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CATEX 2016 Drill

After Action Report

September 27, 2016

The After Action Report (AAR) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine to include the National Preparedness Goal and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included.

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EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Catastrophic Exercise (CATEX) 2016 Drill
Exercise Date	August 10, 2016
Scope	The All Hazards Consortium’s multi-state Fleet Response Working Group (AHC/FRWG), in coordination with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Infrastructure Protection (DHS / IP), conducted a drill that focused on awareness and application of FRWG Disaster Response Tools and Processes in support of regional electric power restoration efforts across the Eastern United States and Canada. Exercise participation was virtual. Information sharing was limited to communication tools normally utilized for a scenario of this type. No assets or resources were deployed.
Mission Area(s)	Mitigation, Response, Recovery
Core Capabilities	Planning, Operational Communications, Operational Coordination, Critical Transportation, Logistics and Supply Chain Management
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate participant’s functional knowledge of AHC/FRWG processes and tools¹. 2. Stress test some key elements of the AHC/FRWG’s Regional Fleet Movement Coordination Initiative process and Sensitive Information Sharing Environment (SISE) information sharing tools to determine gaps. 3. Confirm roles and responsibilities across the following entities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Mutual Assistance Groups (RMAGs) – in electric sector • State and Local Government Agencies • Federal Government Agencies • Trade Associations • Participating Sectors (Food/Water, Fuel, Telecom, Finance, Retail and Transportation) • The FRWG Program Office 4. Discuss logistical challenges when initially aligning resource needs between utilities. 5. Assess overall communications, operational process efficiency and tool(s) operational effectiveness. 6. Identify strengths, areas for improvement and assign corrective

¹ DHS does not necessarily endorse these processes or tools, but are evaluating their ability for the purpose of this exercise.

	<p>actions.</p> <p>7. Education on the AHC/FRWG’s Fleet Movement Coordination with State’s process and tools.</p>
<p>Threat or Hazard</p>	<p>Natural hazard, severe weather similar to a “Derecho” event.</p>
<p>Scenario</p>	<p>Predicted but isolated severe weather in the Mid-West turns into a regional, widespread severe storm with little to no advance notice. The storm is projected to pass over States in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions during a period of excessive heat, high temperatures, and high electrical load periods.</p>
<p>Sponsors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Hazards Consortium’s Multi-State Fleet Response Working Group (AHC/FRWG) and the East Coast Corridor Coalition (EC3) Working Group • U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Infrastructure Protection (DHS / IP) • Regional Mutual Assistance Groups (RMAG) in Electric Sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Southeastern Electric Exchange, Great Lakes, North Atlantic, Mid-West
<p>Exercise Participants</p>	<p>Total in Attendance: 40</p> <p>Private Sector: 20 Non-Profit: 7 Local: 4 State: 8 Federal: 1</p> <p>Players: 31 Controllers: 5 Evaluators: 3 Facilitators: 1</p> <p>See Appendix B for a list of Participating Organizations.</p>

ANALYSIS OF EXERCISE OBJECTIVES

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to core capabilities, which are distinct critical elements necessary to achieve specific mission area(s).

Exercise Objective	Core Capability
Evaluate participant's functional knowledge of AHC/FRWG processes and tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Operational Communications ✓ Operational Coordination ✓ Critical Transportation ✓ Logistics and Supply Chain Management
Stress test some key elements of the FRWG's Regional Fleet Movement Coordination Initiative process and Sensitive Information Sharing Environment (SISE) information sharing tools to determine gaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Operational Communications ✓ Operational Coordination ✓ Critical Transportation ✓ Logistics and Supply Chain Management
Confirm roles and responsibilities across the participating entities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Mutual Assistance Groups (RMAGs) – in electric sector • State and Local Government Agencies • Federal and Canadian Government Agencies • Trade Associations • Participating Sectors (Food/Water, Fuel, Telecom, Finance, Retail and Transportation) • The Fleet Response Working Group (FRWG) Program Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Planning ✓ Operational Communications ✓ Operational Coordination ✓ Critical Transportation ✓ Logistics and Supply Chain Management
Discuss logistical challenges when initially aligning resource needs between utilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Planning ✓ Operational Coordination ✓ Critical Transportation ✓ Logistics and Supply Chain Management
Assess overall communications, operational process efficiency and tool(s) operational effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Operational Communications ✓ Operational Coordination
Identify strengths, areas for improvement and assign corrective actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Planning ✓ Operational Communications ✓ Operational Coordination ✓ Critical Transportation ✓ Logistics and Supply Chain Management
Educate on the FRWG's Fleet Movement Coordination with State's process and tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Planning ✓ Operational Communications ✓ Operational Coordination ✓ Critical Transportation ✓ Logistics and Supply Chain Management

