



DOE PROJECT MANAGEMENT NEWS

Promoting Project Management Excellence

NOVEMBER 2021



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Director's Corner

The results are in, and congratulations are in order! Despite the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic during the past year, the Department of Energy (DOE) successfully delivered 100% of its capital asset construction projects in fiscal year (FY)2021, resulting in a three-year rolling average of 92% for the period 2019-2021. This is up from 86% in FY2020 and a three-year rolling average of 90% for the period 2018-2020. This success is a direct reflection of your professionalism and efforts to advance DOE's mission through the delivery of essential equipment and facilities. Congratulations!

Collectively, we will face additional project execution challenges in the months ahead. Of particular concern will be the ongoing supply chain disruptions and potential craft shortages. I encourage you to stay focused and stay positive. And remember, the project management processes and procedures codified in DOE Order 413.3B and supporting guides are based on best practices and lessons learned from across the DOE/NNSA complex, by other Federal agencies, and the commercial sector. Collectively, these processes and procedures provide a repeatable, consistent formula for successful project delivery.

Benchmarking, which may be either internal or external, is a tool for assessing and comparing project management processes and procedures, as well as project performance to continuously improve. The DOE Project Assessment and Reporting System (PARS) has records for 510 projects of which 316 have been either completed or cancelled. Each of these 316 projects tell a story that can help our project teams in future efforts. Read more about Office of Project Management (PM)'s continuing efforts to make DOE benchmarking data from PARS more available to users in the article on page 4.

In August 2013, then Secretary of Energy Moniz established a working group consisting of project management experts from various program offices across the department. The group was tasked with conducting an in-depth analysis of DOE's project management processes and developing recommendations for continuous improvement. Among the recommendations implemented were the strengthening of the Energy Systems Acquisition Advisory Board (ESAAB) to provide a stronger enterprise-wide perspective on individual projects, and the establishment of the Project Management Risk Committee (PMRC) to provide enterprise-wide project management risk assessment and expert advice to the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary as Chief Executive (CE) for Project Management, departmental Project Management Executives (PMEs), and the ESAAB on cost, schedule, and technical issues regarding capital asset projects with a total project cost (TPC) of \$100M or greater during Critical Decisions.

Continued on Page 2.

If you are a Federal Project Director (FPD) managing a project with a TPC \geq \$100M subject to DOE O 413.3B, sooner or later you will be engaging with the PMRC, and either an ESAAB or ESAAB-equivalent. See the article on page 2 for tips on how to have a successful PMRC or ESAAB/ESAAB-e encounter.

On November 15th, a cloud-based update of PARS will roll out, including a new URL. Learn more about the roll out and update in the article on page 5.

Finally, with the new fiscal year comes an opportunity to reflect, assess, and potentially establish new goals, both individually and/or for your team. You can explore one framework for personal growth and coaching, the GROW model, in the article on page 7.

Keep Charging!

Paul Bosco

How to Prepare for a PMRC or ESAAB Briefing

Mark Wiersma, Office of Project Analysis (PM-20)

If you are a Federal Project Director (FPD) or a member of the project team managing a project subject to Department of Energy (DOE) Order 413.3B, *Program and Project Management for the Acquisition of Capital Assets*, and valued $>$ \$100 million, you will most likely be engaging with the Project Management Risk Committee (PMRC) and the Energy Systems Acquisition Advisory Board (ESAAB) or an ESAAB-equivalent (ESAAB-e), at key milestones throughout your project. Here is a quick rundown of what you need to know to have a successful meeting.

What is the PMRC? The role of the PMRC is to support DOE's strategic objective of excellence in project management. The committee supports this objective in several ways, but most importantly for the project team, the PMRC provides expert advice to the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary as Chief Executive (CE) for Project Management, Project Management Executives (PMEs) and the ESAAB on cost, schedule, and technical issues affecting DOE capital asset projects. For projects with a total cost of \$100 million or greater, the PMRC must review, analyze, and make recommendations for approval of critical decision (CD) milestones, baseline change proposals (BCP), project peer reviews (PPRs), exemptions from specific provisions of DOE O 413.3B, and other significant project events.

