Information Technology Capital Investment Program

Project Status Report

To: Information Technology Strategy and Investment Committee
John Vittner, Office of Policy and Management

From: Irene Garcia

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Agency: Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Project: ezFile Electronic Permitting - Phase 2

Project Manager: Michael Trahiotis

Reporting Period: Project Inception through 12/31/2021

Total Funds Requested: $9,250,000

Total Funds Allotted to Agency: $1,250,000

Accumulative Total Capital Fund Expenditures to Date: $1,053,595

Brief Project Description/Summary:

The ezFile Electronic Permitting project will extend the DEEP ezFile platform to incorporate the remainder of DEEP's application, licensing, permitting, and registration processes. ezFile currently includes less than a dozen e-permitting processes. However, DEEP has over 120 application, licensing, permitting, and registration processes which currently rely on paper-based application submittals, old legacy technologies, and manual review processes. This project will provide a more streamlined, efficient approach to both the external public interface and internal workflows based on lessons learned from previous projects. The focus of the project will be on the intake process to increase our services and online presence to the public by offering expanded electronic filing options. The project will leverage existing SIMS workflow functionality for use by internal DEEP staff. Additional functionality will be introduced to SIMS in order to provide staff with the tools to review electronic submittals and communicate with applicants throughout the various workflow steps.

The project will occur in multiple phases with the first being a proof of concept (POC) phase consisting of around ten filing types selected to represent a cross-section of the various DEEP business areas. An Agile project management approach comprised of multiple phases/sprints and incremental deliverables will be leveraged. After completion of the POC, DEEP will proceed forward with a second grouping of filing types leveraging similar development and incorporating additional lessons learned from the POC. After completion of each grouping, DEEP will proceed to the next grouping where the number of concurrent work threads will be increased in order to meet a more compact timeline. We will continue with these sprints until as many as possible or all filings can be completed.

Summary of Progress Achieved to Date:
The initial pilot release was delayed in order to incorporate additional UI/UX enhancements necessary to improve system usability and user experience. The pilot includs 7 Aquatic Pesticide, Coastal Activities, and Hazardous Waste Transporter permit applications will be implemented by early February 2022. Significant work has also been completed on the next release which adds the ability for the public to renew permits. A DEEP team has also been assembled to define requirements of the next ePermitting project phase which will further refine and reduce the development process through a configurable approach leveraging common components with minimal custom development per permit.

Previously completed activities include:
-New infrastructure build out at BEST to support implementation of the Unity platform. This includes development, staging, and production environments. A separate ECM DB2 instance was also built out to support data crawling requirements without impact to the enterprise ECM environment.
-Business and technical teams worked to identify criteria for the initial MVP and multiple sprints were executed to develop and test these.
-DEEP also completed an Agile assessment to help identify a transformation plan. Scrum master and Product Owner trainings were provided and an Agile coach was introduced to the project team.

-DEEP kicked of the pilot phase of the ezFile Phase 2 project with our selected partner. DEEP IT and business resources have been working with our vendor on identifying business requirements and building out a minimal viable product (MVP). Initial demos of the MVP for the 5 initial pilot permit process were provided to business stakeholders and sponsors. The ezFile Phase 2 project is leveraging an Agile approach which will allow us to release an MVP in early 2021 as we continue to work on sprints to implement additional functionality. DEEP worked with the BEST Technical Review Board to gain approval of the proposed architecture. BEST is currently working on efforts to build-out the approved infrastructure needed to support this project.
-DEEP selected a vendor to partner with on our Agile assessment. We are currently working on the procurement process as we begin planning for our Agile transformation.
-DEEP finalized the initial 5 permit processes to be included in the initial project pilot. We are currently reviewing a vendor proposal internally and have also consulted with BEST to ensure it is in line with the Business One Stop platform and will be able to integrate and provide the expected citizen/business experience. The intent would be to kickoff the initial pilot by fall 2020.
-DEEP continues to meet with DAS BEST regarding the Business One Stop initiative and how this project will integrate and leverage various component currently in development. DEEP plans to stay in close coordination with BEST to leverage the BOS platform and services wherever possible. ezFile Phase 2 will move forward in parallel with BOS but will stay in step with BOS to leverage some of the features being built to improve the citizen experience.
-DEEP finalized and is working to post an RFP to provide an Agile assessment in order to identify DEEP readiness and resulting in an Agile transformation plan including training options for management, business, and IT and coaching options as part of this project.
-DEEP also invested in Jira, an Agile project management tool which is currently being utilized for other projects already in progress.

Issues and Risks:
• Dependency on completion of other DEEP priority projects for availability of IT resources.

• Availability and commitment of business resources.
• Timely build-out of infrastructure at BEST
• Timelines have been further impacted by COVID-19 which impacted staff availability and priorities.

Next Steps & Project Milestones:
• Pilot go-live

• Pilot release 2 including renewals and other enhancements

• Development of requirements for next phase of ePermitting

• Continue working with agency leadership to identify the next set of permit processes to move forward.

• Continue to work on database upgrades needed to stabilize and optimize our enterprise SIMS database. The existing ezFile platform and ezFile phase 2 utilize SIMS as the database of record and its stability is critical to support this initiative. DEEP is also planning to work on a SIMS API set to help reduce the time and effort needed to integrate each new permit process with our enterprise system.

• Continue implementing Agile concepts throughout the course of the project