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Dean C. Logan

VSAP Quarterly Report - 1st Quarter 2012

The following is the first quarterly update report for 2012, detailing VSAP activities and accomplishments during the period of November 30, 2011 - February 29, 2012. These reports are provided to inform your Board and the public on the progress of the Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP). This series of quarterly reports is also in response to the motion adopted by your Board on September 7, 2010.

During the reporting period, the Department continued to work towards the goals of the second phase of the project. In this second phase, the project seeks to 1) identify the voting system model and technical requirements; 2) identify the procurement and development model that the Department will recommend. These overarching goals will be accomplished by continuing to gather and analyze data, building partnerships, and continuing to find ways to engage the community throughout the process. The following report provides an update on the project's progress and activities as they relate to:

- Open Innovation Challenge
- Stakeholder Discussions
- Research and Analysis

About the VSAP

Launched in September 2009, the Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP) was developed by the Department in response to the growing voting system needs and challenges faced by the County. While the County's current voting system has served the voters of Los Angeles County with accuracy and integrity, the design of these

systems and the age of their technology do not offer the technical and functional elasticity necessary to continue to accommodate the growing and increasingly diverse electorate.

The size and diversity of Los Angeles County and the limited voting systems market, however, make it almost impossible to reasonably consider a commercial off-the-shelf voting system solution. Any voting system solution will entail a significant development or customization process in order to satisfy the County's needs, the General Voting System Principles adopted by the project advisory committee and technical requirements.

In response to these needs and challenges, the VSAP represents an unprecedented and comprehensive approach at modernizing the County's voting system. The vision of the project is to implement a voting system through a transparent process that takes into account the needs and expectations of current and future Los Angeles County voters. The VSAP aims at achieving three goals in this process: 1) give current and future Los Angeles County voters an unprecedented opportunity to participate in the assessment and development process; 2) increase voter confidence in the electoral process through the participatory structure of the project; and 3) synthesize public input and research to acquire or develop a new voting system for the County.

Open Innovation Challenge

In partnership with the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) Accessible Voting Technology Initiative, the RR/CC launched an online innovation challenge aimed at gathering ideas and concepts for making the voting experience more accessible.¹ In this process, the RR/CC seeks to find new approaches to the County's aging voting system. This initiative aligns with the VSAP's values of implementing a new system for the County utilizing a collaborative, participatory, and transparent process. It also supports the vision of engaging the genius and talents of experts and innovators to help envision the design of the new system.

The challenge was launched on January 24 and runs through March 22, 2012. It is funded by a competitive grant from the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission and operates on OpenIDEO, the open innovation platform run by the design and innovation firm IDEO out of San Francisco. OpenIDEO's online community will submit inspirations and concepts around making the voting experience more accessible to everyone. The challenge seeks to answer the question, "How might we design an accessible election experience for everyone?"

The RR/CC does not expect the full detailed design of an end-to-end system as the outcome of this challenge. From this challenge, the Department expects to obtain themes, concepts, and ideas that can be refined and further developed. Once these

¹ <http://www.openideo.com/open/voting/brief.html>

concepts are refined and tailored to meet the needs of the County, the VSAP can move on to prototyping and the selection of a design.

The use of open innovation as a way to improve the voting experience is unique and groundbreaking in nature, not only in Los Angeles County, but also nationally. These types of online crowdsourcing challenges have been used by many corporations, government entities, and non-profit organizations as a way of gaining access to the skills and expertise that exist outside of their organizations, but that may be helpful for complex problem solving. Some organizations that have used this strategy to find solutions include: General Electric (GE), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), NOKIA and Proctor and Gamble.

Stakeholder Discussions

The Department continues to meet with stakeholders with the intent of keeping them informed about the VSAP and maintaining their engagement in the process. During this period, the Department provided updates and presentations to, and facilitated discussions with, the Community Voter Outreach Committee, Department staff, Board of Supervisors' Deputies, the Chief Executive Office and the VSAP Advisory Committee. Presentations and discussions were held at the following meetings:

1. Community Voter Outreach Committee Meeting- January 18, 2012
2. RR/CC Staff Meeting- January 25, 2012
3. BOS Deputies/CEO Operations Cluster Meeting- January 26, 2012
4. VSAP Advisory Committee Meeting- January 27, 2012²
5. Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting- February 28, 2012

Research and Analysis

Over the past quarter, the Department's internal VSAP Project Team has continued to research and analyze key issues affecting voting system acquisition and development. The team's ongoing focus is on researching policies and regulatory frameworks in the following key areas:

1. Funding - Two dedicated sources of funding for a voting system exist: Prop 41 and HAVA 301 funds. The project team continues to research the acceptable uses and the disbursement process for these funds.
2. Regulatory Environment/Certification Process - The current approval and certification process is one that is costly and time consuming – and one that is tailored only to procuring existing commercially marketed voting systems. The existing regulatory framework does not contemplate new development or non-proprietary solutions. The project team continues to research legislative/policy

² Video of VSAP Advisory Committee Meeting available at: <http://www.livestream.com/larrcc6>

options that may facilitate the development and implementation of Los Angeles County's future system.

Stay Connected

More information regarding the Voting System Assessment Project (VSAP) is available online at www.lavote.net/voter/vsap and on the project's Facebook page (@Voting Systems Assessment Project – VSAP). The pages on our website and on Facebook are frequently updated with news and information and are a great way to stay connected with the progress of the project between quarterly reports. We strongly encourage public input throughout the process and look forward to continuing to work with your board on this critical project. If you have any questions please contact Monica Flores, VSAP Project Coordinator at (562) 462-2879 or via email at mflores@rcc.lacounty.gov.