

Moderator: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome and thank you for joining today's web conference – An Overview of 8(a) and Overview of Certify for District Offices and Partners.

Please note that all participant lines will be muted until the Q&A portion of the presentation. We will provide you with instructions on how you may ask a verbal question, at that time.

You are welcome to submit written questions throughout the presentation, and these will be addressed during Q&A. To do so, please select the participants menu at the top of your screen, and send your note to, "all presenters." If you are logged in with our web-based application, you will find the Notes tab on the bottom right-hand side of your screen and address your question to "all moderators."

If you require technical assistance, please send a note to the ATTCES operator by clicking on the name in the software or using the Notes tab, if you are on the web application.

And with that, I will turn the call over to project manager for Certify@SBA, Francine Morris. Francine, please go ahead.

Francine: Hi, everyone. This is Francine. And I just wanted to say thank you all for getting on the call today. This is an exciting time for SBA, especially with the 8(a) business development program. As you all know, on November 15, we launched the initial application and initial review of those applications online. And we have had some great success with our firms coming in and actually applying for the program, online. So this is really just an exciting time for SBA and for all of us that have been diligently working on the team, as well as working with our field and headquarters and program offices, in trying to develop this new system.

So I just want to thank each and every one of you. For those of you who have already been working with us and helping us in our discovery phase, and just helping us to build the system, that's good for everyone. This is going to be one of two trainings for just an overview. So if you are on the line today, and there are other BOS's and resource partners that are not here to see this presentation – they can come back on November 28. We're going to do a repeat of the training. So again, it's a simple overview of the 8(a) annual review, in Certify, what it's going to look like and it's for the District Offices and our resource partners.

So, without further ado, I'm going to turn this over to Stephanie Grosser, who is with our USDS team, and she is supporting us with the comms [*Editor's Note: communications*] and training. And with this launch. So, Stephanie, all yours.

Stephanie: Thank you, Francine. Hi, everyone. For those who have been to some of our previous trainings for 8(a) initial application, some of this presentation may look familiar to you. But for those who haven't seen that, we want to make sure that our resource partners, who – and the District Offices who are often going to conferences and meetings – where you are showing firms what to expect when they apply, or when they submit annual reviews this coming year.

I don't want you to continue using your BDMIS slides. We want you to use these slides, instead. So, we'll be actually posting this whole PowerPoint presentation to our Knowledge Base page. And on the screen, you see the Certify website. If you click on the "Help" tab, within that page, you will be directed to the Knowledge Base. And that's where we keep all our presentations and PowerPoints and you will see all our upcoming training and the dates for those, as well.

So those presentations are available for you to download and give yourself, as you work with firms in the future. So, I just wanted to say that to get started.

So, as Francine said, starting in January of next year, 8(a) firms are going to be submitting annual reviews in the Certify platform. And so, this PowerPoint is going to show you the features of Certify. And also, the basic overview process of how firms will do that.

So, the mission of Certify itself is to create a one-stop shop for small businesses to apply for SBA Small Business Programs. And so, you could already apply on Certify for WOSB, EDWOSB, now 8(a) have all been integrated. And now the new thing that we are launching, as I mentioned, is the annual review.

The second part of the mission is so that SBA has an effective and efficient case management system in one place, to allow for easy interaction with the end-user, with the firms.

And so, the reason why we're doing this is the process for the initial application and annual review was very paper-based and very burdensome. It also cost hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to have firms and SBA mail these thousand-page applications back and forth across the country. So, we really wanted to make it easier for firms to apply without having to print and upload

documents and then re-upload the same documents year after year for their annual review process.

And so, the four primary benefits that we are seeing for firms – one is, as I just said, they can reuse documents.

Two, there's online questionnaires. So before, a firm had to print out forms, fill them out, scanning them and uploading them – or mail them back to SBA. And now they have actually been streamlined and converted into these online questionnaires that have logic. So, you only need to answer the questions that apply to you, and you don't need to keep filling out the same pieces of data, over and over.

The third is, transparency. So, firms used to call SBA for updates on where their case was or when their deadlines were. And now, firms can just log into Certify, to see the status of their annual review. Or their initial application, if they are just applying for the first time.

And then, finally, to protect firms' personal data, of which SBA requires a lot for these programs, we have integrated a direct messaging platform into Certify. So that firms aren't sharing personal information via unsecured email systems.