The PMRC is not responsible for project implementation or execution, as that authority resides with the CE (for major system projects), the PME (for non-major system projects) and the FPD. The PMRC's role is to provide recommendations to the CE, PME and ESAAB at these key milestones and at other times as needed.



You should read the PMRC standard operating procedures (SOP) for more detailed information. The SOP is available on the PM-MAX 413 Resource Center website and the PMRC home page at the following web link: [PMRC Guiding Documents - Dept of Energy - MAX Federal Community](#).

Now let's discuss the ESAAB. Like the PMRC, the ESAAB's role is to support DOE's strategic objective of achieving and maintaining excellence in project management. The ESAAB is the primary advisory board to the Deputy Secretary (in his role as CE), and Departmental Executives regarding major system projects; these are projects with an upper end of their cost range (for CD-0 and CD-1) or total project cost (TPC), (for CD-2 and CD-3) of \$750 million or higher. The ESAAB assists and recommends on matters critical to CD milestones and performance baseline (PB) deviations. The PMRC supports the ESAAB on these critical project decisions. As with the PMRC, the ESAAB is not responsible for project implementation and execution. The ESAAB's role is to provide recommendations to the CE at those CD points and to the CE and PME at other times as needed. The PMRC, and specifically the project FPD, and others, as appropriate, will brief the ESAAB as part of each ESAAB project review.

Continued on Page 3.

In addition to the review of CDs and BCPs for major system projects, the ESAAB convenes (at least quarterly) to review all capital asset projects with a total cost of \$750 million or greater, or any projects that have been identified as special interest to the Department. The focus of the quarterly meetings is on projects in execution (i.e., post CD-2) or at risk of not meeting their PB. The ESAAB will also discuss project management and execution across the Department and make recommendations for enterprise-wide policy changes or clarifications.

Occasionally, for some issues that are more straightforward and less complicated, a “paper PMRC” or a “paper ESAAB” may be held. All preparations as discuss in this article are still required, but rather than holding an in-person or virtual meeting using a web (cloud based) video conferencing platform, the relevant documents are shared with the PMRC or ESAAB members via email for their review and endorsement. This can frequently result in a quicker decision for the issue. The PMRC/ESAAB Secretariat (Director, Office of Project Management) will propose any such “paper” sessions obtain approval of the PMRC Chair (currently, the Director, Office of Project Management as acting PMRC Chair) or the Deputy Secretary/CE as ESAAB Chair.

The ESAAB SOP provides valuable information to Project Management Support Offices (PMSO) and project teams in scheduling and preparing for a ESAAB meeting. The SOP is available on the PM-MAX 413 Resource Center and the PM ESAAB Home page at the following web link: <https://community.max.gov/display/DOEExternal/PM+ESAAB+Home>. This SOP includes all the steps required for a successful meeting for each CD event.

Here are a few important recommendations and best practices for a successful meeting with the PMRC and ESAAB.

Coordination – work closely with the PMSO, stakeholders and your respective project analyst (PM-20). They will ensure you have everything you need to have a successful meeting.

Plan – the PMRC Executive Secretariat maintains and publishes a six-month calendar of proposed committee meetings and topics. Plan to have your project included on the calendar accordingly.

Timing – the PMRC will review all projects with a total cost of \$100 million or more, and the ESAAB will generally review major systems projects (those valued at >\$750 million). Project teams should schedule their review with the PMRC at least 2 months prior to the targeted ESAAB or ESAAB-e meeting.

Schedule – submit an email request to the Secretariat ESAAB (ESAAB.Secretariat@hq.doe.gov) for ESAAB review at least 25 calendar days prior to the meeting.

Submit – briefing material and supporting documentation and send to the Secretariat ESAAB at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

Present – be sure to review the briefing template provided in the PMRC or ESAAB SOP closely. Templates are available at the PMRC and ESAAB home pages at the links provided above. Figure 1 shows some of the templates available. It is often helpful to review previous ESAAB briefs to see actual examples of prior work. But always refer to the templates and ensure all the information listed is included in your briefing.