TABLE 1. — Exercise Objectives and Associated Core Capabilities

Exercise Objective One

Evaluate participant’s functional knowledge of AHC/FRWG processes and tools.

Core Capabilities: *Operational Communications, Operational Coordination, Critical Transportation, Logistics and Supply Chain Management*

Strengths

Strength 1: Participants with previous experience working with AHC/FRWG processes and tools demonstrated they were extremely knowledgeable of applications and capabilities, this especially included representatives from Regional Mutual Assistance Groups (RMAGS). These participants validated their ability to apply guidelines and utilize capabilities offered by the tools to communicate and coordinate information. Ultimately, they demonstrated an understanding of how these tools work together to allow for improved decision-making processes.

Strength 2: Participants with little-to-no previous experience generally demonstrated they were functionally knowledgeable of AHC/FRWG processes and tools. These participants accessed guidelines and available training prior to the drill, made available by the FRWG online. They were familiar with or aware of the processes and tools prior to the drill and became more “functionally” knowledgeable during the drill as tools were applied. These participants asked questions when needed, provided their perspective as first-time users, and offered suggestions to improve stakeholder functional knowledge.

Strength 3: Training and informational materials covering AHC/FRWG processes and tools are made available to stakeholders online at all times. The AHC/FRWG made great efforts to inform participants of the processes and tools that would be tested. They encourage participants to visit with the AHC/FRWG website and to become familiar with their products on a regular basis. The website provides “how to” videos, downloadable guidelines, information on upcoming events, initiatives, and links to services used, as well as other related information.

Areas for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1: Development of training and guidance that would allow stakeholders to become functionally knowledgeable of Sensitive Information Sharing Environment (SISE) and GeoCollaborate technologies has not been developed.

Analysis: In 2015, the AHC/FRWG developed and implemented products that allows stakeholders to access a Common Operating Picture (COP) within a secure framework. These technologies include: 1) SISE, a secure framework for sharing sensitive operational information and linked access to all FRWG products; 2) GeoCollaborate, a real-time collaboration tool that produces a regional COP by way of a facilitated regional collaboration session and a non-facilitated Daily Dashboard; and 3) STORM Central, a website that centralizes state emergency declarations and waivers.

The exercise design originally planned for all participants to be able to actively engage in these newer technologies at one point during the drill. Due to technical difficulties, this operational testing instead became a discussion-based webinar that demonstrated what these newer technologies in the GeoCollaboration Session are able to perform.

Although participants were generally familiar with these new technologies, the drill provided many with their first opportunity to view how the capabilities would be applied during an incident to support collaboration and decision making processes in GeoCollaborate. Participants asked detailed questions about SISE and GeoCollaborate capabilities and processes that eventually lead to inquiries about availability of user manuals and training. It was identified that neither guidance nor training materials specific to fleet movement operations had been developed. Efforts had focused on implementing and developing the technologies first prior to developing instructions and training

Recommendation 1: Once these technologies have been updated to provide the necessary tools needed by stakeholders, focus should shift to developing guidance and training specific to applying these technologies with fleet movement operational objectives. Consideration should be given to define step-by-step processes that could be followed by all SISE technology users. Given the criticality of SISE and GeoCollaborate technologies to effectively conduct fleet movement operations, development of guidance and training should be of the highest priority.

