



## Hot Topics

### Implementation of STARS - How will this affect me?

*STARS will bring changes and improvements to various user communities. To help you better understand what STARS will mean to you, we will include a periodic feature article called "Implementation of STARS - How will this affect me?" This feature article will highlight STARS activities and changes for various user groups. This month's feature is:*

#### **STARS User Community**

Starting on June 29, the STARS Implementation Team will begin conducting Lunch and Learns to provide system users an introduction to STARS and answer questions from the end user community. The first Lunch and Learn will be an introduction to a STARS navigation tutorial to familiarize end users with the hands-on web-based training course. This tutorial will be available to end-users online and will help them learn how to navigate through STARS. Lunch and Learns will be scheduled at Headquarters and various field office locations, and will be transmitted via video conference. Specific information on these sessions will be distributed to financial managers in the organizations to cascade to their staff. All current DISCAS users and future STARS users are encouraged to attend these sessions to prepare for the up-coming STARS classroom training to be conducted in September and October.

#### **User Acceptance Testing**

May 3, 2004 was a critical milestone for STARS. As planned, the STARS User Acceptance Testing (UAT) began in Germantown, Maryland. The first round of UAT is scheduled for May 3 - June 11, 2004, with an initial implementation feasibility assessment to be made on June 15, 2004. With the elimination of two cycles of Module Unit and Integration Testing to allow for the reconfiguration of the software to align with the A-76 Financial Services Most Efficient Organization, converted legacy data and interfaces are being analyzed by the functional subject matter experts for the first time. As expected, issues are being identified and corrected for the second round of UAT. Interfaces, including the Integrated Contractor interface, are being tested in this first round of UAT, and will be tested again in the second UAT. Upon completion of each test, the results will be summarized, and shared with the interface partners.

#### **STARS Values**

The STARS Accounting Flex Field (AFF) is comprised of multiple segments that will be populated with values established and maintained centrally at Headquarters. Each of the DOE AFF segments has been mapped to a legacy DISCAS/MARS segment. For example, the AFF Fund Code segment replaces the legacy DISCAS/MARS Fund Type segment.

Field offices have been requested to identify legacy values for most of the AFF segments. The STARS General Ledger Team is assigning STARS values for each of the AFF segments based on the legacy values provided by the field. The Team can only accept data values from the field offices. Integrated Contractors must coordinate with their respective field offices to request values to be added. The Work for Others (WFO) segment replaces reimbursable work order and Inter-DOE work order numbers. A range of STARS WFO segment values has been established for each office. STARS WFO values assigned by the field must be communicated to the STARS General Ledger team to ensure the data is populated in the appropriate tables before entries can be processed in STARS. All STARS values are posted to the I-MANAGE web site.

#### **STARS Myth versus Fact**

*Many of you have been telling us about rumors and hallway chatter you have been hearing about STARS. To separate truth from fiction, we are launching a new series called STARS Myth versus Fact. If you have heard a rumor about STARS that you would like to see addressed in future issues of the STARS Communiqué, please e-mail your suggestions to STARS@hq.doe.gov.*

**Myth:** DISCAS is better than STARS.

**Fact:** DISCAS is currently "easy to use" for many of you because it is a custom-built system, tailored specifically for the financial transactions of DOE. The software is comfortable primarily because of your familiarity with it. It is a good system that has served DOE well. However, DISCAS is based on 20 year old technology and was written on the HP 3000 platform which will not be supported beyond early 2007. The enhanced quality of computer products and services currently available has been a factor in implementing, licensing, and supporting a new system - STARS.

STARS will provide greater functionality than DISCAS. It is based on Oracle Federal Financials software, a leader in it the Federal financial market. It is web-based and offers logical screen (or form) navigation as well as drop down menus filled with options for most fields. Users will also be able to access online manuals for answers to system process and navigation questions.

And who knows? After becoming comfortable with the new system and the added functionality it provides, end users may ultimately find that STARS is better than DISCAS!

## Monthly Spotlight: STARS Accounts Payable

Each month we highlight a new component of STARS or an upcoming activity that you may find interesting. This month we spotlight new features in the STARS Accounts Payable module. Jeff Payne (ORO) leads the STARS Accounts Payable Team.

The Accounts Payable (AP) module will be used to process payments in STARS. There will be many differences in the STARS AP module when compared to DISCAS; however, the type of information that will be processed is essentially the same. STARS groups all AP functions together into a module, this module then interacts with other STARS modules such as purchasing, accounts receivable and the general ledger, to ensure that all financial data is recorded accurately throughout STARS. For instance, the STARS purchasing module will automatically populate invoice funding information in the AP module.

STARS also uses many more screens to collect the payment, invoice, and supplier information that we currently enter into one screen in DISCAS. However, despite the fact that STARS uses more screens to collect this information, STARS can actually save us time by automatically populating similar information across multiple transactions. For instance, STARS requires that ABA routing information be entered on a separate screen but once the information is entered, STARS automatically matches the numerous supplier bank accounts to the proper ABA number without requiring the ABA number be re-entered for each individual bank account.

STARS testers that have been learning how to use the STARS AP module were initially surprised by the look and feel of the new screens, but they have quickly learned the new system and are now becoming proficient.

In addition to the new screens, the STARS Accounts Payable module has many new features and automatic processes for functions we currently perform manually. For instance, in DISCAS interest on invoices is manually calculated outside of the system; however, STARS will automatically calculate interest on invoices. In addition to saving time, automatic interest calculation within STARS also reduces the number of errors that can be made transferring data in and out of the system. STARS has a similar automated process when an invoice is returned to the vendor for bad information, such as incorrect banking information or a missing tax id. Once the corrected information is entered into STARS, the system will automatically re-calculate and update the new payment dates.

Type	Supplier	Supplier Num	Site	Invoice Date	Invoice Num	Invoice Curr	Invoice Amount
Standard						USD	

*The STARS Invoice Entry screen (shown above) is the first of a series of screen that will record payment information.*

Currently in DISCAS, we use a Document Control Symbol (DCS) code structure to manually warehouse payments; however, in STARS payments will be automatically warehoused based on the due date. All of these changes will require staff to be flexible in learning the new features, but will allow numerous improvements to be realized in the DOE payment process.

## Standard General Ledger Training

Per the direction of the Office of Finance and Accounting Policy in a memorandum dated September 8, 2003, all field offices and integrated contractors should provide appropriate staff with SGL training to facilitate the conversion and implementation of SGL and ensure a smooth transition to STARS. The Department of Treasury and private companies offer excellent SGL training courses in basic, intermediate, and advanced SGL. For staff outside of the Washington DC area computer-based training is available from the Department of Treasury and from third-party vendors. If several employees at a particular site need SGL training, please consider contacting the Treasury Agency Services, Professional Development Division on (202) 874-9560 for an on-site course.

### STARS Project Information

I-MANAGE Program Site: <http://www.mbe.doe.gov/ME2-5/i-manage/INDEX.HTM>

STARS Project Site: <http://www.me.doe.gov/STARS>

I-MANAGE Program Manager, Chris Simpson: 202-586-4310 christopher.simpson@hq.doe.gov

I-MANAGE Federal Project Executive, Warren Huffer: 301-903-3761 warren.huffer@hq.doe.gov

STARS Project Manager, Laura Kramer: 301-903-9932 laura.kramer@hq.doe.gov

**Sign-up for the STARS  
Distribution List**

E-mail: [STARS@hq.doe.gov](mailto:STARS@hq.doe.gov)