

A Project Management Approach to the Operational Readiness Review Process

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A DOE nuclear facility may not legally operate until independent reviewers verify that controls specified in the Authorization Basis documents are functional, and that the facility is ready to operate safely. The DOE reference, Order 425-1A, focuses on the technical process of evaluating the Authorization Basis (AB). Very little effort is devoted to managing the process. The resources required to plan execute and document an Operational Readiness Review are not considered. This can result in unplanned schedule delays and uncontrolled costs to complete safety verifications as well as in poor quality documentation.

At Sandia National Laboratories we employed the ISMS (Integrated Safety Management System) Feedback and Improvement principles to assess past readiness review performance, and applied the lessons learned. The result was a new procedure incorporating requirements contained in DOE Order 425.1A and related directives into a framework of project management.

This paper describes how we improved quality and efficiency by incorporating project management principles and tools into the readiness assessment process. The new procedures were applied to a recent Readiness Assessment to authorize the restart of the Annular Core Research Reactor (ACRR) following modifications to enable pulse-mode operations. The results demonstrated that the new procedures, properly applied, produce the intended benefits.