

competitive sourcing solution and STARS. This approach significantly increases demands on existing staff, and increases uncertainty as to whether resources will be available for implementation and testing. As an example, work to consolidate payment operations at Oak Ridge and to centralize National Nuclear Security Administration activities at its Albuquerque Service Center have decreased resources originally expected to be available for STARS-related activities.

- Interface testing to ensure the proper inclusion of contractor-generated accounting data in STARS has not been completed. These interfaces are critical to the operation of STARS, and have been described by an implementation official as the key "show stopper" for the August 16, 2004, decision. The completion schedule for the interfaces slipped from April 2004 to July 2004, and testing remained incomplete on the date of this report.
- As currently designed, STARS does not have the capability to permit budget recasts. These functions must frequently be performed to realign data among accounting codes and overlay historical data. While an implementation official does not believe that budget recasts are necessary, we note that the process has become institutionalized and occurs on multiple occasions throughout the year. Should this feature not be available, the Department may have to significantly reengineer its budget process, an activity that could be labor intensive, costly, and one that is not currently included in implementation tasks.
- STARS also cannot process multi-fund accounts receivables. Both management and the developer have recognized that this functionality is required for reimbursable work and the software vendor is working to modify the core system software. A corporate financial system official indicated that STARS cannot be successfully implemented unless this feature is in place and functioning.
- User acceptance testing revealed more errors than expected and is currently behind schedule. While officials told us that all tests are now complete, analysis needed to determine the severity of the errors and to take corrective actions may not be completed until after the August 16 decision point. As of August 5, 2004, 138 of 193 issues remained to be resolved.
- Users to be trained for STARS have not been fully identified. The STARS training schedule has been delayed approximately one month, with the "Train the Trainers" module slipping from mid-July to mid-August. Training is critically important to successful implementation and is frequently cited as a cause in failed efforts.
- Crosswalks necessary to ensure the proper cleanup and conversion of field site data to STARS accounting codes are ongoing and are not expected to be completed until implementation. A STARS implementation official told us that continuous changes to field site requirements for converting their data to STARS accounting codes have made it difficult to complete testing of the crosswalks.

- The Oak Ridge Payment Center (Payment Center) staffing plan did not fully consider the increased workload associated with preparing data from the Department's legacy system for STARS acceptance. One aspect of the A-76 Study included consolidating all of the Department payments at Oak Ridge. Oak Ridge staff, who are now tasked with performing legacy data cleanup and conversion activities, will also be handling triple the payment workload by October 2004 with less than a 50 percent increase in personnel. In addition, the Payment Center's data entry workload will temporarily increase on implementation because STARS does not have the capability to automatically post payment transactions to multiple accounts – a capability that currently exists with the legacy system. The STARS project team plans to address this issue during post-implementation.

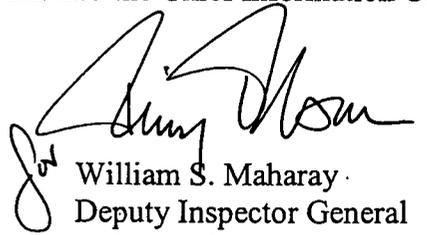
While we view each of these issues as substantial, we could not evaluate their overall impact or determine whether they can be adequately resolved because the project's critical path has not been well defined. According to the implementation officials, every task in the STARS project is now considered critical. However, without a critical path, we cannot gain, and management cannot benefit from, a clear understanding of essential tasks and interdependencies.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

In light of the above observations and concerns, the I-MANAGE Executive Steering Committee should ensure that prior to the September 22, 2004, final decision:

- Essential and interdependent tasks are properly identified and prioritized for completion;
- The budget recast and multi-fund accounts receivable issues are promptly resolved;
- Consideration is given to setting a date for freezing the crosswalks to allow testing to be completed prior to implementation; and,
- Sufficient resources are allocated to complete project tasks.

We informed project management officials and the Chief Information Officer of our observations on August 3, 2004.


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SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The audit of the I-MANAGE STARS was initiated in May 2004 and is currently ongoing at the Department of Energy Office of Management, Budget and Evaluation at Headquarters and the Oak Ridge Reservation. To accomplish the audit objective, we:

- Held discussions with program managers and project officials at Headquarters to gain an understanding of project management roles and responsibilities, and learn the history, status, and any problems associated with the project;
- Held discussions with officials at the Oak Ridge Operations Office, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and Y-12 National Security Complex to gain an understanding of their roles and responsibilities and their progress in preparation for system implementation; and
- Obtained and reviewed project documentation at Headquarters and the Oak Ridge Reservation.

The audit is being performed in accordance with generally accepted Government auditing standards for performance audits and includes tests of internal controls and compliance with laws and regulations to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective. Because our review is limited, it would not necessarily disclose all internal control deficiencies that may exist at the time of our audit. We did not rely on computer-processed data to accomplish our audit objective. An interim briefing was held with project officials on August 3, 2004.