

# NOAA Streamlines Performance Management of Key Functional Areas

## Keane's Project Management Initiative Improves US Agency's Operational Efficiency and Information Flow

### Abstract

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) plays a critical role in managing US coastal resources, gauging the Earth's climate, and predicting environmental changes. NOAA is focused on rapidly and effectively responding to emerging priorities in the areas of climate change, freshwater supply, ecosystem management, and homeland security. The global impact of its mission requires that NOAA consistently delivers high quality information to its constituents, which it recognizes can only be achieved through operational excellence across all functions. To meet this standard, NOAA continuously seeks ways to generate efficiencies through system and process upgrades. As areas for improvement were identified by NOAA's Information Technology Center (ITC), NOAA leveraged an already successful relationship with Keane to implement rigorous project management disciplines. As a result, NOAA has streamlined its administrative support services, significantly improved financial performance management, and reduced operational costs.

### Client

The largest agency within the US Department of Commerce, NOAA was created in 1970 to provide Americans with protection from natural hazards, generate a better understanding of the environment, and lead exploration and development for the intelligent use of marine resources. NOAA delivers a wide range of federal programs that include weather, water, and climate forecasting, managing coastal and marine resources, and predicting changes in the Earth's environment.

Within NOAA's Finance and Administration office, the Information Technology Center (ITC) provides the critical function of processing and managing NOAA's financial and administrative data.

### Challenge

Proactively responding to NOAA's mandate for operational excellence across the organization, the ITC identified opportunities to improve its performance management capabilities for financial and human resources, electronic government, grants management, and budget and performance integration. With nine distinct service areas leveraging different processes, reports, and metrics, valuable ITC resources were being spent on redundant operations, resulting in overtime and budgetary challenges. To streamline its performance management capabilities, the ITC sought a common method for tracking data and managing the information required for financial reporting and analysis.

Leveraging a longstanding relationship, the ITC turned to Keane to implement improved project management standards throughout the organization, and to create consistent administrative practices to manage its functional areas.

### Solution

An industry leader in project management services, Keane implemented a robust project management initiative within the ITC. Keane also took responsibility for providing quality reports and metrics that enhance visibility into, and enable, improved financial and performance management. This two-pronged approach to operational excellence

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**"A priority for 2003 and beyond is to strive to achieve organizational excellence. Improved project management disciplines and enhanced financial reporting is a key step toward achieving this goal. Keane has measurably helped the ITC improve productivity, contain costs, and benefit from process improvements."**

Joseph Smith, Director of Information Technology Center (ITC), NOAA

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included process improvement and increased information sharing. Focused on delivering a strong approach to project management, Keane's solution included:

- Instituting a Project Control and Reporting Process, which standardized reporting and metrics collection for the ITC
- Leveraging its Project Risk Assessment Method to mitigate common obstacles to project success across ITC's nine service areas
- Implementing change, issue, and acceptance management processes to establish a protocol for awareness of variances to project plans
- Quarterly management of Quality Assurance audits to ensure continuous process improvement and ongoing performance to ITC's quality standards

In addition, Keane has provided increased visibility into ITC operations for all NOAA stakeholders through:

- Weekly project meetings that enable consistent communication

## Client Story: US Dept. of Commerce Agency

- Monthly trend reports and staffing plans that help ITC management assess the efficacy of existing resource allocation
- Financial tracking that provides increased visibility into potential cost savings

### Benefits

Through Keane's expertise in project management, the ITC has achieved significant improvements in its ability to manage projects, resources, and information. It is already benefiting from:

- 10% reduction in over-time costs due to increased efficiencies

- Annual savings in administrative spending
- Increased visibility into financial and performance management
- More timely and accurate financial reporting
- Improved metrics and trend analysis, aiding in more effective capacity planning and systems utilization

By effectively responding to NOAA's mandate for improved processes and operational excellence, the ITC has been able to support NOAA's expanded mission in the areas of climate change, freshwater supply, ecosystem management, and homeland security.

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**"Keane has established a strong relationship with NOAA by meeting our varying needs over the years. By addressing our lack of common practices, the implementation of Keane's project management methodology has improved our productivity significantly."**

Joseph Smith, Director of Information Technology Center (ITC), NOAA

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*Keane is a global services firm that specializes in enabling transformation of its clients' business and IT functions.*