

NTIS Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

26 October 2012

Held at 5301 Shawnee Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22312

1. Welcome/Opening Remarks by the Advisory Board Chairman and the Director NTIS
2. NTIS Business Performance
 - a. NTIS FY 2012 Financial Performance
 - NTIS completed FY 2012 with a net profit and in a financially self-sustaining basis on a 23 percent increase in revenues from FY 2011. Part of the net profit was attributed to a Workmen's Compensation one-time credit.
 - FY 2012 revenue increases compared to FY 2011 were primarily recorded in the Federal Services Lines of Business while the Technical Products Lines of Business revenue was maintained.
 - NTIS continued its efforts to maintain costs. Nine employees accepted retirement under the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) offered by NTIS in FY 2012.
 - As noted by the board member and NTIS staff comments, a challenge to NTIS is to manage growth and productivity in a controlled manner so that staff is not burnt out during business growth phases.
 - b. NTIS FY 2013 Budget Plan Projection
 - Board members reviewed the FY 2013 budget plan projections for each line of business and were generally pleased that NTIS believes that it can maintain the FY 2012 revenue base.
 - Board members advised NTIS to consider the benefits of establishing multiple year budget projections with projected revenue and net growth targets to support long range planning and investment.
 - The Director advised the board that NTIS seeks to maintain sufficient revenue growth to ensure the agency's continued financial profitability, stability and self-sustainment. The NTIS senior staff did agree that a goal of 10% revenue growth per fiscal year is reasonable to ensure financial self-sustainment and managed growth. However the board members were advised that maintaining federal services growth is challenging in the face of shrinking federal budgets and sequestration.
 - Chairman indicated that NTIS needs to decide how and when to discontinue products and services that are not profitable. The board was informed that there is currently a "watch list" in place featuring products and services that will be evaluated by the senior staff in FY 2013 for possible discontinuance. NTIS indicated that it will inform the board of the results of each evaluation at the April 2013 board meeting.
 - c. NTIS Organizational Chart. The members were informed that the only change in the NTIS organizational structure was the restructuring of the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to include a Program Management Office.

3. Strategic Development

a. NTIS Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016 with August 2012 Revision

- As recommended at the previous board meeting, the Director presented revised NTIS Mission and Vision Statements that feature NTIS providing information management solutions for the public, industry and other federal agencies, and eliminated the previous references to the separation of NTIS products and services.
- The Director indicated that the senior staff conducted a thorough review of the strategic plan and decided not to change its strategic initiatives and goals.
- A board member asked how NTIS might support STEM education in high school education. NTIS is seeking to improve its outreach to local high schools and is now coordinating with the STEM Consortia. The Associate Director (AD), Office of Product Management and Acquisitions (OPMA), stated that NTIS is also seeking to assist other federal agencies in submitting STEM documents into the NTIS repository/clearinghouse. OPMA will continue its outreach to this community and provide updates to the board during future meetings.

b. Lines of Business Evolution 2011-2016

- NTIS updated board members on significant FY 2012 changes to Products and Services Lines of Business and to changes that are planned or are under consideration for FY 2013 - 2014.
- Technical Reports LOB.
 - NTRL Release 3 based on the Fedora infrastructure now features a more effective search engine, Solr. However NTRL growth and usage metrics have been disappointing: NTRL has not achieved projected revenue and growth targets.
 - The AD, OPMA indicated that NTRL costs were being closely monitored and that OPMA was exploring how to make NTRL a more sustainable product.
 - The AD, OPMA, asked the board members for their advice on how to proceed. The board members indicated that NTIS needs to create a line of products to meet both mission and market needs. The Chairman noted that NTIS has a rich understanding of its products, but it is not obvious how these products fulfill market need; user and market need must be the driver of what products NTIS should continue to offer and those products to be discontinued.
- Another board member indicated that NTIS needs to focus on competition analysis in addition to market and product analysis. The Chairman stated that NTIS must have a better understanding of the needs of its customers through the use of customer focus meetings and surveys. OPMA agreed that it does not have a good understanding of its customer's needs or how the customer uses NTIS information products. NTIS agreed to provide the board analyses of its technical products lines of business customers, competitors and markets at the next board meeting.
- OPMA has undertaken new efforts to forge relationships with the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and Technology Transfer communities. A board member recommended that NTIS consider marketing to the Association of Research Libraries.

