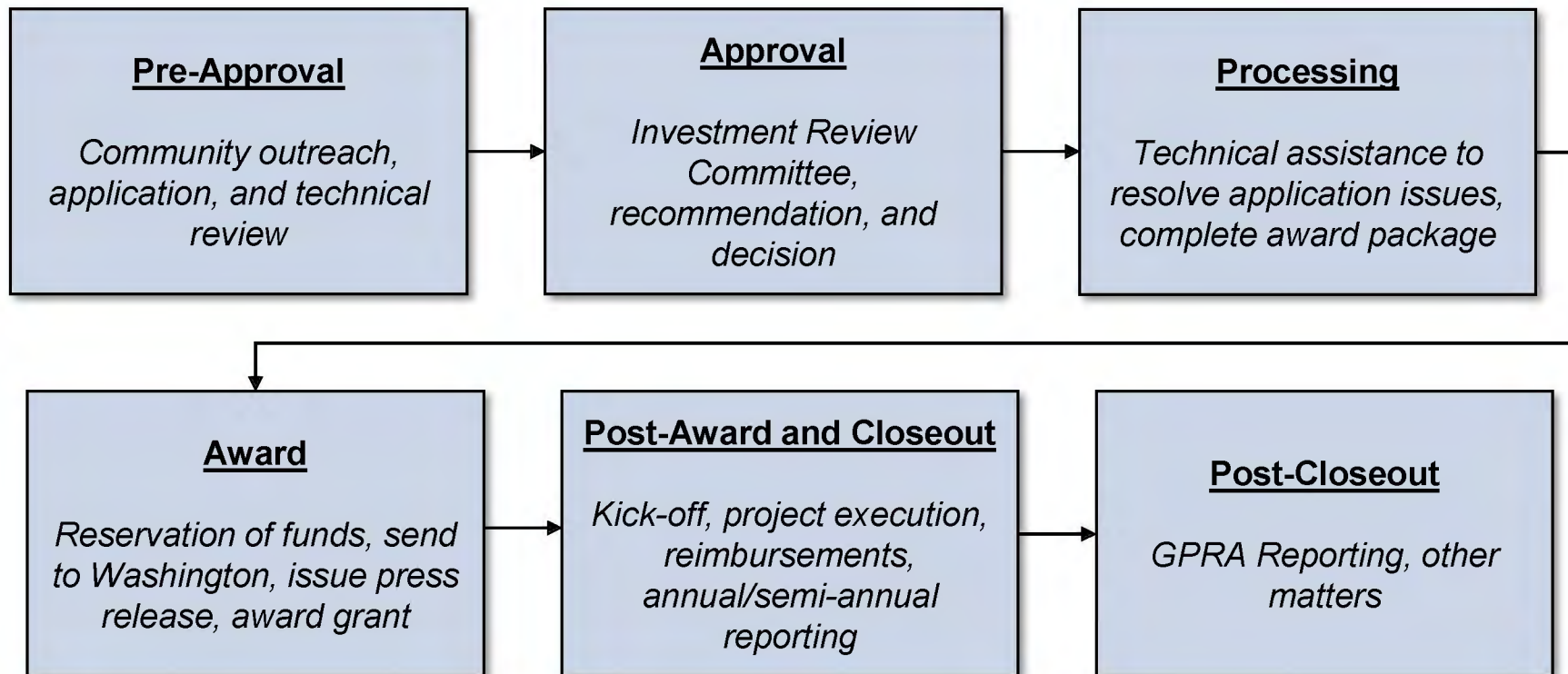
- **Relationships with local communities** vary across regions and states, leading to inconsistent pre-approval process delivery
- The **amount and quality of technical review and assistance** conducted throughout the process varies substantially
- Regions take inconsistent approaches to **IRC purpose and content**, resulting in variable outcomes
- Although less variable than other subprocesses, **post-award variations** result in inconsistent customer service and quality of outputs
- Time spent providing **technical support on application development** distracts from other essential tasks
- Several parts of the process are a **black box**, with limited visibility / understanding by other process owners
- **Documentation** used at different stages of the process is employed inconsistently throughout EDA
- Staff spent substantial time creating **independent workarounds** for the same problems
- **Review and approval** for certain documents varies by region and within offices, with variable levels of efficiency and risk
- **Manual, duplicative data entry and reconciliation** results in heavy administrative burden

All regional offices follow a similar process for identifying, soliciting, and managing grants, but operations vary considerably



Simplified EDA Grants Management Process

Detailed process flow documents have been created for each regional office

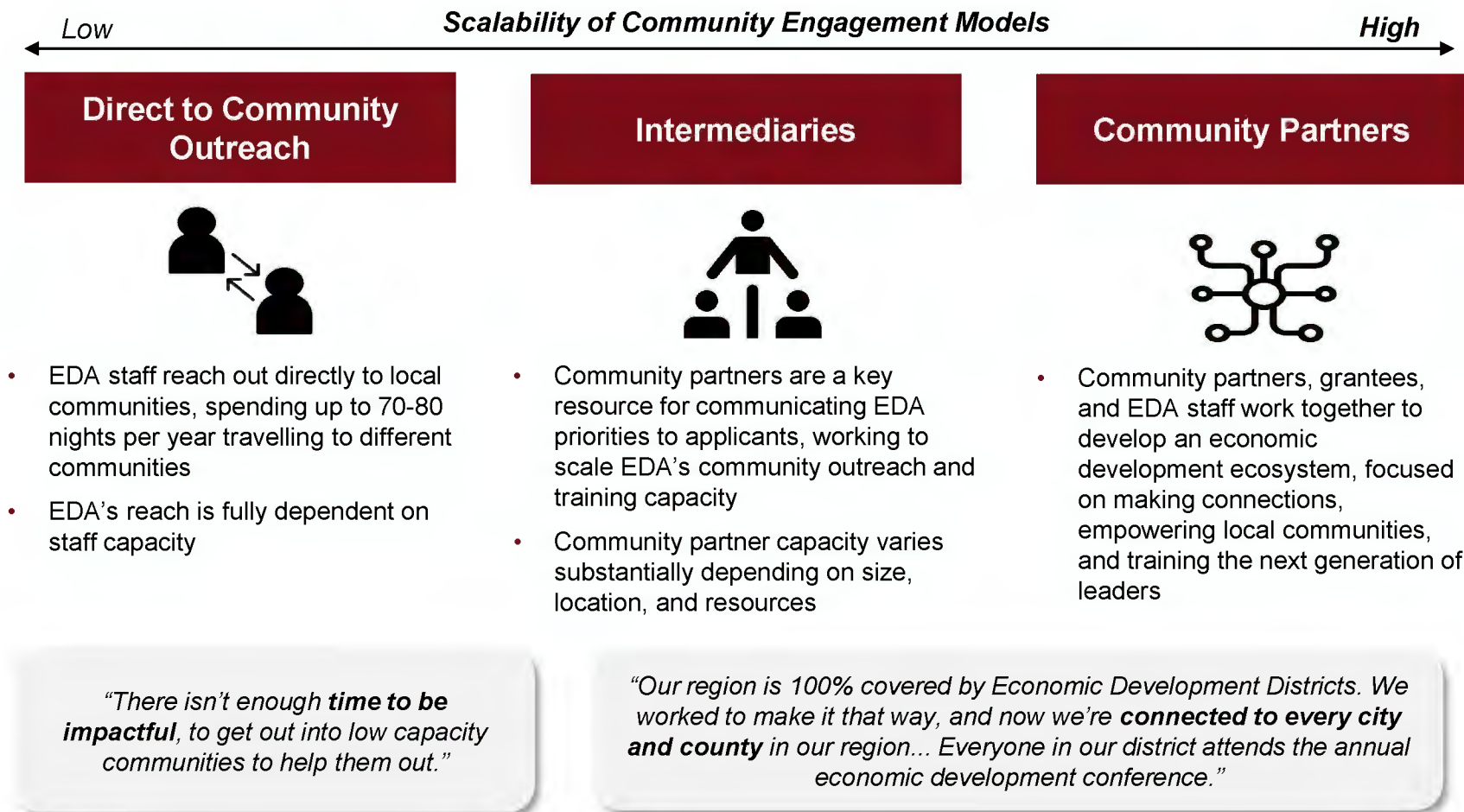


A detailed process spreadsheet (provided separately) summarizes cross-regional variations and improvement opportunities

Relationships with local communities vary across regions and states, leading to inconsistent pre-approval process delivery



Regions have unique approaches to community outreach, project development, and technical assistance



The amount and quality of technical review and assistance conducted at each process step varies substantially



EDA reviews applications and provides technical assistance to applicants at several points in the process, with varied standards and outcomes across offices and among staff within the same office

Pre-Approval

EDA provides technical assistance with application development

- Some regions **have limited engagement** with stakeholders to provide technical assistance
- Other regions are **engaged throughout the application process** to educate applicants on the federal process and help fill technical knowledge gaps

“When the grantee doesn’t pull together the materials properly... it creates more work later in the process”

Approval

EDA staff conduct initial technical review and work with applicants to address deficiencies*

- Regions vary in the degree to which technical review is **rushed to meet targets**, and there is often insufficient time to review applications prior to IRC
- In several regions applications are considered “half baked,” while other regions focus on **ironing out all technical issues** prior to IRC
- In some regions, technical review is **conducted concurrently** by all SMEs; in other regions, **review is consecutive** and highly dependent on the EDR

“There’s variability within our office as to what is technically complete”

Processing

After IRC, EDA staff complete full technical review for all projects prior to award*

- **Degree of technical assistance required** depends on initial application quality and thoroughness of review conducted pre-IRC
- Offices vary substantially in the degree to which application processing is **rushed to meet deadlines**; some regions liberally apply Special Award Conditions when there is insufficient time to resolve application issues to meet deadlines, particularly for environmental review

“There’s a lot of rush to get projects through. You don’t want to sacrifice the process, there’s a high risk of problems coming up later”

*Technical review includes environmental, engineering, program, and legal review. Depth of review for each conducted pre / post IRC varies by office and staff member

Regions take inconsistent approaches to IRC purpose and content, resulting in variable outcomes



All offices understand that a ranking and recommendation must result from IRC, but the level of preparation, discussion, and assessment varies significantly

Pre-IRC

- In some regions, almost all projects come to IRC, with little **pre-screening**; in others, teams meet prior to IRC to pre-determine readiness
- In some regions, EDRs / EDSs spend several hours per project **developing presentations or templates**; in other regions, participants are expected to read application materials in advance and discussions are more free-form

*“Some presentations go on and on and on [while others do not] – we need to make a **consistent presentation structure.**”*

IRC

- In some regions, only EDRs present, while in other regions all SMEs provide a **summary of their findings**
- **IRC discussions range** from 5 minutes per project to 60 minutes per project; regions vary in the degree to which participation and discussion is encouraged

*“Getting drilled about application discrepancies and minor issues with projects is a **waste of resources.**”*

Post-IRC

- **Quality and content** of IRC records varies from brief pros/cons to detailed notes of discussions; in some regions, Area Directors or EDRs prepare all records, while other offices rotate duties
- Some regions take time to **circulate the IRC record** to all SMEs prior to sharing with the voting members, while other regions only get signatures from the four voting members and send directly to the Regional Director

*“[We’re] making decisions **without complete information...** It’s not the most informed decision.”*

Although less variable than other subprocesses, post-award discrepancies result in inconsistent service and output quality



Post-Award Variability Examples

Kickoff



Attendance: Ranges from only Project Officer and grantee to several EDA staff and A&E firm



Agenda: Some staff send a standard agenda in advance, others use a PPT presentation, and others do not use an agenda and simply review the post-approval construction tool



Length: Lasts anywhere from 30 minutes to 2+ hours



Post-Approval Tool: Used by Construction PMs / Civil Engineers across EDA, but sent in different ways (Kiteworks, CD, website link)

Implications

- Grantees are **often rushed** to find an engineering firm
- Kickoff **may be delayed** due to time-intensive contracts or outstanding SACs
- Grantees vary in degree to which they are **prepared for post-award** activities, which is often reflected in reporting quality

Reporting



Start Date: Reporting start date varies across regions and within offices (grant award date, kickoff date, construction start date)



Level of Assistance: Regions and staff within regions vary in whether they help grantees fill out forms



Rigor of Review: Post-award staff typically fall behind on reporting duties due to EDA's pre-award focus, and several staff simply check to make sure reports were submitted, rather than providing an in-depth review

Implications

- **Legal risk** associated with inconsistent reporting standards
- Grantees, especially those in smaller communities, frequently **fail to meet reporting expectations**

Time spent providing technical support on application development distracts from other essential tasks



EDRs spend substantial time providing technical support to prospective applicants during the pre-approval phase of the grants process, taking away time from their schedules that could otherwise be used to develop additional projects

Avg. Time (%) Allocated by EDR's on the Pre-Approval Phase of the Grant Process
(Self-Reported by Region)

Task Categories	ATRO	AURO	CRO	DRO	PRO	SRO	Average
Outreach	40%	45%	16%	40%	23%	32%	32%
Pre-Approval	40%	40%	29%	39%	42%	39%	35%
Post-Approval	5%	15%	24%	3%	28%	18%	16%
Performance Data	5%	0%	11%	4%	2%	4%	5%
Closeout	0%	0%	8%	0%	2%	3%	1%
Other	10%	0%	11%	12%	3%	3%	6%

*"We spend most of our time **helping grantees fill out forms**. Is that the most valuable use of our time?"*

*"We have **vast geographic territories**; if you're one EDR covering a giant territory, you have limited time to travel if you're focused on technical support"*

Several parts of the process are a "black box," with limited visibility or understanding by other process owners



Limited visibility and understanding of parts of the process among regional offices, HQ, and other agencies results in frustration and inefficiency

EXAMPLE: NOFO Approval



NOFOs undergo several time-consuming layers of internal routing, up to the Assistant Secretary, without a system to track progress
NOFO approval must **route through OMB**, potentially adding weeks to the grants process

"OMB approval is an artifact of a time when EDA published a NOFO before receiving funds"

EXAMPLE: Send to Washington



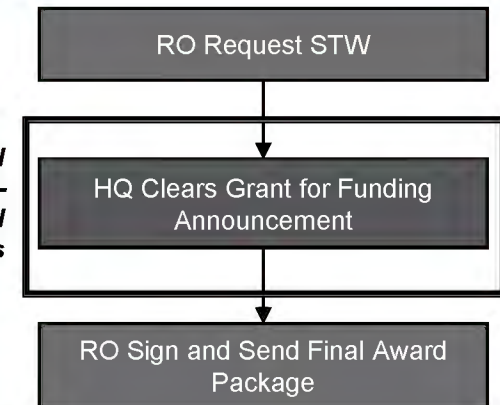
"Send to Washington" (STW) is a **black box for regional office** staff, who have limited visibility into the process

- Some staff perceive that emailing HQ staff in addition to submitting the STW milestone expedites the process
- Regional office staff follow up frequently with HQ staff via email or phone inquiring about status, causing time wastage and frustration

Office of External Affairs staff responsible for the congressional notification process have limited awareness of the preceding or following process steps

- Risks grants falling through the cracks between steps

Several Weeks - Several Months

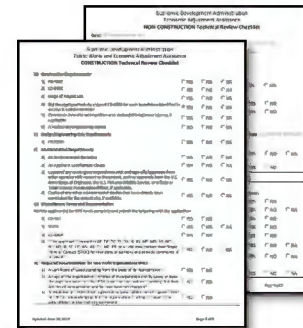


Documentation used at different stages of the process is employed inconsistently throughout EDA



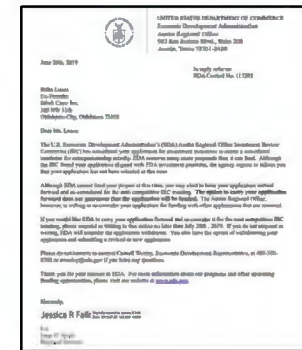
Internal EDA materials (e.g. IRC records, technical review checklists, memos, reports) are inconsistent, resulting in vastly different contents and quality across regions. Where templates do exist, they often have vague guidance

- **Notable Example: Technical Review Checklist**
 - Some regions **consistently apply the Technical Review checklist** to determine when an application is technically complete
 - In some regions, staff **manage their own checklists** to determine when an application is technically complete, and application completeness may be driven by timeline pressure



Communication with grantees (e.g. letters, emails, phone calls, meeting agendas) occurs with little standardization or consistency, resulting in varied levels of support and guidance being provided to grantees in different regions

- **Notable Example: Carry Forward Letter**
 - Some regions use the carry forward letter when an application has **substantial deficiencies** as determined by IRC but still merits future consideration
 - Other regions use the carry forward letter according to its **intended purpose** (as defined in the Grants Manual), when an application is approved but there are not enough funds to award



Staff spend substantial time creating independent workarounds for the same problems, a major source of inefficiency at EDA



Time spent creating workarounds could be spent on other high-value work, and the sheer quantity of workarounds across regions and within the same office is a barrier to EDA-wide communication

“I have my own template forms that I’ve had to develop because our systems don’t do what I need them to do.”



EXAMPLE



Common Problem: How do I manage my Revolving Loan Funds without an RLF system?

