

ISC13D004

Title: Progress report on the Finance system replacement project
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Issue

To update the Committee on the progress of the project to replace the Finance System.

Recommendation

Recipients are invited:

- To consider the report.

Resource Implications

None

Equality and Diversity

No impact on equality and diversity is expected.

Timing of decisions

Not applicable

Further Information

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Background

See below.

Project: Finance System Replacement
Document: Highlight Report
Author: Donna O'Brien
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ABW Project Phase 1 Project Managers Report

Review of the Post Go Live Period

ABW has now been live for over two months and the number of users logging in has increased hugely with the end of the summer break and the arrival of the students for the new year. There are satisfied users who are coping well with the functionality but there are some users who are not enjoying using ABW to process financial transactions for a variety of reasons.

Finance and Faculty users

Users in Finance and the Faculty Finance Offices are generally comfortable with using ABW and are coping well with transaction processing, reporting and enquiries. However they are unable to rely on the data coming out of ABW which they feel is incomplete and inaccurate. Faculty staff feel unable to produce budget reports for their budget holders and ABW is losing credibility.

Issues include:

- Interface files not posted from SAM and Concept labour recharges
- Interface files for SAM posted multiple times
- Overheads not posted
- Recharges not posted
- Opening balances and reversals not posted
- Restricted access to payroll costs

REN Finance Users

Users in REN Finance are getting more familiar with ABW but have been frustrated by the restrictions on the data that they can see in terms of payroll detail. REN Finance, also have an issue with the lack of restrictions within ABW in terms of Account code and Chargecode combinations. PI's can now post expenditure against lines with no budget and against codes which cannot be reclaimed from the funder and this causes extra work in REN finance as items must then be moved.

Other Finance Users

The other users such as HR, DOS, Development Office, VCO etc have required more support than the bigger schools and sections and this is because they have a low volume of transactions and a lot of people for whom finance makes up a comparatively small part of their role. For these people there is little opportunity to build their skills and confidence by repetition of tasks.

Principle Investigators and Academics

Principle Investigators and Academic Staff are using ABW to review their budgets and to order goods and services. Most have had few problems and seem quite comfortable with the functionality but a few have voiced concerns over restrictions in access to detailed transactions. We are working with staff to resolve these issues.

Summary

In general the users who are familiar with ABW already are managing well with the functionality and every user is going through a steep learning curve as ABW is so very different to QLX.

To date over 15000 requisitions have been raised through ABW and 10000 supplier invoices have been processed

Interfaces

The SAM interfaces are still not working correctly and 98 payment files have not been posted, 60 files were posted between 2 and 6 times, and some of the files had the debits and credits back to front. Finance now carry out a reconciliation between SAM and BW every week which identifies what has been posted and what is outstanding.

A recent meeting identified that the problems were with the mappings in the SSIS package written to extract the data from SAM rather than with the data in held in SAM/SITS. The systems team are working with ITCS and Debtors to resolve the remaining issues and are testing files as they become available.

Currently there are problems with:

- Credit/debit card receipts for invoices
- Credit/debit card receipts for cash sales
- Bank Transfers to clear invoices

The Concept labour charges interface is not working as ABW rejects the file and there is an issue with the interpretation of account rules.

Outstanding Issues

The outstanding issues from Phase 1 which are still to be resolved are:

- Completing the Stock implementation
- Finalising PI reports to allow them to access data in sufficient detail
- Loading remaining project transactions
- Completing the SAM Interfaces
- Completing the Concept interface for labour recharges
- Completing the ABW interface to SAM for debtors invoices

Unit 4 consultancy will be required to complete some of these tasks.

Phase 2- ARCP Implementation

The build of the ARCP solution began in September and after a very short period of time the consultant reported that he felt that it was impossible to build and test ARCP in the time allocated. Amongst the people working on the project it has become apparent that the November timescale is unachievable even for the build of the costing tool.

From meetings between REN staff and Rob Cocklin it was agreed that the solution design can be broken into 3 distinct tasks being:

1. ARCP build
2. Workflow
3. Transfer of ARCP data to PCB (AAM/ABW)

The first of these tasks has progressed well with both Rob Cocklin and Richard Worton working on the build. The aim is to begin testing next week with a view to going live in the new year.

Of the three tasks workflow is complex and will take a lot of Unit 4 resource to complete, with just Rob allocated to the build it is unlikely that this could be delivered before May 2014 fortunately this is probably the task that we could manage without for a few months although it is not ideal.

If workflow is not available initially there would need to be some additional work done to ensure the paper based "reports" (RGNs) we currently use in place of workflow were enabled to run off ARCP which would mean additional work in task 1.

The final task is the transfer of ARCP costings to the Project ledger in ABW. We were led to believe that this was a simple "push of a button" process but now it transpires that there is no ready-made solution and we will in effect, be starting with a blank sheet to write our own solution.

We have repeatedly questioned the level of support and resources provided by Unit 4 and in response have been provided with novice staff with very little ABW 5.6.3 experience and a mixture of consultants bought in from other organisations.

We have repeatedly been reassured that UEA was considered a priority and that resources would be made available but throughout we have suffered as a result of inconsistent and insufficient resourcing which has now come to a head with us trying to implement Phase 2 with an undeliverable Project Plan and insufficient Unit 4 resources.

In response to the above we have no choice other than to recommend to the Board that the timeline for the implementation of ARCP is changed and a new project plan drawn up to support the following proposed timescales:

Task 1 ARCP Build to be completed by the end of January 2014

Task 2 Workflow to replace the RGN forms to be completed by the end of March

Task 3 Transfer of data from ARCP to PCB to be completed by the end of January

These timescales are proposals based on the estimated deadlines and tasks overleaf:

		Consultancy days booked	ARCP	Transfer to PCB	Workflow
w/c	07/10/2013 14/10/2013 21/10/2013 28/10/2013	6 days 4 days 2 days 4 days	build build and test IST		
	04/11/2013 11/11/2013 18/11/2013 25/11/2013	2 days 2 days 1 day		Agree and Map Flexifields Build ETL & Planner	
	02/12/2013 09/12/2013 16/12/2013 23/12/2013 30/12/2013	2 days 1 day	UAT	Define processes to update PCB Build processes in test & IST	
	06/01/2014 13/01/2014 20/01/2014 27/01/2014		Build in Live Go-Live	Build in Live Go Live with ETL	Define workflow views Define AG16 & SQL
	03/02/2014 10/02/2014 17/02/2014 24/02/2014				Build AAM Workflow IST UAT
	03/03/2014 10/03/2014 17/03/2014 24/03/2014 31/03/2014				Build in Live Go-Live

UEA are committed to delivering ARCP, workflow and ETL and have allocated additional internal resources to the project. REN have set up weekly update meetings to ensure that all staff are kept up to date and have progressed arrangements for testing. REN staff have taken time out of the day jobs to urgently collate and deliver data to contribute to the ARCP build in very short timescales and are fully involved with the project.

The tasks and timescales above have been discussed with Tracy Moulton and Rob Cocklin and are deemed to be deliverable providing sufficient Unit 4 resource can be provided to support the implementation and that those consultants are fully supported and managed from within Unit 4.

Next Steps

Identification of additional Phase 1 and Phase 2 support for UEA
A revised Project Plan identifying deliverable milestones and tasks

Complete the build of ARCP and begin testing