- Publishing LOB. The Division Manager (DM), Office of Program and Product Management (OPPM) indicated that the World News Connection program was under review to determine future direction. The AD, OFS, described the joint efforts that OFS and OPMA are engaged in to create joint marketing and lead development between the two offices. Two examples are the digitization and repositories lines of business.
 - Federal Services LOB's. The AD, OFS provided the following lines of business updates:
 - E-Training and Knowledge Management: Expect to continue to grow and add Cloud-hosting capabilities of JIVE and SharePoint.
 - Digitization: Expand program to provide a complete lifecycle solution for federal agencies including storage and repositories services.
 - Web Services: New focus on expanding current capabilities and services. Converting all systems to IPV6.
 - Federal Energy Management: Program completely restructured; four (4) new partners added; emphasis on federal data centers, metering and dashboards.
 - To the question of how NTIS determines the needs of other federal agencies, the AD, OFS stated that as agencies identify a new need, the DOC Office of General Counsel determines if NTIS can accomplish the need within its statutory authorities, and then NTIS determines how to best accomplish the need.
- c. Strategic Initiative 1 Accomplishments. Objective 1: Implement process improvements that increase content, effectiveness and customer satisfaction
- OPMA: NOAA Deepwater Horizon Repository has been very successful. OPMA is working with Department of State and Department of Commerce to assist the Iraqi Ministry of Science and Technology in the development of the Iraqi Science and Technology Information Repository (ISTIR) featuring agriculture, environment and science documents. NTIS is also assisting in the development of metadata for the repository. Advantages of the NTIS Repository Program include reduced costs and standard core metadata.
 - OCIO:
 - The Deputy CIO provided an overview of the CISPUB upgrade program featuring the Elan web-based system. NTIS has begun installation of an Elan test environment and is working with the vendor on configuring the software prior to installation. The goal is to launch ELAN prior to October 2013. Other NTIS systems that will undergo technology refresher in the same time period are STAR and ADSTAR.
 - Technology refresh of desktop systems has been initiated.
 - OCIO has begun to evaluate use of Agile software development processes.
 - Web Presence Improvements: AD, OFS, stated that a cross agency functional team has been established to implement web site improvements and evaluate proposals to improve searching and branding on NTIS websites. NTIS websites will have DOC basic look and feel.
 - New Business Developments and Marketing Strategies: AD, OFS discussed the "Doing More With Less" conference workshop that NTIS conducted at DOC with over 100 agencies attending and 19 partners participating.

