Contractor Assurance System Effectiveness

EFCOG
Contractors Assurance System Group
Spring Meeting

May 3, 2023

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Agenda

- Contractor Assurance System (CAS) success factors and outcomes

- Is CAS delivering the performance we are seeking?

- Critical role of leadership in CAS

- Risk-based prioritization of CAS data

- Streamlining data collection and analysis for action in the field

- Next steps

Success factors and outcomes

Success factors

- Role clarity and mutual desire for transparency
- Emphasis on self-identification, correction, and prevention
- Process drives improvements

Outcomes

- Sustainable performance
- More efficient allocation of resources
- A climate engaged leadership and mutual trust

Recent assessments have concluded

- CASs are largely complete and compliant
- Maturity Assessment Tools are available

DOE SC

Contractor Parent

Laboratory Management
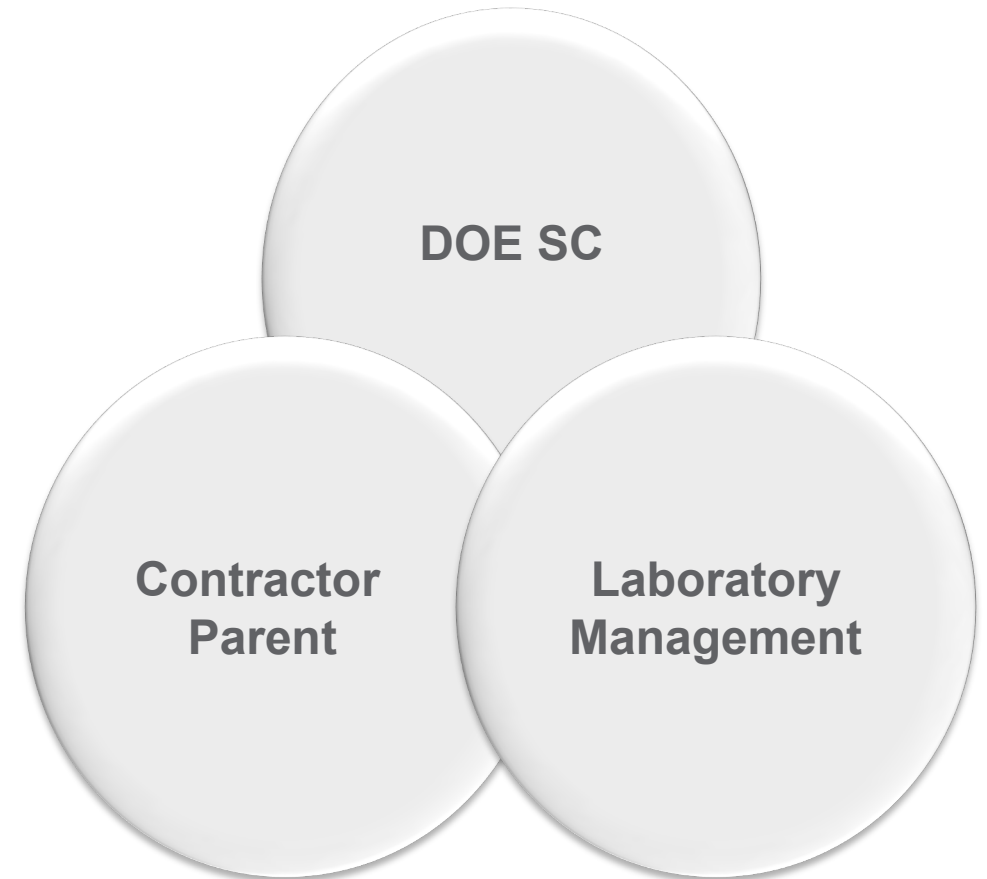
Success depends on the engagement of all three parties

Is CAS delivering the performance we are seeking?

- Are we providing "Reasonable Assurance" consistent with the outcomes CAS was designed to achieve?

  - CAS effectiveness and the role of oversight of CAS are reoccurring concerns for oversight entities such as GAO and DNFSB and within DOE Enterprise Assessments

- Contractor CAS is complete and compliant, but is it as effective as it could be to meet the Reasonable Assurance test?

- CAS Subgroup survey identified three theme areas for consideration to enhance effectiveness:
  - Critical role of leadership in CAS effectiveness
  - Risk-based prioritization of CAS data
  - Streamlining data collection and analysis for action in the field

Critical role of leadership in CAS effectiveness

Key questions of leaders

- Are we **personally and organizationally receptive** and responsive to criticism; able to be self-critical – accepting that things need to improve?

- Are we **setting the right example and expectation**, fostering an open dialogue and exchange of ideas, listening to voices from all levels of the organization, demonstrating what can be learned from failure?

- Are we **demonstrating intellectual curiosity** about the causes of performance challenges, "pulling the string" on what is reported to make sure the contributing factors are well understood, so they can be addressed and not re-emerge later?

- Are we **"owning" (vs. delegating) the need to address issues**, but also holding everyone on the team accountable for completing corrective action commitments on time?

- Are we as leaders accessible, **is information being filtered** through gatekeepers adverse to making decisions or delivering unpleasant news?

Risk-based prioritization of CAS data

Key questions of ourselves and our DOE partner

- Are we steering the focus of the CAS program toward **important risk areas** based on data-driven insights, and actively using the results to drive management actions?

- Are we dedicated to **fixing the right problems at the right level**, so that system improvement is achieved?

- Are we awash in data based on a **lack of focus** as to what is most important, at various levels of significance?

- Are we assessing in the **right areas of performance**, and how do we know?

- Is our CAS oversight **consistent with our risk-based expectations** and feedback, or is it returning to CAS compliance oversight?

Streamlining data collection and analysis for action in the field

Key questions to ask those we are attempting to empower

- Are we **collecting too much or too little** data, and how do we know?

- Are we able to quickly **surface valuable insights** about our performance and put into the hands of someone responsible to act on it?

- Are we hampered by **siloed information**, i.e., each business function maintaining assurance information (self-assessments, issues management, etc.) within their own system?

- Is our issues management, cause analysis, and corrective action information sufficiently connected to help us **identify systemic issues** that might be occurring broadly across the institution?

- Are we realizing the **efficiencies** of assessments and oversight that were part of the original value proposition of CAS?

Next Steps

- Convene a team to examine the three theme areas:
  - Involve interested EFCOG sponsor Directors, CAS Subgroup representation, contractor parent representation, DOE field and HQ representation
  - Validate the themes are the key areas requiring our collective attention
  - Determine how best to move forward and who to involve

- Focus on defining the outcome for each of the Theme areas:
  1. What outcome we are seeking (for example – what would "streamlined CAS" look, feel, and represent value added to Leadership and those at the deck plates)
  2. What actions would be needed to achieve the outcome
  3. Recommendations and considerations for deployment

Thank you