

Insights from a Recent EVMS Certification Review: A Valuable Learning Experience

Recently, we had the opportunity to serve as process lead support staff and observer during a PM-30 EVMS Certification Review. This experience provided a firsthand look into the certification review process, utilizing the Integrated Program Project Management (IP2M) Maturity and Environment Total Risk Rating (METRR).

Prior to this experience, we had not participated in an EVMS certification review and were uncertain about what to expect. The experience allowed us to take away valuable knowledge about the process, expectations, and requirements involved in an EVMS certification review, reducing the unknowns we had previously faced and preparing us for our upcoming certification review.

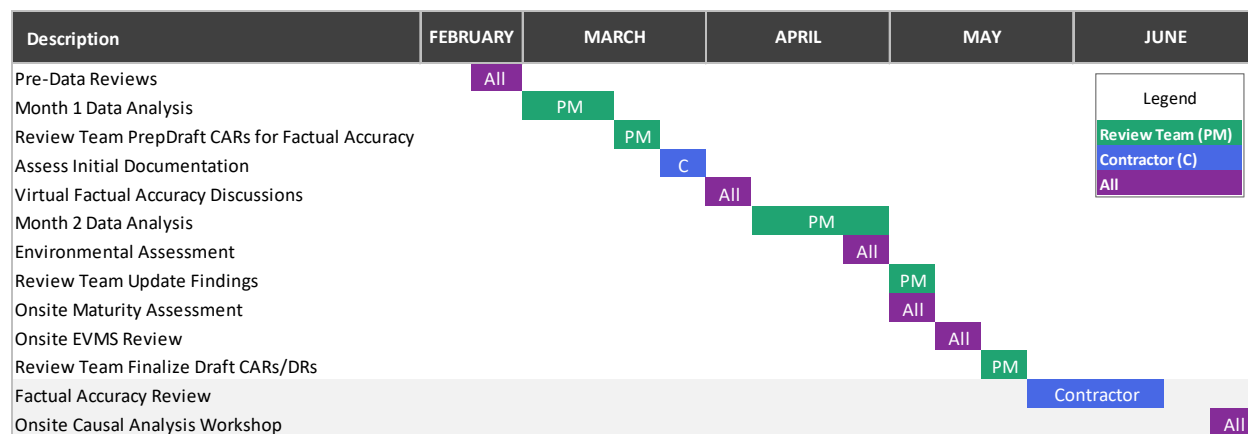
Fostering a Collaborative Environment

One of the most notable aspects of the PM-30 review was the welcoming, collaborative, and transparent environment fostered by the review team. The process emphasized openness and constructive dialogue, allowing the contractor to demonstrate their processes and clarify how they align with their System Description throughout the review. This approach not only facilitated mutual understanding but also contributed to reducing the number of findings by addressing potential discrepancies early in the process.

The review was exceptionally well-organized, ensuring a smooth flow of information and engagement among all parties involved. This collaborative atmosphere highlighted the importance of communication and teamwork in achieving a successful EVMS certification.

High -Level Certification Review Timeline

To provide context, the DOE EVMS Certification Review is not confined to the onsite week alone. It encompasses a series of activities before, during, and after the onsite review. Here's a simplified timeline of how the Review unfolded.



Utilizing the IP2M METRR Framework

One of the key tools utilized during the review was the IP2M METRR framework. This played a crucial role in the review process, providing a structured approach around the 10 subprocesses, and ensuring compliance with EVMS standards. Observing the application of IP2M METRR enhanced our understanding of its functionality but also highlighted its importance in maintaining the integrity of the EVMS.

Three key facilitated sessions were conducted during the review process:

1. **Environment Assessment:** This session involved anonymous ratings on 16 out of 27 environment factors by various groups, including the local customer, review team, contractor leadership, and contractor practitioners. PM-30 emphasized that organizational culture and environment are critical to the success of EVMS
2. **Maturity Assessment:** Separate facilitated maturity assessments were conducted with the contractor, local customer, and review team. Each group collaboratively determined maturity levels for 56 attributes, providing a comprehensive evaluation of EVMS processes.
3. **Maturity Reconciliation Meeting:** This session compared maturity ratings side-by-side across groups, facilitating collaborative discussions to address discrepancies. While the contractor had opportunities to influence ratings through evidence and alignment with the Compliance Assessment Guide (CAG), PM-30 retained final decision-making authority.

Key Lessons Learned from the Review Process

By observing the process from start to finish, we gained insights that will help guide our approach to our own EVMS certification.

- The structured timeline provides ample opportunities to address issues and concerns, highlighting the importance of using this time effectively.
- The Pre-Data Review meetings are a valuable opportunity for the contractor to present their processes prior to data analysis, fostering clarity and alignment with the review team from the outset.
- The review team conducts a comprehensive analysis of two months of contractor data, with leads and support staff assigned to specific subprocess areas. This targeted approach enables the reviewers to thoroughly examine the System Description, CRC, internal findings, relevant data call items, and all DOE EVMS test metrics related to his/her subprocess area.
- Document Request Forms (DRFs) are issued to the contractor to gain additional context and information on various topics leading up to the onsite review. Responses to the DRFs are essential, as they can address outstanding questions and potentially resolve initial concerns or findings.
- Initial findings are provided to the contractor as a draft Corrective Action Request (CAR) following the first month of data analysis. This "first look" allows the contractor to understand potential issues early and address them by supplying additional documentation or context during factual accuracy meetings.
- Conversations during the onsite review often evolved beyond metrics, delving deeper into processes and alignment with EVMS standards.

Applying the Experience to Our Own Certification Review

Reflecting on this experience, we identified valuable lessons that we plan to share with our site and apply to our own EVMS certification process. For example, our site has already implemented the IP2M METRR framework, including maturity and environment assessments and DOE EVMS test metrics. However, we gained additional insights into areas where automation could streamline test metrics and where facilitated maturity reconciliation sessions could bridge gaps among groups.

Additionally, observing PM-30 interviews provided us with strategies to better prepare Control Account Managers (CAMs) for certification interviews, including techniques we can use during “black hat” sessions. These insights will help us refine our interview preparation process and align our practices with PM-30 expectations.

Lastly, we are leveraging this experience by sharing these lessons learned with our site and fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.

Conclusion: The Value of EVMS Certification Reviews

The EVMS Certification Review utilizing the IP2M METRR framework demonstrated that it is not just about passing a metric test or achieving a level 4 rating. It is about building and sustaining an EVMS that empowers projects to make informed decisions, stay on track, and manage risks proactively. The review teams’ approach was not focused on identifying CARs/DRs but rather on ensuring the completeness and effectiveness of the EVMS

Our participation in this review was an invaluable experience that we highly recommend to others, whether as team members or observers. It broadened our understanding of EVMS practices, strengthened our readiness for our upcoming review, and provided networking opportunities with EVMS practitioners across the complex. We encourage our colleagues to take advantage of similar opportunities to enhance their expertise and contribute to the success of their organizations.