

Align Release Notes

Release 4.5.3

Date of Deployment: August 17, 2023

Background

Align and the Secure Evidence Locker (SEL) are tools used by NERC, Regional Entities, and registered entities in the conduct of the ERO Enterprise Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement Program (CMEP). Initial training and training materials have been offered throughout the initial deployment of functionality (Releases 1, 2, 3, 4.0, and 4.5). Ongoing maintenance and enhancements to Align and the SEL (CMEP tools) will occur as needed to assure effective implementation of the CMEP. Maintenance may include modifications to correct existing objects, notifications, records, workflows, etc. Enhancements may include new or improved functionality, workflows, reports, etc. These changes are expected as these CMEP tools are adjusted from their initial deployment to provide additional user functionality, efficiency, and enhancements to usability.

Purpose

As changes are implemented to the CMEP tools, training and training materials provided during initial deployment may no longer be accurate. As part of an effective communication plan and to assure the effectiveness of user training, NERC is providing detailed release notes in this report. These release notes include detailed information regarding what features are changing or being added, what users are impacted by the changes, and if current training materials are impacted and have been updated. Users are encouraged to familiarize themselves with any changes that impact features or workflows regularly used.

Terminology

Ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the CMEP Tools is conducted using an adaptive and iterative software development process. Terminology used within this document may refer to various processes most users may be unfamiliar with.

CEA: Compliance Enforcement Authority

COP: Compliance Oversight Plan

IRA: Inherent Risk Assessment

Module: Used to refer to a set of features used within Align. As shown in [Figure 1](#), each item that can be selected from the My Align drop-down menu is a Module. *Example: Risk and Planning*

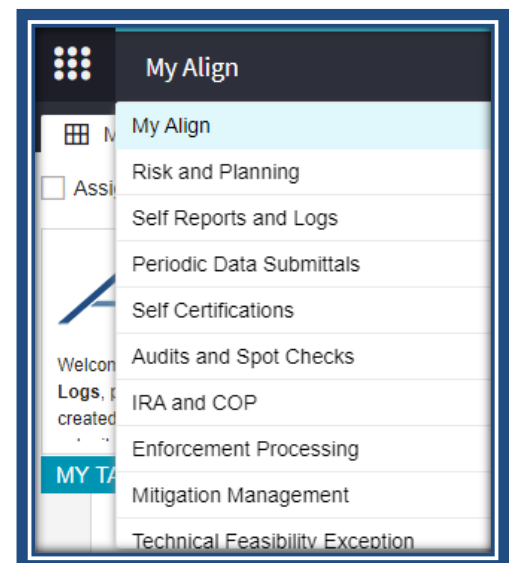


Figure 1: My Align Drop-Down Menu

User Story #: As shown in *Figure 2*, a unique number is used by the developers, NERC IT, and testers when referencing discrete changes. This number is used to aggregate all details, testing, and development information regarding a specific change. This number is not used by most CMEP tool users and users are not expected to become familiar or track these numbers. These numbers are provided for transparency purposes regarding changes and change controls. However, users may leverage these numbers to facilitate any follow up discussion, troubleshooting, testing, or IT support ticket details.

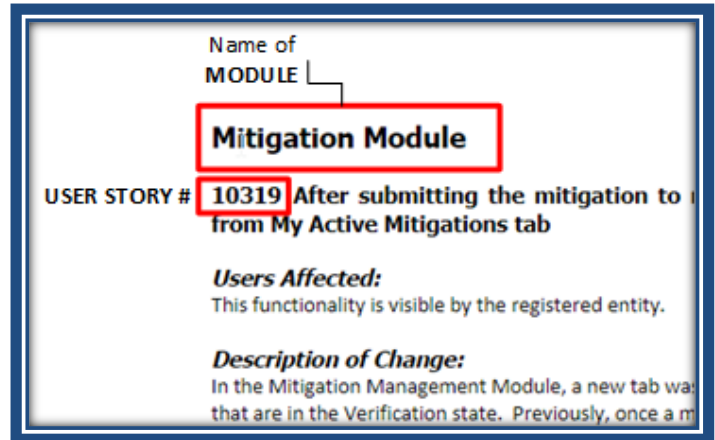


Figure 2: Elements of a User Story

Enforcement and Mitigation Module

User Story # 11374

Description of Issue: For Registered Entities, we need to have the ability to print the full record

