

**Listening Post Telecon
May 27, 2009
Minutes**

QUESTION:

The ARMP process and how much of the plans are now duplicated.

ANSWER:

The ARMP process provides an organized, Agencywide approach to annual budgeting and financial planning used by all levels of management. It relates the Agency's research priorities to the available resources and allows the fund holder to identify and elevate unfunded needs, as well as any pertinent issues or concerns early in the fiscal year. The ARMP is a planning tool and is used as a snapshot in time rather than a dynamic document. Headquarters uses ARMP to support the SRMP process to define challenges and resolution to problems. Yes, there is duplication but it is all used in different ways to help make important decisions.

QUESTION:

Three-year budget projections are prepared outside of ARMP.

ANSWER:

The ARMP system only accommodates projections for one FY. The multiyear analysis is used in conjunction with the ARMP. It allows the Area Director and Administrators to view the projected financial status of a management unit over a 3 year period. This helps to identify out year projections and develop strategies to overcome budget challenges.

QUESTION:

Procurement forecasts are still required outside of ARMP asking for information that can be found on the procurement plan.

ANSWER:

The Procurement Plan in ARMP allows the fund holder to budget for the upcoming year based on research priorities and available resources. It also allows for the identification of unfunded procurement requirements and shortfalls that may be addressed during the ARMP reviews. The Procurement Forecast is required by law and submitted to the Office of Small Disadvantaged Business Utilization (WSDBU) each year. The report includes procurement preference goals as well as planned procurement (see P&P 210.8). The Procurement Forecast is updated throughout the year.

QUESTION:

AFM training session in financial systems requested. Have there been any dates established for FMMI training?

ANSWER:

No.

QUESTION:

What is the status of the stimulus package from OMB?

ANSWER:

No word yet.

QUESTION:

We enter information on PSP about SCEP employees but are still required to complete SCEP worksheets/data calls from HRD and ODEO.

ANSWER:

The PSP is used as a budget planning tool. The SCEP worksheets issued from HRD are a checklist for what's needed to bring a student on board. Information requested by ODEO is used to track the SCEP employees' status. There is a limited time at the completion of their tour where they can be non-competitively converted to a permanent employee.

QUESTION:

We use the HRD POL from HRIS to verify the ARMP PSP. Why do we need two documents with pretty much the same information?

ANSWER:

The ARMP PSP is a budget planning tool and includes the base pay, benefits, and projections for WGI's, promotions and the annual pay cost. The PSP may also include new positions, anticipated retirements, abolished positions, etc, that may not have been approved/finalized yet. The HRD POL is an official list of current positions that can be used to verify the current grade/step of a position as well as the position number.

QUESTION:

Capital Projects & Repair Plan (CPRP) is required outside of ARMP with the same information as the facilities plan. We are entering the data on both plans.

ANSWER:

The CPRP data is consolidated and reported to the Department and OMB prior to the development of the ARMP. This data is then used for various purposes, including as a basis to forecast what will be included in the ARMP and to approve the projects included in the ARMP.

QUESTION:

We use SAMS to prepare the salary projections, transfer the data to ARMP, transfer the data back to SAMS once the FY begins, then repeat the process.

ANSWER:

It is not necessary to transfer all of the data from ARMP back to SAMS – only revisions that may have been made during the ARMP process need to be updated in SAMS. SAMS is a dynamic system used throughout the year to track individual salaries and related expenses by pay period.

QUESTION:

Confusion about the new travel card and the new purchase card because they look so much alike. HUD has ordered special sleeves to store the purchase card. Perhaps ARS might want to consider a red sleeve for the purchase card.

ANSWER:

If we get red sleeves we will distribute them.

QUESTION:

Hiring at 14 and 15 levels – I hear there are a bunch on hold? Are there any more new programs coming out next year?

ANSWER:

USDA, Office of the Secretary prior approval is required for all hiring selections. HRD submits weekly list of all proposed selections. We get feedback pretty quickly. Occasionally questions are asked but in all but a single case, approvals have been granted and selecting officers are notified as soon as possible.

QUESTION:

Are there any more new programs coming out next year?

ANSWER:

Not clear about question. No new systems are known at this time.