- The Chairman requested more information on how NTIS is building the NTIS brand. The AD, OFS indicated that a solicitation is pending. Efforts to improve NTIS.gov and NTRL.gov site mapping have been initiated. The Board indicated that NTIS must build greater brand and product awareness with more audiences. Board members recommended focus groups with current and former customers.
- d. Strategic Initiative 2 Accomplishments: OPMS. Goal 1: Improve the NTIS collection, dissemination and data management of federally funded STEI
- The AD, OPMA and DM, OPPM updated the Board on various programs to improve NTIS STEI programs, including NTRL Release 3, FSRS, discontinuance of microfiche products, pilots with Electronic-on-Demand product fulfillment, and establishment of the NTIS Digitization Working Group.
 - During the discussion of the Technical Reports Library LOB. The Chairman requested information on cost of goods sold. He was informed that STEI products cost of goods was not higher than revenue. However indirect and allocated costs result in net losses for most STEI products. NTIS agreed to provide the Board with a breakdown of indirect and allocated costs. The AD, OPMA did indicate that a number of products with continuing net losses were being evaluated to determine if NTIS should terminate the sale and distribution of these products.
 - Digital Repository Business Plan. DM, OPPM discussed the business plan that the Digitization Working Group is preparing to address federal agency digitization services, Electronic-on-Demand product fulfillment, and digitization of specialized collections in the NTIS archive. The first draft of the business plan is due to the senior staff in January 2013.
 - NARA Preservation Plan. OPMA continues to work with NARA to establish a process by which electronic documents placed in a federal services repository will be transmitted to NARA.
- e. Strategic Initiative 2 Accomplishments: OFS. Goal 2: Establish NTIS as the premier provider of federal government information services.
- The AD, OFS indicated that although five (5) employees have been added to OFS in 2012, there is still a concern on balancing work load, customer satisfaction and level of service in both OFS and OCIO. OFS is formulating an approach to offer lower costs services to small agencies. Collaborative software services are expected to grow in FY 2013.
 - In response to the Chairman's question on how the OFS staff will manage the growing number of federal projects, the AD, OFS indicated that each line of business and project is assigned a primary program manager with larger customer and projects assigned an assistance program manager. The AD has initiated a program to ensure that at least one other OFS team member has working knowledge of each program within OFS.
 - The Chairman recommended that NTIS consider developing a roadmap to plan NTIS revenue growth and investment through 2016.
 - Business Development Standardization. OFS is developing standard customer questions to cost out projects in each line of business. Based on success in the growth of federal service projects, the Chairman asked if the primary drivers for the success

have been identified, and what is needed for OFS to drive further business growth. The Chairman was informed that relationships developed between OFS and its customers, NTIS ability to exceed customer expectations with quality service, and responding quickly to customer needs were factors that contributed to business growth. Board members did opine that NTIS must be certain that new federal services and projects are permitted within NTIS statutory authorities.

f. Strategic Initiative #3 Accomplishments

- Improve Workforce Excellence. The senior staff continues to develop the NTIS Vision 2016, a roadmap to assist NTIS in adopting its organization, lines of business and skill sets to best service the public and other federal agencies in 2016. The Director presented the Vision 2013 Roadmap to provide the board members with the planning activities that the senior staff conducted in preparing for FY 2013.
- Line of Business Market and Customer Analysis. At the request of the Chairman to provide the Board information on NTIS line of business market and customer analysis, OFS discussed the new Federal Energy Data Management program. The Chairman thanked OFS for the update, but indicated that NTIS had to be more specific on addressing the following questions in its analysis: What federal energy markets does NTIS operate in? What are the customer needs? What are the key trends in the marketplace?
- After the Chairman's comments, it was decided that the National Technical Reports Library would be discussed at the next Advisory Board meeting.
- FY 2013 Strategic/Tactical Projects. The Board was provided an overview of the strategic and tactical projects that NTIS planned to accomplish in FY 2013. One project discussed was the procurement through GSA of warehouse space in January 2014 when the current leases expire.
- Risk assessment. The Board was provided an update on the NTIS Risk Map. In response to Risk Number 7, Availability of Free STEI Products, NTIS agreed to present a plan at the next meeting describing how this high risk element is being addressed.

4. Public Comments. No members of the public attended the meeting.

5. Advisory Board Roundtable.

- The Board recommended that NTIS feature the value-added services that NTIS provides to the STEI products added to the NTIS collection, such as the permanency and authenticity of the NTIS repository, and the benefit of one stop shop to search for federal STEI. The members further recommended that NTIS continue its measures to reduce costs, specifically cost associated with STEI products.
- The Board also stated that NTIS should more clearly identify its customers and the market segments that it must be a leader in. The Board recommended that NTIS consider how to reach a broader segment of knowledge users, not just researchers.
- The Board recommended that NTIS identify its STEI product customers, survey them to understand their needs, and establish relationships with them.
- Board members presented a number of recommendations for NTIS to improve STEI product dissemination: develop a better understanding of its markets and market forces;

determine new market segments to focus on; consider alternative fee-based models; identify marketing tools to drive visits and sales; conduct focus groups and surveys; determine how “competitors” are adopting to changing market conditions.

6. Next Advisory Board Meeting. The Board decided that the meeting would be either April 19 or April 26, 2013 at NTIS.