Users Affected: Registered Entities

Description of Change: *New reports were created for registered entities to print the forms. The new forms match the UI and ensure all fields are visible, all forms are visually uniform, and the print links have either been updated or added to pull in the new reports. The registered entity can print the following: the draft finding record prior to submission, with milestone details; the finding record with the references to the related items (finding updates, mitigation, notifications, and RFIs); finding updates; notifications; RFIs; mitigation with milestone information; and individual milestone records.*

Training Materials Modified: *N/A - no training materials need to be modified; this is just addition of hyperlink to print on the forms.*

Self-Certification Module

User Story # 17758

Description of Issue: Update Permissions for Self Cert Admin

Users Affected: CEA

Description of Change: The CEAs have the ability to create Self-Certification questions. This change corrects a permission issue to allow the Self Cert Admin profile to be able to create Self-Certification questions. In production, this was limited to only a couple of CEAs, this corrects to allow all CEA users with the Self-Cert Admin profile to create questions.

Training Materials Modified: *N/A – no training materials need to be updated as this was fixing a permissions error which prevented people from being able to do what they should've been able to do. CEA63 Adding Self-Cert Questions is already available.*

Inherent Risk Assessment Module

User Story # 15171 and 16226

Description of Issue: Users were clicking “click to assign” multiple times due to some loading times. This practice was creating multiple iterations of the risk factor questions.

Users Affected: Registered Entities

Description of Change: Entities may now select by selecting the checkbox to the left of the risk factor and then selecting “Delete Selection” to delete duplicated risk factor rows. See the screenshot below for an example.

5 items selected		
SUBJECT ↑	REVISION	STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/> CIP – Monitor and Control Capability Click to assign	Not Assigned	NOT ASSIGNED
<input type="checkbox"/> Largest Generation Facility Assignment Finalization Incomplete - Click here to Finalize	Not Assigned	PENDING ASSIGNMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Largest Generation Facility Assignment Finalization Incomplete - Click here to Finalize	Not Assigned	PENDING ASSIGNMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Largest Generation Facility Assignment Finalization Incomplete - Click here to Finalize	Not Assigned	PENDING ASSIGNMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Largest Generation Facility Assignment Finalization Incomplete - Click here to Finalize	Not Assigned	PENDING ASSIGNMENT

Update Cancel

Figure 3: Deleting Duplicate Risk Factor Questions

Training Materials Modified: N/A – no training material needs to be updated. This is a minor enhancement to allow the ability to delete duplicate questions. The current 43) Assigning Answering Risk Factor Questions training video explains the delete option for a different screen and notes that duplicate questions is a quirk that may be changed in the future.

User Story # 15176

Description of Issue: Risk Factor Questionnaire Due dates on the dashboard were automatically populating to 90 days out regardless of the date set by the CEA in the IRA.

Users Affected: CEA and Registered Entities

Description of Change: Due Dates for the questionnaire now pull from the date in the record to show the proper due date.

Training Materials Modified: N/A - no training material needs to be updated. This is a minor fix to get Align to pull the proper date as it was intended to. The training CEA099) Sending and Reviewing ERPQs is not affected by this change.

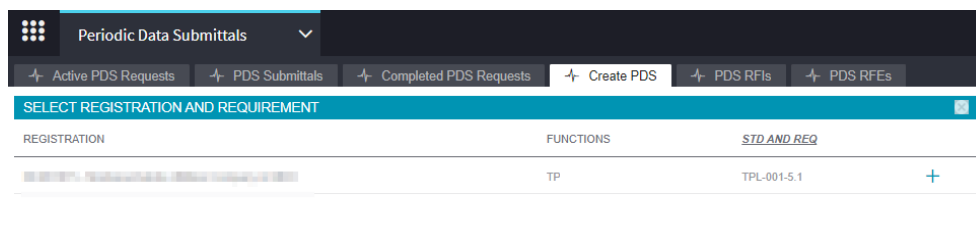
Periodic Data Submittals Module

User Story # 16597

Description of Issue: PDS - Create a new Entity PDS form for TPL-001-5.1

Users Affected: Registered Entities

Description of Change: For entities that are Transmission Planners or Planning Coordinators, a new standard became enforceable TPL-001-5.1 on July 1, 2023. This change adds to the selection criteria for registered entities in the PDS module under the Create PDS tab.



