

NOTES FROM THE:

Financial Information Systems Program Office



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Financial Information Resource System

The Financial Information Systems Program Office (ESC/FN), Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, is responsible for development of the Financial Information Resource System (FIRST). FIRST will provide Air Force financial managers with a new, enterprise-wide system to integrate all budget processes and provide financial information to worldwide users ranging from squadron resource advisors to Secretary of the Air Force (SAF)-level corporate leadership. Current Air Force financial legacy systems provide limited decision support capabilities, are resistant to incorporating modern business practices, and have limited interoperability due to dissimilar database structures, computer languages, and operating environments. ESC/FN is working to deliver the Air Force a modern and robust financial management information system for the 21st century.

ESC/FN is developing FIRST using the evolutionary spiral acquisition approach. This means FIRST will be developed in increments enabling capability to be fielded quickly and often. Moreover, this approach is schedule-centric which puts a premium on fielding capability while maintaining flexibility as user requirements evolve. The initial increment, Acquire Accounting, will provide timely access to Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) accounting data (within 24 hours) with planned implementation by third quarter FY03. This increment will be closely followed by capabilities/increments for Budget Formulation, Funds Management, Budget Execution, and an interactive cost modeling capability. Additionally, outdated legacy systems such as the Automated Budget Interactive Data Environment System (ABIDES), the Command Budget Automated System (CBAS), and the Microbased Budget Automated System (MicroBas)...in addition to other financial legacy systems...will ultimately be modernized/subsumed into FIRST and eventually decommissioned.

FIRST will also implement the Department of Defense (DoD) Standard Fiscal Code (SFC) structure, meet Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Act requirements, be interoperable with the Global Combat Support System—Air Force (GCSS-AF) environment, and be compatible with the DoD Financial Management Modernization Program (FMMP). The ultimate

objective is to provide Air Force financial managers (at every level) with a state-of-the-art financial management information system that fully supports the Air Force Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS).

A Cost-Plus-Award-Fee (CPAF) contract with a six year period of performance was awarded to Accenture LLP in April 2001 as the prime development contractor for FIRST. In addition, Lockheed Martin Systems Integration—Owego (LMSI-O) is on a separate contract to ensure FIRST is interoperable with the GCSS-AF Integration Framework (IF). The GCSS-AF IF establishes technical standards for interoperability and provides common services (such as security) for information systems throughout the Air Force. This approach saves time and money by enabling re-use of previously developed software and maximizes employment of Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) technologies. Currently, FIRST will reside on the GCSS-AF IF at the Defense Enterprise Computing Center-Detachment (DECC-D) at Montgomery, Alabama. User training and help desk operations will be conducted by SAF/FMB. From an overall acquisition perspective, ESC/FN is working closely with SAF/FMB, Accenture, and LMSI-O to ensure FIRST meets GCSS-AF technical standards and the customer's requirement for a modern, robust, and responsive system.

In order to provide a quality product, the FIRST team relies heavily on user input into the development process. Under the auspices of SAF/FMB, users are actively engaged with ESC/FN, Accenture, and LMSI-O throughout the development cycle. For example, Joint Application Design (JAD) sessions and a web-based User Evaluation Model (UEM) are available for users to provide feedback on FIRST prior to testing and final delivery. The objective is to cement customer buy-in and to provide a system of immediate value to the users by incorporating "real world" input.

Working in concert with SAF/FMB, ESC/FN is committed to providing the 6000+ Air Force financial managers throughout the world with a modern, powerful, and flexible financial management information system. ESC/FN is proud to be spearheading the FIRST development effort by enabling Air Force's "honest brokers" to do their jobs more efficiently and effectively!