- Solution 1:**
- Risk Rating letter template
 - Audit Log spreadsheet
 - Checklist for review of RLF plans
 - Instructions for reviewing ED 209 reports and loan lists

- Solution 2:**
- Grant Status spreadsheet
 - Audit Log spreadsheet
 - Contact Information spreadsheet
 - Mail Merge spreadsheet

- Solution 3:**
- Tracking spreadsheet
 - Risk Rating spreadsheet
 - Processing checklist for new RLF applications

- Solution 4:**
- No tools for tracking – keep track of all grants mentally
 - URT used to capture RLF data

In total we’ve identified more than 100 checklists, spreadsheets, and other tools used as workarounds to common issues

Review and approval for certain documents varies by region and within offices, with varying levels of efficiency and risk



Some regions are highly risk averse and require several (up to 3) time-consuming approvals, while other regions err on the side of fewer approvals

EXAMPLE: Final Award Package Approval / Signature



Level of risk associated with review requirements varies by document:

- Low / Medium Risk: Financial / Progress Reports, ED-735, ASAP Drawdown Request (non-construction)
- Medium Risk: IRC Record, IRC Decision Letters
- Medium / High Risk: Final Award Package, ASAP Drawdown Request (construction)
- High Risk: Payment Memos

*“A three-step process for reviewing reimbursement requests can be time-consuming, but this is a **critical place to minimize risk**”*

Manual, duplicative data entry and reconciliation results in heavy administrative burden



Duplicative data entry requirements force staff to enter identical data into multiple, distinct forms, adding non-value administrative burden to staff workloads

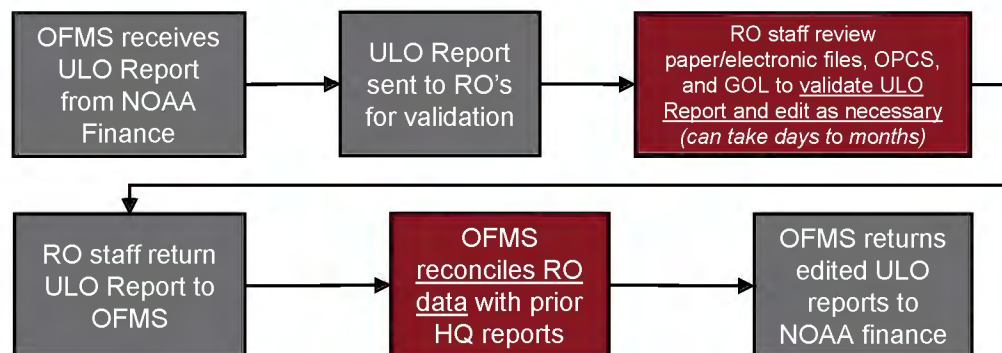
Notable Examples:

- Application information **submitted to Grants.gov** is manually copied into a project file in OPCS (for those grants not in GOL)
- Prior to IRC, **applicant information and project officer narrative** are copied from OPCS or GOL into upwards of 3 different documents
- Following a grant's funding decision at IRC, information drafted for the **official record** must also be copied into one of three decision letters

"I have to copy information from OPCS and paste it three times – I've made a post-it note to keep track"

Staff must manually reconcile data at multiple points throughout the grantmaking and related financial processes, a time-consuming process with high error rates

The Unliquidated Obligations Reports (ULO) is one example:



"The work is good; it's just overwhelmed by the processing"

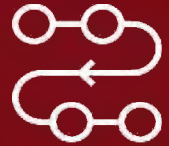
"We're talking about analysis that was done 100% by human processing. Across a field of 214 projects across multiple years, that's massive room for error"

We have identified opportunities for meaningful reductions in variability and improvements in efficiency



Process Variability & Efficiency

Highly variable and inefficient process execution across EDA results in inconsistent outcomes and customer service



Improvement Opportunities

- 1.1 Reduce variability of and streamline technical review and assistance to promote consistency and effectiveness
- 1.2 Reduce variability of and streamline merit review to promote consistency and minimize risk
- 1.3 Implement measures to improve and standardize award through closeout subprocesses
- 1.4 Ensure consistent standards of customer service through standardized documentation and guidance for communicating with grantees and applicants
- 1.5 Develop standardized tools (e.g. trackers, checklists, letter generators) for commonly performed tasks to improve consistency of outputs and reduce administrative burden
- 1.6 Define and implement consistent standards for approvals and routing to increase efficiency and minimize risk
- 1.7 Consistently leverage community partners to scale impact

Recommendations have been developed with the following goals and considerations:

- Support expectation-setting and response by applicants and grantees
- Position for scalability and agility
- Allow flexibility for inherent region / project variability
- Improve overall effectiveness
- Assist in risk management



Improvement Opportunities: Technical Review and Assistance

1.1 *Reduce variability of and streamline technical review and assistance to promote consistency and effectiveness*

E1	E2	R

Improvement Opportunity	Details
<p>A Streamline eligibility review to reduce administrative burden at RO level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combine technical review for eligibility with initial pull of files from grants.gov (done at EDA HQ). In the interim, assign single RO staff member responsibility for technical review for eligibility
<p>B Assign clear responsibility for technical review to ensure ownership among the supporting staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon application intake, assign responsibility to all EDA staff members responsible for technical review Clearly and consistently communicate EDA staff point(s) of contact to applicant to set expectations and ensure transparency
<p>C Improve consistency of pre-IRC review to support timeliness and adequacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign IRC date upon application intake Introduce an EDA-wide standard timeline for technical review to be complete (i.e. 2 weeks prior to IRC), with flexibility at the regional office level Provide more firm guidance to applicants regarding processing timelines and actions if not met Flag projects that will require complex environmental review early in the process (e.g. during technical review for eligibility) to minimize bottlenecks later in the process Enforce standard of readiness for IRC and final application completion via technical review checklist, with Area Director responsible for enforcing consistency at each point in the process

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Merit Review (IRC)

1.2 *Reduce variability of and streamline merit review to promote consistency and minimize risk*

E1	E2	R

Improvement Opportunity

Details

A Provide standard guidance regarding IRC structure and content to simplify processes and promote consistent merit review outcomes



- Each SME should **present their findings** during IRC, using EDA-wide standard template guidance
- Assign **recommended length** (e.g. 30 minutes) to each application to balance timeliness and appropriate depth of review

B Standardize IRC outputs and results communication to save time, reduce risk of inconsistent outputs, and minimize confusion



- Assign one individual to be the **record keeper** for each IRC, in addition to adding clarifying detail to IRC record template
- **Consistently communicate** RD decision to all participatory staff, to increase transparency and minimize confusion

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Award through Closeout

1.3

Implement measures to improve and standardize award through closeout subprocesses

E1	E2	R

Improvement Opportunity

Details

A Increase process transparency to improve understanding and reduce frustration



- Increase transparency of “black box” processes, for example:
 - Provide notifications to regional office staff when appropriate milestones have occurred between STW and press release

B Develop clear guidance and enforce consistent standards to minimize bottlenecks and drive process consistency



- Implement standard guidance and consistently enforce standards for several highly variable subprocesses, for example:
 - Clarify timeline expectations for Regional Director to sign final award package (e.g. 5 business days at maximum)
 - Default to electronic signature for CD-450 across all regions
 - Establish project kickoff data as standard date to begin post-award reporting
 - Standardize closeout reporting requirements to ensure that all forms (e.g. ED-1103) are used consistently

C Establish metrics designed to quantify post-award success



- Implement post-award success metrics to reflect the importance of post-award activities and incentivize staff to consistently conduct post-award reporting and other requirements
- Dedicate appropriate resources for post-award activities (see *Theme 2 for additional detail*)

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Customer Service (1 of 2)

1.4

Ensure consistent standards of customer service through standardized documentation and guidance for communicating with grantees and applicants

E1	E2	R
●	●	◐

Improvement Opportunity

Details

A Develop customer-facing “One-Pagers” for commonly-fielded questions to empower community partners and minimize repetitive questions

- Application Document Completion One-Pagers
 - EDA Public Works Program Summary
- Post-Award Grant Management One-Pagers
 - Grants Online FAQ's
 - Progress / Financial Report Guidance

B Standardize letters and notifications to improve communication and ensure consistent customer service

- Clarify Guidance Regarding Existing Letter Templates
 - Carry Forward Letter
 - Merits Further Consideration Letter
- Introduce New Letters to Serve Additional Needs
 - Deficient Application Letter - to be used when application has significant deficiencies as determined by IRC but still merits future consideration
- Establish notification best practices, for example:
 - Ensure that letters clearly communicate anticipated EDA staff member point(s) of contact to establish clear communication protocol at each stage of the process
 - Call applicants to convey Award Decision, in addition to sending written email / letter

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Customer Service (2 of 2)

1.4

Ensure consistent standards of customer service through standardized documentation and guidance for communicating with grantees and applicants (continued)

E1	E2	R
●	●	◐

Improvement Opportunity

Details

C Standardize meeting agendas / presentations to promote clarity and consistency



- **Meeting Agendas**
 - *Kickoff Call – Send agenda well in advance of kickoff call, clearly outlining post-award expectations (e.g. A&E contract)*
- **Presentations**
 - *Kickoff Call presentation for standard EDA-wide post-award activities*
 - *Standard presentation or template to present key points for IRC (e.g. PowerPoint presentation or template, format can vary by region)*

D Consistently support low capacity communities and grantees



- Ensure that supporting low capacity communities is **prioritized at every level of the organization**, beginning with EDA goals / desired outcomes and performance metrics
- Provide **workable solutions** for communities without sufficient access to technology
 - *For example, permit exemptions to electronic application submission requirement*
 - *In systems, provide simple workaround for EDA staff to submit application on behalf of applicant*

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Internal Tools

1.5

Develop standardized tools (e.g. trackers, checklists, letter generators) for commonly performed tasks to improve consistency of outputs and reduce administrative burden

E1	E2	R
●	◐	◑

Tool Type

Potential Tools

A Application Status / Reporting Trackers



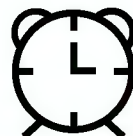
- **Pre-Award Grant Application Status Tracker**
 - Grant application status
 - SME processing status (e.g. ATRO master environmental spreadsheet)
- **Post-Award Grant Reporting Trackers**
 - GPRA
 - Financial Reports
 - Audit Status Reports

B Checklists / Standards



- **Checklists for Common Processes**
 - For example, standardize and consistently enforce application processing checklist used to determine if application is complete
- **Documentation of EDA Standards**
 - For example, regularly maintain library of recommended / not recommended Special Award Conditions

C Tools to support common, time-consuming tasks



- **Annual Contact Update Request Emails to Each Active Grantee**
- **Letter Generators**
 - Award Decision Letters, Kickoff Meeting Invitations
- **Document 'Auto-fillers'**
 - Final Award Package Document Creator
- **Automated Mail / Email Generator**
 - Notice of report due; reminder to Project Officer / reporting staff

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Approvals and Routing

1.6

Define and implement consistent standards for approvals and routing to increase efficiency and minimize risk

E1	E2	R

Process Stage

Recommended Approvals

A Pre-Award

- **Provide opportunity for all involved staff to review pre-award materials**
 - IRC Record: Reviewed by all voting members (including PNP), with all participatory staff copied to provide comments; legal should review if there are specific legal issues
 - IRC Decision Letters: If the record is routed and letter content is pulled from the IRC record, routing the letter for approval is not necessary; letter should be approved by Area Director and signed by Regional Director

B Award

- **Application Document Completion**
 - Final Award Package: Consistently route to Area Director, Legal, and Regional Director; Area Director should provide written comments for clarity
 - ED-735: Should be consistently completed by Project Officer, reviewed by Area Director, and signed by Regional Director; does not need to be signed by Legal unless specific issue

C Post-Award

- **Require review of post-award reports where it provides greatest value**
 - Progress / Financial Reports: Project Officers should review at regular cadence, with input from Legal, Area Director, and others as needed
 - Payment Memos: Project Officer, Area Director, Regional Director; Legal review as needed
 - ASAP Drawdown Request: Reevaluate requirement that EDA staff member must approve ASAP drawdown request for non-construction projects (construction projects should continue to require ASAP approval by EDA staff to minimize risk)

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk

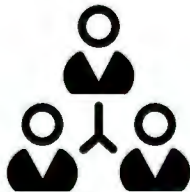


Improvement Opportunities: Community Engagement

1.7 *Consistently leverage community partners to scale impact*

E1	E2	R
●	◐	◑

Train and appropriately resource community partners to educate communities and assist applicants to enhance the efficiency of EDA's community engagement



Utilize Partnership Planning (PP) and Technical Assistance (TA) grants as needed to improve support



Leverage standardized tools, one-pagers, and presentations to enable community partner support (*see Improvement Opportunity 1.4*)



Empower community partners to support lower capacity grantees

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Agenda

Executive Summary

Project Approach

As-Is Process Challenges

- Theme 1: Core Business Process Variability & Efficiency
- Process Enablers
 - Theme 2: Workforce Management
 - Theme 3: Supporting Capabilities
 - Theme 4: Data Quality and Access
 - Theme 5: Knowledge Management

Culture and Organizational Factors

Recommendations

Next Steps

Process Enablers Challenges

Theme 2: Workforce Management



Workforce Management

Roles are not optimally defined, allocated, or balanced, resulting in inconsistent process delivery and substantial risk to future operations



Key Findings

- **EDR and EDS roles** overlap substantially in certain regions, compromising the efficacy of outreach and pre-approval tasks
- **The EDI role** varies across offices, underutilizing valuable resources and resulting in differing levels of “integration”
- The **Regional Environmental Officer role** is filled differently across offices, leading to variable environmental processing quality and capacity
- **Area and Administrative Director** reporting structures vary
- **Top-heavy staffing** across regional offices frequently results in high-value employees performing low-value work
- **Minimal succession planning** and “one-deep” staffing throughout EDA poses risk to agency operations
- Regional offices are expected to **carry out certain grant programs** without commensurate resources

Improvement Opportunities

2.1

*Develop an **EDA-wide approach** to staffing and structure to create flexibility and alignment around roles*

2.2

*Develop and implement a **comprehensive workforce plan** that enables effective alignment of resources, plans for the future, and supports organizational agility*

EDR and EDS roles overlap substantially in certain regions, compromising the efficacy of outreach and pre-approval tasks



A recent study shows the discrepancies in the percent of time allocated to outreach and preapproval responsibilities across EDA's offices

Avg. Time (%) Allocated by EDR's/EDS's to Each Step of the Grants Process (Self-Reported by Region)

Tasks Category	ATRO		AuRO		CRO		DRO		PRO		SRO		Average	
	EDR	EDS	EDR	EDS	EDR	EDS	EDR	EDS	EDR	EDS	EDR	EDS	EDR	EDS
Outreach	40%	0%	45%	35%	16%	8%	40%	9%	23%	17%	32%	7%	32%	15%
Pre-Approval	40%	80%	40%	26%	29%	28%	39%	24%	42%	34%	39%	40%	35%	30%
Post-Approval	5%	20%	15%	26%	24%	45%	3%	36%	28%	42%	18%	34%	16%	35%
Performance Data	5%	0%	0%	5%	11%	18%	4%	7%	2%	7%	4%	8%	5%	8%
Closeout	0%	0%	0%	5%	8%	8%	0%	3%	2%	4%	3%	5%	1%	4%
Other	10%	0%	0%	3%	11%	0%	12%	4%	3%	1%	3%	5%	6%	3%

Although outreach is generally seen as EDRs' highest leverage role, the % of time EDRs allocated to outreach can be as low as 16%, less than the time dedicated to pre-approval or post-approval activities

EDSs add tremendous value to the pre-approval process; but the % of time EDSs allocate to pre-approval ranges from 24 to 80%

"The time EDR's spend on office work takes away from the time that we can spend on the outreach, networking, and development activities that are required to build a pipeline"

"Atlanta has just one EDS who handles processing elements. In Seattle, there are several EDS's, and they're assigned work accordingly – there's a lot of cross-communication in SRO as far as points of contact..."

* Source: "Economic Development Administration Organizational Structure Analysis Project Final Report" – JJA Consultants



The EDI role varies across offices, underutilizing valuable resources and resulting in differing levels of “integration”

EDA’s Economic Development Integration (EDI) team works with federal peers to identify opportunities for greater interagency collaboration, and to facilitate the coordinated and effective investment of federal economic development resources.

Data show that EDIs spend most of their time on relatively low-value work

EDI Average Time Spent (%) per Job Task Across Regions (Self-Reported)					
Job Tasks Categories	PRO	ATRO	SRO	AuRO	Average
Admin/IT Support	70%	45%	24%	60%	51%
Grants Program Management Support	5%	20%	0%	5%	8%
Organizational Performance Improvement	25%	30%	56%	15%	35%
Other	0%	5%	20%	20%	13%

On average, EDI’s spend **51%** of their time on **Admin/IT Support** - their lowest leverage activity

EDIs can make a larger impact through organizational performance improvement activities related to **local interagency collaboration**, such as development of Regional Economic Diversification Summits, but some EDIs allocate on average **35%**, and as little as **15%** of their time on it

“There needs to be buy-in from the rest of the office for the EDI to work ... and it needs to start with the RD first”

“I don’t want an EDI doing an EDR’s work – I don’t want to confuse the customer. We have one face for the customer.”

“I think HQ has set the EDI role up to fail. I don’t think they’ve carved out the federal role very well in this space, so we’re asking people to do something that’s impossible.”

* Source: “Economic Development Administration Organizational Structure Analysis Project Final Report” – JJA Consultants



Regional Environmental Officer role variability leads to differing environmental processing quality and capacity

REOs vary in their ability to perform environmental processing because of office-specific role variances and past environmental experience

	Staffing					
	Dedicated Environmental Protection Specialist (EPS)			Civil Engineer/EPS		Contractor EPS
Office	<u>ATRO</u>	<u>CRO</u>	<u>DRO</u>	<u>AuRO</u>	<u>PRO</u>	<u>SRO</u>
# Staff	1	1	1	2	1	2
Environmental Capacity						
Notable Role Variance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works exclusively on environmental matters; Serves as EDA's <i>de facto</i> environmental SME 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holds significant project officer responsibilities (UC, PP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works exclusively on environmental matters; Assists SRO's environmental processing as able 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each civil engineer is responsible for environmental processing of their assigned grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single civil engineer is responsible for all environmental processing Also has a post-award construction portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each contractor works exclusively on environmental matters
Relevant Education & Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters, Environmental Engineering Extensive environmental experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters, City Planning Environmental coursework Extensive EDA experience; REO since 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelors, Environmental Studies Environmental experience with government entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelors, Civil Engineering Environmental experience Department of Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelors, Civil Engineering Army Corps of Engineers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters, Earth Science; Environmental consulting experience
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelors in Wildlife Biology; Continuing Education Environmental Coursework Environmental consulting experience

*"We've seen **environmental risk** treated very, very differently from office to office... **it would be really beneficial to have a few employees at HQ that are responsible for all of it**"*

*"The REO and civil engineer roles should remain separate – if we weren't so experienced in environmental issues, **I could name four projects that would've gotten the EDA in major trouble.**"*



Area and Administrative Director reporting structures vary (1 of 2)

Differences in Area Director quantity, direct report numbers, and grant allocation methods are notable among regional offices

Area Director Responsibilities/Reports by Region*

	ATRO	AURO	CRO	DRO	PRO	SRO
# ADs	1	2	1	1	2	2
# of Staff Managed	AD 1 12	AD 1 9	AD 1 13	AD 1 14	AD 1 14 AD 2 9	AD 1 16 AD 2 10
Allocation of Responsibilities	N/A	Geographic	N/A	N/A	By Program and Phase	By Program

Lowest span of control

Highest span of control

- Oversight responsibility varies widely among area directors, as the number of staff reporting to an area director ranges from 6 to 16 across regional offices.
- Allocation of grants responsibilities is geographic in some regions, and by program in others

“She’s got too many direct reports ... it’s too much for one person to handle.”

