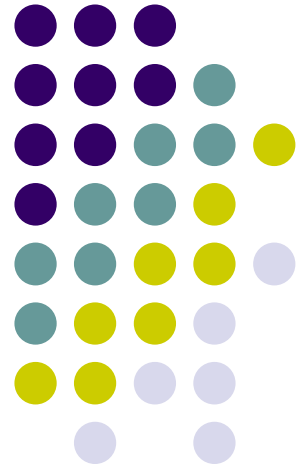
Rapid Improvement Event (RIE)
Focused Improvement Transformation (FIT)

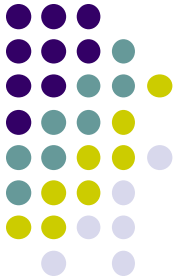
Supplier Based Activities / Techniques Performed Remotely

Supply Chain Quality Working Group

Joe Fulghum – Vice Chair



PROBLEM STATEMENT/ REASON FOR ACTION



Supplier QA Oversight:

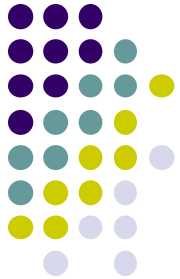
- The COVID-19 health pandemic created a need to stop the spread of virus and thus limit personal interaction
- Supplier QA physically travels to the Supplier's place of business to perform QA program implementation and product verifications
- Need for Supplier QA to explore new methods of conducting business other than physical travel and still maintain a high level of Quality

Risk: If Supplier QA is unable to qualify suppliers or perform source surveillance, sites may realize an increased risk associated with facility operations and product quality.

AIM / (PROJECT'S DESIRED OUTCOME)

- Explore new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to support remote activities / techniques
- Make it possible to provide an equivalency to that of an individual(s) being physically present at the supplier's facility
- Maintain a high level of reasonable assurance that compliance is achieved without jeopardizing or reducing "Quality"
- Develop a consensus on a path forward for applying ICT while using a risk based graded approach
- If travel is necessary based on high risk, reduce the time spent at the supplier's facility
  - Explore improvements and efficiencies in preparation and performance
  - Use of ICT

SCOPE



- Benchmark the use of remote activities / techniques
- Review Procurement Contract language (GP's and T&C's)
- Review platforms and equipment for hosting remote activities
- Review low and high-risk QA activities – for basis of remote techniques
- Engage Technical/Engineering community
- Develop procedure governance (NQA-1 Requirement 5)

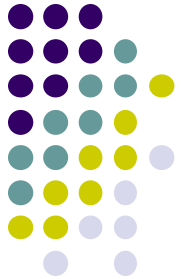
Benchmarking

Benchmark Results on Performing Supplier Based Activities Remotely

Organizations	Prohibit remote activities	Guidance Provided
EPRI	No	Yes
NQA-1	No	Interpretation request pending
ISO 9001	No	Yes
DOECAP	No	Yes
NIAC	Yes	No
ASQ	No	Yes

DOE EM and NNSA Sites	Prohibit remote activities	Guidance Provided
PNNL	No	Yes
Y-12	No	Yes
Sandia	No	Yes

Procurement Contract Language

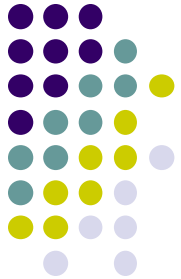


- Review boiler plate contract language – T&C's and GP's
- Review Procurement Procedures

- "Right of Access" language was present in the T&C's and GP's
- T&C's and GP's lacked specific language regarding the supplier hosting a remote activity / technique

Procurement Procedures needed revision to include the supplier hosting and remote activity / technique

Explore new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to support Remote Activities/Techniques



Equipment:

Use recent models of smart phones, tables, with a good camera

Connectivity:

Requires Wi-Fi or Cellular capabilities with a Data Plan

Equipment Ownership:

Supplier owned or Site Loaned Program (if loaned – establish contract – T&C's or GP's)

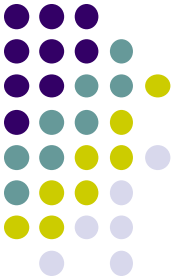
Security:

Access

Material control – loaned gov. equipment – secured when not in use

Applications: TEAMS or WebEx

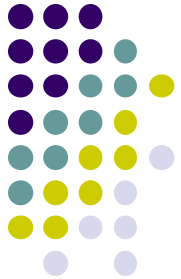
Risk : Exclusion Criteria
Additional Screening Questions



Exclusion Criteria (situations requiring physical presences at supplier location):
- Complex Testing involved
- High level of visual acuity required
- Critical Dimensions involved
- Specific code/regulation requires onsite observation (e.g., weld inspections)
- Surveillance involves classified component(s), proprietary, UCNI

Additional Screening Questions, if exclusion criteria not met:
1. Has the supplier built the item before or is this a new process being observed?
   - Have there been any previous failures (0 - 24 month)? If yes, describe.
2. Could the supplier-based activity be independently performed after receipt on site?
3. Is this an NQA-1 qualified supplier? If yes, is the vendor on the Approved Suppliers List?
4. Does the supplier have an ISO-9001 program? If yes, how long have they had it?
5. Has a remote surveillance been done before? If yes, was the remote process successful?
6. Does the supplier have the technology necessary to perform remote surveillances? If no, can they procure it (buy it themselves, use SRS-provided equipment, etc.)?
7. Is it business sensitive/security? (non-govt cell phone for govt work)

