Federal Aviation Administration

Success Story
Collaboration with NATCA on ERAM

How the collaboration-based approach on ERAM since early 2011 has contributed to the program's success.

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By:	ERAM Program Office, Federal Aviation Administration
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What is ERAM?

- The En-Route Automation Modernization (ERAM) replaces a computer system called the Host that was developed in the late 1960s and implemented in the early 1970s at the FAA's 20 air route traffic control centers.
- ERAM is at the core of everything that happens with air traffic in this country. As the backbone of national airspace system, ERAM processes radar data, communication, flight information and displays tracks for aircraft flying at high altitudes to controllers.
- ERAM is a foundational Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) system key for achieving NextGen's primary goals, such as increasing air capacity and reducing flight delays.
- The Host is a tremendously complex system, and the ERAM replacement project is one of the largest efforts undertaken by the FAA.

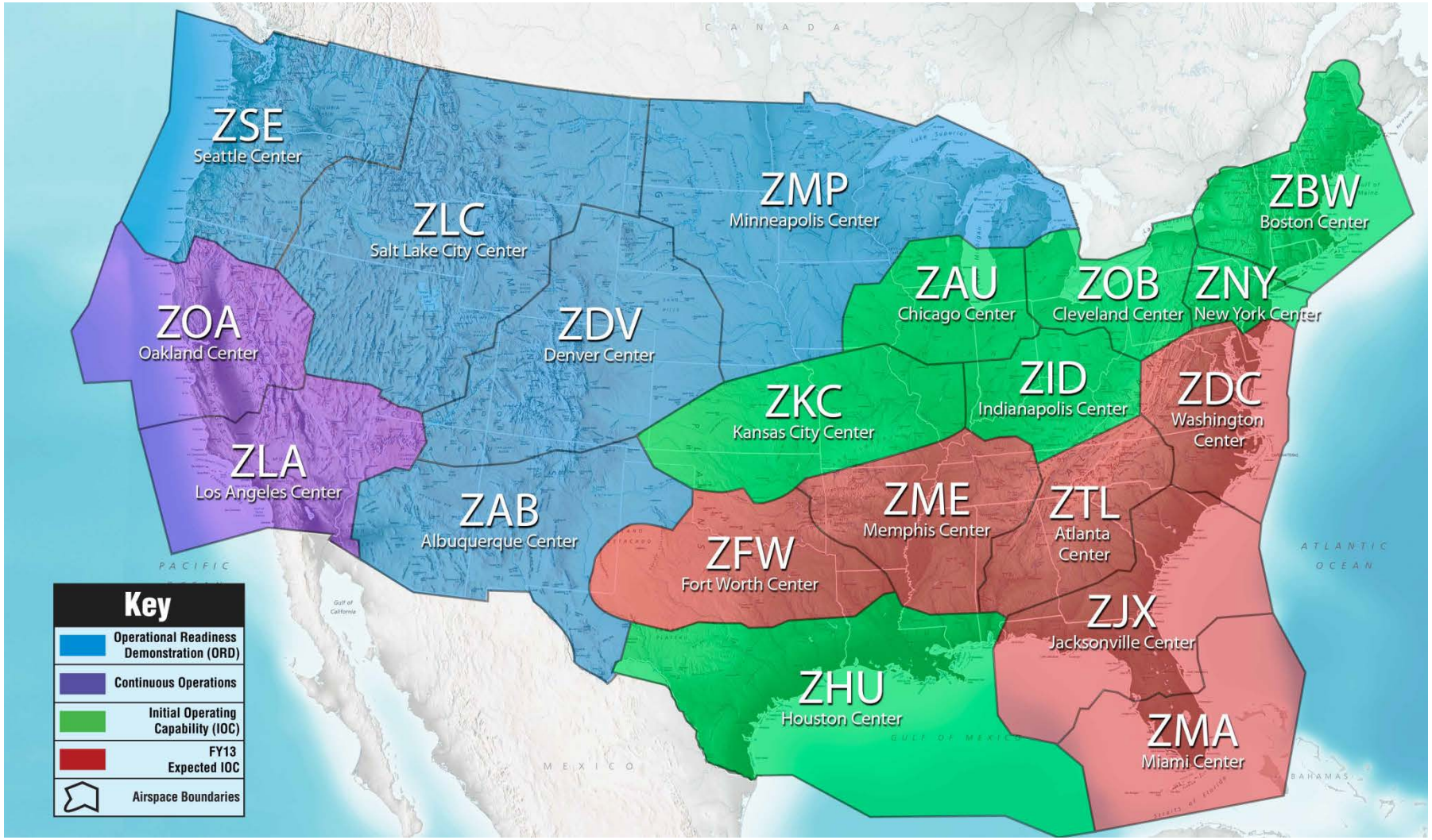
ERAM – Brief History

The FAA has undertaken a series of management initiatives that are helping to get ERAM back on track:

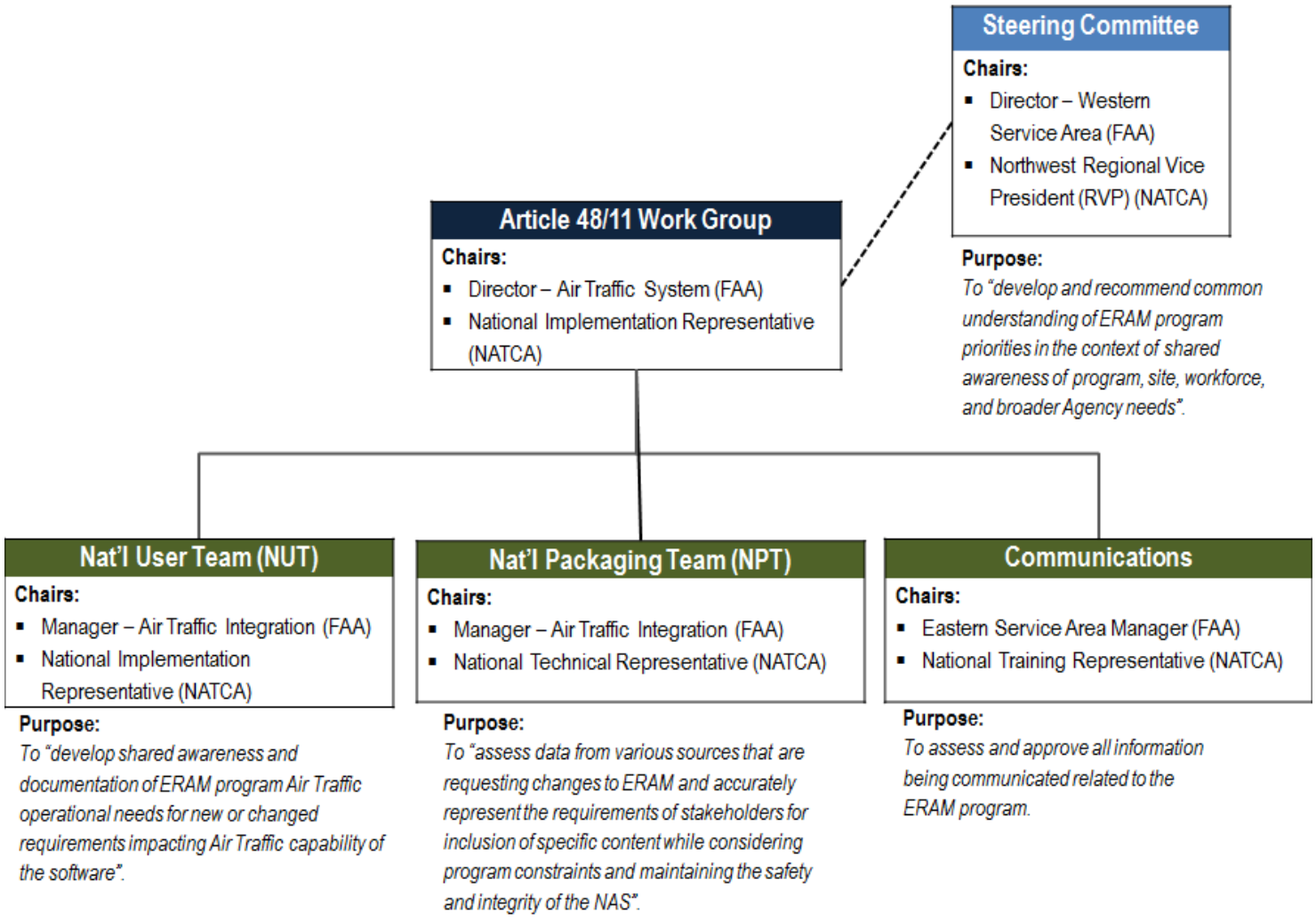
- In 2011, ERAM program was restructured with a $330 million variance in funding and a 3-year, 8-month variance in schedule.
- At that time, the FAA appointed a new management team within the ERAM program who improved relationships with the National Air Traffic Controller's Association (NATCA) and Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS) unions, and creating collaborative work groups.
- New program governance/oversight was put in place in early 2011 which included the labor unions, a steering committee and regular program management reviews.
- FAA and union working group standardized procedures resolved technical and training challenges and prioritized necessary fixes to the system.
- Over time, these process improvements were implemented to enhance how software is released, tested, and deployed – reducing the number of problems with software code.

ERAM - Today

Blue, purpose, and green areas represent active ERAM operations, with red areas planned for operations no later than September 30, 2013.



Success Example – Collaborative Governance



Success Example – Integrating Operational Workforce Expertise to Software Design

Collaborative workgroups established the National User Team (NUT) and Computer Human Interface design team (CHI) with dedicated management and union participants to assess the following:

- Agreement on problem statements for changes to the automation system with an operational impact
- Assignment of task teams to support detailed analysis of operational capabilities for select requirement changes
- Agreement on desired behavior recommendations to the Program Management Organization's Engineers for requirement changes

Success Example – Collaborative Change & Communications Management with End-Users

Collaborative workgroup jointly developed communication and site transition strategies:

- Site ‘team’ construct intentionally leveraged a joint management and union approach to enhance collaboration and overall buy-in to local planning and implementation practices.
- Site orientation and pre-operational transition activities were collaboratively designed and presented to end-user management and workforce personnel consistently
- Collaboratively reviewed national-level communications to FAA facilities improved the ability of the program to speak with ‘one voice’ to the field
- Improved workforce engagement

Creating Positive Outcomes

These changes have contributed to ERAM being 'on track' and will benefit others.

- Sustained and proactive engagement with pre-operational facilities through a collaboration-based approach improves readiness and maturity of sites prior to deployment.
- 14 of 20 ERAM sites are now operational, with 7 in continuous operations and over 45,000 hours of operational run-time nationwide on ERAM since December 2011.
- Collaborative requirements validation, operational evaluation, and deployment procedures will continue to enhance the quality and effectiveness of future ERAM deployments planned to support the FAA's NextGen goals and objectives.
- Lessons learned are now being leveraged on other programs to seek similar successes.