When we had a lot of work, “I literally had to apologize to my new hires every day – I’d love to be able to sit down and have breathing space to onboard you properly, but the best that I can do is assign you a peer in this office to be your go-to.”

Methods of establishing organizational structure do not appear to reflect any organizational standard

* Program coverage reflects formal reporting relationships – supervisory relationships may differ in practice



Area and Administrative Director reporting structures vary (2 of 2)

Management of non-construction grant programs is largely split between area directors and administrative directors across regional offices

Grant Program Oversight by Regional Office						
	Non-Construction					Construction*
	PP	RIS	RLF	UC	VISTA	All
ATRO	Admin	Area	Admin	Admin	N/A	Area
AuRO	Area	Area	Admin	Admin	Admin	Area
CRO	Admin	Area	Admin	Admin	N/A	Area
DRO	Area	Admin	Area	Admin	Admin	Area
PRO	Admin	Admin	Admin/Area	Admin	N/A	Area
SRO	Area	Area	Admin	Area	N/A	Area

- Program staff reporting to Administrative Directors often lack effective guidance and oversight. This is more often the case for Administrative Directors with fewer years of EDA experience

*“Programmatic disparity exists between administrative directors. **Some run a lot of programs, and some don’t do any at all.**”*

*“He [my admin director supervisor] says he’s here to help, but **he can’t help me with my GOL grants...he can almost never help me.**”*

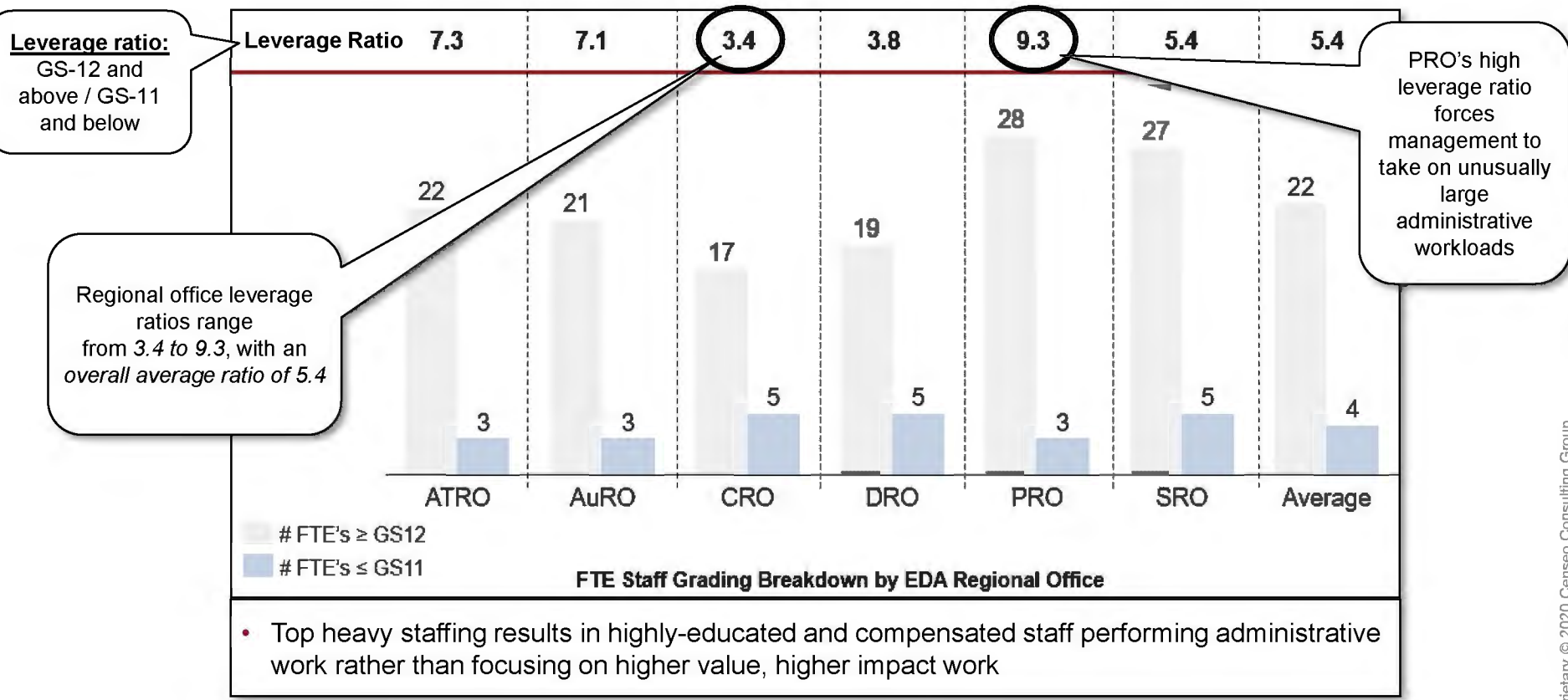
“The administrative branch is always handed the misfit children – that’s kind of how it always is.”

*Construction programs include PW, EAA, and disaster programs (even though these programs do fund a small number of non-construction projects)



Top-heavy staffing across regional offices frequently results in high-value employees performing low-value work

EDA is a top-heavy agency, with four of its regional offices having more than 5 staff graded at GS-12 or above for each staff member graded at GS-11 or below



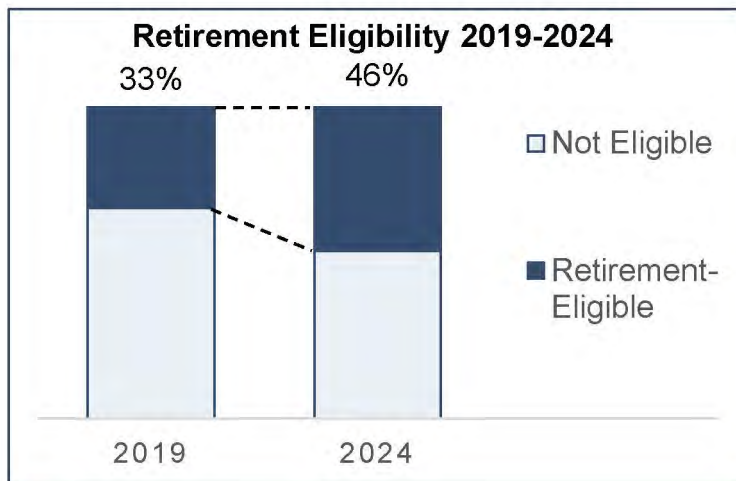
"We're a top-heavy regional office (we have basically entirely GS-13's – maybe one GS-12) – so we don't have a lot of extra resources to pay for an administrative resource."

"Everyone in our office is a GS-13 – all of them do everything top to bottom. We need some layering where a lot of the work could be done by lower grades."

Minimal succession planning and “one-deep staffing” throughout EDA poses risk to agency operations



Forty-six percent of EDA staff will be eligible for retirement within the next 4 years, leaving an exodus of content knowledge and an influx of less experienced employees



A lack of coordinated succession planning across the organization threatens to leave it hamstrung with vacancies

“A lot of this [my supervisor] doesn’t know how to do, so what happens if I decide to retire?”

“One-deep staffing” throughout EDA presents a considerable risk to the agency and compounds issues posed by poor succession planning

Notable examples:

- **Regional Offices** – Most regional offices have multiple “one-deep” roles, without backup or succession planning. DRO is the only regional office that has significantly engaged in cross-training
- **EDA HQ** – Office of Legislative Affairs and Office of External Affairs both have one-deep staffing gates that control the Send to Washington (STW) grants subprocess



“If our area director were to leave, I don’t know what would happen.”

*“EDA is **short-sighted on the workforce issues**. We don’t look at the long-term impact of short staffing.”*

Regional offices are expected to carry out certain grant programs without commensurate resources



Build to Scale

EDA
U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION



Regional Innovation Strategies / Build to Scale (B2S)

- **Regional staff manage RIS grants** in addition to other responsibilities
- The increasing quantity of RIS grants – particularly in PRO – risks making the workload unsustainable
- In the new iteration of B2S, **EDRs will field tier 1 questions** without commensurate increases in staffing at the regional level
- Most regional RIS staff report to the region's Administrative Director or Area Director, resulting in **inadequate support and variability** in how the grant is managed across regions

"RIS grants aren't included in my performance review, despite them taking so much time."

VISTA Program

- VISTA program was **incubated in AURO**, then expanded into DRO
- Knowledge of these grants is **highly concentrated**
 - One program analyst is the expert on the VISTA program; *"VISTA is at risk if Sally leaves"*
- Management of the program involves engagement with a variety of stakeholder and **hands-on operating support**, including recruiting and training for up to 10 EDDs per region and their VISTAs

"Regardless of how great it is – there needs to be some acknowledgment of how this [VISTA] program is a complete job in and of itself."

Disaster Supplementals

- EDA received \$1.2 billion in supplemental (unplanned) disaster appropriations between FY18 and FY19, **doubling regular appropriations** for each fiscal year
- Hiring delays resulted in most regions processing more than twice their regularly-funded appropriations with the same or slightly more staff
- SRO has utilized a BPA to quickly identify and **onboard contractors** to support disaster funds
- A large disaster supplemental is anticipated for FY20

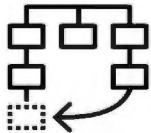
"Disaster funding swamped what we could do."

"You ramp up with capacity that you have. You have to pick your priorities. Things will eventually slip."



Improvement Opportunities: Staffing and Structure (1 of 2)

2.1 *Develop an EDA-wide approach to staffing and structure to create flexibility and alignment around roles*



E1	E2	R
◐	●	●

A More clearly define EDR, EDS, EDI, and REO roles based on the principle of highest value

- Leverage **EDRs** for community outreach and pipeline development
- Focus **EDSs** on post application activities, including processing and technical support
- Put into place **transition strategies** as needed to move staff into their appropriate roles regrade positions as needed
- Clarify role of the **Economic Development Integrator**, clearly stating expected outcomes; consider adjusting related performance plans to incentivize results
- Ensure EDA-wide support for and a consistent standard of experience and guidance for structure of the **Regional Environmental Officer** role, to most effectively manage EDA risk

B Implement cross-training and establish backups for “one deep” positions

- Enable regional offices to access staff from within an RO and from **across EDA as backups**
- Cross-train within offices as appropriate, to enable more **fluid movement of resources** to support overall office needs

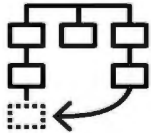
E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Staffing and Structure (2 of 2)

2.1

Develop an EDA-wide approach to staffing and structure to create flexibility and alignment around roles (continued)



E1	E2	R
◐	●	●

C

Develop an intake process for new programs, to ensure staffing is appropriate to support existing as well as new programs

- Develop **guidelines** for the establishment of new EDA programs to ensure adequate support and effective management
- Examine existing, **regionally-based programs** to ensure adequate support and identify shortages or other staffing issues

D

Plan for the next disaster supplemental

- Develop **appropriate planning** for supplemental funding, to include:
 - Identification of “floaters” able to move locations to support higher volume regional offices, as needed
 - Establish the BPA as first line of hiring to quickly onboard new term staff; ensure that BPA contract-holder has access to position descriptions to begin building a pipeline of resources prior to supplemental appropriation
 - Determining management structure needed to support an influx of disaster hires
 - Leverage community and university relationships to develop a pipeline of potential disaster hires
 - Identify other, creative methods to support staffing in the event of the next large disaster appropriation

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Workforce Planning

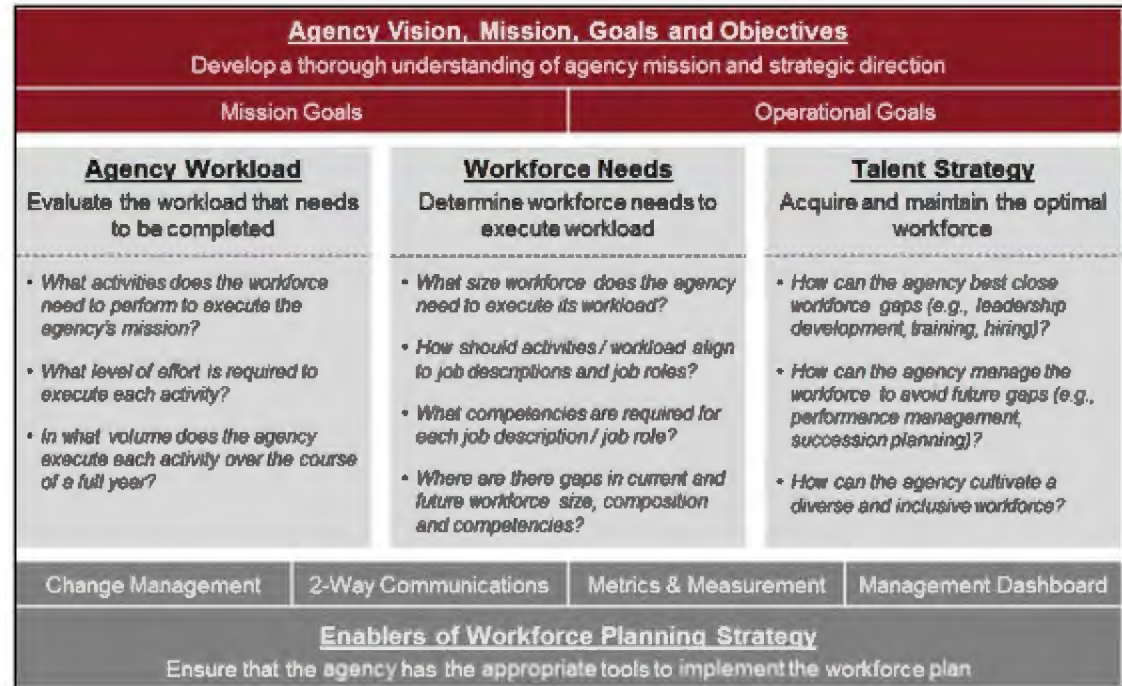
2.2

Develop and implement a comprehensive workforce plan that enables effective alignment of resources, plans for the future, and supports organizational agility

E1	E2	R
◐	●	●

- Develop an understanding of mission & strategic direction
- Evaluate the agency's workload, including level of effort and volume
- Project impacts to workload, including frequency of supplemental funding
- Project future impacts to workforce, including retirements, new hires, and disaster hires
- Determine current and future workforce needs, including alignment of workload with job roles, competencies, and skills gaps
- Determine how best to acquire and maintain the optimal workforce

Components of Workforce Planning Strategy





Agenda

Executive Summary

Project Approach

As-Is Process Challenges

- Theme 1: Core Business Process Variability & Efficiency
- Process Enablers
 - Theme 2: Workforce Management
 - Theme 3: Supporting Capabilities
 - Theme 4: Data Quality and Access
 - Theme 5: Knowledge Management

Culture and Organizational Factors

Recommendations

Next Steps

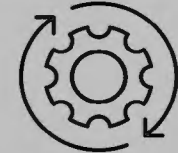
Process Enablers Challenges

Theme 3: Supporting Capabilities



Supporting Capabilities

The capabilities directly supporting EDA's grants staff and processes are ineffective, resulting in inefficiency, frustration, and inconsistent outcomes



Key Findings

- **Technology deficiencies** are a key driver of inefficiency and dissatisfaction for the agency
- **IT and HR support** are inadequate for EDA's needs, leading to reduced productivity, staffing inefficiencies, and general frustration
- EDA lacks **agency-wide EDA-specific programmatic training**, resulting in frustration and variable outcomes

Improvement Opportunities

- 3.1 *Centralize **standard workarounds** to reduce inefficiencies*
- 3.2 *Implement **structured response** for IT & HR support to influence improved support levels*
- 3.3 *Leverage **planned improvement projects** to ensure effective, responsive development, implementation and roll out of new technologies*
- 3.4 *Leverage **new training coordinator** to develop a training and development plan for EDA*

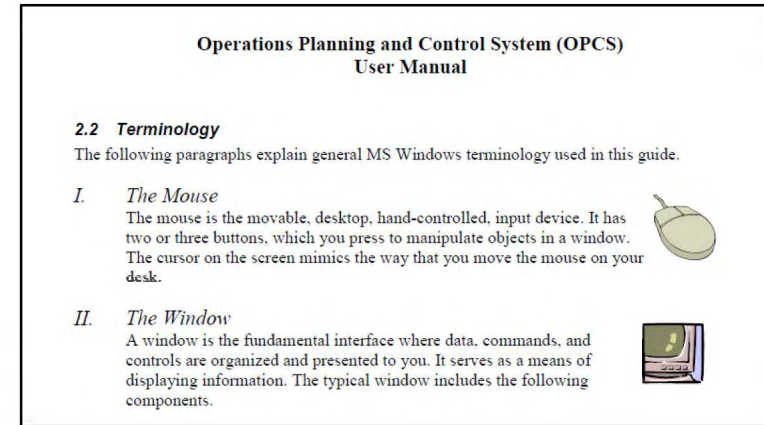
Technology deficiencies are a key driver of inefficiency and dissatisfaction for the agency



EDA's two flagship grants systems, OPCS and Grants Online, are both well past their expected periods of utilization, with OPCS being over 20 years old

*"I was here when OPCS was new, and that was in 1995!! You **can't sit around on technology**, you've got to keep pushing it forward."*

