Skills Marketplace PDI Team Discussion Approach and Analysis of Pilot Survey Results:

Skills Marketplace PDI Team Charge: Review pilot results and recommend changes to the Skills Marketplace Program Draft Operational Framework

Background:

The pilot phase of the Skills Marketplace program was intended to test the program Operational Framework to evaluate the following aspects:

- Provide a range of project types to foster employee professional development in a number of program areas, disciplines, and skills.
- Enable staff to enter their skills and interests information into the Skills Marketplace and to apply for, and if selected, to participate in projects that are useful to their professional development.
- Enable managers to select project staff from among the Skills Marketplace entries and applicants, and to benefit from employee skills from across the participating organizations.
- Provide evidence of practicality, potential effectiveness, and desirability of extending the Skills Marketplace agency-wide from experiences of participating employees and managers.

Draft Operational Framework sections to be discussed:

6. What is a Skills Marketplace Project?

7. What is the time commitment associated with participating in a Skills Marketplace Project?

8. Who is eligible to participate in the One EPA Skills Marketplace Program?

9. How can employees participate in the One EPA Skills Marketplace Program?

11. What is the application process for participating in a Skills Marketplace project?

12. What is the selection process for participating in a Skills Marketplace project?

13. What are the guidelines and conditions for participation, once an employee is selected to participate in a Skills Marketplace project?

14. How is an employee's performance on a Skills Marketplace project evaluated and/or recognized?

Appendix: Skills Marketplace Participation Agreement Template

Key: Yellow (low priority); Magenta (medium priority); Red (high priority)

Proposed Approach:

For each highlighted section:

- Read current draft Operational Framework text
- Review relevant survey results
- Is the current text sufficient/ satisfactory?
- If no, discuss options for improving text
- Decide on recommendation for improving text.

What is a Skills Marketplace Project?

Project Participants Survey Responses

What type of project did you participate in?

Science/Engineering	16	28%
Legal	1	2%
Financial	1	2%
Contracts/Grants	5	9%
Administrative	3	5%
Policy	5	9%
Information Management	5	9%
Generalist (e.g. Environmental Protection Specialist, Program Analyst, Project Management)	15	26%
Human Resources	1	2%
Other (please specify)	11	19%

Other (please specify)

- emergency response
- Writing/Editing
- Watch Officer in the Emergency Operations Center
- Geospatial Application Development
- Social Media
- Correction to question 6. My project was in OCIR not OA / / My project was as Lead to a LGAC (Local Government Advisory Committee)
- Social Media
- Website Editing
- Emergency Response
- Training
- Social Media

- Characterization of projects' focus as skills development, skills transfer or both was sharply different from the early phase of the pilot to the post-pilot survey. This suggests a strong serving of both needs even in the pilot, and that probably all SMP projects would have some skill development function.

	Skills Development	Skills Transfer	Both
Project supervisors' view in mid-pilot survey (Aug. 2013)	41%	55%	4%
Participants' view in post-pilot survey	28%	14%	58%

Project Supervisor Survey Responses:

What type of project did you manage?

Science/Engineering	5	24%

Legal	1	5%
Financial	2	10%
Contracts/Grants	1	5%
Administrative	1	5%
Policy	2	10%
Information Management	5	24%
Generalist (Environmental Protection Specialist, Program Analyst, Project Management)	1	5%
Human Resources	1	5%
Other (please specify)	5	24%

Other (please specify)

- Tribal website development
- Innovation
- Records Management
- Staffing support for the HQ Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Project Management and Coordination

What is the time commitment associated with participating in a Skills Marketplace Project?

Project Participants Survey Responses

5% of your time	5	9%
10% of your time	19	33%
20% of your time	25	44%
Other (please specify)	8	14%
Total	57	100%

Other (please specify)

- A one day trip to Springfield, MO to collect water quality samples
- 4 weeks out of the fiscal year plus some additional one-hour meetings and shadowing sessions.
- 15%
- whenever I had time
- 10-20% as needed
- 15
- 15 percent

Who is eligible to participate in the One EPA Skills Marketplace Program?

This question was not addressed in the survey but this issue came up often during the pilot.

How can employees participate in the One EPA Skills Marketplace Program?

This question was not addressed in the survey.

What is the application process for participating in a Skills Marketplace project?

- Application process:
    - 95% very/easy to obtain supervisors' approval – reflects high level pilot support

- Very/easy to use portal, simple documentation (see how match of skills to needs works out over time, a potential "best practice" focus)

What is the selection process for participating in a Skills Marketplace project?

Project Supervisors Survey Responses:

Which of the following selection methods did you use to select your participant(s)? (please select all that apply)

Resume/Application	17	81%
Reference/Supervisor check	9	43%
One on one interview with selecting official	14	67%
Panel interview (e.g. with other members of the team)	3	14%
Other (please specify)	2	10%

Other (please specify)

- One applicant applied for our project.
- Resumes reviewed and phone calls with candidates.

