



The IAE Digest

News and Program Updates from
the Integrated Award Environment



Volume 4, Issue 4
4th Quarter FY17

From the Deputy Assistant Commissioner

The state of the Integrated Award Environment (IAE) is strong, and I am happy to report that during the fourth quarter of 2017 we unveiled beta.SAM.gov on schedule and in functioning status.

Yes, you read that right; beta.SAM.gov is online and available for users to access and to test. This is a significant step for the IAE in our on-going effort to modernize and integrate what currently are 10 separate websites used by those who make, receive, or manage federal awards. As regular readers of *The IAE Digest* probably know, we have been working behind-the-scenes to create the beta site, which is the platform into which all the other IAE websites will integrate during the next few years.

Currently, visitors to beta.SAM.gov can register for an account, search across domains, and access the help page, which contains a lot of great information and background. Users can also submit suggestions and provide other feedback through the "Provide Feedback" button, soon to be available throughout the entire site. Note that registering for an account on beta.SAM.gov is different from registering your entity. The original SAM.gov site is still the official source for entity registrations.

In other articles within this issue of *The IAE Digest*, we'll discuss in more detail the beta site and what it does. But, overall, now is a good time to reflect on what it means to have beta.SAM.gov online as a live site that you can go to.

Beta.SAM.gov is the culmination of countless hours of hard work by the amazing IAE staff. Having inherited this project from previous leaders who laid the groundwork, and now having been here for a while, I can speak first-hand to the effort that has gone into bringing beta.SAM.gov to life. The individuals who make up this team—both in building the beta site and in maintaining the current websites—are some of the most dedicated, professional people I've had the pleasure of working with.



But while having beta.SAM.gov online is a milestone for the program, it's only the beginning of what's to come. Now that the site is live, we are actively working to improve it every day. We're incorporating your feedback in real-time making the site easier for you to use, and we're in the process of adding functionality to the system. In 2018 and beyond, we will begin to transfer the functions you use in our current systems into the beta site. At the end of this process, all IAE stakeholders will access only one streamlined, unified website.

Reducing burdens on our users – Increasing access to critical information – Making it easier for anyone who interacts with the federal award process

The new beta.SAM.gov is the backbone of it all. The 2017 Fiscal Year will be remembered at the IAE as the year we achieved a big step toward the future.

As always, I urge you to continue communicating with us through our various IAE channels, including on Interact and through email at IAEOutreach@gsa.gov. Let me know what you think about beta.SAM.gov!

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beta.SAM.gov is Live!



The Integrated Award Environment is pleased to announce that beta.SAM.gov went live in the fourth quarter of 2017. Currently existing as a beta test site, beta.SAM.gov will be the future online destination for people who make, receive, or manage federal awards. Using valuable feedback from current IAE system users and other stakeholders, beta.SAM.gov was designed to make the experience of interacting with the online federal award process simpler and less burdensome. The new display is cleaner and easier to navigate. The way users find data has vastly improved with the creation of a robust search tool that returns the same data found on the original websites. These different types of award data—or domains—make up the heart of beta.SAM.gov. Users can either search across all domains at once or choose a specific domain to search within a specific data set.

Beta.SAM.gov uses the functions of the old sites as new naming conventions. For example, the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, or CFDA, is now called Assistance Listings in beta.SAM.gov. The new naming conventions are:

Assistance Listings → CFDA.gov	Federal Hierarchy → New
Contract Opportunities → FBO.gov	Entity Information → SAM.gov
Contract Data → FPDS.gov	Wage Determinations → WDOL.gov

Users are also able to preview and test the sign-up and sign-in process, walk through the new help center, and submit feedback to developers through the feedback tool on the site. It is important to note that the site is a work in progress. The current websites will run in parallel with beta.SAM.gov until the integration process is complete.



Modernization Overview



One website for people who make, receive, and manage federal awards

- One Home Page
- Single Sign-On
- Search
- Reports
- Workspace
- Administration
- Help Center

As the IAE continues to modernize, we will release new functionality for beta.SAM.gov to replace the functionality that currently exists in the 10 current websites. The IAE looks forward to receiving feedback about beta.SAM.gov.

For the latest information about beta.SAM.gov, or for any other questions, please contact IAEOutreach@gsa.gov.



Quarterly System Updates

Past Performance Information Retrieval System

With each software release, we strive to improve the user experience and quality of information available for the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS) and the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). We do this through a combination of applying minor enhancements and by fixing known issues. The following list summarizes changes that were made in the fourth quarter to the PPIRS and FAPIIS applications in version 3.0.11:

- Reformatted bar charts
- Added additional validations to Assessment Search
- Added additional validations to ADHOC Search
- Added missing elements to ADHOC Search

Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System

During the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2017, we also made the following updates to the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS):

- Aligned the CPARS archive process with the current rules of archiving in the (PPIRS)
- Correctly categorized Product and Service Codes (PSC) F109, F110, and F111 to match the PSC manual
- Fixed a bug on Contractor Representative transmittal letter identifying the focal point on a contract without an order number
- Added FAR ratings definitions to narrative screens in the evaluation process
- Updated Small Business Utilization instructions and tab names for clarification
- Updated the narrative field logic to align with FAR 42.1503(B)(4) making it mandatory to enter a narrative when a rating is assigned

Federal Procurement Data System

The FPDS Version 1.5 production application (<https://www.fpds.gov>) is now available for the creation of contract actions. FPDS Version 1.4 is no longer available.