Area for Improvement 2: Knowledge levels of AHC/FRWG processes and tools varied greatly among stakeholders.

Analysis: Some participants commented on the ease of use of the processes and tools while others asserted issues while applying the same. Knowledge level differences were far and wide among participants; they either knew what they were doing or they didn't. Factors identified at the organizational level that contribute to this variance include; continuous personnel changes and the lack of emphasis to provide training to new personnel internally on a regular basis. At the AHC/FRWG level, capabilities that would be needed to provide ongoing training that would match frequencies of personnel changes is not feasible. For real-world incidents, stakeholders that lack training may find themselves responsible to coordinate fleet movement operations which would potentially create issues with time-sensitive information sharing and response operations.

Recommendation 1: Fully develop user manuals or guidance that covers application of all AHC/FRWG processes and tools, as needed. Development of new or existing training courses should be considered, especially for guidelines that require specific actions to be taken among stakeholders.

Area for Improvement 3: AHC/FRWG available resources are limited may not be capable of achieving guideline and training development recommendations on their own.

Analysis: Roles and responsibilities of AHC/FRWG have increased exponentially since their inception. With limited available resources, they have been able to improve fleet movement response operations by addressing ongoing coordination issues that were previously not a direct responsibility of any particular organization. Measures to address issues include the development of multiple guidelines and tools, training and exercises, and a website for stakeholders to access these resources. With the implementation of SISE technologies, AHC/FRWG will take on additional responsibilities to develop guides, training, and system management with limited increases to available resources.

Recommendation 1: Consider developing strategies that would allow responsibilities to be shared with partner organizations that rely on AHC/FRWG processes and tools.

Exercise Objective Two

Stress test some key elements of the FRWG's Regional Fleet Movement Coordination Initiative process and Sensitive Information Sharing Environment (SISE) information sharing tools to determine gaps.

Core Capabilities: Operational Communications, Operational Coordination, Critical Transportation, Logistics and Supply Chain Management

Strengths

Strength 1: An updated version of the SISE was rolled out and required all users (old and new) to register in advance of the drill. Emphasis on the pre-registration requirement resulted in registration of over 30 stakeholders.

Strength 2: The tile format and design for SISE was beneficial and helped users easily find needed information.

Strength 3: GeoCollaborate Daily Dashboard elements that tested successfully included real-time updates of layered information, such as weather, state and local declarations, and a "Key Points" window that provided specific hazards and projections.

Areas for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1: All tools available to AHC/FRWG members have not been integrated with the SISE technology (e.g., Dashboard) as applications.

Analysis: As the SISE Portal serves as the common operating picture for AHC/FRWG members, the technology should have available all necessary applications. Most AHC/FRWG guidelines and technologies are integrated as applications into this framework, however, some are not. Specifically, the Open/Close Program in one of these applications. In order to access those programs that have not been integrated, a link is available. However, clicking the link redirects users outside of the Common Operating Picture and the secure environment.

Recommendation 1: Continue integration of needed applications into SISE technology so that when Portal is opened, all applications determined for the situation needed by the stakeholders are available.

Area for Improvement 2: Some stakeholders were unable to register or access SISE technology.

Analysis: Various participants reported during the SISE Portal registration process that they were unable to register or access due to issues with the SISE technology certificate or due to organizational firewalls preventing access. By not having key stakeholders being able to access the technology during an incident, the effectiveness of collaboration, information sharing, and decision making is limited.

Recommendation 1: Identify and coordinate with the organizations and individuals who are unable to register or access. Work with stakeholders to identify the barriers preventing access,

and determine corrective or alternative measures that would allow steady-state access or at a minimum, a work-around as needed during an emergency.

Recommendation 2: If a stakeholder remains unable to access after suggested measures in Recommendation 1, consider the development of continuity strategies that would allow the organization or individual access as needed.