So, I'm going to show you, if you are unfamiliar with Certify, some features. So, firms are going to see basically all aspects on one page, which you will see in one minute. But that includes the different sections of their application, their document library, their messages platform, notifications of what needs to get done, and noted locations of contacts from SBA to the firm. And then the allowing of contributors, or people involved with the firm to put their information directly into the Certify platform.

So, all of the features that I just mentioned, are visible here, on the overview page for the firm. And so, this page actually is the internal analyst view of the annual review application. And so, this is a complete application for annual review that has already been submitted. And this is what the District Office at SBA would see. And it's very similar for the firm's view, also. This just has, as I mentioned, all of the major components that I just talked about. And you see the sections – SBA notes, messages, and activity log of what's new on the case. And then down below, we have the sections, or cards, that have the broken-down sections of the application. So before we had forms, and now we have the sections with questionnaires.

So just to dive in a little bit more about these online questionnaires – I mentioned before, there were PDFs or paper forms, like the 1450, that firms had to do, and that were really lengthy. Now that has been streamlined and shortened a little bit and converted into these online questionnaires. And so, there are five different sections, that you saw previously, but this page takes you into one of those, which is business development.

And so on the left side you'll see a navigation bar, of these different parts to the business development section. And the system actually walks the firm through each question, one at a time. If you answer yes to a question that would require an attachment, it would then update with a note that says, please upload the required documents. The details section for each question is very helpful. We really encourage firms to read the detail section, before answering any questions. There will be a detail section for every question. And that really gives the firm tips on what we are looking for. What we are looking to see.

The only way for firms to upload documents for their annual review – same for initial application – is through the questionnaires. And so, because the firms are uploading documents in response to questions, the system actually names the document with the file type, based on the question. And that makes it easier for analysts at SBA to quickly see what documents have been uploaded, if they went into the firm's documents tab at the top. But the analysts are also able to look at documents within the questionnaires as they go through and review them.

And so, the Document Library is the second feature that I will show you. And so, as I said, firms will upload documents only within the questionnaires. But then, every document will be saved through their Document Library. And so, here you are seeing the firm's document page.

So, if a firm completes an annual update for year three, let's say January is their third year in the program, and they upload all these documents. And let's say in year four they come back to Certify, and they need to upload like kind of the same documents that they uploaded for year three. For year four, when they fill out the questionnaire, and it says please upload your taxes from 2016 – they'll actually be able – instead of saying upload from computer, they can click the other option, which is look at Document Library. And then this will pull up their Document Library that you are seeing, and they will be able to click on whatever relevant attachment they want to associate with that question. And again they are reusing

documents from year-to-year, instead of simply having to go back and resend in that same file, over and over again.

The next feature that I mentioned was messaging. And so, this is what the messaging feature looks like. This is a very secure way to send messages to the SBA analyst. So, any question that the firm has, they could just send it this way. One of the benefits, besides the security of the firm's PII, is that if someone from the SBA goes on vacation or if there is staff turnover, and someone else takes over the case, that person will be able to see the complete case file and all the messages between the firm and the analysts over time. Because all the messages and all the notes are visible to anyone in SBA with access to Certify.

And then, one really exciting feature is contributor access. And so, firms are able to invite contributors and a contributor is someone who is required to submit their information to the file. So, for annual review, that would be the firm owner, any DVD who is a 50% owner, and then spouses of DVDs or the owner.

And so, the firm, instead of handing out forms to all those people and then having to scan them in and reviewing their PII – so personally identifiable information on that form – we've made it so that the firm can directly, and here on the page, you can actually see what that looks like – the firm can write the name and the email address of each contributor and then send an invitation to collaborate and then that person will receive an email saying please register on Certify.

And then once that person logs into Certify, they'll see the application for them to submit their questionnaire. And once they do, the firm owner will be notified that that is a complete section. The annual review is not complete until all of the different contributors have submitted and completed their own sections.

There is one caveat I want to make to what I just said – for 8(a) firms that were approved in BDMIS – so that's basically everyone, except for the people who just got, who just applied since November 15. All of those people – so this is their first time submitting annual review in Certify. So, they'll actually have additional questions to complete their first year, using Certify. And that they won't be needing to do every other year for annual updates - for annual review. And that's because we need to establish their profile within the system. And so, the system in the questionnaires, we'll just walk them through those questions.

