



The IAE Digest

News and Program Updates from
the Integrated Award Environment



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2nd Quarter FY17

From the Deputy Assistant Commissioner

The second quarter of 2017 focused on making significant steps forward in the Integrated Award Environment. Both within some of the 10 systems we currently manage and in the new environment we're building, we made remarkable progress in our endeavors to reduce the burden on our users and to increase confidence among all our stakeholders.

In February, we released some exciting updates to SAM.gov. You'll read more about the update further on in this edition of *The IAE Digest*, and our "Industry Day" program this quarter highlighted the improvements to SAM.gov as well. But it's important to remember that much of the work done here by my colleagues on a daily basis in this program management office is focused on making our current systems the best they can be.



Each of our 10 systems receives critical updates in various intervals; some only when needed and others much more regularly. And I'm happy to report (again, as you'll see in another section of this newsletter) that the trends at the Federal Service Desk remain positive with call times down and response rates up. This means that when our users need help within our systems, they are finding the information or answers they need quickly at the FSD and they need to rely less on the help desk – which is a positive sign.

While the 10 IAE systems today are the most stable they've ever been, we are deep into production of the new environment that will eventually encompass all of the functionalities of the 10 individual systems into one, streamlined, online environment hosted in the cloud. We are building the new "beta.SAM.gov" in an Agile way.

Using the Agile method of development, we break up our work milestones into sections called "Releases." The second quarter of 2017 found us working diligently through Release 9. This is a critical Release for us, in that once Release 9 is moved into production (late this summer), it will enable us to unveil the new environment to the public for the first time!

That's right, later this summer, all our stakeholders will see the progress we've made in beta.SAM.gov and you'll be able to "touch and feel" the direction we're moving in when it comes to merging the 10 into one.

During this quarter, we continued our "alpha testing" in the new environment that I mentioned in the last issue of *The IAE Digest*. We now have more than 200 government users who have been in the new environment and have been providing invaluable feedback that we are incorporating as we go.

Finally, I'm happy to share that during this quarter, we added new leadership to the Integrated Award Environment. Robert Noonan joined the IAE as our assistant commissioner in February. A U.S. Navy veteran, Bob brings with him a wealth of experience in transforming organizations and in streamlining and improving the delivery of services; skills that integral to everything we do within the IAE.

So, as you can see, the second quarter of 2017 was a notable one for us. We're planning to keep the momentum going and keep improving the systems you interact with today while we're hard at work creating something better for you to use tomorrow.

As always, I continue to urge you to interact with the IAE through our various channels, including the IAE section on GSA Interact, through GSA's Twitter account at @USGSA, or through our industry engagement programs.

You can also reach me directly with any questions, suggestions, or concerns at IAEOutreach@gsa.gov.

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Internal Realignment

You may not know this, but the United States General Services Administration is comprised of three separate, distinct services: The Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), The Public Building Service (PBS), and the new Technology Transformation Service (TTS). While each of the three services are headed by a commissioner, the Federal Acquisition Service operates at the core of the GSA mission to leverage the buying power of the federal government and acquire the best value for taxpayers and federal customers.

To support GSA and accomplish its mission, FAS uses innovative techniques and leverages government-wide buying power, acquisition expertise, and electronic tools to successfully deliver new and existing services, products, and solutions.

At the end of the 2016 fiscal year a realignment order was signed by Administrator Dennis Turner Roth that reorganized the way that FAS, and subsequently the IAE, are set up. FAS has implemented the order and realigned its organizational structure to the vision and principles of category management. FAS determined this need to realign its organizational structure in order to increase its efficiency, reduce costs, and deliver improved customer service.

Although most of the reorganization is internally focused and has impact on GSA employees mostly, some of the changes affect public-facing aspects of the IAE:

- Our overall Program Management Office that previously was titled *The Office of Integrated Award Environment* (OIAE) has been renamed the Office of Systems Management (OSM). Within the Office of Systems Management lies both the Integrated Award Environment (where SAM.gov and our other 9 systems are housed) and the Common Acquisition Platform (CAP).
- Within the IAE, three of our internal divisions were renamed. The Business Operations division (the division largely responsible for bringing you the 10 systems you know today as well as the new environment) has been renamed the Business Applications Operations division.
- The Program Planning, Analysis and Control division has been renamed the Management and Program Support (MPS) division.
- And finally, the Outreach and Stakeholder Management division (the folks who bring you *The IAE Digest* each quarter) has been renamed the Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement (OSE) division.