*"As far as systems go, **we are twenty years behind** – that's a lot of time in the technological age."*



OPCS User Manual

Lack of an agency-wide IT strategy has led to ineffective technological planning and a lack of trust in HQ's ability to support IT needs

*"I'm currently piloting Salesforce, and it's **going to make people lose their minds** ... [but I haven't provided this feedback] because I haven't been asked."*

*"We spend a lot of time complaining about our systems ... we should stop talking about what systems we need and just start **accepting the systems we have.**"*

*"When I first came to EDA, **we had an IT specialist**, but that role went away ... [now] HQ is trying to make me an IT specialist, even if it kills me."*



IT and HR support are inadequate for EDA's needs

Operations support issues lead to reduced productivity, staffing inefficiencies, and general frustration



IT

Insufficient IT support for home offices

"I got connectivity in my home office about 3 months ago... prior to that, I hadn't been able to access shared files since the cyber attack in 2013"

Uncoordinated distribution of IT authority

*"I'm willing to take whatever training is necessary to do IT work and get problems fixed, but you'll have a 20 year employee who **doesn't have the same IT access** that a contractor started on Monday has."*

Lack of easily-accessible IT assistance

*"If we have a problem, we're told to mail our computers back into EDA HQ and maybe **get them back a week later.**"*

Note: IT at EDA has seen improvement with the recent addition of dedicated support

HR

Sluggish hiring processes

*"OFMS gave us the HR flow diagram that they referred to as the **"80-day hiring model"** – I laughed and said that it was the **980 day hiring model"***

Lack of HR support transparency

*"**My job is to be a professional nagger** – I can spend 75% of my day trying to get other people to do their jobs"*

Unpredictable federal HR support

*"**Federal offices in Philadelphia weren't helping** to onboard our EDR from the USVI so I sent her down to D.C. for onboarding... now I do that with all of our new employees"*



EDA lacks Agency-wide EDA-specific programmatic training, resulting in frustration and variable outcomes

Beyond standard DOC onboarding, EDA has insufficient training available to support onboarding and acclimation of new hires

EDA Training Programs

	Orientation / General Onboarding (Security, IT, HR)	Introduction to EDA	Acclimation to Role	Ongoing ED-related training
Responsibility	DOC / EDA Office	EDA Office	EDA office	EDA Office
Method	Checklists, standard forms, web-based onboarding	No formal training: Varies – depends on office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPCS/GOL manuals Limited OPCS/GOL training No formal training specific to role; generally via shadowing; varies by office 	Outsourced grants training; no formal EDA training

- Regional and HQ offices either create their own training or utilize shadowing to onboard and train new staff, resulting in variable quality, additional workload for supervisors, and employee frustration
- In the face of disaster supplemental funding and new hires who replace retiring staff, EDA lacks the capacity to effectively onboard and equip its staff, compromising the ability to sustain operations and scale up as needed

“[My training] was very disappointing – I was never satisfied with the explanation that “there is no training.””



Improvement Opportunities: Managing Technology Deficiencies

3.1 Centralize standard workarounds to reduce inefficiencies

E1	E2	R
●	◐	◑

A Develop shared workarounds and common practices to support more effective and consistent utilization of OPCS and GOL

- Develop/revisit the gap analyses for OPCS and GOL
- Utilize BPR best practices as needed



Student	Quiz	Thumbnails	Abstract Drawings	Color Drawing	Grades Assignment	Watercolor Painting	Homework Points	HW Grade	Exam 1	Exam Points	Exam Grade	P.P. #1	P.P. #2	Participation Points	Participation Grade	Final Weighted Grade
1	3	10	10	4	18	80	125	80%	80	80	80%	80	40	120	67%	78%
2	4	10	10	7	20	84	135	87%	90	90	90%	115	40	155	86%	88%
3	4	10	10	10	18	86	138	88%	92	92	92%	120	60	180	100%	92%
4	6	10	10	0	18	70	114	73%	90	90	90%	120	40	160	89%	84%
5	6	10	10	0	10	97	133	85%	95	95	95%	115	60	175	97%	92%
6	5	10	10	0	18	92	135	87%	85	85	85%	115	40	155	86%	86%
7	2	10	10	10	18	95	145	93%	84	83	83%	120	50	170	94%	88%
8	5	10	10	4	20	82	131	84%	75	75	75%	120	35	155	86%	80%
9	10	10	10	7	20	92	139	89%	90	90	90%	120	60	180	100%	91%
10	6	10	10	5	0	88	109	70%	88	88	88%	120	60	180	100%	83%
11	3	10	10	10	0	83	116	74%	76	76	76%	100	35	135	75%	75%
12	4	10	10	0	18	80	122	78%	77	80	80%	120	35	155	86%	80%
13	0	10	12	7	18	92	139	89%	76	76	76%	115	60	175	97%	84%
14	3	10	10	4	20	94	141	90%	87	87	87%	115	60	175	97%	90%
15	3	10	10	10	20	93	146	94%	92	92	92%	115	60	175	97%	93%
16	5	10	10	10	20	89	144	92%	96	96	96%	100	60	160	89%	94%
17	3	10	10	0	0	82	105	67%	85	85	85%	100	60	160	89%	79%
18	4	10	10	6	18	96	144	92%	88	88	88%	120	60	180	100%	91%
19	4	10	5	8	16	90	133	85%	93	93	93%	90	60	150	83%	89%
20	6	10	10	10	0	90	126	81%	83	83	83%	100	60	160	89%	83%
21																

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: IT/HR Support Mitigation (1 of 2)

3.2

Implement structured response for IT & HR support to influence improved support levels

E1	E2	R

A

Institute immediate internal service mitigation

- Communicate contracted service levels and escalation procedures for IT & HR support to relevant staff, i.e., Administrative Directors
- Ensure that “EDA intermediaries” are equipped and organized to be responsive, for example:
 - Utilizing appropriate trackers
 - Held accountable to specific service / response levels
 - Knowledgeable of escalation procedures

B

Continue to influence improved shared services support levels through shared services meetings

- Compile and summarize EDA support issues
 - Utilizing a simple survey tool, compile specific service issues from all EDA offices
 - Summarize issues, clearly notating service gaps
- Restructure DOC/shared services meetings for optimal productivity
 - Share summarized service gaps and set a plan forward
 - Meet regularly (i.e. monthly) to review service metrics and progress against gaps

Share your service issues

**REVIEW
SURVEY
COMMENTS
OPINIONS
FEEDBACK**



E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



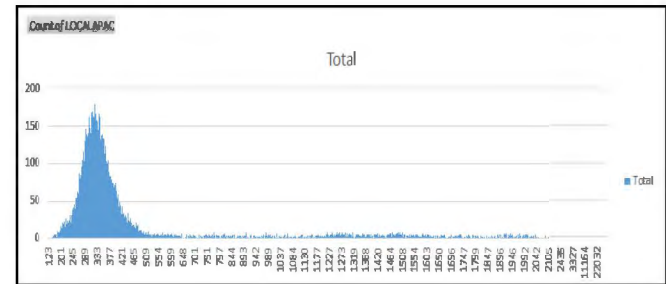
Improvement Opportunities: IT/HR Support Mitigation (2 of 2)

3.2 *Implement structured response for IT & HR support to influence improved support levels (continued)*

E1	E2	R

C **Improve staff visibility to service metrics and ticket requests**

- Request visibility to service metrics by core EDA leadership staff and intermediaries
- Explore availability of a portal or connector application to enable appropriate EDA staff to view ticket progress
- Implement overall customer service metrics via a customer service dashboard, viewable to all EDA staff and shared with DOC and shared service providers



Example service metrics dashboard

E1 = Efficiency
 E2 = Efficacy
 R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Technology Planning

3.3

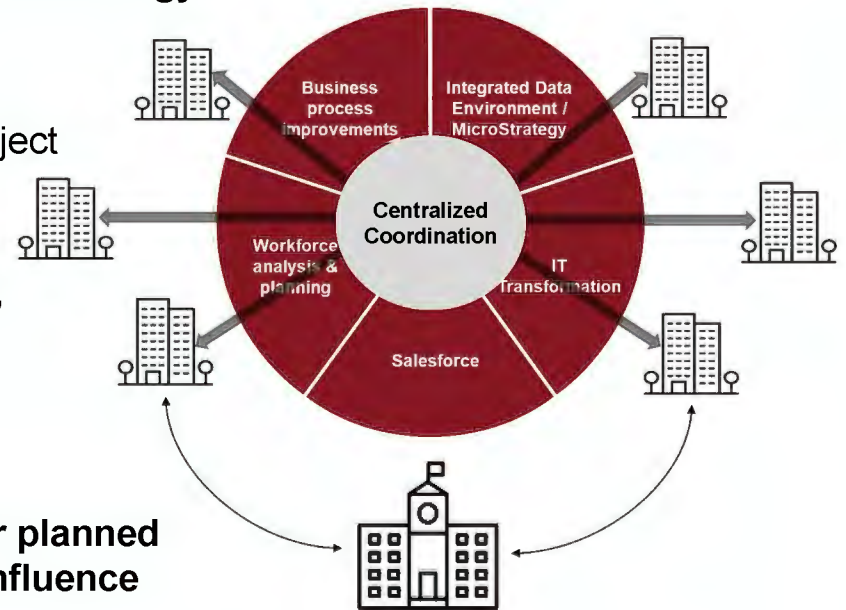
Leverage planned improvement projects to ensure effective, responsive development, implementation, and roll out of new technologies

E1	E2	R
●	●	●

A

Take an organization-wide, coordinated view of technology and improvement projects

- Ensure adequate representation from HQ and multiple regions throughout the development project
 - Enables strong understanding of both HQ and regional office needs & requirements
 - Highly engage regional office representatives, given the high percentage of grants managed and customers/stakeholders connected at the regional level



B

Encourage staff to proactively identify needs for planned systems and engage effectively in planning to influence and prepare for implementation

- Where requirements for new systems do not accommodate EDA's needs, prioritize gaps and develop common, effective workarounds

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



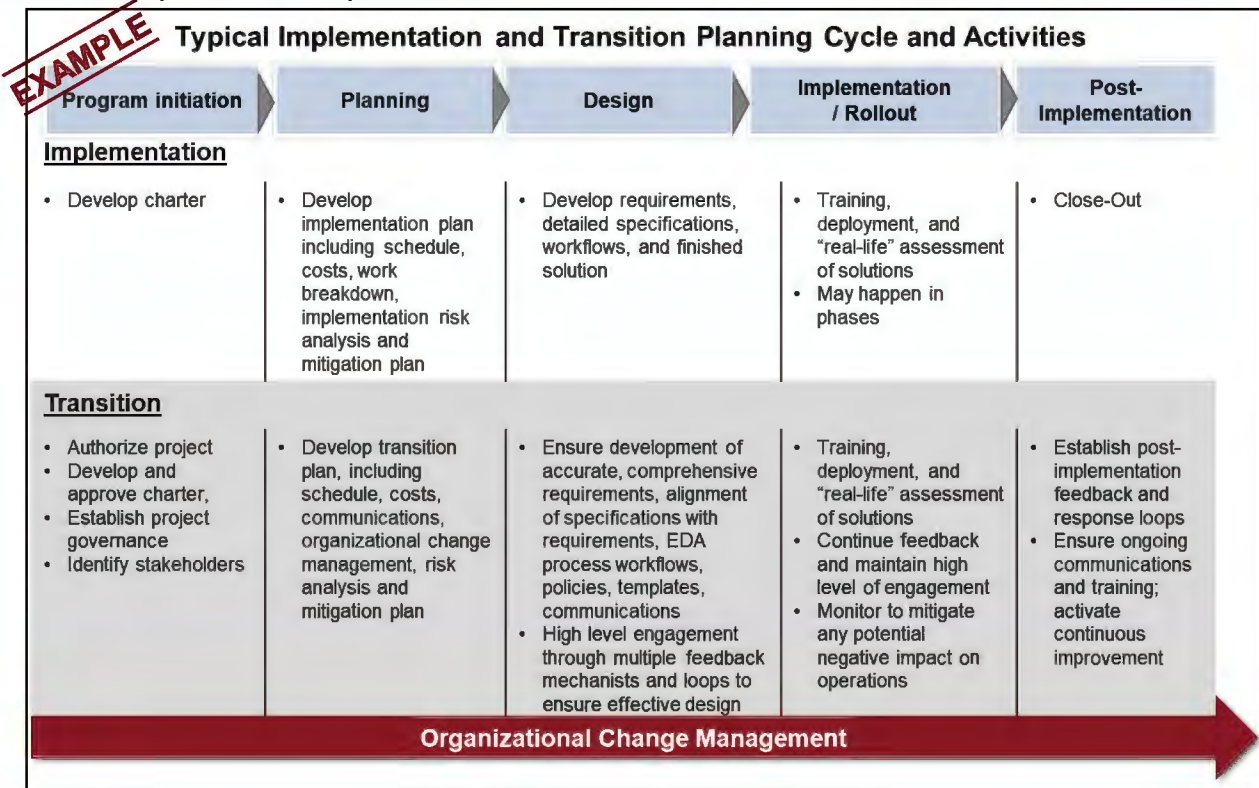
Improvement Opportunities: Technology Planning

3.3 *Leverage planned improvement projects to ensure effective, responsive development, implementation and roll out of new technologies (continued)*

E1	E2	R
●	●	●

C **Develop coordinated plans for implementation and change management**

- Ensure coordinated transition & change management planning in alignment with IT project development & implementation

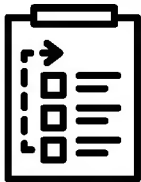




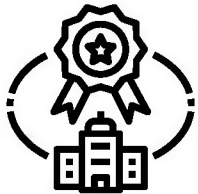
Improvement Opportunities: Onboarding & Training

3.4 *Leverage new training coordinator to develop a training and development plan for EDA*

E1	E2	R



Prioritize training needs based on EDA strategic plan and immediate situational concerns



Develop a standardized onboarding program for new hires that includes both administrative and programmatic training

- Onboarding may be different for disaster/term vs. regular hires



Enlist supporting staff to inform training needs and content development

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Agenda

Executive Summary

Project Approach

As-Is Process Challenges

- Theme 1: Core Business Process Variability & Efficiency
- Process Enablers
 - Theme 2: Workforce Management
 - Theme 3: Supporting Capabilities
 - Theme 4: Data Quality and Access
 - Theme 5: Knowledge Management

Culture and Organizational Factors

Recommendations

Next Steps

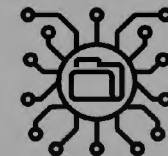
Process Enablers Challenges

Theme 4: Data Quality and Access



Data Quality and Access

EDA's poor quality data is not readily accessible to support daily operations, respond to reporting requirements, or inform strategic decision-making



Key Findings

- **Centralized management tools** are non-existent resulting in staff throughout EDA creating homegrown tools
- Data required for EDA's **standard and ad hoc reporting** is not easily accessible, resulting in **time-consuming manual data collection and analysis** that does not support strategic decision-making
- EDA relies on **lagging indicators**, resulting in a reactive approach to grant-making
- **Metrics do not exist** for most measures of efficiency and effectiveness, posing a challenge to quantifying long-term performance

Improvement Opportunities

4.1

Identify data needs and clearly delegate responsibility for EDA data quality assurance to ensure continuous improvement to data quality and accessibility

4.2

Implement tools to support collection of and access to data

4.3

Develop effective KPIs and measurement methods to provide visibility into performance and encourage continuous improvement

4.4

Implement interim workarounds to measure process efficiency



Data required for EDA's standard and ad hoc reporting is not readily accessible...

EDA uses individually managed, manually updated spreadsheets...