Figure 1. PMRC/ESAAB Briefing Templates

Link to Presentation Template	Description
Critical Decision 0 (CD-0)	Template for briefing Critical Decision 0 (CD-0) to the ESAAB and/or PMRC
Critical Decision 1 (CD-1)	Template for briefing Critical Decision 1 (CD-1) to the ESAAB and/or PMRC
Critical Decision 3A (CD-3A)	Template for briefing Critical Decision 3A (CD-3A) to the ESAAB and/or PMRC
Critical Decision 2 (CD-2)	Template for briefing Critical Decision 2 (CD-2) to the ESAAB and/or PMRC
Critical Decision 3 (CD-3)	Template for briefing Critical Decision 3 (CD-3) to the ESAAB and/or PMRC
Critical Decision 4 (CD-4)	Template for briefing Critical Decision 4 (CD-4) to the ESAAB and/or PMRC
Performance Baseline (PB) Deviation	Template for briefing a Performance Baseline Deviation to the ESAAB and/or PMRC
Baseline Change Proposal (BCP)	Template for briefing Baseline Change Proposals to the ESAAB and/or PMRC

Focus – try to anticipate questions about the project and be prepared to respond. Briefings should be thorough but not repetitive or verbose, so minimize content to the extent possible.

The Office of Project Management (PM) offers a comprehensive resource center of essential information that will be valuable when preparing for meetings with the PMRC and ESAAB. And PM serves as the Secretariat for both the PMRC and ESAAB. Be sure to visit the home pages at the web links provided. And finally, the PM-20 project analyst assigned to the project is a great resource; if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact them to get more detail and sound advice.

Benchmarking

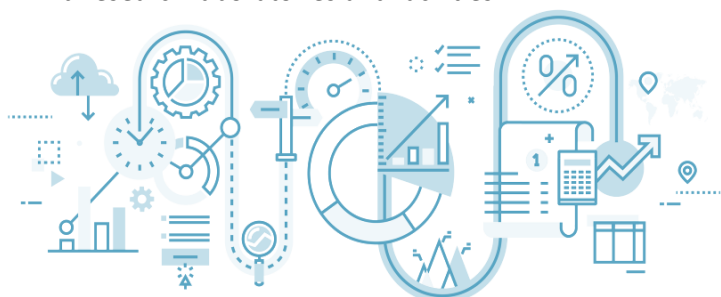
Matthew (Zac) West, Robert Stern, and Dipali Amin,
Office of Project Controls (PM-30)

The adage “past is prologue” takes many forms in project management. While estimate-at-completion (EAC) and estimate-to-complete (ETC) are day-to-day tools within an effective earned value management system (EVMS) for a given project, utilizing benchmarking and cost estimating relationships (CERs) for parametric estimating will outdo the magic 8-ball when using historic project data on a new project. Benchmarking at the Department of Energy (DOE) compares a like project’s actual cost and schedule to future project estimates to help determine estimate reasonableness. Seeing and understanding what risks were realized on past projects, whether baselined or anticipated in the risk register, helps inform the current estimate.

The key, of course, is having access to the historical data in the proper format to make benchmarking useful. Over the last 10 years, while many CERs were developed for specific projects by both programs and the DOE Office of Project Management (PM) to support independent cost estimates and independent cost reviews, they were generally done for a specific review and not captured in a standard format or in a single database for use on future reviews across the enterprise.

Currently, PARS has records for 510 projects. Each of the 316 projects that were either completed or cancelled tell a story that can help DOE in future efforts. PARS supplies time-phased data that is valid in most cases to support benchmarking efforts. For projects that are one-of-a-kind, this data set can still supply analogous examples to help support estimate reasonableness for both cost and schedule.

DOE executes unique projects across the enterprise such that commercial benchmarking data does not always relate in a meaningful way. While DOE subscribes to tools such as RSMeans (www.RSMeans.com), the data from these commercial vendors does not always address facilities with specific nuclear characteristics or one-of-a-kind research laboratories and facilities.



DOE also manages the real property database Facilities Information Management System ([FIMS](#)) which includes the Anticipated Asset Information Module (AAIM) to provide current information on planned acquisitions of real property assets, interest in real property assets, or improvements to real property assets.