Recommendation 3: Assess SISE technology certificate to determine any issues that may exist and take corrective actions.

Area for Improvement 3: Registered SISE members maintain permissions to sponsor and approve new applicants.

Analysis: Currently, any approved SISE member maintains permissions to sponsor new applicants to grant them access. Applicants are required to complete and sign a detailed confidentiality agreement. Not all registered SISE members may not have in-depth knowledge of which organizations or individuals should be allowed access. Allowing all members to have permissions increases the risk of access by an individual who should not. Additionally, instructions or procedures are not documented or in place to ensure SISE members have vetted applicants prior to determining their acceptance. Without a process to ensure applicants meet determined standards, vulnerabilities exist regarding sensitive information exposure.

Recommendation: Restrict permissions to include only those who have in-depth knowledge of the confidentiality agreement, and who understands the level of information sensitivity as well as who should be allowed to access that information.

Exercise Objective Three

Confirm roles and responsibilities across the participating entities.

- Regional Mutual Assistance Groups (RMAGs) – in electric sector
- State and Local Government Agencies
- Federal and Canadian Government Agencies
- Trade Associations
- Participating Sectors (Food/Water, Fuel, Telecom, Finance, Retail and Transportation)
- The Fleet Response Working Group (FRWG) Program Office

Core Capabilities: Planning, Operational Communications, Operational Coordination, Critical Transportation, Logistics and Supply Chain Management

Strengths

Strength 1: The drill provided a great opportunity for electric sector stakeholders, both public and private, to come together and discuss roles and responsibilities through drill conduct and collectively identify strengths and discuss opportunities for improvement. In addition, it provided an opportunity to develop partnerships with senior leadership within the Federal agencies.

Strength 2: The drill challenged stakeholders to functionally apply AHC/FRWG processes and tools to achieve their own objectives, roles and responsibilities, as well as collectively as FRWG members.

Exercise Objective Four

Discuss logistical challenges when initially aligning resource needs between utilities.

Core Capabilities: *Planning, Operational Coordination, Critical Transportation, Logistics and Supply Chain Management*

Objective was not exercised due to real world difficulties.

Exercise Objective Five

Assess overall communications, operational process efficiency and tool(s) operational effectiveness.

Core Capabilities: Operational Communications, Operational Coordination

Strengths

Strength 1: SISE technology portal brings all the information and stakeholders together into one place. Participants expressed a high interest in using the SISE information tool including the GeoCollaborate technologies.

Strength 2: The SISE technology, in addition to the Open/Close Program, provided the private electric sector participants a means to receive real-time updates of logistical needs such as roads, hotels, and restaurants, from response until the resources (e.g., trucks) have returned to their point of origin.

Strength 3: Storm Central was noted by participants to be a key tool because it was one location for all declarations and related situational information.

Strength 4: Although not intended to be tested, the Constant Contact program used by the AHC/FRWG proved to be a strength for communication to all stakeholders. This program allowed for a standard template for preset messages, automated sign-in for individuals that want to receive specific messages. When individuals visit Storm Central, they can fill out a short form and quickly get signed up for Constant Contact.

Areas for Improvement

Areas for Improvement under Objectives One and Two also address this section for Objective Five. Refer to those sections for specific additional information.

Exercise Objective Six

Identify strengths, areas for improvement and assign corrective actions.

Core Capabilities: *Planning, Operational Communications, Operational Coordination, Critical Transportation, Logistics and Supply Chain Management*

Strengths

Strength: Conducting the drill itself was a strength as it helped to capture strengths and areas for improvement, as well as providing electric sector stakeholders and public sector an opportunity to test the synchronization of national response efforts using only virtual methods.

Areas for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1: Additional opportunities to test AHC/FRWG processes and tools should be integrated with other exercise programs involving electric sector response capabilities.