... to develop outputs for EDA's reporting requirements

TAAAC	Contracts (Non-Federal/Clean Share)	Contracts (Federal)	Personnel	Fringe Benefits	Travel	Equipment	Supplies
Great Lakes	\$281,106	\$287,466	\$404,010	\$112,598	\$17,354	\$0	\$6,099
Mid-America	\$709,210	\$766,245	\$390,882	\$135,352	\$19,417	\$0	\$2,151
MidAtlantic	\$424,453	\$424,453	\$418,798	\$134,625	\$13,609	\$708	\$4,307
Midwest	\$333,988	\$570,457	\$345,799	\$161,202	\$2,302	\$3,721	\$1,302
New England	\$685,797	\$729,858	\$349,623	\$84,285	\$8,853	\$10,972	\$5,786
New York, New Jersey and Puerto Rico	\$295,482	\$321,346	\$280,171	\$112,068	\$5,225	\$2,959	\$2,861
Northwest	\$182,618	\$213,357	\$404,860	\$139,744	\$29,201	\$12,342	\$3,621
Rocky Mountain	\$394,492	\$396,770	\$441,677	\$164,959	\$1,589	\$0	\$0
Southeastern	\$297,539	\$343,580	\$426,155	\$129,086	\$14,667	\$0	\$13,349
Southwest	\$269,520	\$271,511	\$375,680	\$108,727	\$10,542	\$0	\$9,678
Western	\$130,276	\$196,935	\$326,724	\$108,504	\$16,106	\$0	\$2,755
Total	\$4,224,481	\$4,521,978	\$4,164,379	\$1,391,150	\$138,867	\$30,702	\$51,909

Ex: TAAF Annual Report spreadsheet, used to report on expenditures and success metrics for 500+ active firms, is manually validated and updated by EDA staff

Program	Region	FY18 FY19	Total Allocated as of 20-Oct-18	Reservations as of 20-Oct-18	Unreserved as of 20-Oct-18
Total			\$67,308,000	\$67,308,000	\$62,414,812

Region	TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE as of 20-Oct-18	Total Allocated as of 20-Oct-18	Obligations as of 20-Oct-18	Reservations as of 20-Oct-18	Unreserved as of 20-Oct-18
Total	\$67,308,000	\$67,308,000	\$62,414,812	\$62,414,812	\$4,893,188

Ex: EDA's status of funds reports are manually updated by EDA's budget team

Council on Foreign Relations reports

GPRR Report

Ad hoc Congressional reports

TAAF Annual Report

EDA Annual Report to Congress



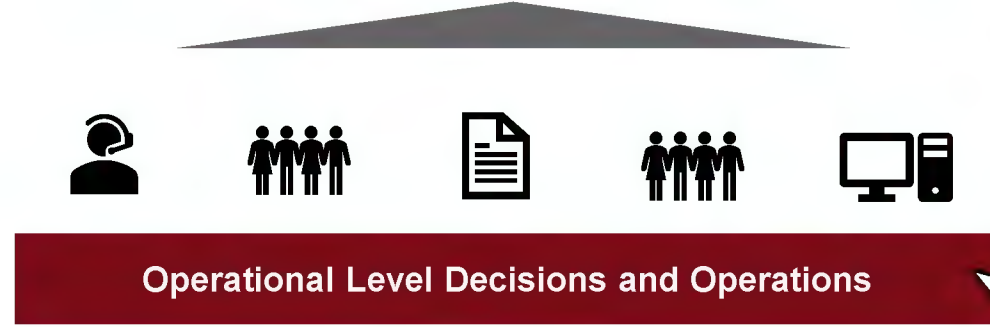
... Resulting in time-consuming manual data collection and analysis that does not support strategic decision-making

Time spent on manual data retrieval results in limited time for strategic analysis



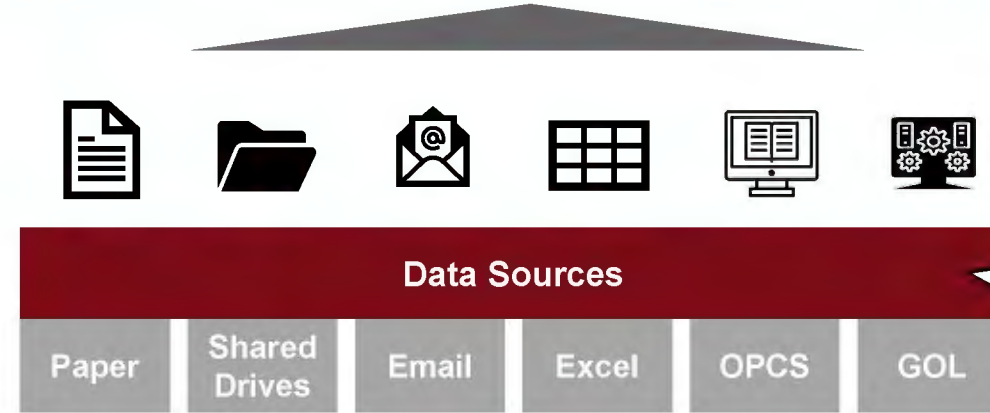
*"If I were to go to a Congressional hearing today and were asked to take an oath and swear about confidence in EDA's data analysis I would have to say I am **only 5% confident in the data analysis** we currently have."*

Data collection/validation is time consuming for staff, and available data does not support higher-level analysis



*"Our survey / data collection software precludes us from carrying out analysis – we spend **three-quarters of the time** cleaning the data"*

There is no "single source of truth" – multiple files and data elements are kept across duplicative systems with no unified view



*"We can't pull data from GOL. We have to **wait for weekly pulls** of data from NOAA, then turn it into a master file that can be queried."*



EDA relies on lagging indicators, resulting in a reactive approach to grantmaking

GPRA Reports

- Lag EDA performance with metrics (jobs created and private investment) taken 3, 6, and 9 years after closeout

GPRA Data Collection Form
 Economic Development Administration
 Public Works, Economic Adjustment Infrastructure and Revolving Loan Fund Investments
 Date: October 11, 2016
 Recipient Name: Jasper County Board of Supervisors
 Full Address: 77 West Eighth Ave (P. O. Box 408), Bay Springs, MS 38422-0408
 Authorized Contact: Darryl Rogers, President, Jasper County Board of Supervisors
 Telephone: (601) 784-3497 Fax: (601) 784-3498
 Email: gprarep@jasper.ora.ms
 Investment Program: Public Works Economic Adjustment Revolving Loan Fund
 Project Number: 04-01-00000
 Award Date: 10-30-2011 Close-out Date: 10-30-2016
 Investment awarded during federal fiscal year: FY 2012
 Date in this report: 3 years after investment award 6 years after investment award 9 years after investment award

Total Investment	EDA Investment	Applicant Investment ¹	Private Investment ²	Other Federal Investment
\$4,200,000	\$1,750,000	\$2,400,000	\$0	\$350,000

(Note: Total Project award for the total of the other values in 96A section)
GRANT RECIPIENT COMPLETE THIS SECTION
RESULTS OF EDA INVESTMENT

	3 Years After Award ³	6 Years After Award ³	9 Years After Award ³
Private Investment Generated	\$0		
Jobs Created	0		
Jobs Retained	0		
Total Jobs Created/Retained	0	0	0

1 The federal loan and share
 2 private investment associated with project construction, e.g. foundation grants
 3 in the time of this report (see instructions)

“Leading indicators would allow us to work smarter and more efficiently”

“We are stewards of federal funds; money spent should never be a metric... Our approach should be proactive rather than reactive”

Quarterly Progress/ Financial Reports

- Could be useful as leading indicators, but largely go unmonitored and are of widely varying quality

Revolving Loan Fund Financial Report ED-209
 Economic Development Administration
 Quarterly Progress/ Financial Reports
 ED-209 for Semiannual or Annual Reporting
 Report Type: Semiannual Annual Other
Part II: Reporting Unit
 Reporting Period End Date (MM/DD/YYYY):
Part III: Portfolio Financial Status

A. RLF Pending Serves	Federal Grant Rate	Rate
1. EDA Pending		\$0.00
2. Local Match		\$0.00
3. Total RLF Pending		\$0.00

B. Committed RLF Income Earned	Rate
1. Interest Earned on Loans	\$0.00
2. Interest Earned on Deposits Accounts	\$0.00
3. Pass Through on Closed Loans	\$0.00
4. RLF Income from Application Fees	\$0.00
5. Other RLF Income	\$0.00
6. Total RLF Income	\$0.00
7. Portion of RLF Income Used for Administrative Expenses	\$0.00
8. RLF Income Added to Capital Base for Leading	\$0.00
9. Reductions of Other Income	\$0.00

C. Status of RLF Capital	Rate
1. Total RLF Pending	\$0.00
2. RLF Income Added to Capital Base for Leading	\$0.00
3. Voluntarily Committed Capital	\$0.00
4. Loan Losses	\$0.00
5. Drawdowns	\$0.00
6. RLF Capital Base	\$0.00

D. Current Liquidity Available for New Loans	Rate
1. RLF Principal Outstanding on Loans	\$0.00
2. RLF Cash Available for Lending	\$0.00
3. RLF \$ Committed for New Drawdown	\$0.00
4. RLF Cash Available for Lending, Net of Committed RLF \$	\$0.00
5. RLF Cash Available for Lending, % of Capital Base	0.00%

EDA lacks leading indicators that predict performance and support continuous improvement

Metrics do not exist for most measures of efficiency and quality, posing a challenge to quantifying long-term performance



Quantifying Quality

- Community outreach – a key differentiator for EDA – **cannot be quantified** to assess its value and to drive improvements in sourcing
- Offices are primarily measured on their ability to award allocated funds, without any measures of post-award support quality; this imbalance results in **insufficient focus on post-award activities**

*“There aren’t any metrics for **bringing EDA projects to communities** that need them, rather than reaching out to communities where you know you can spend the money.”*

Measuring Efficiency

- Without centralized management tools, EDA cannot easily **quantify the efficiency** of grants process steps
- Milestones are recorded inconsistently across regions in the existing systems, making it difficult to track process performance

*“We can’t **quantify our performance.**”*

EDA-Wide Performance

- EDA metrics are not linked to **broader organizational objectives**
- As an agency, EDA is **focused on meeting milestones** (e.g. awarding allocated funds) rather than performing against specific metrics
- While some staff and programs (e.g. B2S) have developed innovative metrics, the Agency lacks a **single set of EDA-wide success metrics** that clearly outline the agency’s goals

*“We’re more milestone based. We’re focused on **closing out the fiscal year.**”*



Improvement Opportunities: Data Needs

4.1

Identify data needs and clearly delegate responsibility for EDA data quality assurance to ensure continuous improvement to data quality and accessibility

E1	E2	R

A

Establish a “data steward” within EDA

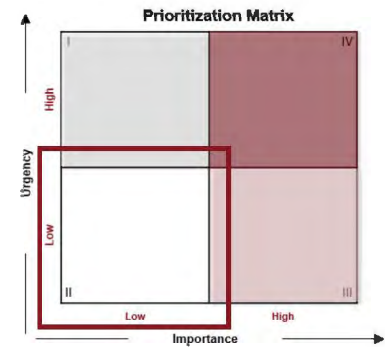


- **Assures quality** of EDA data; likely a PNTA role
- **Understands sources** of data, standardizes definitions for key data elements, and ensures consistent use of data resources
- **Continuously assesses organization’s position** with respect to data quality, accessibility, and assurance
- Key member of the **Integrated Data Environment** team; acts as liaison between IDE team and EDA offices

B

Identify current data needs and gaps

- Identify organizational data needs, including **management tools and reporting requirements**
- **Leverage relevant findings** identified via the IDE and MicroStrategy projects
- **Prioritize data needs** based on importance and urgency
 - Identify any unneeded reporting, for improvements in efficiency



E1 = Efficiency
 E2 = Efficacy
 R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Tools

4.2

Implement tools to support collection of and access to data

E1	E2	R
●	●	◐

A

Develop interim EDA-wide tools to support most immediate data needs

APPLICATION STAGE	APPLICANT	PROJECT NO.	PROPOSING REVIEW COMPLETED	ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW COMPLETED	AREA DESIGN REVIEW COMPLETED	LEGAL REVIEW COMPLETED	PROJECT FOR PREPARATION OF FORMALS TO HAWAII
HAWAII	Hawaii County	16-21-04012	8/28/2016	8/2/2016			
	City of Honolulu with Special A Study Project	14-03-01000	3/26/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016
	City of Honolulu	14-03-01000	3/26/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016
MOLOKAI	City of Molokai & Hawaii County, Molokai Subdiv	14-03-01002	8/2/2016	8/2/2016	8/2/2016	8/2/2016	8/2/2016
	City of Molokai	14-03-01002	8/2/2016	8/2/2016	8/2/2016	8/2/2016	8/2/2016
	Hawaii County Development Authority	14-03-01002	8/2/2016	8/2/2016	8/2/2016	8/2/2016	8/2/2016
MAUI	MAUI Community Action Partnership, Inc	15-24-00111	8/26/2016	8/26/2016	8/26/2016	8/26/2016	8/26/2016
	General. of H. State Agency	15-24-00111	8/26/2016	8/26/2016	8/26/2016	8/26/2016	8/26/2016
	City of Hono. with Honolulu offshoot	14-03-01000	3/26/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016
KAUAI	City of Kauai	14-03-01000	3/26/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016
	City of Kauai	14-03-01000	3/26/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016	7/20/2016

- **Implement shared workarounds** to support most immediate data needs, for example:
 - Regional office management tools
 - Functional project trackers
- Consider potential for **in-house solutions** to address needs
 - For example: Investigate a replacement for existing customer survey data collection software, to reduce time-consuming manual data validation; consider in-house options (e.g. QuestionPro used by ACE)

B

Implement systems to support data needs, enhance data quality, and allow for easy data access

- **Systems implementation** is in progress with Integrated Data Environment / MicroStrategy project
- Document **data quality and access requirements** for workload management, reporting, and other needs, based on business process review findings
 - Ensure both regional and HQ requirements are included
- Ensure coordination with **all other planned improvement projects** producing or relying on data

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Metrics (1 of 3)

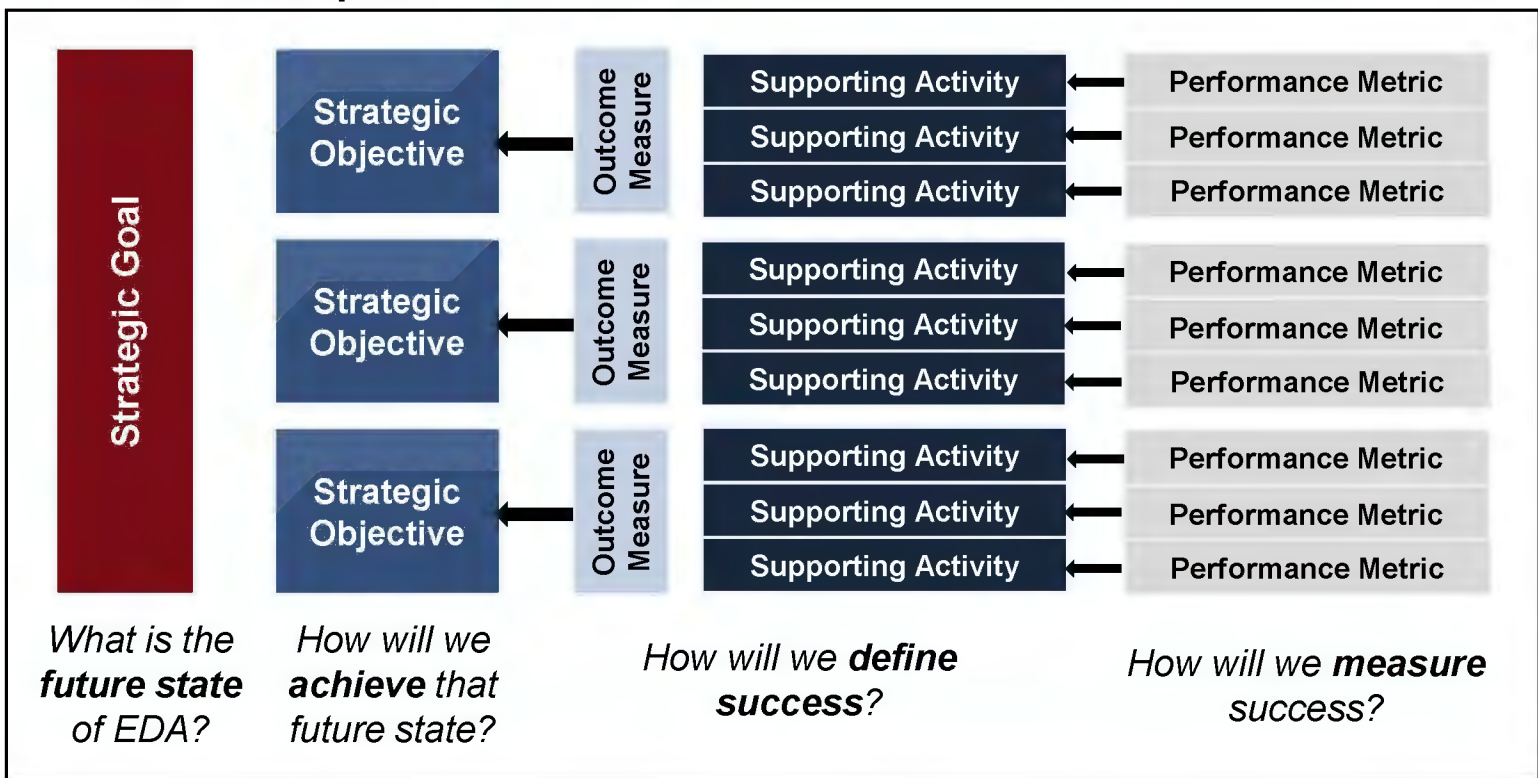
4.3

Develop effective KPIs and measurement methods to provide visibility into performance and encourage continuous improvement

E1	E2	R

A

Clarify EDA vision, objectives, and outcomes to inform outcome measures and performance metrics



E1 = Efficiency
 E2 = Efficacy
 R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Metrics (2 of 3)

4.3

Develop effective KPIs and measurement methods to provide visibility into performance and encourage continuous improvement (continued)

E1	E2	R

B Establish Meaningful Metrics

Change management outcome metrics roll up to the three impact areas and ultimately tie back to the overarching transformation goal

Impact Area	Measurement	Outcome
Change Adoption	% staff using the tool/feature	Increasing customer service
Cost Containment	Training completion rate	Reducing process errors
Employee Engagement	Staff satisfaction survey scores	Reducing process errors

Leading Indicators

- Predictive measures that indicate trends to positive or negative outcomes
- Allows mid-course corrections to support achieving outcomes

Outcome Measures / Performance Metrics

- Quantifiable measures that demonstrate how well EDA is fulfilling its vision, objectives, and outcomes
- Tracks the overall efficacy of EDA's programs

C Monitor, Communicate, and Reward

- Ensure metrics are easily measurable, and accounted for in development of data structures
- Establish standard reports
- Integrate measurement into operations, to reduce data collection burden
- Institute rewards and recognition for achievement of key metrics

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Metrics (3 of 3)


4.4

Implement interim workarounds to measure process efficiency


E1	E2	R

Example: OPCS Milestones

Streamline OPCS milestones to measure process efficiency and inform future strategy



Mandate certain milestones in OPCS so that aggregated data can provide valuable insight regarding efficiency of process steps



Eliminate extraneous / unnecessary milestones and enforce consistency across regions

Identify critical OPCS milestones, for example:

5.1 Milestones Reference Table

The following is a list of *pre-approval* milestones that have predecessor requirements prior to entry (subject to change):

Milestone	Milestone Description	Predecessor
PRD	Project review committee date	PPR
DID	Dislocation, Actual Date	PPR
PCH	Pre-application Conference Held	PPR
RSA	Application Invited	PPR
APD	Application Due Date	RSA
ARO	Application received	RSA
DLD	Deficiency identified date	PPR
DEF	Deficiency resolved date	DLD
DAN	Application numbered date	ARO
CFI	Financial review Completed	DAN
TCD	Title Clearance	DAN
PCD	Program Review Clearance (PW)	DAN
CPL	Planning Review Clearance (Cons.)	DAN
ERD	Engineering review	DAN
CEV	Environmental clearance	DAN
CCV	Civil rights clearance	DAN
CPD	General Requirements signed	DAN
CPW	Project officer sign off	CPD
RPW	Program chief sign off	CPW
ROL	Legal Review	RPW
RDC	Regional director decision date	RPW
STO	Sent to IOG	ARO
STI	Received back from OIG	STO
FBO	FARB out	FBI
DEC	Final Decision	RDC
ANO	Announcement date	RDC
AWD	Award documents mailed	RDC
AAD	Grantee acceptance	DEC