But I just wanted to highlight that in addition to those additional questions, it's also additional contributors. And so, even though annual review is only for DVDs

and spouses, and the owner and their spouse – all of the contributors that would have filled out the application, their section towards the initial application – will have to do the same thing for the first time doing annual review in Certify. And so the system will let them add not just the DVDs but also all contributors, and 10% owners and managing partners – that entire list of contributors.

And then, finally, the firm has a dashboard that is going to give them the status of all of their SBA applications and certifications. And so, here you can see that this made up firm, DRD Farms, has an 8(a)-annual review that is in draft form. So they could go in here and click on 8(a) annual review to get inside and start their application, or to continue it - it's a draft, so that means that they have actually started it. Or if they wanted to delete it, they could actually delete it from within here.

And so, I just will walk you through the features. And now I just want to walk you through how firms would go ahead and complete their annual review in this system. And so, to get started, firms will go ahead and click "get started" where you see the red arrow pointing to the orange box. And that will allow them to register on Certify, which is going to ask them basically for their DUNS number, their MPIN number, which is the number firms create when they register their entity in SAM.gov, and their TIN number. If a firm doesn't have one of those, they'll have to do that. And they should all have that since they're already in the 8(a) programs.

Once they have registered and linked their business in Certify to their SAM profile, the next page will take them to what you are seeing now, which is their Dashboard. And they'll go ahead and click 8(a) annual review and that will take them to this overview page, which has the different sections.

So, there are five sections total for annual review. You have the eligibility section, the ownership section, control, business development, and then the last section, which you are not seeing because the screen shot cut it off, but the last section is the contributor section. And so that's where the owner would fill out their information, they would be invited, they would be asked to submit the emails for all the other relevant contributors.

And so, here you're seeing the page for a contributor, who is being asked to provide all of their basic information and upload any relevant documents from their end. So, they could put in their information directly. And I should mention

that there is a firewall in place so that the firm owner cannot see the information that contributors put into the system. And the contributors cannot see the information that the firm owner puts in the system. So, all that information is securely sent directly to SBA without anyone else being able to access it.

And then once all those sections, so you guys saw those five sections – on this page you see that they all say complete. Once all those and the contributor section all say complete, it will enable the firm to submit their annual review. And so, they will go ahead and submit that, and they'll get emails from Certify, asking for additional information from them for anything that's confusing or left out. And if the firm has any questions, they'd be able to also contact Certify through the messaging component.

So just a couple of quick dates. One is that November 15 we actually launched 8(a) initial application. We're continuing to iterate on that site and we have launches of features coming out based on feedback we're receiving every two weeks. So, November 29 we have the first set of features coming out to just continue to iterate on this site and add some things we think firms and SBA will find useful.

January 2018 we're launching 8(a) annual review. And so that's when firms will be able to start submitting their annual reviews in Certify and we will, of course, let all firms know who will be affected by that and when it's ready for firms to submit their annual review.

Today's training was an overview, just so everyone is prepared to know generally what we're doing. So, resource partners and District Offices, as I mentioned before, will be equipped with this PowerPoint to be able to share this PowerPoint with other people, with firms, so that they know what to expect.

But then on – if you've seen our training schedule, we actually made some changes to the second training, the in-depth walk-through of the platform. We moved it a week back and so instead of December 5 and 7, that training is going to be December 12 and 13 at 2pm Eastern time. And so, it's just one training and we're doing it twice, just to have more people be able to hear the training. But that will actually walk you through in-depth how you go through step-by-step to do an annual review.

And then we're having the same training but for 8(a) firms instead of for resource partners on the 13th and 14th. So before we open it up to questions, the one other

thing I want to mention is that on the Certify platform, I mentioned that on the top right is the Help tab. and that Help tab, as I mentioned, brings you to our Knowledge Base. And our Knowledge page will have the webinar and the PowerPoint later today, and this webinar so you can watch it over and over again if you want to, from that page as well, with a transcript. And we're also producing an annual review checklist of documents that you'll need to upload as you go through those questionnaires. And a Quick Start Guide on how to complete certain tasks within the Certify platform for annual review.

And we already have a Quick Start Guide and an application checklist for the initial application product, so we're going to replicate those to make them relevant as well to the annual review process.