Version 1.5 Functional Documentation

- Data Dictionary - Updated to include new Version 1.5 data elements and changes to existing data elements
- Version 1.5 Quick Start Guide - Provides users a quick overview of the Version 1.5 changes, including screenshots and validation rules
- A new web service will be established to allow contracting officers to close contracts via Business Services with a new API. The new Close Out API will allow users to close out contracts through their interfacing systems. This function will also be available from the contract screen via the web portal and GUI services in Version 1.5
- A new data element will be added to the Contract Data section of the FPDS-NG screens for the "Inherently Government Function." The data for this element was previously collected in the "Description of Requirements" field. The new data element "Inherently Government Function" will have the following values:
 - Closely Associated
 - Critical Functions
 - Other Functions
 - Close Associated, Critical Functions
- The CAGE code will be added as a new data element to the FPDS-NG contract screen. The field will be available in the Contractor Information section via GUI screens and web services



User Group Feedback

As the IAE product teams build beta.SAM.gov, we continue to incorporate user feedback from focus groups. The IAE held its fourth quarter Industry Day on September 26 where more than 135 attendees joined online to hear IAE Design Lead Christy Hermansen present the beta.SAM.gov website and discuss focus group feedback. In July and August, the IAE conducted five focus group sessions with more than 50 participants. Users from both large and small businesses provided feedback, suggestions, and requests for features to be included in the new site.

Our groups addressed topics such as users and roles, entity management, work spaces, and work processes. For each topic, we asked participants for their pain points and wish list items. We then discussed and clarified their input.

The following are examples of feedback based on our current websites that would represent significant improvements for industry:

- People want more flexibility in assigning and managing access in some of our current systems. For example, the government currently determines who responds to past performance at the time an award is made. Our industry participants asked for more control over who responds to past performance.
- People asked for an overall administrator for their organization who would be able to manage user accounts across all integrated functionality.
- People asked for better ability to manage their entities and to roll-up information using the hierarchical relationships between those entities.
- People asked for better tools to manage changes to their organization including people coming and going and entities being purchased and sold.

We also talked with industry about the implications of bringing our websites together. The following are examples of what we heard:

- People provided positive feedback about our intention to bring together notifications and provide a centralized to-do list to help them keep track of due dates, announcements, and other things that may need their attention.

- Some participants indicated they would like to see their post-award requirements for a single contract brought together (past performance, sub-award reporting, etc.). Others indicated that they would like past performance to remain distinct. Our conclusion is that we need to make it easy to organize information both by contract and by domain.

We are following up these focus groups with more in-depth workgroups. We will walk through the details of moving from the capabilities of our current websites to implementing the improvements people have requested.

To volunteer for our working groups, or for any other questions about beta.SAM.gov, please email IAEOutreach@gsa.gov.

Did you miss Industry Day? You can find event materials and an archived recording for this and previous Industry Day presentations on the IAE Interact site. To receive information about our next event, please join IAE's Interact Community at: <https://interact.gsa.gov/group/integrated-award-environment-iae-industry-community>

Did You Know?

GSA is making big changes to industry role management. As data is migrated from the original websites, we are redefining existing roles and permissions; changing the way roles are assigned; and providing consolidated, high-level administrative capabilities for managing users and data across all entity and application functionality. During the next couple of months, the IAE will conduct working group sessions with industry to share our current designs, collect feedback, and resolve outstanding questions. We are especially interested in speaking with large businesses with significant numbers of entities to manage, businesses that buy and sell entities, and businesses with responsibilities distributed among people who don't typically work together (e.g., sub-awards versus entity registrations). To sign up, please complete this questionnaire: <https://goo.gl/forms/NKrc6IT5Gg7Ua5NE3>. If you're having trouble accessing the form, send us an email at IAEOutreach@gsa.gov. For more information, please visit our [IAE Interact Community page](#).

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Decommissioning the Websites

The IAE is working to combine 10 current websites into one new website (beta.SAM.gov) by incrementally transitioning the data and functionality of each system. During these migrations, the original websites will remain operational until all capabilities are fully transitioned. The IAE will then begin decommissioning the original websites in four phases:

1. Development Completed Phase

Features and functionality of the original site are transferred to beta.SAM.gov. Site decommissioning will be announced through extensive outreach to the governance and stakeholder communities. Next, the IAE will work with the user community to test the website. User interaction and feedback are critical for identifying possible areas of vulnerability.