Agenda

Executive Summary

Project Approach

As-Is Process Challenges

- Theme 1: Core Business Process Variability & Efficiency
- Process Enablers
 - Theme 2: Workforce Management
 - Theme 3: Supporting Capabilities
 - Theme 4: Data Quality and Access
 - Theme 5: Knowledge Management

Culture and Organizational Factors

Recommendations

Next Steps

Process Enablers Challenges

Theme 5: Knowledge Management



Knowledge Management

Inadequate structures exist for knowledge capture, distribution, and use



Key Findings

- **EDA's multiple, disjointed systems** hinder effective knowledge capture, distribution, and use
- There is **no single standard** for capturing, storing, or sharing information with EDA and with stakeholders
- **Inconsistent and inadequate knowledge sharing** due to systems, structures, and culture hinder information-sharing within EDA
- Beyond the grants manuals and OPCS/GOL user manuals, **little documentation exists** for processes and procedures

Improvement Opportunities

5.1

Establish standard file **naming conventions and folder structures** to facilitate knowledge capture, information-sharing, and cross-region transitions

5.2

Develop a full understanding of the **current and future state information flow** within EDA, to inform workforce and IT planning

5.3

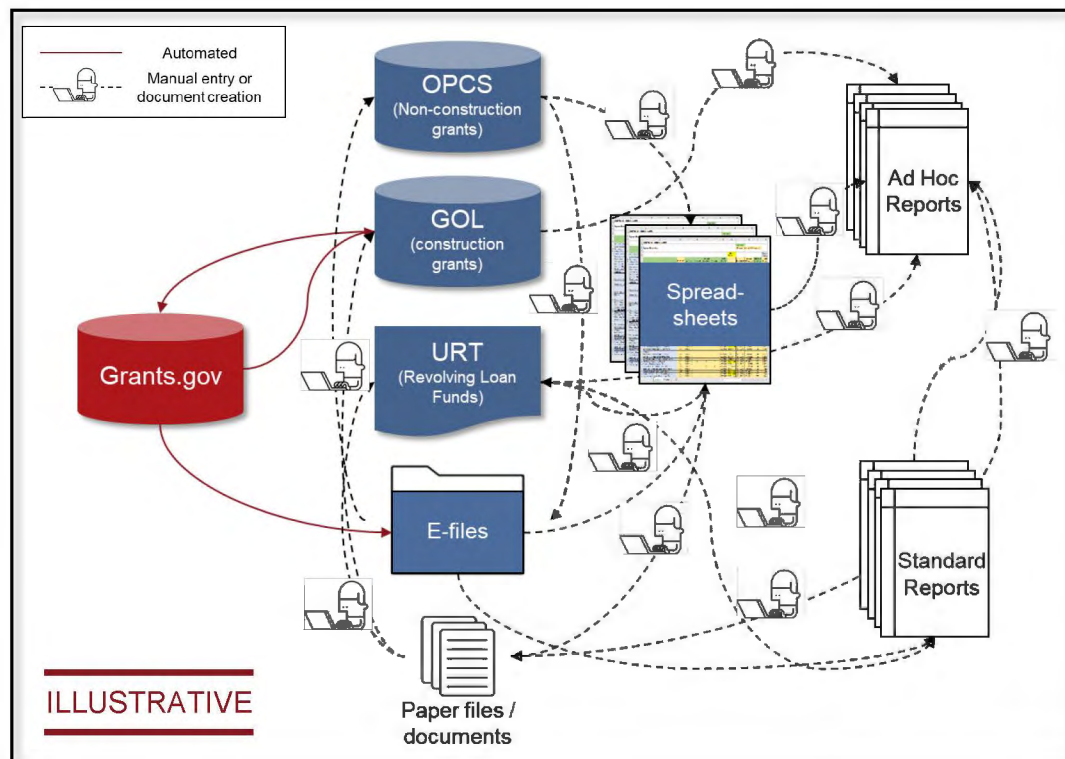
Establish **lessons-learned pathways** and practices for the agency

EDA's multiple, disjointed systems hinder effective knowledge capture, distribution, or use



EDA's grants management systems, spreadsheets, and paper files are a complex web of related, yet ***not inter-connected***, systems

EDA Information Flow



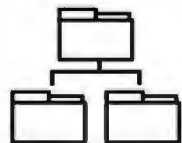
"I have to keep track of [grant processing] outside of GOL and OPCS because that's just not what those systems do."

- Out of date grants management systems are not adequate to capture and correlate needed information and data
- Information is captured in these widely distributed tools and manually collected and compiled into standard and ad hoc reports
- Systems do not capture person-to-person connection, including community outreach and pre-application technical assistance

There is no single standard for capturing, storing, or sharing information within EDA and with stakeholders



Inconsistent Knowledge Standards



No standard folder structures

- No universal adoption of a digital folder structure standard
- Most offices have standard structures for IRC files
- AURO and DRO have standard folder structures within the regional offices; however each is different than the other. These offices rely on individuals to maintain their files according to their own preferences, which may also included maintaining files on hard drives



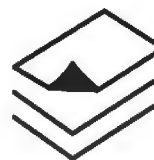
No standard file naming conventions

- No universal file naming standards
- Three offices have instituted file naming conventions for most files

Inconsistent Knowledge Capture



Information captured and stored in both paper & electronic files



- Several offices use both paper and digital folders, which adds complexity
- Digital files may be stored on both shared and personal drives as well as on hard drives and in email



External communication via email & voice are not captured centrally

- No practice or standard for capturing external communication which occurs via email or voice

Inconsistent and inadequate knowledge sharing due to systems, structures, and culture hinder information-sharing within EDA



Key Organizational Information

Key organizational information is shared inconsistently, often without a cohesive plan (if conveyed at all), resulting in unclear and inaccurate top-down information throughout EDA, including:

- Progress on EDA-wide initiatives
- Organizational wins
- Staff recognition

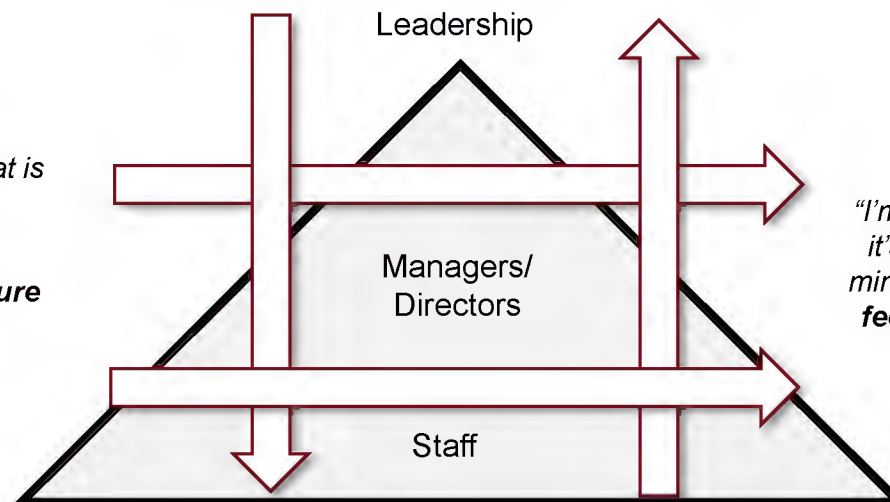
Best Practices / Lessons Learned

Structures do not exist for sharing and leverage of best practices and lessons learned, inhibiting organizational continuous improvement

Upward Feedback

All-Staff and Office meetings are primarily top-down and do not provide intentional time and opportunity for upward feedback, resulting in a low level of staff engagement and a lack of continuous improvement

Potential Knowledge Distribution Pathways



"We have a call every week that is pretty unhelpful"

"In general, there is just a culture here of not-terribly open information sharing"

"I'm currently piloting Salesforce, and it's going to make people lose their minds ... [but I haven't provided this feedback] because I haven't been asked"

Beyond the grants manuals and OPCS/GOL user manuals, little documentation exists for processes and procedures



The lack of documentation is of particular significance because practices and roles in each office vary, and staffing is lean with minimal cross-training or backup

Resulting Challenges

- **Onboarding:** Onboarding for new and transitioning staff is almost entirely through shadowing: in most cases, **existing process documentation was created by new employees** to support their learning and integration to new roles
- **Scale:** Scaling up for new, disaster (term) employees is difficult due to lack of documentation
- **Risk:** The organization is at risk if staff leave or suddenly fall ill

"I just had to rely on others to learn – I went directly to them as often as I could without pestering them... there's not a lot of structured onboarding related to our jobs."

"There isn't an EDA way to do things, so I had to create my own way."

Implications of this challenge will only increase as staff retirements escalate



Improvement Opportunities: Knowledge Sharing

5.1

Establish standard file naming conventions and folder structures to facilitate knowledge capture, information-sharing, and cross-region transitions

E1	E2	R
●	●	○

- Use KM best practices and understanding of file/folder usage to determine structures
- Ensure ownership and engagement of regional offices in defining conventions and standards to ensure buy-in
- Monitor and update/modify based on regional feedback
- Provide centralized support for implementation, i.e.,
 - Easy-to-understand guidance documentation and example structures that can be copied for ease of use
 - Point of Contact to provide hands-on support for implementation

Electronic File Organization Tips

This guide offers tips that are helpful when organizing electronic files and records. Keep in mind that:

- Efficient management of electronic records begins with accurate file-naming. A file name should be clear and understandable to those who will use the files.
- Once a record is created, the file can be lost or misfiled due to disorganization. While search functions exist to help find files, it is often easier to prevent files from being lost or misfiled than to find them.
- Many multi-agency organizations have different naming conventions, which can make it difficult to find files.

Electronic File Organization Tips

When an electronic folder hierarchy is shared between multiple personnel, things can get messy quickly because everyone thinks about organizing and finding files in different ways. When a filing structure is well designed it will allow personnel to access records more effectively.

Electronic Folder Structure	
Organized File Structure	Support records management by providing an understandable and accessible location for all records which encourages users to work within it. Reduces the risk of critical information being lost within a file system. Motivates users to move records out of personal drives or email accounts where it may be deleted without anyone knowing it existed.
Limitations	A filing system does not prevent users from placing records in the wrong folder if they have access to it. A filing structure will only be effective if users are able to use it. Poorly constructed filing structure will only discourage personnel from using it and exacerbate records management issues.
Keep it Simple	The capture and management of electronic records into a file system, usually organized in a series of folders, requires careful planning and structure. Design a file structure hierarchy to ensure that it doesn't become too hard to find information in the hierarchy or ineffective because there are too many records in each folder. A filing structure may be modeled on the functions of an organization and may also use subject themes for parts of the structure.
Folder Naming Conventions	Folder naming conventions provide all information within the system with a coherent context and logical frame of reference. Name electronic folders for "find-ability." A record that can't be found and easily identified is a useless file. Folder names should contain information that leads to easy retrieval and identification. But don't overdo it - avoid extra-long folder names. File name elements should be ordered from general to specific detail of importance as much as possible. Assume that you'll forget what's in the folder immediately after you create the file name when you name it. Try to use a name that will be descriptive to other people as well as yourself.
Use Title Case	Use capital letters for the principal words for filenames.

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk

<https://www.nist.gov/system/files/documents/pml/wmd/labmetryology/ElectronicFileOrganizationTips-2016-03.pdf>



Improvement Opportunities: Information Flow

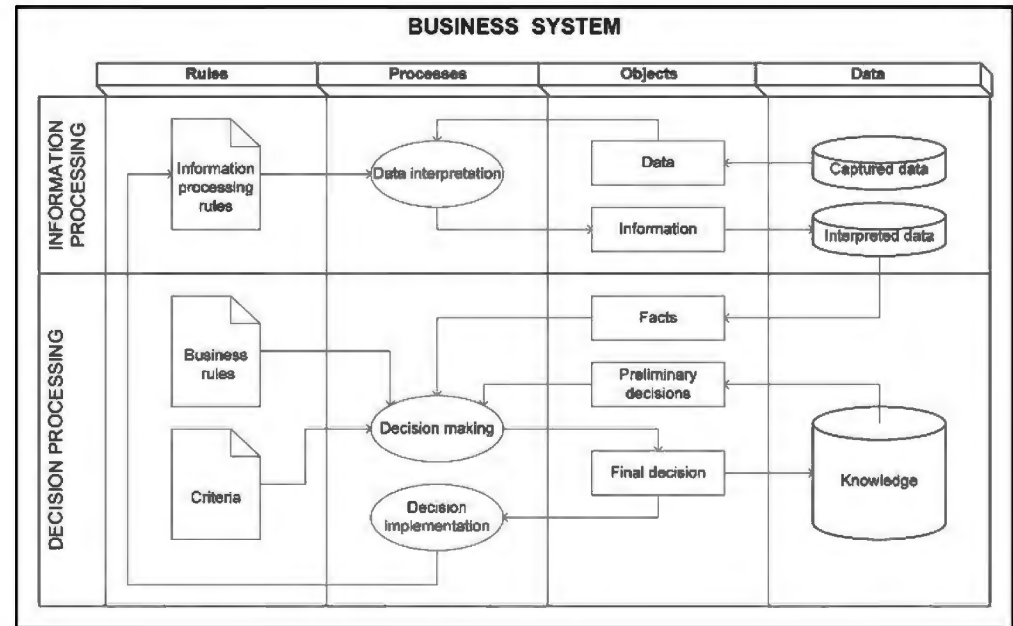
5.2

Develop a full understanding of the current and future state information flow within EDA to inform workforce and IT planning

E1	E2	R
○	●	○

- Leverage BPR process flow diagrams to generate current state information flow
- Develop future state information flow and identify gaps
 - Ensure that future state information flow meets regional office requirements (e.g. central management of grantee contact information)
- Integrate information flow into IT transformation planning, specifically the Integrated Data Environment (IDE)

Example Business System Information Flow Diagram



E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



Improvement Opportunities: Innovation Culture

5.3 *Establish lessons-learned pathways and practices for the agency*

E1	E2	R
●	●	◐

One potential approach is through the development of an *innovation culture*:



Establish an Innovation Task Force with representatives from each regional and HQ office



Include an innovation component in All Hands Meetings to be led by the Innovation Task Force; celebrate large and small innovations



Identify an “Innovation Champion” within EDA leadership



Highlight innovative ideas and innovation sharing in regular communications



Hold regular best practices events with commitment to disseminate and adopt best practices and lessons learned throughout the organization

E1 = Efficiency
E2 = Efficacy
R = Risk



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 - Theme 4: Data Quality and Access
 - Theme 5: Knowledge Management

Culture and Organizational Factors

Recommendations

Next Steps

Culture and organizational factors impact EDA's business process execution



Culture and Organizational Factors

Organizational Culture

EDA's siloed culture has an adverse impact on efficiency and risk



Strategic Alignment

EDA has undertaken significant change via efforts without sufficient coordination and with varying buy-in



External Factors

Factors somewhat outside of EDA's control effect grants process efficiency

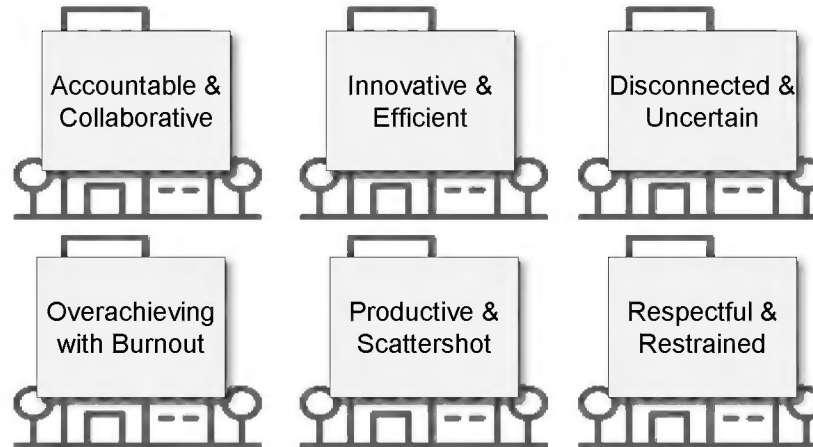


EDA's culture is a risk to the ability to successfully implement recommendations and transform the organization...



Each Regional Office has a unique culture driven from its leadership; forces of change will need to navigate these differences

Varying office cultures



*"Why is there so much **blood on the floor** when we're doing so much great work?"*

*"A lot of our problems aren't so much **organizational** as they are **attitudinal**."*

Resistance to accepting input and guidance from outside the local office is an inhibitor to organizational improvement

Fierce Independence

*"Mitchell sets an agenda, and he's been trying to standardize processes, but **he is meeting a lot of resistance**"*

*"Everyone has their own style of how they manage their office. It serves no purpose for me to explain how I do things to them. **I'm going to do what I do.**"*

*"**We enjoy the flexibility and the autonomy**...but reducing redundancies and inefficient processes and also those technical resources...will cut down on the field office headaches."*

...But the passion, expertise and commitment of EDA staff is a powerful tool for change



Staff wholeheartedly believe in and are passionate about EDA and its mission



"EDA rocks!"

"The mission here is amazing. The problem is with the execution."

*"I love this job because we get to see what we have created – **real jobs for real people supporting real families**. You can touch what we do – you can see it and feel it."*

"Most everyone is very driven by sense of mission. They have a really important mission and it is the common thread that keeps them going."

...and the staff are the cream of the crop



What keeps you here?

"Good people here...we've got a good team."

*"If I didn't have the people I have, we'd be screwed. **It's by sheer competency of my team** that we are able to do the work that we do."*

*"Bob White's shop is probably **the best that I've worked with**...it executes at a very high level."*

*"We might have our differences, but **we put them aside when we need to get things done**"*

EDA has undertaken change efforts often without sufficient coordination, communication, and buy-in...