In doing so it uses tailored RSMeans cost books to help inform users in forming CERs. A challenge with FIMS/AAIM is in bringing all of the different real property items from AAIM into a single project since one project can include one or more buildings, a parking lot, security perimeter, etc.

PM is continuing efforts to make DOE benchmarking data from PARS more available to users. In August 2021, PARS added a time phased data report to each project. PARS users now see a file titled, “*Project SPAE Benchmark*” in the project report section containing the time-phased budgeted cost of work scheduled (BCWS) or planned value, budgeted cost of work performed (BCWP) or earned value, actual cost of work performed (ACWP), and ETC for each work breakdown structure (WBS) element for the life of the project. A useful example to check if an estimate is realistic would be if a project planned specific efforts to reach critical decision (CD)-2 for an estimated cost of \$50M, but for like projects it historically takes twice as long and doubles the cost.

Figure 1. PARS Project Reports

Reports					
Default Reports		PARS Support		Find a file	
✓	PARS ID	Project Name	Modified	Name	
		Grid Storage Launchpad	October 18	Current Monthly Assessment	...
		Grid Storage Launchpad	October 18	Current RYG	...
		Grid Storage Launchpad	October 18	Project SPAE Benchmark	...
		Grid Storage Launchpad	October 18	Project Summary	...

As PARS already collects technical data, such as hazard category, as well as the location and time the project is taking place, PARS can be improved to help develop additional CERs. PARS is adding fields such as gross square feet to allow the system to better support CER development. In addition, PM-30 is working to map project costs from the contractor project performance (CPPs) data upload to a high-level WBS at key points in the project. As there is not a standard DOE WBS, the high-level WBS is based on the PM’s 2012 [WBS Handbook](#). The goal of this effort is for the PARS users and programs to be able to access the benchmarking data and results by the end of 2022.

Continued on Page 5.

As a proof of principle, 18 completed projects are now being mapped and will be loaded into PARS as the benchmarking interface is developed.

The process is working through analysis with ongoing effort towards adapting the practices to make the output more useful enterprise-wide. In doing so, PM-30 is reaching out to others across DOE and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to collaborate on program benchmarking systems.

In a separate effort, PM is also working with the Construction Industry Institute (CII), and other government agencies, to populate and improve a benchmarking tool kit which brings in more than just DOE historical projects. As a member of CII, DOE will have access to this tool when it is established. Keep an eye out for more information on the development of a benchmarking module in PARS and the CII effort later in 2022.

PARS Updates on the Way!

Matthew (Zac) West, Office of Project Controls (PM-30)

Significant updates to the Project Assessment and Reporting System (PARS) will be rolled out this month. PARS is moving from a base platform of SharePoint 2013 to Azure Government (Microsoft's cloud space) to take advantage of improved applications and tools. While the most significant immediate impact for users will be improved performance, this PARS update will include specific enhancements with more planned in future roll outs. What is staying the same in this update:

- The look and feel of PARS to reduce training time
- Security as a moderate system, maintaining the ability to have controlled unclassified information (CUI), such as data and documents that are official use only (OUO) and unclassified controlled nuclear information (UCNI)
- PARS remains outside the DOE firewall, making it easier for contractors to access

The upgrade to PARS will take place on November 15th with the earlier version to run in parallel for one month to make sure we do not have a lapse in capability (e.g., a report that does not run correctly).

The PARS team has been evaluating the updated version, which has been running in parallel since June 2021 and they are working to make sure that all current functionality works in the updated version. As noted, the earlier version will continue to operate as a backup option through the November reporting cycle.

On November 1st, the PARS team will email all users an invitation to sign up for your new PARS account. We are doing this prior to making the latest version available to help migrate all four hundred users to the new system before November 15th.