Training Materials Modified: N/A - training materials do not need to be updated; this change is just the inclusion of a new Standard in the Create PDS Standard selection.

Technical Feasibility Exception Module

User Story # 16621

Description of Issue: REPORTING - Review and restrict Reporting Universe user access based on business need

Users Affected: NERC

Description of Change: NERC Standards users had the ability to access Technical Feasibility Exception (TFE) data in the reporting universe. The change corrected the permissions for the NERC Standards users so that they are unable to run any data related to TFEs.

Training Materials Modified: N/A - no changes to training material, this is correction to permissions in the reporting universe.

User Story # ERO-33552 and ERO-33694

Description of Issue: Updating the TFE Recipient formula for TFEs

Users Affected: CEA and Registered Entities

Description of Change: This change corrects the email recipient email for TFEs when the CEA wants to extend its review. Previously, the email that would trigger for the ACC recipients was looking for multiple recipients. If the registered entity only has one ACC contact, the email would not trigger and cause an error. The code was changed to send to the ACC contacts for the registered entity, whether it was one or more.

Training Materials Modified: *N/A - no changes to training material, this is correction to the email trigger in the system.*

Internal Controls Assessment Module

User Story # 17307

Description of Issue: ICA - Regions are able to view and edit Internal Controls Assessments (ICAs) from regions other than their own and ones they are in coordinated oversight with.

Users Affected: CEA

Description of Change: The ICA list being displayed for a CEA included ICAs where the CEA was not the Lead Regional Entity (LRE). The change was to ensure that all ICAs on the dashboard are either from the CEA's region or from an ARE region in which the CEA is the LRE. Further, AREs are able to see the ICAs but not edit the ICA, only the LRE is able to edit the ICA.

Training Materials Modified: *N/A - no changes to the training material are needed. This change does not affect information that is on the CEA104) Creating and Internal Controls Assessment (ICA).*

User Story # 17779

Description of Issue: Unable to create an Internal Control Assessment

Users Affected: CEA

Description of Change: The change was to ensure the CEA could only edit an ICA from the CEA's region or the CEA is the LRE for coordinated oversight entities. Previously, a CEA could modify another CEA's ICA form.

Training Materials Modified: *N/A - no changes to the training material are needed. This change does not affect information that is on the CEA104) Creating and Internal Controls Assessment (ICA).*

Appendix A – Table of User Stories

ID	Chapter	Title
11374	Enforcement and Mitigation	For Registered Entities, we need to have the ability to print the full record
17758	Self-Certification Module	Update Permissions for Self Cert Admin
15171, 16226	Inherent Risk Assessment Module	Users were clicking “click to assign” multiple times due to some loading times. This practice was creating multiple iterations of the risk factor questions.
15176	Inherent Risk Assessment Module	Risk Factor Questionnaire Due dates on the dashboard were automatically populating to 90 days out regardless of the date set by the CEA in the IRA.
16597	Periodic Data Submittal Module	PDS - Create a new Entity PDS form for TPL-001-5.1
16621	Technical Feasibility Exception Module	REPORTING - Review and restrict Reporting Universe user access based on business need
ERO-33552, ERO-33694	Technical Feasibility Exception Module	Updating the TFE Recipient formula for TFEs
17307	Internal Controls Assessment Module	ICA - Regions are able to view and edit Internal Controls Assessments (ICAs) from regions other than their own and ones they are in coordinated oversight with
17779	Internal Controls Assessment Module	Unable to create an Internal Control Assessment

Appendix B – Revision History

Revision History		
Version	Date	Revision Details
1.0	8/4/2023	Initial Draft