2. Deploying to Production/Decommissioning

Once governance approves, the original site will be frozen before decommissioning. The original website's domain will then be rerouted to the beta.SAM.gov server. Current account holders of the original site will be notified to create new accounts on beta.SAM.gov.

3. Decommissioning

The URL of the original website will be moved to the beta site. The original website will be archived in the event beta.SAM.gov has to shut down for technical updates.

4. Post Decommission

After the migration of the 10 websites, beta.SAM.gov will become the official source for government procurement, business transactions, and contracts.

Please note that the decommissioning process for any site is subject to change at any time.

IAE by the Numbers

Federal Service Desk 4th Quarter FY 2017

- ❖ Call volume was at an average of 27,000 calls per month, a decrease of 7,000 calls from Q3
- ❖ Average speed to answer was 28 seconds, compared to the industry standard of 60-90 seconds
- ❖ Average handle/talk time was approximately 14 minutes and 44 seconds, compared to the 13 minutes and 15 seconds in Q3
- ❖ First call resolution rate increased to 94 percent and continues to exceed the industry standard of 80 percent

System for Award Management 4th Quarter FY 2017

- ❖ Average number of registrations activated per month:
 - New registrations: 7,995
 - Updated registrations: 49,749
- ❖ Average cycle time in Q4 FY2017 was 1.80 days
- ❖ Average number of site visits per month was 1,175,358
- ❖ Average number of searches performed per month was 4,915,528

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IAE Staff Spotlight



Salomeh Ghorbani is a project manager for the IAE, which is under the Federal Acquisition Services division at GSA. In her role, Salomeh acts as the product owner for the Identity Management capability of the new beta.SAM.gov in addition to being a transition manager and managing the testing programs for SAM.gov. She has vast experience in project management, agile development methodologies, and IT system modernization and management.

Salomeh joined the IAE team as a contractor in 2007, where she began her career providing

program support and later served as an information systems security officer for the original IAE websites. After managing the refresh of the ID Management website for OGP, Salomeh returned to IAE as a federal employee. Her first project at IAE was to transition the operations and management of the current FPDS.gov site from the legacy vendor to a new vendor.

Once that project was successfully completed, Salomeh began working on the modernization projects for the IAE systems, including the beginnings of the Federal Hierarchy and Identity Management capabilities. She also is developing detailed transition plans that will ensure the smooth transition of the original websites to the new beta.SAM.gov.

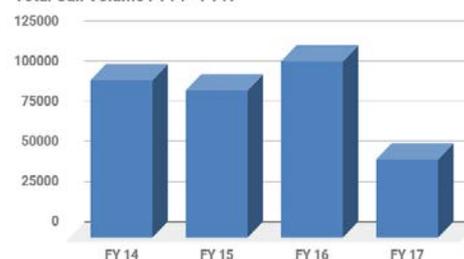
Recently, Salomeh became the voice of beta.SAM.gov. Soon, you will hear her voice instructing you on how to navigate the website. "One of the things I love most about working at IAE is our approach, in that we are not simply recreating what we already have," said Salomeh. "There is a lot of hard work going on behind-the-scenes and, in the end, hard work pays off. The people in IAE are the best!"

Salomeh's accomplishments don't end with IAE. She is a long-distance cyclist, biking two consecutive years in the Ride to Conquer Cancer cycling event that raises money for cancer treatment programs. Salomeh enjoys many outdoor activities, including kayaking and hiking, and she also once climbed Mount Kilimanjaro.

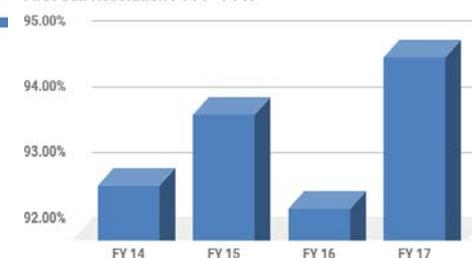
Did You Know?

The goal of the Federal Service Desk (FSD.gov) is to provide technical assistance for all IAE websites. The FSD is accessible online, via live chat, and through the telephone. As shown below, FSD efficiency continues to increase. Between fiscal years 2016 and 2017, calls to the FSD decreased (meaning fewer people are having technical issues with the IAE systems) and first-call resolution increased (meaning we're able to resolve issues in a timely manner).

Total Call Volume FY14 - FY17



First Call Resolution FY14 - FY17



FSD representatives are available via live chat at FSD.gov or by calling 1-866-606-8220 on Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern time. There are no fees associated with any FSD-supported websites.

Follow IAE:

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- ✓ Follow us on Twitter [@USGSA](#) and [@FAS_Outreach](#)
- ✓ Email us at IAEOutreach@gsa.gov
- ✓ Visit our website at GSA.gov/IAE
- ✓ For technical support, please visit the Federal Service Desk at FSD.gov