Examples range from small changes to larger efforts

CD-450 digital signature

*"This drives us absolutely nuts because **regions have been allowed to sign CD-450's digitally for a long time.**"*

Transition to paperless

*"We do have 1 representative in Atlanta that ... **encourages us to handle a lot by paper-old school.** If the project has been assigned to that individual, we have to print quarterly reports and mail them"*

RLFMS

*"They were trying to do phased approach to implement function. Had 90% functionality for EDA staff. But **they didn't grasp concept of phasing in changes.**"*

*"**Real requirements gathering with actual users didn't happen**"*

This has led to a distrust and skepticism regarding improvement efforts

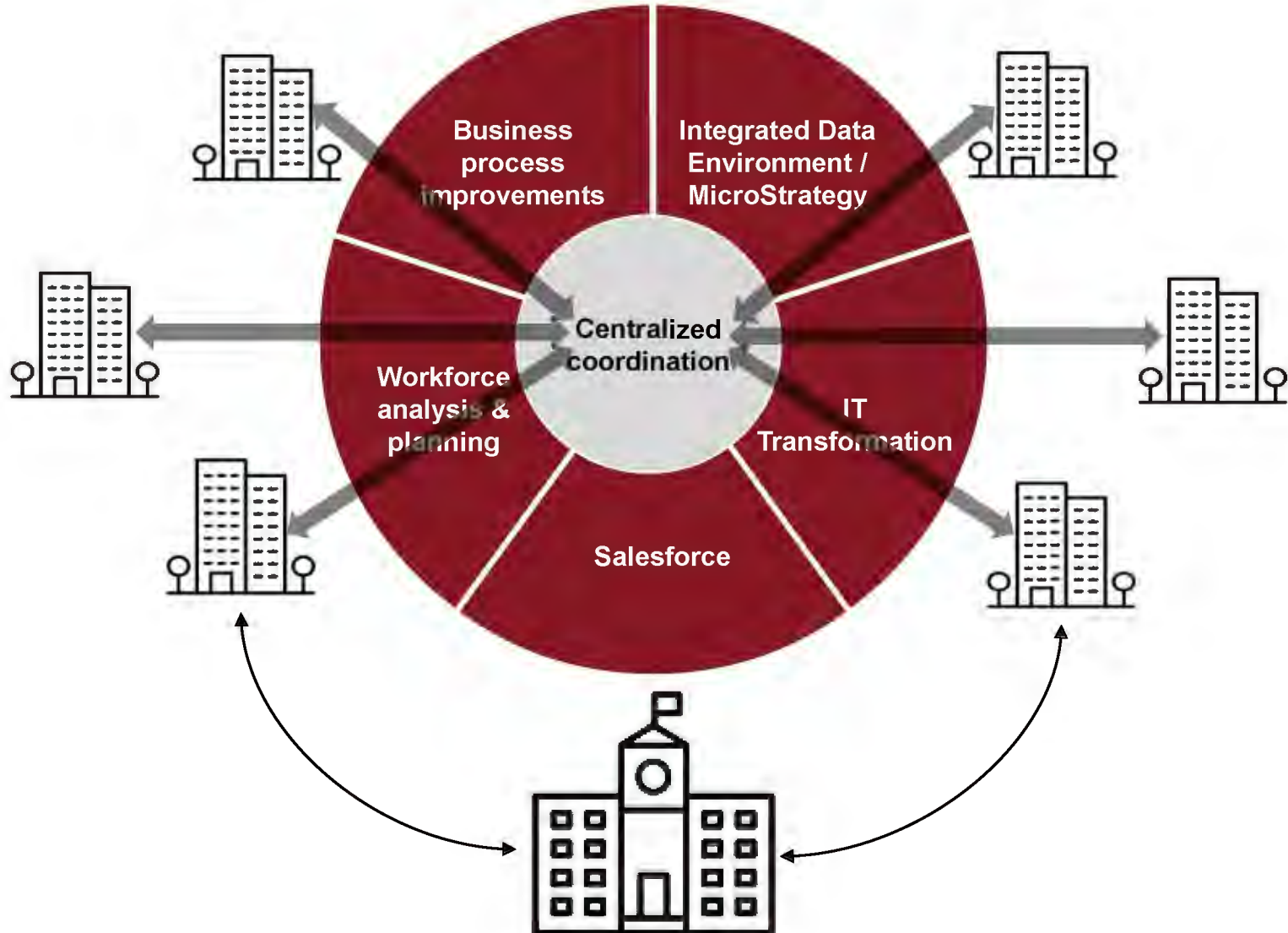
*"We are going to get **elbowed out of the room and forced to comply or just go our own way.**"*

*"I'm **growing increasingly worried** about the direction that this process is headed..." [regarding GEMS]*

*"We've been surveyed/analyzed for several years now, and we **haven't seen a whole lot of results.**"*



...So careful planning, regional involvement, and coordination are critical to the success of any change effort



Factors somewhat outside of EDA's control affect grants process efficiency and regional practices (1 of 2)



Inherent regional differences making strict consistency ineffective and unrealistic

Differences include:

- Population density
- Geographic area
- Technology infrastructure
- Community capacity
- Presence of EDDs/Tribes



"We cover more distance than any other region...5 hours to Hawaii, 5 more hours to Samoa and Guam."

"If you put your values on someone that lives completely differently, and you don't understand their culture, then you're not going to understand their needs."

"Our region represents a large portion of US population (20%), a robust rural area, and US Caribbean Islands"

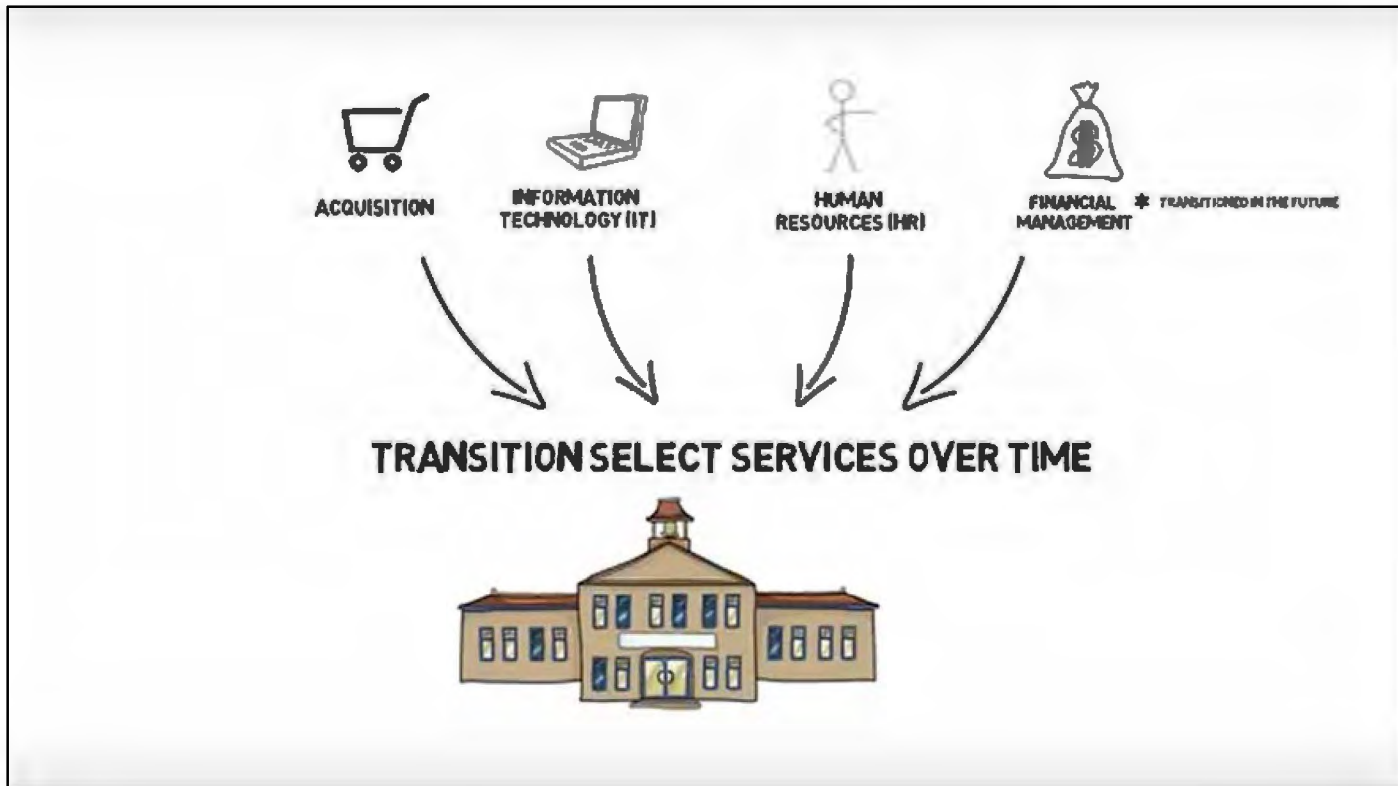
Disaster funding is unpredictable, which makes planning more challenging and compounds the impact of existing issues

Between FY18 and FY19, EDA received \$1.2 billion in supplemental disaster appropriations (\$600 million each year) from Congress to help regions recover from the economic harm and distress resulting from natural disasters in 2017-2019.

Factors somewhat outside of EDA's control affect grants process efficiency and regional practices (2 of 2)



Key support functions are managed by the Department, and EDA often lacks visibility and control



The combination of these factors has led to a distrust in EDA and DOC headquarters



“Everything was ready to go, then at the last minute I was told, ‘You don’t have permission from HQ.’”

*“We’ve been surveyed/analyzed for several years now, and we **haven’t seen a whole lot of results.**”*

“HQ just doesn’t understand how workload it allocated at the regional level.”

*“This **isn’t our first rodeo**...we’re going to need to build a strong business case if anything is going to change.”*

*“I lack confidence that **whatever the Department tries to create will meet our needs.**”*

*“We send it **up to HQ and wait and wait and wait...**”*

*“EDA HQ tried to tell us we couldn’t sit in on the IRCs – I **fought against that.**”*



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 - Theme 5: Knowledge Management

Culture and Organizational Factors

Recommendations

Next Steps

Censeo has developed five major recommendations to address the identified challenges



Challenges

Primary Focus of Our Study

Core Business Process Challenges

1. **Process Variability & Efficiency** – High variability & inefficiencies exist in EDA's core business processes

Process Enabler Challenges

2. **Workforce Management** – Roles are not optimally defined, allocated, or balanced
3. **Supporting Capabilities** – The capabilities directly supporting EDA's grants staff and processes are ineffective
4. **Data Quality and Access** – Critical information is not readily available to staff and leadership to day-to-day operations or decision-making
5. **Knowledge Management** – Inadequate structures exist for knowledge capture, distribution, and use

Recommendations

Eliminate widespread inefficiencies

Implement strategic workforce management

Mitigate ineffective operations support

Improve data quality, access, and use

Leverage IT Modernization efforts



Each recommendation comprises a set of improvement opportunities (1 of 5)

Recommendations

Eliminate widespread inefficiencies

Implement strategic workforce management

Mitigate ineffective operations support

Improve data quality, access, and use

Leverage IT Modernization efforts

Improvement Opportunities

1.1

Reduce variability of and streamline technical review and assistance to promote consistency and effectiveness

1.2

Reduce variability of and streamline merit review to promote consistency and minimize risk

1.3

Implement measures to improve and standardize award through closeout subprocesses

1.4

Ensure consistent standards of customer service through standardized documentation and guidance for communicating with grantees and applicants

1.5

Develop standardized tools (e.g. trackers, checklists, letter generators) for commonly performed tasks to improve consistency of outputs and reduce administrative burden

1.6

Define and implement consistent standards for approvals and routing to increase efficiency and minimize risk

1.7

Consistently leverage community partners to scale impact

3.1

Centralize standard workarounds to reduce inefficiencies

5.1

Establish standard file naming conventions and folder structures to facilitate knowledge capture, information-sharing, and cross-region transitions

5.3

Establish lessons-learned pathways and practices for the agency



Each recommendation comprises a set of improvement opportunities (2 of 5)

Recommendations

Improvement Opportunities

Eliminate widespread inefficiencies

Implement strategic workforce management

Mitigate ineffective operations support

Improve data quality, access, and use

Leverage IT Modernization efforts

2.1

Develop an EDA-wide approach to staffing and structure

2.2

Develop and implement a comprehensive workforce plan that enables effective alignment of resources, plans for the future, and supports organizational agility



Each recommendation comprises a set of improvement opportunities (3 of 5)

Recommendations

Eliminate widespread Inefficiencies

Implement strategic workforce management

Mitigate ineffective operations support

Improve data quality, access, and use

Leverage IT Modernization efforts

Improvement Opportunities

3.1

Centralize standard workarounds to reduce inefficiencies

3.2

Implement structured response for IT & HR support to influence improved support levels

3.4

Leverage new training coordinator to develop a training and development plan for EDA

Each recommendation comprises a set of improvement opportunities (4 of 5)



Recommendations

Eliminate widespread inefficiencies

Implement strategic workforce management

Mitigate ineffective operations support

Improve data quality, access, and use

Leverage IT Modernization efforts

Improvement Opportunities

4.1

Identify data needs and clearly delegate responsibility for EDA data quality assurance to ensure continuous improvement to data quality and accessibility

4.3

Develop effective KPIs and measurement methods to provide visibility into performance and encourage continuous improvement

4.4

Implement interim workarounds to measure process efficiency



Each recommendation comprises a set of improvement opportunities (5 of 5)

Recommendations

Eliminate widespread inefficiencies

Implement strategic workforce management

Mitigate ineffective operations support

Improve data quality, access, and use

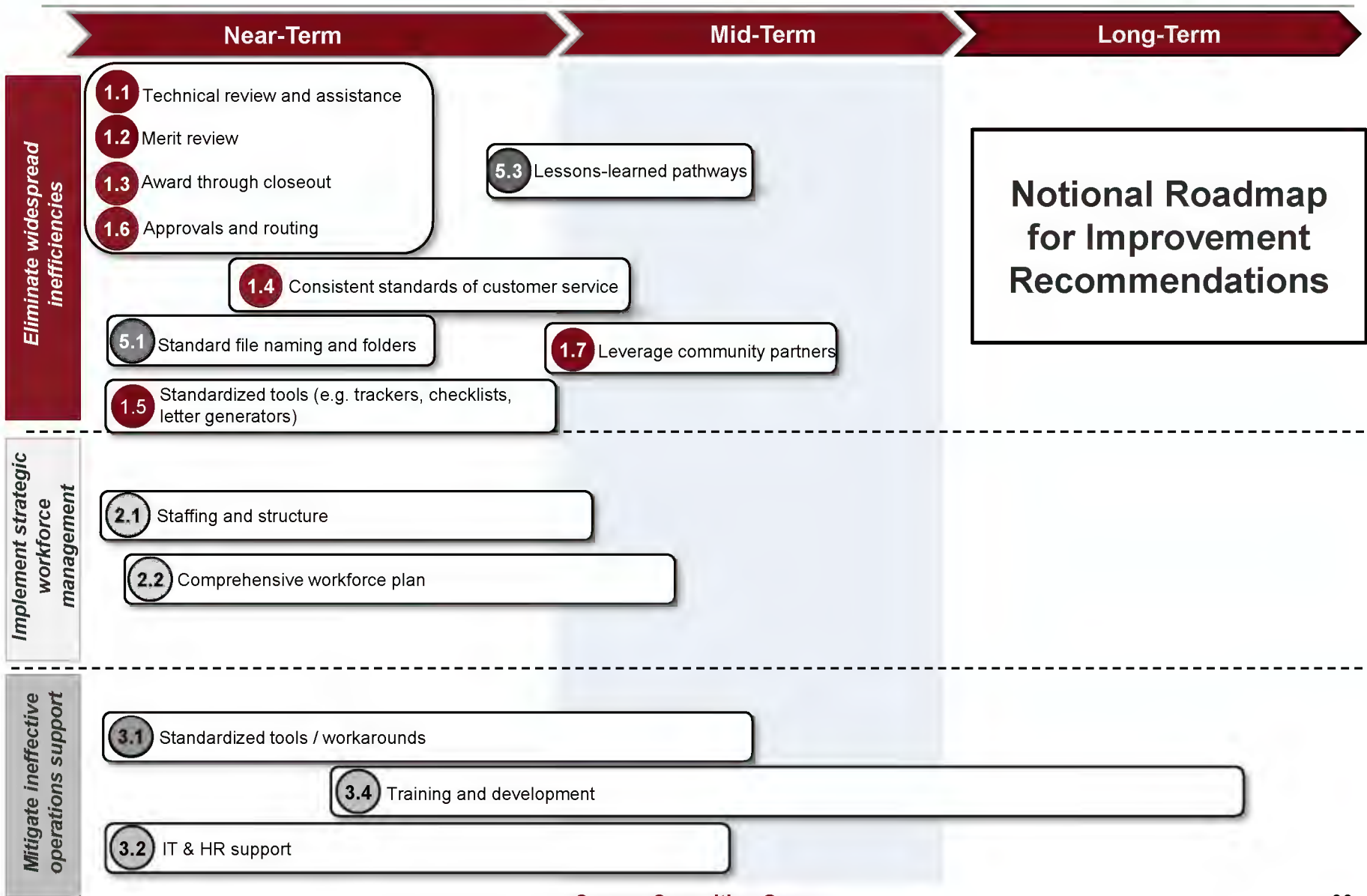
Leverage IT Modernization efforts

Improvement Opportunities

- 3.3 Leverage planned improvement projects to ensure effective, responsive development, implementation and roll out of new technologies
- 4.2 Implement tools to support collection of and access to data
- 5.2 Develop a full understanding of the current and future state information flow within EDA, to inform workforce and IT planning