So with that, I want to leave time for questions and so, Tanya, I'll turn it over to you to go over any written questions, or verbal, that we've received.

Moderator: Ladies and Gentlemen, as we move to Q&A please feel free to place yourself in our verbal question queue, by dialing #2 on your telephone keypad. If you are a voiceover computer user, you may select the raised hand emoticon from the top toolbar. You will each receive a notification once your line is unmuted and then you may state your name and question. And as a reminder if you prefer to submit a written note, please select the participants menu at the top of your screen and send your note to all presenters. Or if you are logged in on the Web you will find the Notes tab on the lower right-hand side of your screen and you may address your note to all moderators.

And we do have our first verbal question in the queue. Your line is unmuted, please go ahead.

Caller: This is Alice (?) in the Mississippi District Office. Will the firms still have to submit hard copies of their annual review?

Stephanie: No. No hard forms will be required to be submitted anymore. Everything will be digital.

Francine: Hey Alice, we're doing away the forms and we're making the system – we're automating it, so you won't have to worry about the forms. Ultimately, they should be no forms except for maybe one.

Stephanie: Yeah, I was going to say there are one or two forms that aren't digitized, like the 1790 which is representative paid, using compensation paid. There may be one or



two others that are remaining. And so those forms will all be – when you go through the application checklist and documents, the forms that will remain will be within there; it's hyper-linked. So, you can access those forms. Those forms, firms will have to print but they will not have to send them in. They can just upload them when they get to that question within the questionnaire.

Caller: Thank you.

Moderator: *Repeats instructions*

We do have a few written questions that have come in. The first one reads – *When you send a link to another person in the company to upload documents, can that person see the other company docs that have been uploaded?*

Stephanie: No, no. They can only access their own questionnaire, but they can't see anything that has been uploaded by the firm. And they won't have access to the documents tab.

Moderator: And we did have another verbal question come in. Caller, your line is unmuted, please go ahead.

Caller: Hi this is Joel (?) from the Michigan District Office. I have two questions. One is, from an internal standpoint, what would be the approval process for the District Director to sign off on annual reviews once the electronic piece rolls out. And then secondly, is there something in place where the FAR review, the Field Accountability Review folks are being updated to this new innovation so that when they do come out to the field, they're updated on that there's no hard copies anymore. Everything's digital. Has that conversation taken place, too? Thank you.

Stephanie: Yeah, for the first question with review, we didn't show that feature on today's call, but we will show it in the in-depth walk-through. It has already been built. So basically, when the BOS, the business opportunity specialist, in the District Office finishes the review, they'll be able to make a recommendation to their supervisor. And then that supervisor can make a recommendation to their supervisor. So that flow is all built in to the Certify platform. And there will be a record of who approved and what the recommendations were moving up the chain.

And then in terms of visibility for other people at SBA who need to be able to see the file, certify actually works where anyone at SBA can actually log in and can create an account using their MAX ID. They would basically click on the federal

employee's Get Started link that you see on the screen right now. And then they associate their MAX ID to sign in.

And then their supervisor would approve their permission to access the system and then they would be able to see the status and the files of different cases and so that's particularly useful if, let's say, the field office gets a call saying what happened to my initial application and OFO can actually see – right now, they can actually look up that firm's name and say, yeah, I see it in there. It's in processing. And actually, you could go in yourself and see that it's in processing. But you don't have to call the CODS' offices anymore to ask those questions. But yeah, the FAR folks will be able to get access as well and then they would be able to back up to the online file.

Moderator: And moving on to our next caller. Your line is unmuted, please go ahead.

Caller: Hello, my name is Clark (?) with the Alaska District Office. And my question is, how long will BDMIS run in parallel with Certify? The reason I ask is, I have two concerns. One, will I be able to complete my annual reviews that were submitted prior to January 2018? And two, will firms be able to complete their annual update, if they don't finish in BDMIS by January 2018?

Francine: They will have time. Although we say that BDMIS is going away, fortunately, we have been in tune with the timeline as far as how the annual reviews are coming in. So, we are not just going to immediately turn it off. We're going to phase it out. However by April, we are looking for BDMIS to be completely decommissioned. And everything will be coming into Certify. So, we are definitely aware of this happening, and we are going to phase that out. So, we'll definitely let the field know the hard deadline date, so you all can plan accordingly.

