

STORAGE AREA NETWORK FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION REPORT

March 4, 2015

During the post training monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process; EPP Cross-Cutting Activities team conducted second of the three focus group discussions with the Storage Area Network (SAN) training participants at EPP Lahore office on March 4, 2015. Second post training focus group discussion (FGD) session was conducted to monitor the progress made on the challenges highlighted by SAN training participants during its deployment at Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA).

EPP successfully conducted the focus group discussion with 4 out of 7 participants to track the implementation phase of the training objectives along with the major challenges faced and identified during and after the training.

Venue

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

Participants

Sr	First Name	Job Title	Gender	Attendance
1	[Redacted]			Attended
2				Attended
3				Attended
4				Attended

Focus group was conducted by two Cross-Cutting Activities team members: Ms. Mahak Ali Bajwa and Ms. Rabia Abbasi along with Project Technical Assistant Mr. Moazzam Shafique from Transmission department.

Objectives

- Assessing the SAN training objectives and outcomes
- Assessing the system deployment and related issues and their resolution

Focus group findings

EPP conducted second focus group discussion on March 4, 2015 with Storage Area Network (SAN) training participants who completed their training on September 15-19, 2014 at EPP's Lahore Office. Participants were asked to briefly describe their experience, challenges, learning, and respective future goals while operating and maintaining the SAN at CPPA. The discussion allowed the participants to highlight challenges and key takeaways from the training. Major findings from the participants are highlighted in the quotes section below. Feedback questions were asked from each participant and their specific responses were separated into two different categories.

- 1) Skills learned and challenges faced
- 2) Feedback received

Skills learned and challenges faced

During the first focus group discussion session held in November 2014, it was highlighted by the participants that they did not get the chance to manually work on SAN because of deployment delays. However, during the second focus group discussion all the participants specifically stated that SAN has

been fully deployed and they have formally started working on the system. According to one of the participants who is the point of contact (POC) for SAN, the theoretical training was excellent and helped all of them in understanding the technical details of the storage software and currently helping them retrieving data for past . Quotes from participants are below:

“After the SAN deployment, now the application is running smoothly and successfully and there is no problem to resolving the issues to storage”

“We are migrating historic data”

“SAN Deployment is resolving the issues related to outdated database and storage errors are under evaluation”

“After deploying SAN, we are able to store large amount of data in the new database i.e. archiving old data efficiently”

“Because SAN was a new technology to our organization, we had to face challenges like understanding the dynamics, system deployment along with the associated delays; application configuration was successfully completed with the help of M/s. Comtel”

“Data transfer rate was the bone of contentment”

“There are currently no problems at all, only license is pending for using a remote copy”

All the participants received positive feedback from their supervisors. As mentioned, SAN is a new technology which has never been used in Pakistan’s power industry before. CPPA is constantly seeking maintenance services from the vendor for better implementation of the objectives. Participants shared the following:

“After the SAN deployment, we are able to display the information more efficiently i.e. we reduced the time of display from 20 minutes to ten minutes .The storage problem has also been resolved”

“Our application performance increased approximately 50%. This system is making possible for us to transmit the immediate data within 10 minutes to our respective DISCOs’ and GM offices. We are capable of dealing with data modifications more accurately”

“Time interval has sufficiently decreased from twenty to ten minutes”

Participants were asked to share their routine operational, commercial and maintenance related activities. Participants discussed the skills they are using in making SAN more efficient. They mentioned:

“The storage is increasing day by day and SAN in CPPA was necessary and helpful to help the information long time, due to SAN we are going forward in modern era and protection of data for future generation.”

“SAN is acting as data drive for connected database.”

“SAN solution improved system monitoring by DISCOs. We can also utilize this solution to deploy our DISCO billing and IPAS application storage.”

“Sharing the stored data with the other NTDC departments like Planning, NPCC etc. will help them function in a better way.”

Suggestions

In order to improve similar future initiatives while determining the sustainability of the training, EPP gave participants a fair chance to express their unbiased-views about the skills learned and to give suggestion for improvements. Participants suggested the following:

- In order to improve the application of SAN for effective outcomes, communication across NTDC departments should be improved i.e. communication channels should be defined for better comprehension of database with the Planning department.
- A training session should be conducted after the full deployment of the application not during the deployment; this will help participants to learn about the system application/equipment in a better way.