Engage Technical Community



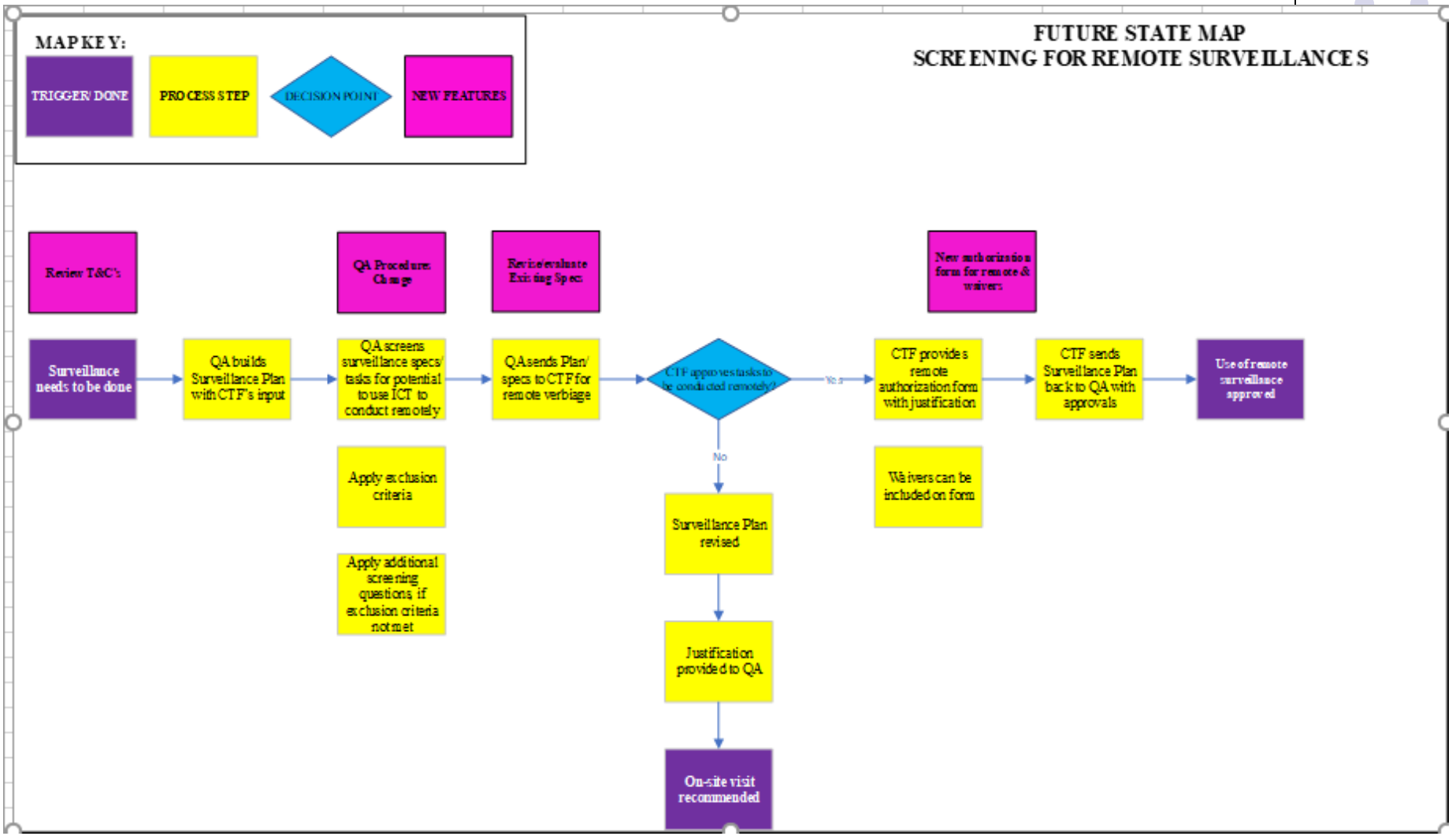
Supplier Evaluations:

- Make aware the evaluation method:
  (History, Qualitative & Quantitative, Direct (physical or remote technique)

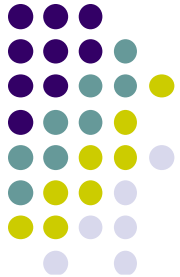
Source Surveillance:

- Recommend performance of remote techniques for hold points
- Obtain and Document concurrence from Engineering

Future State Map
Screening for Remote Surveillances



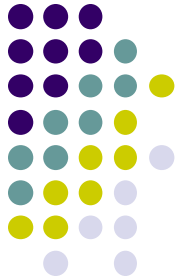
Develop Procedures Activity Affecting Quality



Reference NQA-1, Requirement 5

- Remote techniques are activities affecting “Quality”
- Remote techniques need be prescribed by and performed in accordance with documented instructions, procedures, or drawings that include or reference appropriate quantitative or qualitative acceptance criteria for determining that prescribed activities have been satisfactorily accomplished
- Remote techniques shall be described to a level of detail commensurate with the complexity of the activity and the need to assure consistent and acceptable results
- Written procedures or instructions shall be determined based upon complexity of the task, the significance of the item or activity, work environment, and worker proficiency and capability (education, training, experience).

Conclusion



- Decisions to perform supplier based remote activities / techniques are dependent upon risk, and as such, should be treated on a case-by-case basis by the purchaser

- If the purchaser determines that the risk it too great and/or the remote activity technique is insufficient to obtain the appropriate level of quantitative or qualitative acceptance criteria, then the purchaser should not rely on the remote techniques but rather rely on a physical presence

Improvement Efficiencies
Reduce Travel

Considerations to Reduce Travel (time and personnel)

- Improve preparation activities
  - Capability questionnaire
  - Obtain QA Manual and Implementing procedures

- Consider a hybrid model (combination of both remote and physical)

- Team with other DOE/NNSA sites
- Use Audits performed by others – (MSL, NIAC)

- Use accreditations

- Expand on the use of Supplier Performance “History”

- Perform corrective action verifications remotely

Questions