And, we are also going to be communicating with the firms, as well. So, just like we did trainings with the small business community for the initial application, we are also going to do those same trainings for our firms that are actually in the 8(a) programs. So, we'll be working with everyone to keep in line with those dates.

Stephanie: And I'll just add that for the initial application process, some of you were aware that we sent out a list of dates, where we said if you are a new firm, you have to apply to X date, and then there was a 45 day pause for new applications. And then we said if you are in the middle of applying in BDMIS, you could – you would have 30 (sic) or 15 days to complete the application. So, we did have a series of dates like that. And so we are in talks right now about formalizing what those

dates will look like for the annual review process on the site. And once we have those, we'll make sure to communicate that, on the website, and to all of you.

Moderator: Moving on to the next verbal question in the queue, please go ahead. Your line is unmuted.

Okay, we'll go back to that line.

In the meantime, we did get a few written questions. Next one – *How will you address entity-owned participants? We've already experienced issues with Certify application. If an individual is associated with more than one participant.*

Rick: We are working on creating a functionality that will allow a PTAC or a SCORE office to be able to help firms, by having multiple firms associated with a single email address. There's some PII issues that we need to work through with OC, to make that happen. So, I don't have a timeline for you, specifically.

We are also making other enhancements to the system to make entity-owned firms, applications, and annual reports, a bit easier. Obviously, our first target here was the broader audience. And now we are going to be working into some of those entity enhancements. Wish I had a more concrete answer for you. But, we're working on it.

Van: This is Van. Just to add on to Rick. The question is for entity-owned firms. I understand that one person can – like one manager can manage two firms so that one manager can complete the information for those two firms. So, what that manager needs to do, in the meantime, is to establish a separate email account. So, he has an email for company A and company B. He has to establish an email for a company A. And then establish another email for company B. And then he can register and put in information for those two firms... (crosstalk-inaudible) ...

Moderator: *For emails sent directly to a BOS, become part of the firm record?*

Stephanie: For emails sent... so, it needs to be sent through the messaging platform within Certify. If it was sent via email, it should not be – the analyst should say, please send me this message through the Certify platform, and not through email – to help firms get used to the fact that they need to start using messaging, instead of email. If they just send it email, that would not automatically be part of Certify, unless the analyst took the time to download that email, save it, and then uploaded it themselves, in the analyst document section. Which is not preferred. What is preferred is to, again, use the messaging feature within Certify.

Rick: And, again, to build on what Stephanie is saying, it's actually not just preferred. It's absolutely critical that we do conduct our communications as much as is absolutely – whenever possible, through the messaging service. Email presents a wide range of security vulnerabilities for firms who may be transmitting personal information through email. The other component of that is SBA benefits greatly by having a running record of any communications that have occurred with the firm. But the primary reason for messaging is, is to preserve the security of that information. So, it is critical that we get away from using email.

Moderator: In a follow-up comment to that, I'll just read that out – *We've considered unique emails. However, individuals that were a member rep on two firms in BDMIS are being rejected on new Certify applications. It is common for an individual to serve multiple roles on an entity-owned participant, board member, or member rep.*

Moving to our next question – *What is the technical help point of contact information for certify.SBA?*

Stephanie: So if there is a problem, again, on [certify.SBA.gov](http://certify.SBA.gov), if you click on the Help tab, there's a Knowledge Base with a lot of information and also in the "How Can I Help You" box, where you can enter your question and get answers immediately.

And we've taken most of the questions that we receive in the Help Desk and translated those into questions on that page. So that's the fastest way to hear back.

If your question is not there, then we do have a Help Desk which is [help@certify.SBA.gov](mailto:help@certify.SBA.gov). And we do ask that you be a little bit patient. People will get back to you within one or two days, but it won't be an immediate response. But you can always ask questions on that page and send it to that email address – [help@certify.SBA.gov](mailto:help@certify.SBA.gov).

Moderator: Our next question – *Now in BDMIS we submit the letter, and 1729. Do we still have to do that?*

Stephanie: So, for the analysis for the SBA – not for the firm, but for the analysts who are writing their recommendations, they can still do that. How they have been doing it. And then when they are taken through the Wizard of how to submit your recommendation, it will say, please upload that form. And they can just upload the WORD document that is editable. And so when their supervisor – when it's their time to review the file, they will be able to download that analysis and then make

any edits to it. And then re-upload it with their initials at the end. And that version will be saved within the analyst document tab on Certify.