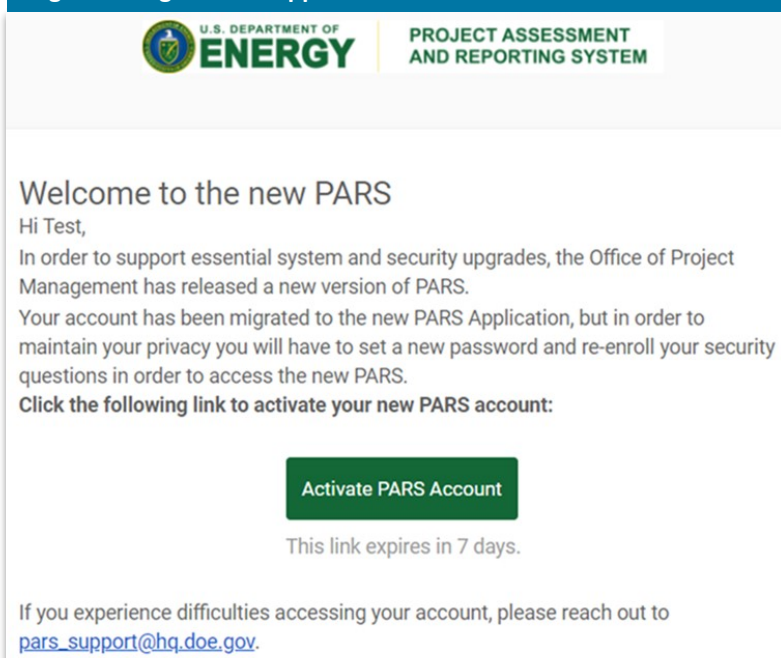
All PARS users will need to register for the latest version of PARS, as we are moving from an older two-factor authentication technology to a newer one.



On November 15th users will switch to a new URL <https://pars.doe.gov/>. If you go there now, it offers a PARS log in screen, but will not accept your log in until the 15th.

Figure 1 provides a snapshot of the email to register for the latest PARS. It will ask for a password that supports strong security and questions for password resets. For two-factor authentication, you will be able to use an email for one-time codes or set it up on a mobile device (phone or tablet). You then will be able to register your PIV card, which also provides two-factor authentication. Please be sure to do so between November 1-15.

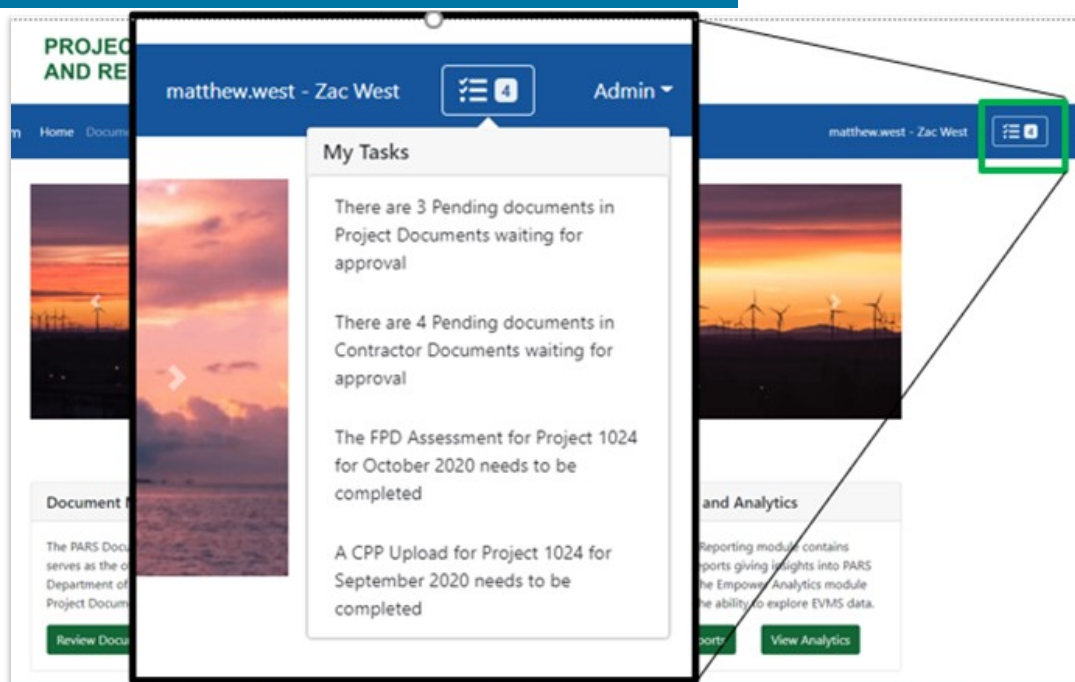
Figure 1. Registration Application



Continued on Page 6.