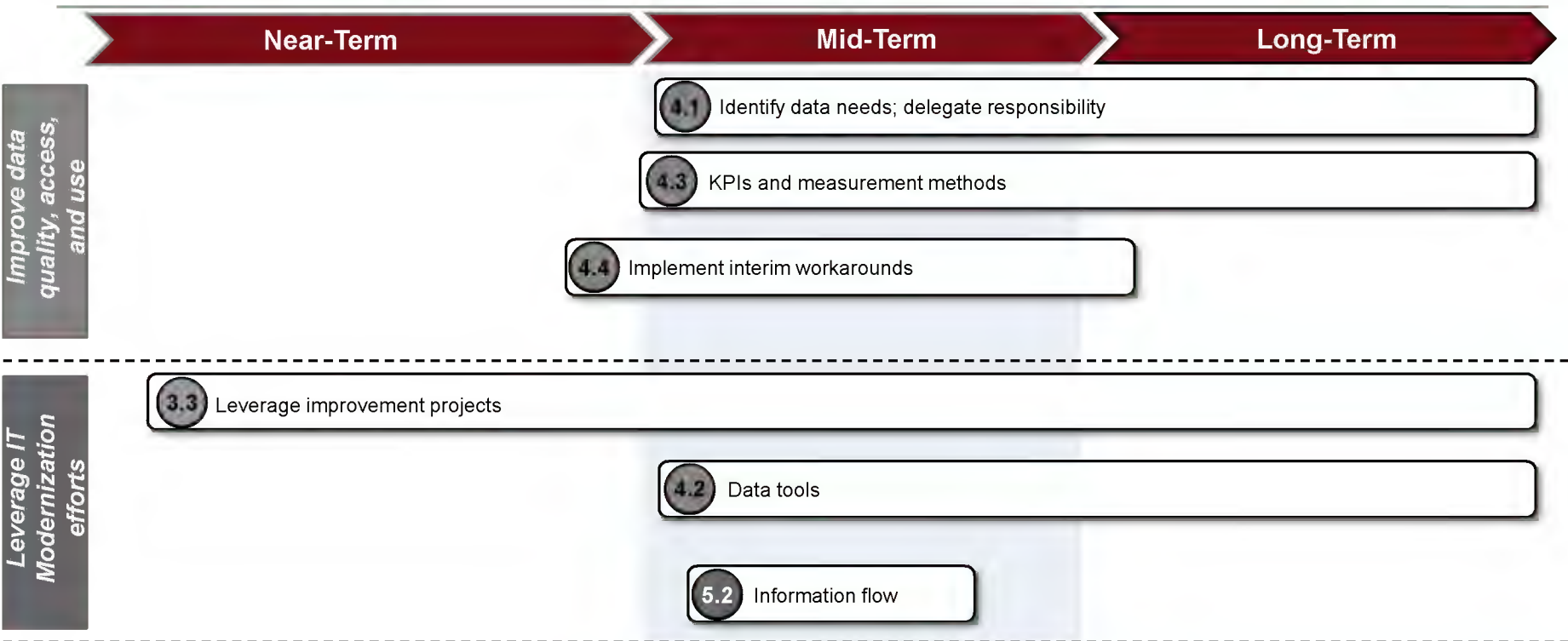


Recommended improvements can be implemented in phases (1 of 2)





Recommended improvements can be implemented in phases (2 of 2)



Phases are notional; actual phases and timing will be established during project planning

The risks to the EDA's process improvement implementation can be addressed by mitigation actions (1 of 3)



Risk	Description	Mitigation
<p>Lack of Ownership by EDA Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders of areas most affected by the changes are not engaged or refuse to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDA's full leadership team must be engaged and work collaboratively to plan and execute the recommendations Expectations must be clearly established, communicated, incentivized, and rewarded Governance must be clearly established and include EDA leadership The Business Process Improvement Team must be structured to allow early identification of issues
<p>Siloed Implementation Approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDA has a siloed culture comprised of fiercely independent offices with varying cultures, making consistent implementation and standardization a challenge Business process improvements are planned and conducted in isolation, without input and integration into other concurrent or planned improvement projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a carefully planned and executed change management strategy fully integrated with the overall BPR implementation will enable EDA to manage change within the culture effectively Establishment of an EDA change office with associated governance and responsibility for coordinating improvement projects will ensure integration of planning, implementation, and change management for all projects



The risks to process improvement implementation can be addressed by mitigation actions (2 of 3)

Risk	Description	Mitigation
<p>Poor Change Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change management is executed as an after-thought, resulting in ineffective design and implementation and a return to former behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Business Process Improvement Team and Change Office will develop and implement a change management plan that spans the planning and implementation lifecycle into post-implementation Structures must be put into place to ensure ongoing governance post-implementation
<p>Waning Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and leaders are initially enthusiastic and motivated, but over time and with operations pressures, lose momentum and interest, reducing effectiveness of the business process improvement efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change management planning accounts for the cycle of change, planning for the “valley of despair” and the expected waning commitment by reinforcing leadership commitment and introducing motivating actions Establishing accountability and adjusting timelines as needed to accommodate operational needs will support continued engagement
<p>Staff Distrust and Skepticism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDA staff do not participate, provide feedback or insights due to distrust in the change leadership or skepticism regarding the outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change management planning accounts for the cycle of change, planning for the denial and “informed pessimism” phases characterized by distrust and skepticism. Early wins and ongoing engagement as well as staff change champions will provide motivation and build trust.

The risks to process improvement implementation can be addressed by mitigation actions (3 of 3)



Risk	Description	Mitigation
<p>Lack of Regional Office Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and implementation takes place at the HQ level with limited input and testing from regional offices – will lead to failure of improvement efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Business Process Improvement Team must include substantial representation from regional offices, who should be major participants in development of user stories and requirements. Change management planning will ensure ongoing engagement, communication, and feedback from the regional offices. Regional Office leadership must be involved in overall governance for the project

Changes of this scale need to be managed tightly to get off to a fast start, maintain momentum, and sustain change



10 Common Pitfalls That Can Derail Change Efforts

1. No compelling articulation of mission and objectives
2. Importance of change relative to other priorities low or unclear
3. Key leaders do not have specified accountabilities for successful implementation of change
4. Pace and intensity of changes too much or too little
5. Change initiatives not reinforced or sequenced for fastest adoption and/or highest value creation
6. Undisciplined execution and progress tracking
7. Team operating models lack reinforcing cooperation mechanisms
8. Employees view change as flavor of the month – “this too shall pass”
9. Focus is on changing employees versus reinforcing desired behaviors and practices
10. Rely on one way communication versus networked and organic communication approach

Initiating Actions

Clearly define and broadly **communicate the transformation vision**

Reinforce the vision and priority frequently

Develop and implement a **governance structure** with clear roles and responsibilities, headed by a connected and engaged executive sponsor

Create, execute and regularly re-evaluate a **change management strategy** that reflects impact of and resistance to change, needs, and benefits of all key stakeholders

Implement a **disciplined Change Office approach** with regular updates, problem-solving, and communication across improvement project teams, and broader organization

Assign a **highly trusted leader** to direct the Change Office

Ensure an ongoing flow of **communication**, intentional **feedback** mechanisms, and recognition of **quick wins**



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Culture and Organizational Factors

Recommendations

Next Steps



Next Steps

Immediate Next Steps

- Validate the assigned impact (efficiency, efficacy, and risk) and align on prioritization for each recommendation
- Align with full EDA leadership team on path forward

Additional Next Steps

- Communicate findings and recommendations to relevant stakeholders across EDA and Department of Commerce
- Clarify EDA vision, objectives, and outcomes to inform strategic planning
- Develop implementation plan for executing Business Process Review recommendations



Appendix

A: Regional Office Process Findings and Implications

B: Regional Office Profiles

C: Regional Office Process Flow Diagrams

D: Headquarters Profiles

E: Headquarters Grants Office Process Flow Diagrams

F: Stakeholder Interview Summaries

Full Appendix materials provided separately

Pre-Approval: Community Outreach, Application, and Technical Review



Findings	Example	Implications
<p>Relationship quality with local communities varies depending on direct to <u>community outreach</u> v. working with community partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In DRO, field-based EDRs spend 70-80 nights a year traveling to stakeholder communities In AURO, EDDs serve as primary stakeholder communicators; the office generally views the EDR role as extraneous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of efficacy and ability to scale capacity of direct to community outreach is questionable
<p>Level of preparation and <u>engagement prior to application</u> varies across offices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In PRO, project owners often have difficulty engaging stakeholders In AURO, EDDs are engaged with prospective applicants throughout the process, including providing training on the application process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application quality varies substantially, often resulting in additional work by staff after the application is received
<p>Regions vary substantially in the process used to <u>assign applications</u> and how workload is communicated to staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In AURO, applications are assigned to staff by state, with some shifting of responsibility as a result of Disaster funding. Area Directors send out a monthly calendar invite with a list of IRC projects, and staff find all application materials in the shared drive In SRO, Area Directors assign applications according to staff workload and capabilities. Area Directors email project assignments to staff, and Project Officers pull applications from the grants.gov shared drive folder and print applications (for construction projects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaster supplementals are increasing workload variability, requiring effective workload distribution strategies Inconsistent file structures and unclear communication introduce confusion and inefficiency into the process
<p>Regions vary regarding what is considered ready for IRC and whether staff members conduct <u>Technical Review</u> concurrently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In PRO, all review (EDS, Engineering, Environmental, Legal) is conducted concurrently, and the EDS assigns a target date for review to be complete prior to IRC. Staff often rush to complete review prior to IRC In ATRO, a physical file is walked from one reviewer's desk to the next, with no simultaneous processing. Projects do not go to IRC unless review is complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although a standard Technical Review checklist exists, the checklist is not applied consistently Thoroughness of technical review impacts IRC efficiency/effectiveness

Approval: Investment Review Committee, Recommendation, and Decision



Issue	Example	Implications
<p>Regions took different approaches to adjusting their processes when the PRC was removed from the EDAP NOFO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In CRO, almost all projects come to the IRC In AURO, teams meet prior to IRC to discuss projects and confirm which are ready for IRC DRO developed a process flow to define the grants process without PRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing most projects to IRC is inefficient if they can be screened beforehand Pre-meetings risk disrupting integrity of IRC merit review discussion
<p>Regions have broad variations in their processes for preparing for IRC and the level of preparation expected by participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In ATRO, no forms are prepared; all should read the materials prior to the meeting In AURO, EDRs complete template forms. Teams meet prior to the IRC to discuss projects and confirm which are ready for IRC In DRO EDRs and EDSs develop a PPT presentation to present at IRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pre-discussion can be seen as “pre-wiring” the IRC results, rather than having those discussions within the context of the IRC Extensive preparation (e.g. creating PPT slides) may be inefficient, increasing EDR/EDS workload
<p>Regions take different approaches to IRC purpose and content. All offices agree that a ranking and recommendation must result from IRC, but the level of discussion and assessment varies significantly across offices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In CRO, the EDR presents and participants give their review of the project; there has been “fighting, hard feelings.” Meetings are long – up to one hour per project In AURO, presentation and discussion are 5-10 minutes/project. Other staff may join but should not comment. Area Directors defer to one another’s judgment within their area In DRO, presentation and discussion average 30 minutes/project, with each SME giving input and all participants asking questions; the regional director is present at IRC in DRO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and content of presentations varies, leading to significant variability in the vetting and recommendation process Overly short presentations do not allow for sufficient discussion to inform later voting
<p>IRC record quality and whether it is routed varies across offices and by individual preparers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In AURO, Area Directors prepare brief IRC records for their projects, signed by all 4 voting members and sent to the Regional Director In DRO, Project Officers prepare thorough IRC records, with content cut and pasted directly from SME comments. The record and drafted letter are routed together to the Area Director, who sends the package to the Regional Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IRC record template can be filled out with differing levels of detail, resulting in vastly different record quality across regions and posing potential risk for audit
<p>Offices are inconsistent in how they use the carry forward letter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRO uses the carry forward letter when an application has substantial deficiencies in IRC but merits future consideration CRO uses the carry forward letter when an application is approved, but there are not enough funds to award 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent use of letters throughout EDA results in confusion for staff and grantees and poses legal risk

Processing: Technical Assistance to Resolve Application Issues



Issue	Example	Implications
<p>The degree of <u>technical assistance required</u> depends on initial application quality and thoroughness of technical review conducted pre-IRC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In PRO, projects are often “half-baked” when they come into IRC, resulting in a large degree of technical assistance required to resolve application issues after IRC with a lot of back and forth between applicants and staff ATRO staff spend substantial time on upfront technical review and address most technical deficiencies upfront, meaning that minimal review is required post-IRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back-and-forth is time consuming for staff and grantees When the bulk of technical review occurs post-IRC, there could be technical problems that weren't identified or addressed during IRC When substantial documentation (i.e. PER) occurs upfront, it requires significant investment for local communities with minimal resources
<p>Offices vary substantially in the degree to which <u>technical assistance is rushed</u> to meet deadlines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In DRO, environmental review is often not complete prior to funds being awarded, and the REO adds Special Award Conditions if there is insufficient time to complete environmental review before deadlines In AURO, where there is a healthy project pipeline, engineers take the necessary time to ensure engineering and environmental issues are resolved prior to award 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some applications with environmental concerns are awarded, risking environmental compliance issues during project implementation Ironing out all technical issues prior to award is time-consuming and often not feasible
<p>Regions use <u>different standards</u> to determine if an application is complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In SRO, staff manage their own checklists to determine when applications are complete. Application completeness is often driven by timeline pressure, and Special Award Conditions are used liberally to move applications forward In ATRO, EDS or Assisting EDR consistently apply a checklist to determine if application is complete. The healthy project pipeline means that application completeness is rarely rushed due to timeline pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application quality, content, and completeness is variable across the regions, resulting in several different standards across EDA

Award: Reservation of Funds, Send to Washington, Issue Press Release, Award Grant



Issue	Example	Implications
<p>Offices differ on when they submit the reservation of funds relative to when reviews and processing have been completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At ATRO, the reservation of funds is submitted once all reviews and processing have been completed At CRO, the reservation of funds is submitted prior to reviews and processing being completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simultaneously submitting the reservation of funds and completing application processing can add process efficiency There is a risk of reserving funds for a grant that is not approved, if reviews and processing are not complete
<p>Offices differ on whether environmental, engineering, and legal review the final award package, and whether the Area Director provides written comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At CRO, legal, environmental, and engineering review and comment on the final award package. Whether the Area Director provides written comments depends on the grant type At DRO, legal, environmental, and engineering do not review and comment on the final award package, because the content is directly copied from their post-IRC comments. The Area Director typically provides written comments regarding the final award package, if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the final award package adds a step to the process, but ensures that legal, environmental, and engineering concur with the final award package
<p>In some offices, staff send an email to inform HQ that the STW milestone is complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In PRO, staff send an email to HQ, along with sending the request to Washington in the system In CRO, staff send the request to Washington in the system, without sending an email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some offices perceive that this expedites the STW process, and they find it helpful to have a paper trail Regions lack transparency into what happens when an application is “Sent to Washington” and follow up frequently via email, resulting in time wastage by HQ and RO staff



Post-Award & Closeout: Kickoff, Project Execution, Reporting

Issue	Example	Implications
<p>Kickoff calls vary substantially by region, including attendance (EDA and external), length, invitation method, and agenda</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In CRO, some staff send grantees an agenda in advance, others use a PPT presentation, and others do not use an agenda. The grantee and Project Officer attend, with optional attendance by the A&E firm for construction projects. Kickoff typically occurs over the phone, but some grantees are required to attend in person In AURO, staff send a standard agenda in advance, with the recommendation to execute the A&E contract prior to kickoff for construction projects. Calls are conducted via Zoom, and the A&E firm is strongly encouraged to attend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants are often rushed to find an engineering firm Kickoff may be delayed due to time-intensive contracts or other factors (e.g. outstanding SACs) Grantees vary in the degree to which they are prepared for post-award activities, which is often reflected in reporting quality
<p>Construction PMs and civil engineers across EDA use the post-approval tool, but send it in different ways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In ATRO, most post-approval staff still send the tool on CD, a pain point for several grantees AURO and SRO send the tool using Kiteworks, which may lock out grantees due to infrequency of use PRO and DRO send the website link to grantees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The post-approval tool simplifies the process for both the grantee and post-award staff The tool may be a useful model for bringing consistency to other parts of the process Method of sending needs to work for the recipient
<p>Date used to set progress/financial reporting deadlines varies across regions and within offices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regions and staff within regions vary widely in the date used to start reporting deadlines, ranging from the grant award date to the kickoff date to construction start date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal risk is associated with inconsistent reporting standards Using construction start date misses a critical reporting period
<p>Regions and staff within regions vary in how much time they spend reviewing forms and helping grantees fill out forms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In DRO, Project Officers typically fall behind on reporting duties due to pre-award focus; however, the EDS responsible for working with Tribes provides in-depth assistance to the communities and tracks closely to deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grantees, especially those in smaller communities, frequently fail to meet reporting expectations Inconsistent post-award reporting poses substantial risk

Post-Award & Closeout / Post-Closeout: Reimbursements, GPRA Reporting



Issue	Example	Implications
<p>Payment memo reviewers vary by region (Project Officer / Engineer, REO, Legal, Admin Director, Area Director)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In ATRO, the Admin Director is responsible for non-construction payment memo review; construction memos are created by engineers In CRO, EDSs and engineers are responsible for payment memos, with review by the Area Director In ATRO and DRO, legal reviews all construction payment memos. In PRO and AURO, legal does not review payment memos, and in CRO and SRO, legal reviews the first and last payment memos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing payment memos is an important tactic for mitigating risk associated with waste, fraud, and abuse
<p>GPRA reports can be handled by almost anyone, depending on the region. Construction data is entered manually into OPCS; non-construction data can be entered by the recipient, but in some cases forms are sent to staff who enter it manually into GOL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In PRO, a Management Analyst handles all GPRA reports – 100+ for the region – in addition to multiple other duties In DRO and ATRO, GPRA reports are managed by the post-award project owner. In ATRO, EDRs may help In AURO, admin manages GPRA reports; transitioning to RLF admin when the admin staff retires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project knowledge is helpful in finding the correct POC and in ensuring accurate reporting Reporting quality may vary depending on the staff member responsible and their competing priorities
<p>Tracking down the right GPRA point of contact is a significant time component, due to the infrequency of reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In PRO, the Management Analyst handling GPRA is not familiar with most recipients and uses Google to find POCs In ATRO, Construction PMs and Engineers and EDRs have more familiarity with the project and can more easily find the POC; however, some investigation is often still needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process is highly inefficient and costs time because grantees often do not maintain updated POC records with EDA