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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Farm and Foreign
Agricultural
Service

Farm Service
Agency

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TO: Office of External Affairs
Office of Business and Program Integration
Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs
Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs
Deputy Administrator for Field Operations
Deputy Administrator for Management
Deputy Administrator for Commodity Operations

FROM: Steven L. Sanders 
Acting Chief Information Officer

SUBJECT: Farm Service Agency (FSA)'s Systems Development Life Cycle (SDLC)
Formal Release

As part of the Chief Financial Officer's Act audit of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Fiscal Year 2003 Comparative Financial Statements, a review of CCC's Information Technology (IT) controls environment was conducted. The auditors issued management letter item 3-10 finding a need for FSA/CCC's SDLC controls to be improved. The management letter cited a need to update the various IT related policies and guidelines into a consistent and cohesive SDLC process with key performance indicators that can be used by management, system development teams, and system owners to alter or adjust SDLC procedures and practices.

In response to the management letter, FSA committed to implement a comprehensive, detailed SDLC methodology with demonstrated usage by December 2005. Further, FSA committed to training the appropriate management and staff on the updated SDLC processes, procedures, controls, and techniques.

FSA's SDLC is now available at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/sdlc/>. A link to the SDLC is also on the Kansas City/St. Louis intranet: <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/kcstl/default.htm>. The initial deployment of FSA's SDLC focuses on object-oriented software development and provides process, templates, and guidelines for the following disciplines: Project Management, Requirements, Analysis, Design, Implementation, Test, and Environment. Future iterations will fully implement the Change/Configuration Management discipline and will incorporate the Mainframe and Data Warehouse environments. FSA's SDLC is based on the Rational Unified Process (RUP), a system engineering process that provides a disciplined approach to assigning tasks and responsibilities within a development organization. The goal of the SDLC is to ensure the production of high-quality software that meets the needs of the end users within a predictable schedule and budget.

Within the SDLC, a link has been provided for user feedback. Comments may also be directed to Stephen Risker, FSA Enterprise Architect at stephen.risker@usda.gov, or Loretta Burns, Chief, Application Development Program Office, at loretta.burns@usda.gov.

Attachment

Farm Service Agency (FSA)'s Systems Development Life Cycle (SDLC) Formal Release

Notes on this SDLC release:

The following Technical Information Advisories have been incorporated into the SDLC:

- Common 1 – Information Technology Accessibility - Section 508
- Common 2 – Application Implementation Coordination Process (technical kick-off)
- DBMS 01 – Database Management Systems Standard
- SYSDEV 04 – Object-Oriented Work Products
- SYSDEV 05 – Reference Application Architecture
- SYSDEV 06 – Standard Web Browser and Related Technologies
- SYSDEV 07 – Java Package Naming and Versioning Standard
- SYSDEV 09 – Application Deployment Directory Structure
- SYSDEV 11 – Common Application Framework (CAF) Deployment
- SYSDEV 12 – IBM WebSphere MQ Development Support and Guidelines

All new projects are required to follow SDLC. Projects that began prior to the release of the SDLC can continue to adhere to the pre-SDLC standards, but must move to SDLC at a new development cycle. Project teams may want to consider the benefits of adopting the SDLC standards at any project phase. Projects under contract may remain under pre-SDLC standards until completion of contract requirements or move to SDLC if the contract allows.

Remaining TIA's and ADPO Information Bulletins are now maintained in the SDLC. TIA's and Information Bulletins will be removed from the K: and X: drives. Legacy S/36 and Mainframe TIA's are in WordPerfect format but may be viewed in Microsoft Word.

The Project Management Discipline templates and process have been defined for the SDLC based on the Project Management Institute's (PMI) best practices and customized for FSA. The PM process is captured in the FSA's Development Case (see SDLC Getting Started to access the Development Case). Integration of FSA's PM process into the RUP process documentation is forthcoming.

The SDLC RUP implementation requires JRE 1.4 or higher to execute. This issue has been addressed for the majority of users. If a related error occurs when starting the SDLC, email the problem report to Stephen.riskier@usda.gov.

Changes to the SDLC will be maintained in the "Release Notes" section of the SDLC. Significant changes or critical information will continue to be circulated as ADPO Information Bulletins or through other communication processes.

Training for Washington, D.C. Program Sponsors is scheduled for June 21, 2005.