One of the new features is a task list of actions available by role. Look for it in the upper right side of the PARS home screen (Figure 2). There is also a new feedback option, so if you have a recommendation for an enhancement or if something does not respond as expected, you can take a screenshot and report it to PARS support while you are in the system. Figure 3 shows how the feedback tool works. The “Send feedback” button will appear on all PARS screens.

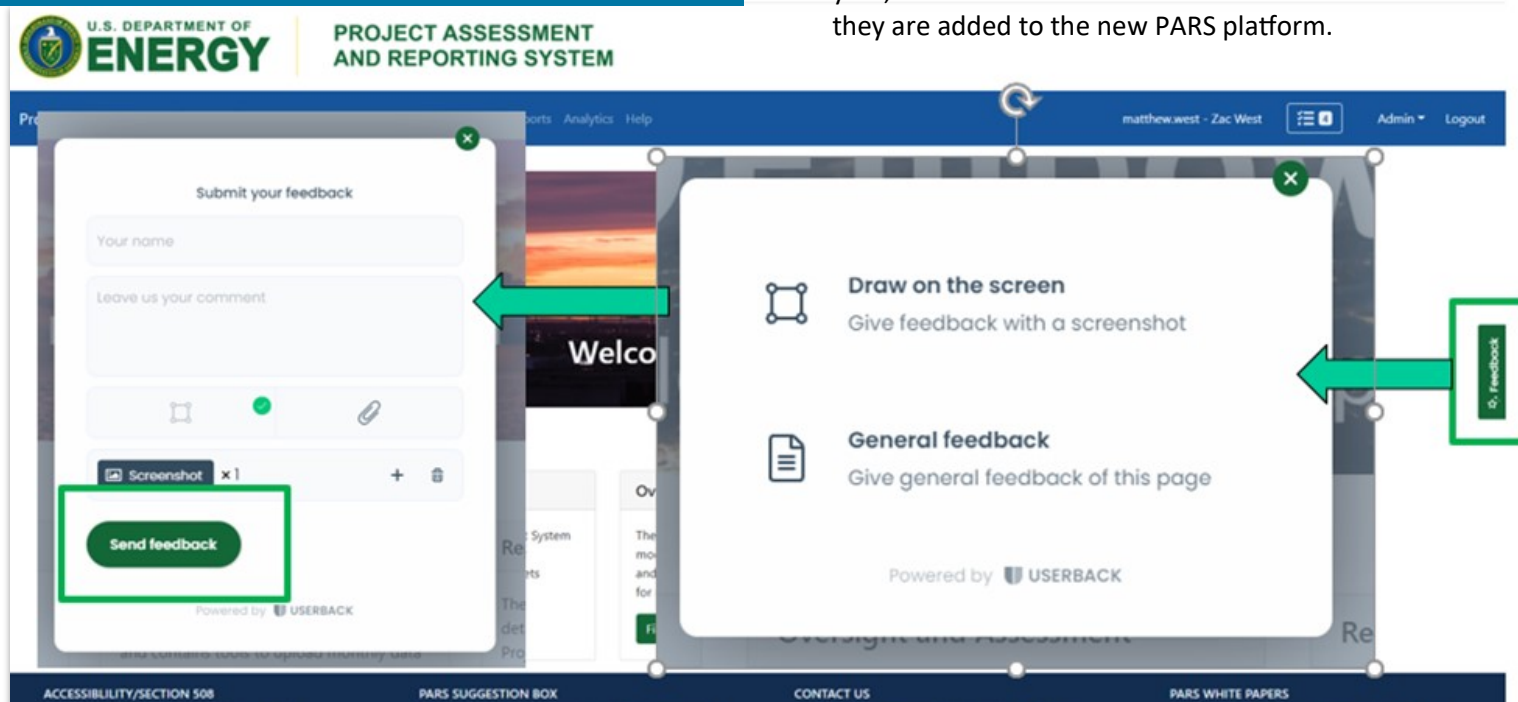
Figure 2. User Task List



For Contractors, the CPP upload process will provide a better workflow environment, improved validation reports, and coming during the next year, data integrity and quality reports to help identify gaps in data quality. Reports and Empower functionality will remain the same at roll out, but over the next year, the PARS team will move reports to Microsoft’s Power BI tool to provide new and improved report capabilities.