Analysis: It was noted that the CATEX Exercise Series produces one exercise per year to test AHC/FRWG processes and tools; however, objectives to test these capabilities within other exercise programs has been limited to those sponsored by RMAGs. As local and State jurisdictions rely on restoration of continuous electrical feeds following an incident, electric sector response is critical. Knowledge of these operations and the tools used to organize and coordinate response actions would be beneficial for stakeholders who are not currently involved.

Recommendation: Continue to educate stakeholders and integrate capabilities with the broader response and recovery communities due to the fact that these drills are necessary to better enhance local, State, regional, and national coordination following a major event. It is recommended that AHC/FRWG continue outreach and encourage other training and exercise programs integrate these efforts within broader response and recovery exercises.

Exercise Objective Seven

Educate on the FRWG's Fleet Movement Coordination with State's process and tools.

***Core Capabilities:** Planning, Operational Communications, Operational Coordination, Critical Transportation, Logistics and Supply Chain Management*

Strengths

Strength 1: Read-ahead and educational materials that included current references, resources, and internet links were provided to the participants in advance and were helpful before and during the drill.

ANALYSIS OF EXERCISE DESIGN

Strengths

Strength 1: Training and participant materials provided before the exercise, specifically the Player Checklist with embedded links, were helpful and beneficial throughout the exercise.

Strength 2: Good communication of information, and the level of detail provided through the injects.

Strength 3: Drill provided great feedback on areas needed for improvement.

Strength 4: Conference line availability throughout the drill linking participants to the exercise control cell and SimCell.

Strength 5: Drill was very well-organized and well run.

Areas for Improvement

Area for Improvement 1: The SISE technology was not accessible for the majority of participants.

Analysis: Simulated SISE technology was conducted from a laptop located within the control cell. Once bandwidth of the laptop would only allow a limited number of participants access, therefore, the SISE technology was not tested in full.

Recommendation: Ensure that bandwidth capabilities are adequate to provide access to all participants. Also, it was noted that the server for the National Weather Service crashed the day before the drill, resulting in slow processing speeds of real-time weather-related information.

Area for Improvement 2: Separation of AHC/FRWG from exercise control responsibilities and player responsibilities.

Analysis: AHC/FRWG personnel served as both exercise controllers and players. As a result, actions that would have been taken by the AHC/FRWG were not fully executed due to double tasking.

Recommendation: Assign the roles of player and controller to separate individuals for future drills for most effectiveness.

Area for Improvement 3: Knowledge level of some participants did not match what was needed to conduct an operational drill.

Analysis: It was determined during the drill that some participants had limited knowledge of the AHC/FRWG processes and tools while other participants had extensive knowledge. Those with limited knowledge were unable to provide expected actions although this did help to confirm Objective One.

Recommendation: For future operational exercises or drills, it is suggested to confirm that key players vital to conduct would be able to participate.