As the internal realignment came into fruition, the Office of Systems Management (OSM) at the same time brought on a new assistant commissioner who will oversee the operations of both the Integrated Award Environment and the Common Acquisition Platform. Robert Noonan joined the OSM in February of this year. Coming to us from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Commissioner Noonan's responsibilities will include helping the OSM to integrate and unify the federal award process for United States government buyers and sellers, and enabling shared acquisition services with goals to reduce costs and generate customer savings.

Using Agile to Build Something New

The Integrated Award Environment (IAE) has embraced Agile development and is continuously employing Agile methods in our transition to the future state. IAE uses Agile development and program management by adapting the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe) to the IAE Program Management Office (PMO).

The SAFe methodology has allowed the IAE to establish Product Management, Release Management, and System Teams to define and prioritize the program backlog, govern the release planning, and build and use the development infrastructure. The anticipated results of these concerted efforts are shorter development times and user-centric system designs.

In the second quarter of 2017, beta.SAM.gov development focused on Release 9. The Release 9 Agile objectives included:

1. Enabling teams to plan a month ahead
2. Enabling teams to log time daily (track focused capacity)
3. Making 50 percent of IP Sprints available for continual development
4. Incorporating all user stories (detailed or coarse grained) into JIRA after release planning

We will always use continuous improvement to drive innovation. Part of the beauty of Agile development is the ability to make course corrections along the way and to adjust as needed while we're in the process of developing. We don't have to wait until something is completely done; rather we can fix it as we go.

Introducing beta.SAM.gov



The second quarter of 2017 was instrumental in advancing the new environment. Knowing that we have been building the future state in an Agile way since we started, we've embraced that change would be a significant part of our path forward. In that respect, the second quarter did not disappoint!

Previously, we've referred to the new environment in a number of ways, including: the new environment, the future state, the new SAM.gov, and transition.SAM.gov. We now are pleased to report that the new environment will be known as beta.SAM.gov from here-out; at least until the functionalities of the current SAM.gov you use today transfer into the new system. At that point, today's SAM.gov will be sunset and taken off-line; the "beta" will drop off the new moniker; and there will be only one SAM.gov that will have the functionalities of our systems merged into one.

Moving toward that goal, this quarter we continued to add new testers to our alpha testing site that has been up and running since the end of last year. Currently, there are more than 200 federal testers poking around in the alpha version of beta.SAM.gov. Their participation has proven invaluable as they continue to provide critical feedback to GSA in preparation for the public launch of the beta.SAM.gov site.

Right now, current alpha testers are able to search and view across multiple data sets including Assistance Listings (CFDA), Opportunities (FBO), Wage Determinations (WDOL), Entity Registrations and Exclusions (SAM), and Federal Hierarchy. In the third quarter, testers will be able to test the "Sign Up" and "Sign In" process, review the procedure for migrating account(s) from the legacy systems and test the launch of the new reporting tool.

Everyone reading this newsletter (and the rest of the world) will be able to see and experience beta.SAM.gov at the end of this summer; likely the end of August 2017.

During the next release of the beta.SAM.gov functionalities, users will be able to search for IAE public data (except FAPIIS). Users also will be able to choose an active/non-active status and find a wage determination through Q&A filtering. The new functionality will enable users to view details on publicly available information derived from search results for the following:

- Opportunities (FBO) - History and relevant attachments
- Wage Determinations (WDOL) - Service Contract Acts (SCAs) and Davis-Bacon Acts (DBAs)
- Organizations (FH) - Enhancements (Stretch)
- Awards (FPDS) - Generic Display encompassing all Award/Contract object view types (Iteration 1)
- Entity Exclusions (SAM) - Resolve unique identifier requirement

Public Search and Display. The complete public search and display functionality will include global search across all applications and allow users to be able to search for information in a logical and efficient way. In beta.SAM.gov, improvements to the look and feel of the site will allow for ease of use by enhanced navigation along with a consistent style that helps the user find the information that is needed. Users will be able to easily find and consume information through an improved layout and a modernized logo and visual style to create a uniform experience.

