

STORAGE AREA NETWORK FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION REPORT

NOVEMBER 24TH, 2014

During the post training monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process; EPP Cross-Cutting Activities department conducted a focus group discussion with the SAN training participants at EPP Lahore office on November 24th, 2014. Focus group discussion was conducted to monitor the outcomes of the SAN training at Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA).

EPP successfully conducted the focus group discussion with 6 out of 7 participants to track the implementation phase of the training objectives along with the major challenges faced during and after the training.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH, 2014

Venue:

EPP Lahore Office – PIA Building, 8th Floor, Egerton Road, Lahore (Next to WAPDA House)

Participants:

First Name	Job Title	Gender
[Redacted]		

Focus group findings:

EPP conducted a focus group discussion with the Storage Area Network training participants who attended the training sessions from September 15-19, 2014 at EPP's Lahore Office. Major findings from the participants are highlighted in this report. The discussion allowed the participants to highlight their challenges and key takeaways from the training. EPP's monitoring and evaluation team (Ms. Mahak, Ms. Memona, and Ms. Rabia) carried out the discussions to adequately measure the sustainability of the SAN training for CPPA. Participants were asked to briefly describe their experience, challenges, learnings and respective future goals while implementing the SAN training at CPPA. Feedback questions were asked from each participant and their specific responses were separated into two different categories.

- 1) Skills learned and Challenges faced
- 2) Suggestions

SKILLS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES FACED

Throughout the discussions, all the participants specifically stated that the theoretical training was excellent and helped all of them in understanding the technical details of the storage software. Whereas, they explained by the mentioning the following:

“The given manuals underlined the use of SAN software in storing the historical data to be used when needed. Trainers and training was good but it lacked practical training which could have given us a better overview of the topics covered in the manual”

“Training gave us a good knowledge and meaningful experience of SAN software but more decision making and hands on experience should be given to the trainees. Trainees will help in identifying the issues rather than asking the vendor again and again for their feedback which is timely and requires more formal procedures”

“We have learned the identification of issues but due to the slow configuration of the remote mirroring resulting in work delays. e.g. Giga bite interference taking too long than the original time it should have taken to be installed”

“Status of the remote mirroring deployment is complete which will allow us to start implementing some of the topics learned during the training, but it requires more detail practical training of the software itself to forecast sustainability”

“SAN software develops over the time and requires all the minor details to be accounted for before starting the actual use of the system. A practical training by the principal is required; providing us an insight of the system and answer all the unanswered technical question from the previous training”

“We will pass on the knowledge, manuals and presentations received during the SAN training to other colleagues at work for continuous improvement in storage systems at CPPA. At our plant mostly engineers are having more than 20 years of work experience; this training will serve as refresher course while improving the approach to adapt new skills and knowledge for better work performance’

Participants detailed a range of challenges that have faced during and after the training course. Explain their experiences they stated:

“Hands on experience training should be conducted once the system is fully deployed, as it will help us understanding; what to do, when to do and who will perform a certain function within what capacity”

“Storage Area Network has its own operating system that has been delayed because we are relaying on windows and Linux. All these operating procurements taking a lot time which is causing delays in implementation of the training objectives”

“Along with the theory and practical trainings; system deployment is a vital part and delays are causing difficulties implementing the skills learned. Furthermore, simulators are easy to use and help in implementation, easy to deploy for immediate implementation of the software. The management needs to pay attention to the deployment delays because of its direct impact on the performance”

Suggestions:

In order to improve similar future initiatives while determining the sustainability of the training, EPP's focus group discussion gave participants a fair chance to express their views, skills learned and challenges they faced during and after the training. Participants suggested the following:

“Training was very technical and informative but it lacked hands on experience; once the system is fully deployed, hands on training should be organized. Software’s details during the hands on training will help us understand what to do, when to do and who will perform a certain function using the SAN software”

“Storage Area Network should be operated on its own operating systems because relying on windows and Linux takes time”

“All these operating procurements taking a lot time just because of these alternate operating systems which can easily be minimized by using the original operating systems for achieving the objectives”

“System deployment is a vital part of any software operation and its implementation. Major delays in configuration are causing difficulties in implementing the skills learned”

“Organize a hands on training by involving a principal person who knows the technical details and can answer all the queries. Most common issues regarding the software can be identifies in a better way by the principal person than a third party vendor. The vendor will just deploy the system but the principal trainer will guide us about the issues and their possible solutions”

“After receiving the training, USAID should communicate to the authorities in CPPA to allow us to work on the system and implement the skills learned. We cannot work on the systems on our own with the other job responsibilities”