While the PARS updates are rolling out, PM is also providing a PARS user guide which will be updated as new options are implemented. The guide provides users with a checklist for each critical decision or action made in PARS. Over time, this checklist functionality will be added as instructional aids into the new PARS. Lastly, both basic and advanced PARS online training courses are being added to Learning Nucleus this month. The basic course consists of six one-hour blocks of instruction available to both federal and contractor staff. As enhancements are made to PARS over the next year, training material will also be updated. The PARS advanced course is a 12-hour training that digs more into analysis of data

Figure 3. PARS Feedback Tool



to support the evaluation of projects. Over the next year, look for articles that detail the enhancements as they are added to the new PARS platform.

Planning for GROWth

Linda Ott, Professional Development Division (PM-40)

As Federal employees wrap up the FY2021 performance cycle and look forward to FY2022, a bit of introspection and planning can differentiate goal setting for personal growth. We often use the adage, “Plan the work, work the plan” but how can this be applied to the most long-term project of anyone’s career—professional development? Does planning and setting goals for personal growth pay off? I hope, by the end of this article, you agree with me and set a plan for personal GROWth.

The GROW model, originally developed in the 1980s by business coaches Graham Alexander, Alan Fine, and Sir John Whitmore, is relatively simple. However, it requires intention and commitment. GROW stands for Goals, Reality, Options, Will. The genius is in its simplicity, as the GROW framework can be applied to almost any situation and yield positive results.

Asking yourself a series of questions makes applying the GROW model relatively easy, but it also results in greater intention. The more intention that is behind a goal, the better the likelihood of achieving it.



An excellent example of the GROW model at work was demonstrated by one of our recently awarded Level I FPDs. In early 2021, Crystal Williams applied for FPD Level I. She was informed that she lacked field experience before certification could be attained. By working the process and really focusing on the questions “What steps can you take?” and “What alternatives do you have?”, the now Level I FPD not only identified opportunities for field experience, but also took action to achieve her PMP. Please join me in congratulating Crystal on this achievement!

Planning for your professional development begins by taking time to set goals, whether the goal is to attain the next level of FPD certification, to take a PMCDP class that is new to you to strengthen your skills, or to attain a professional credential or license. Whatever the goal may be, applying the GROW framework increases awareness, accountability, and ultimately success.

Goals What do you want?	What’s important to you at the moment?
	What does your ideal future look like?
	What are you currently working toward?
Reality Where are you now?	How important is the goal to you?
	What is the biggest obstacle you are currently facing?
	What do you need to improve or advance?
Options What could you do?	If success was guaranteed, what would you do?
	What steps can you take?
	What alternatives do you have?
Will What will you do?	How committed are you to achieving this goal?
	When will you do it?
	How do you want to be held accountable for this goal?

G

Here are a few of the many resources available to help apply the GROW model:

R

[GROW Model | Sir John Whitmore's GROW Coaching Model Framework](#)
(performanceconsultants.com)

O

[The GROW Model of Coaching and Mentoring - Skills From MindTools.com](#)

W

[The GROW Framework – Coaching for Leadership \(nyu.edu\)](#)



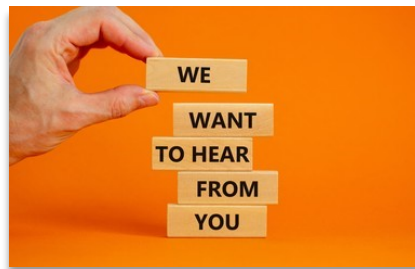
Congratulations to our newly certified FPDs!