Role Management. In beta.SAM.gov, there will be a complete role management architecture implementation and integration with Identity and Access Management (IAM) and Federal Hierarchy. The creation of a single Federal Hierarchy in lieu of the existing four hierarchies is intended to decrease the government's effort to maintain a hierarchy and will create the ability for users to generate reports at various organizational levels.

For the latest updates on Release 9 progress, visit the IAE page on Interact or contact us at IAEO outreach@gsa.gov.

Quarterly System Updates

System for Award Management

With each software release, we work to improve the System for Award Management (SAM) user experience, improve the quality of information available from SAM, and reduce the burden for those wishing to do business with the U.S. federal government.

We do this through a combination of minor enhancements and fixing known issues. The release notes document that is issued on SAM.gov with each new release, summarizes the customer-facing changes that were made to the SAM application and database in the development window culminating in the build to production on February 24, 2017.

In addition to making minor enhancements and fixing known issues, we also made the following changes in this release:

- Redesigned the SAM Homepage to provide a more user-friendly entrance point and help users easily navigate the website, create a user account, register their entity to do business with the U.S. government, and search for records.
- Added the SAM Status Tracker to the main navigation bar to allow users to quickly check their entity registration status without logging into the system.
- Enabled editing of the taxpayer address and taxpayer information fields on the IRS Consent page during a registration update or renewal.
- Updated the page description, Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information, and TIN Match Instructions on the IRS Consent page to provide more clear direction to users for properly executing the consent.
- Added a statement to the Representations and Certifications (Reps & Certs) review page and Reps & Certs PDF to clarify that by having an active registration the user has complied with the requirement to report the following:
- Added proceedings data in accordance with FAR 52.209-7 Information Regarding Responsibility Matters, and
- Added executive compensation data in accordance with FAR 52.204-10 Reporting Executive Compensation and First-Tier Subcontract Awards.

For additional details, you may find and read the February 24th Release Notes posted to SAM.gov > About > News > Release Notes.



Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)

Software Releases are enhancements and changes we have made to our software via Service Packs. As of February 3, 2017, the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) issued Service Pack 33.0 to the current FPDS System Version 1.4. Some of the impacts include:

- The "CAGE Code" data element was added in the new Atom Feed version 1.4.5 and will be available in the AdHoc Reporting tool.
- The data elements "Approved By", "Referenced IDV Type", "Referenced IDV Multiple or Single", and "Referenced IDV Part 8 or Part 13" will be added in the version 1.4.5 Atom Feed.
- The "Approved Date" and "Approved By" data elements will be added to the version 1.4.5 ATOM feed.
- The data element "Consolidated Contract" has a "Base and All Options Value" Dollar Threshold of \$6M applied on it.
- The data element "Bundled Contract" has a "Base and All Options Value" Dollar Threshold of \$6M applied on it.

For additional details (including FAR case impacts), you may find and read the V1.4 SP 33.0 Release Notes posted to FPDS.gov > Status > Software Releases.

IAE By The Numbers

IAE Spotlight

IAE By the Numbers

Federal Service Desk 2nd Quarter FY 2017

- ❖ Call volume was at an average of 34,648 calls per month
- ❖ Average speed to answer was 0.29 seconds, compared to the industry standard of 30 seconds
- ❖ Average handle/talk time is approximately 13.19 minutes, compared to the 14.12 minutes in Q1
- ❖ First call resolution rate increased to 94 percent and continues to exceed the industry standard of 80 percent

System for Award Management 2nd Quarter FY 2017

- ❖ Average number of registrations activated per month:
 - New registrations: 7,462
 - Updated registrations: 59,802
- ❖ Average cycle time in 2Q FY2017 was 2.07 days
- ❖ Average number of site visits per month was 1,173,179
- ❖ Average number of searches performed per month was 4,681,130

"Dave Bell is the Information Technology Director for GSA IT, IAE. As the IT director, Dave's main objective is to anticipate future network needs, obviate proactive solutions, and provide exceptional business value. Dave's work touches all facets of IT within beta.SAM.gov, SAM.gov, and IAE.