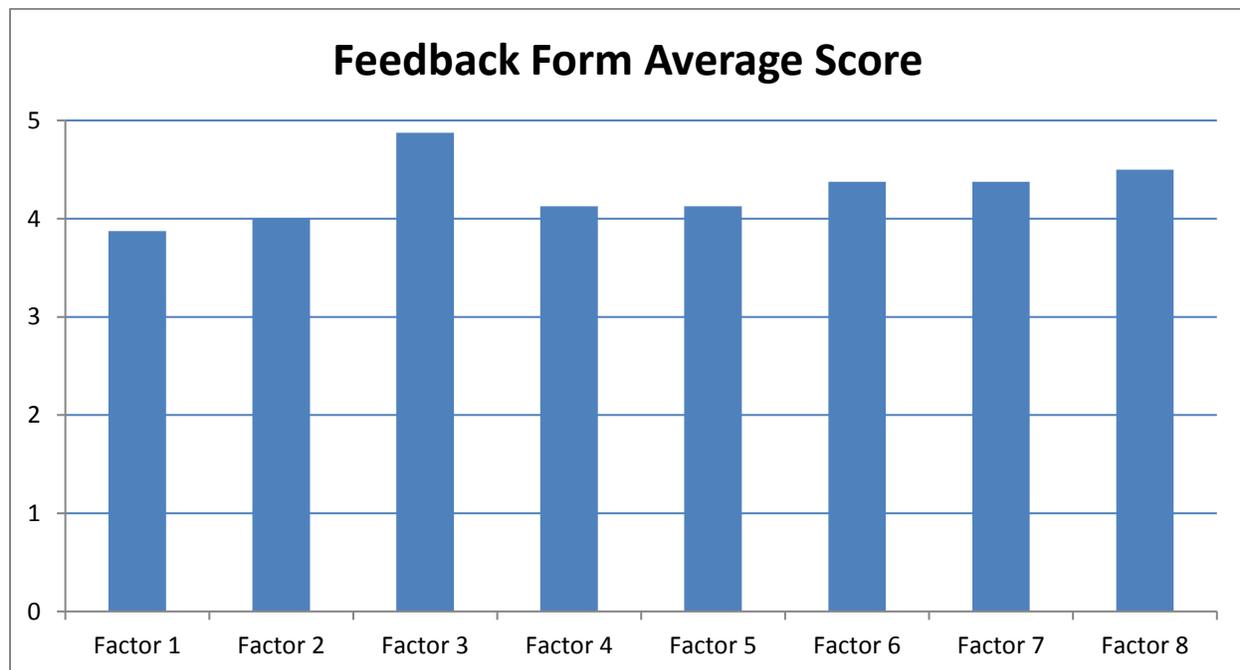
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APPENDIX A: FEEDBACK FORM RESULTS

Exercise Design

Participants rated, on a scale of 1 to 5, their overall assessment of the exercise relative to the statements provided below, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

Factor		Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
1	The exercise was useful to my organization.	1	2	3	4	5
2	The exercise enhanced my organization's resiliency.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The exercise team was professional and worked towards my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I would recommend the exercise program to my partners.	1	2	3	4	5
5	It is likely that I will request another exercise from DHS IP.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The information received through this activity was current and relevant.	1	2	3	4	5
7	The information received through this activity will effectively inform my decision making regarding safety and security risk mitigation and resilience enhancements.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I will encourage my agency/organization to incorporate information I learned through this activity into our safety, security, or resilience practices.	1	2	3	4	5



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APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Organizations
Private Sector
ARCOS
Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation
Con Edison
Georgia Power/Southern Company
Dominion Power
Duke Energy
EverSource
First Energy/Jersey Central Power & Light
Golden Triangle Business Improvement District
National Grid
PSEG Long Island
New Jersey Power & Light
PEPCO Holdings
PPL Electric Utilities
StormCenter Communications, Inc.
Non-Profit
All Hazards Consortium
Edison Electric Institute
Southeastern Electric Exchange
Local
Chester County, Pennsylvania
District of Columbia Homeland Security & Emergency Management
New York City Department of Emergency Management
State
Georgia Department of Emergency Management
Maryland Emergency Management Agency
New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness
North Carolina Department of Public Safety
Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency
South Carolina Department of Emergency Management
Federal
U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Infrastructure Protection

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APPENDIX C: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
AAM	After Action Meeting
AAR	After Action Report
AHC	All Hazards Consortium
CATEX	Catastrophic Exercise
C/E	Controller/Evaluator
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EC3	East Coast Corridor Coalition
EEI	Edison Electric Institute
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
EPT	Emergency Planning Team
ExPlan	Exercise Plan
FRWG	Fleet Response Working Group
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
HSIN	Homeland Security Information Network
I&A	Office of Intelligence and Analysis
ICS	Incident Command System
IP	Office of Infrastructure Protection
JIC	Joint Information Center
PIO	Public Information Officer
POC	Point of Contact
PSCD	Protective Security Coordination Division
RC3	Regional Consortium Coordinating Council
RMAG	Regional Mutual Assistance Group
SimCell	Simulation Cell
SISE	Sensitive Information Sharing Environment
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SOPD	Sector Outreach and Programs Division