Level I

Crystal Williams (EM)

Andrew Bachowski (SC)

Earn a CLP for reading PM News and providing feedback about the edition you read. [Click here!](#)



PMCDP FY22 Q1-Q2 Training Schedule

The training schedule is posted on PM-MAX. Save the direct link to the Project Management Career Development Program PMCDP Training Schedule to your favorites: <https://community.max.gov/x/BgZcQw>

Course Title	LN Code	Dates	CLPs	Details
Scope Management and Baseline Development	001036	November 15-18, 2021	24	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Strategic Planning	001043	November 16-18, 2021	24	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Capital Planning for DOE O 413.3B	002152	November 30-December 14, 2021	16	(Tue/Thurs) 12-3pm EST Webinar
Facilitating Conflict Resolution	001558	December 1-13, 2021	24	(Wed/Mon) 12pm-4pm EST Webinar
Managing Contract Changes	002102	December 14-17, 2021	32	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
PM Systems and Practices	001024	January 10-February 7, 2022	60	(Mon/Wed) 12pm-4pm EST Webinar
Monitoring and Controlling During Project Execution	000450	January 10-14, 2022	32	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Acquisition Management for Technical Personnel	000145	January 25-Feb 3, 2022	16	(Tue/Thurs) 12pm-4pm EST Webinar
Systems Engineering	001049	January 24-27, 2022	24	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Executive Communications	001031	February 1-3, 2022	24	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Project Risk Analysis	001033	February 7-11, 2022	28	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Value Management	001037	February 8-11, 2022	24	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Front-End Planning	003176	February 15-March 3, 2022	20	(Tue/Thurs) 1-3pm EST Webinar
Planning for Safety in PM	001035	February 16-March 9, 2022	28	(Wed) 1-3pm EST Webinar
Federal Budget Process in DOE	001034	February 22-25, 2022	32	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Negotiation Strategies and Techniques	001047	February 28-March 9, 2022	24	(Mon/Wed) 12pm-4pm EST Webinar
Managing Contract Changes	002102	March 7-10, 2022	32	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Project Management Simulation	001029	March 7-11, 2022	32	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Managing Performance-Based Contracts	001951	March 22-24, 2022	24	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily
Advance Risk Management	001042	March 22-24, 2022	32	10:30am-4:30pm EST Webinar Daily

Find up-to-date information and resources anytime! PM axi

All PMCDP Course Descriptions and Course Materials can be found in the Course Catalog on PM-MAX. Save the direct link to your favorites: <https://community.max.gov/x/UAT3Rw>



Or download the Interactive Curriculum Map: <https://community.max.gov/x/sQd1Qw>

Have a question, found a bug or glitch in a PMCDP online course, or want to provide feedback? Submit your questions through PMCDPOnlineCourseSupport@hq.doe.gov.

Contact Us!

The Office of Project Management welcomes your comments on the Department's policies related to DOE Order 413.3B. Please report errors, omissions, ambiguities, and contradictions to PMpolicy@hq.doe.gov. Propose improvements to policies at <https://hq.ideascale.com>.

If you have technical questions about PARS, such as how to reset your password, please contact the PARS Help Desk at PARS_Support@Hq.Doe.Gov. And as always, PARS documentation, frequently asked questions (FAQs) and other helpful information can be found at <https://pars2oa.doe.gov/support/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

The current PARS reporting schedule is located in PM-MAX at the following link <https://community.max.gov/x/m4IIY>.

Need information to apply for FPD certification? The Certification and Equivalency Guidelines (CEG) can be found here <https://community.max.gov/x/IQd1Qw>.

Can't put your finger on a document or information you were told is available on PM-MAX? Looking for information on DOE Project Management? Submit your questions and queries to PMWebmaster@doe.gov.

To reach the Professional Development Division team:



Linda Ott — Division Director for Professional Development, PMCDP Program Manager, FPD Certifications Manager, PM Newsletter Editor, Linda.Ott@hq.doe.gov, 202-287-5310



Sigmond Ceaser — Alternate Delivery Platforms, PMCDP Review Recommendations Lead, PMCDP Curriculum Manager, Sigmond.Ceaser@hq.doe.gov



Ruby Giles — PMCDP Budget Manager, PMCDP Training Coordinator and Training Delivery Manager, Course Audit Program, Ruby.Giles@hq.doe.gov

If you would like to contribute an article to the Newsletter or want to provide feedback, contact the Editor at DL-PM-40.