Dave joined the IAE team in July of 2016 and since then has focused on accelerating the integration of the 10 legacy systems into beta.SAM.gov. He was excited when given this opportunity to come into a struggling IT application and help refine and streamline the processes and provide the IT support IAE needs.

There have been many accomplishments to the IAE program since Dave started. One major achievement occurred in December 2016, when external users were allowed to test the code within the beta.SAM.gov environment and give their opinions of the site. Since the rebuild began, no one other than IAE employees could view the new environment. "Now we've seen a huge difference with the stakeholder's confidence level with beta.SAM.gov" said Dave.

What I love most about working in IAE are the people. There are a lot of stars here with great skill sets which makes my job much easier. Everyone works very hard and they're all dedicated to the IAE mission" said Dave.

Outside of work, Dave is a consummate quote collector. Since 1979, he's amassed a collection of more than 400 pages of inspirational and motivational quotes. One of his favorites is, "Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right" by Henry Ford."



Industry Day 12

On March 29, 2017, the IAE hosted another successful Industry Day engagement program. This time, Meredith Whitehead (who manages the current SAM.gov) spoke about the significant improvements made to current SAM in the second quarter of 2017.

As you may have seen by now if you've been online in SAM.gov in the past few weeks, one of the biggest improvements is the new user interface on SAM.gov that was redesigned with a more user-friendly navigation for a better user experience.



(Photo on left: this is what the current site used to look like before Feb.) (Photo on right: this is what the site looks like now after the update.)

More than 215 participants also learned about other enhancements to the current SAM.gov, including the addition of the SAM Status Tracker to the main navigation bar (as shown below). The status tracker already existed, but its new location will allow users to quickly check their entity registration status without logging into the system.



Event materials and an archived recording (for this and previous Industry Day presentations) are housed on the IAE Interact site. Please join [IAE's Interact community](https://interact.gsa.gov/group/integrated-award-environment-iae-industry-community) here: <https://interact.gsa.gov/group/integrated-award-environment-iae-industry-community> to receive information about our next event.

beta.SAM.gov Alpha Testing Update

As most of you probably know, the Integrated Award Environment (IAE) is moving 10 disparate operational systems into one integrated environment. Our teams are in the midst of an Agile, multi-release build of what is now “beta.SAM.gov” which will grow over time as features from the legacy IAE sites are migrated. Eventually, beta.SAM.gov will become SAM.gov. Don’t worry though, we are not there yet and you will receive plenty of notice before any of the legacy sites are decommissioned.

In December of 2016, IAE opened the beta.SAM.gov alpha testing site to get feedback from a select group of federal users about the look, feel, and functionality of the new website. More than 200 participants have now registered and are currently testing new features, providing written comments, and attending online feedback sessions.

Testing is open-ended and new features are being added on a regular basis. The current testing effort focuses primarily on the public search functionality for FBO, CFDA, WDOL, and Federal Hierarchy data. Most recently, testers have been able to try out the “Sign Up” and “Sign In” functionality of the site as well as see a preview of the process for migrating accounts from the legacy IAE systems.

GSA has received valuable feedback, which is being used to update and improve [beta.SAM.gov](https://beta.sam.gov) in preparation for a future launch of the beta site for public testing and eventually the relaunch of SAM.gov as the site for people who make, track, or receive federal awards.

Did You Know?

There is no cost to use SAM.gov. You can use SAM.gov for FREE to:

- Register to do business with the U.S. government
- Update or renew your entity registration
- Check status of an entity registration
- Search for entity registration and exclusion records

Registration in SAM and all of the 10 IAE systems is free of charge. Any offer you receive for assistance with registering in SAM is from an entity not affiliated with the U.S. federal government, GSA, or the IAE. Use of third-party vendors is not required or necessary. Additionally, the Federal Service Desk (FSD) is available to assist you with SAM registration, also free of charge. You can contact the FSD via live chat or toll-free number. Our customer service staff is available to help you Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

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