What are the guidelines and conditions for participation, once an employee is selected to participate in a Skills Marketplace project?

Project Participants Responses:

- Results/benefits:
  - 82% greatly/enhanced skills/knowledge
  - Most written testimonials reflect positive, often exciting learning experiences that generally seem to reinforce goals for OneEPA perspective
  - N/A or negative seem to reflect
    - Projects that didn't come off because of time disruption, inadequate plan
    - Need for "best practices" of project supervisors learning/knowing how to structure/manage work plans in SMP
- Effects on offices/collaboration
  - 53% greatly/enhanced collaboration between offices, 28% not; question for further assessment in agency-wide SMP as to importance of direct collaboration between offices or whether key ties are largely indirect through participants
  - 86% contributed/significantly to mission of project office
- Listed challenges reflect
  - Need for project and home supervisors to focus on time management (need "best practices" learning to ensure project work is productive AND home gives the 20% (or whatever))
  - Need to communicate imperative of SMP working through SharePoint (communications and coordination issues)
  - Need for One EPA coordination between home and project office supervisors
    - need for "best practices" learning about tasks, expectations, time
    - Need for Agency guidance to be clear on home supervisors' obligation to honor the SMP time %

        - increases impetus for all supervisors to be entrepreneurial and consider hosting an SMP project
- Conclusions
    - 95% would recommend SMP participation, 95% would do another SMP project
    - Need to clarify that SharePoint will become SMP platform as soon as practicable
    - Need for simple templates regularizing needed logistics in process (e.g. extension of project)
    - Need to offer online training for participants and supervisors on SMP aspects (including on Operational Framework?)

Project Supervisor Responses:

- SMP benefits to you and your organization: valuable (62%)/extremely (29%) = 91%.
- Participant showed ability to learn/apply needed skills: agree (57%)/strongly (38%)=95%
- Cross-office collaboration/communication: enhanced (67%)/greatly (19%) = 86%
- Recommend SMP participation to another manager: yes 100%
- Would participate in SMP again: yes (76%), yes with modifications (24%)
    - Some modifications related to project refinement, and having all of EPA to draw on skills
    - Others may reflect challenges of culture change (not "supporting a program's needs", risk of participants' office "roles and objectives that potentially conflict" with project office's
    - Improvements in portal, shorter-term access to participants [note that means to accomplish these objectives will be in SharePoint]
- Many strong testimonials for effective skills transfer and development, getting work done, interoffice coordination on most projects that were able to work logistically (re pilot issues)
- Challenges – apart from pilot logistics issues, disruption (shutdown, furloughs) and related issues, most centered on
    - Need for management focus including project planning
    - Better ongoing coordination with participant (share best practices) [SharePoint can help]
    - Better communication best practices with participant and home office

Home Office Supervisor Responses:

- 22% did not work with participants or project supervisor on participation agreement.
- 59% of HOS believed project enhanced or greatly enhanced One EPA interaction
- 91% thought SMP contributed (66%) or contributed significantly (25%) to employee development
- Some HOS indicate that SMP projects need to be priority work, not work that wouldn't get done otherwise, to maintain HOS support and ensure focus on project management
- "Best practice" for participant to give detailed communication on work in SMP project and as to availability for home office work
- Need to cover potential for extension in original Project Agreement
- 91% would recommend SMP to other managers
- 100% would approve future SMP participation, 16% with caveats of
    - No impact on mission-critical work of home office (should be addressed in early discussion)
    - Some part of PARS to identify project work as important

- "Specific deliverables defined in advance to measure progress" (not HOS's job to define project characteristics)

How is an employee's performance on a Skills Marketplace project evaluated and/or recognized?

All Groups Surveyed – Relation to PARS: net of all surveyed

	Participants (# of respondents)	Home Office Supervisors (# of respondents)	Project Supervisors (# of respondents)
# of survey respondents/total in @category (%)	55/92 (60%)	32/67 (48%)	21/59 (36%)
Skills Marketplace participation should not be reflected in PARS evaluation	11% (6)	3% (1)	5% (1)
Consider a letter from Skills Marketplace Project Supervisor in PARS evaluation	63% (36)	47% (15)	38% (8)
Require a letter from Skills Marketplace Project Supervisor in PARS evaluation	19% (11)	34% (11%)	33% (7)
Include Skills Marketplace participation as a non-critical element in PARS	53% (30)	31% (10)	38% (8)
Include Skills Marketplace participation as a critical element in PARS	7% (4)	13% (4)	19% (4)
Other	9% (5)	16% (5)	19% (4)