Moderator: *Will exit interviews for 8(a) final year be done on Certify?*

Rick: Actually, yes. There's a number of workflows for 8(a) that we are yet to build. Exit interviews, graduation, and terminations are on that list.

Stephanie: And I'll just mention we are building the system as an agile, iterative process. And so, what Rick just said, we know that there are – we've mentioned a couple of different features that we know are very critical, and that we are working on for future enhancements. But the theory behind agile, is that you build in the critical functionality that you need to launch a product and make sure that it works for users. And then you keep adding on that – versus a traditional IT project in government, which could take five years. And you collect all requirements up front, and the thing may never launch. It could be billions over in spending.

And so we are really staying away from doing every single requirement. That could have taken five years. Instead, we are launching that in months and we will be able to make sure that it works for the end-user. And we have also been really happy that throughout this agile process, we've involved those BOS's in the field who have been tremendous champions for this development process. And firms themselves have come in and talked to us to make sure that our designs and the questionnaires make sense to them. And that they are in plain language.

Moderator: *Do you know when the HUBZone application process is due to be moved to Certify.gov?*

Stephanie: So, the fall of 2018 is when we are looking to have all of HUBZone on Certify. And as we are building the new things, like HUBZone, we'll be continuing to iterate on what is already launched, including 8(a) initial application and 8(a) annual review.

Francine: And that's important to know that while we are enhancing the product that we have already pushed out, we are also building our other program products. So all of this is happening, parallel and simultaneously. So, you will see that what is neat about this whole thing, is you will see how the system is being built, because you're going to be in it while it's being built. And your feedback will greatly help in order to make the system, our system. So, it's a great way of building something that is usable.

Stephanie: And the Help page, the Knowledge Base is available externally. And on that page, we'll be posting the updates on what features come out after the initial launch. And for internal – this presentation is for the end-user, the actual firm. For you guys to be able to educate firms.

But for anyone on the call from SBA, we're going to have a separate in-depth walk-through for SBA staff that shows you all the features that you guys have, which is different from the features that firms have - a lot of them are the same, but for things like making a recommendation, or the ability to refer the case to a different office, or being able to upload documents to an analyst document section – we did go over those today because this training was focused on the firm.

But something else that the analyst has, is the SBA SharePoint site on Certify. And that's where we post all the internal documents for analysts to really be able to understand the system. And for any updates on the analyst's side, we'll be posting to that SharePoint page. And we'll show you where that is when we do the in-depth walk-through for analysts.

Moderator: *Will certify have the MP annual review for 8(a) firms with MPA's?*

... (inaudible conversation among speakers) ...

Francine: Would you read that question again? I'm sorry, we couldn't hear.

Moderator: *Will Certify have the MP annual review form for 8(a) firms with MPA's?*

Rick: Yes. The MPA form on the annual review will be an attachment. So you will use the PDF form, that you will be able download and upload to the system initially. Ultimately, we'll roll that in as well.

Francine: The worksheet that checks annual requests...to clarify.

Moderator: *Is the contributor function available during the 8(a)-application process?*

Stephanie: Yes. Anyone who is applying to an initial application for 8(a) also has that same contributor screen, where they can add all the contributors and then they won't be able to submit their application online, until all the contributors complete their application.

There were initially some people who didn't see that, that existed on the individual contributor page. They didn't scroll down to see that there were sections to add contributors. And we reached back out to them to make sure, that

they saw that, that is also on that page, and we are redesigning that page to make it more clear that they need to add all their contributors, up front. So that we receive a complete application.

And the system, also, it lets the firm owner – even though they can't see what is uploaded, on the dashboard, they will see a note that says which of their contributors has finished, and who hasn't. And for anyone who has not finished, the firm owner can just press one button to send a reminder to that contributor to please go ahead and sign in and complete their section.

Moderator: *If a message is sent through the messaging system in Certify, will the recipient get an email notifying them that there is a message in the system?*

Stephanie: Yeah, so we've built in notification. And so anyone who gets a message – the analyst or the firm – either one will receive a notification via email, saying, please log into Certify to see your message from the firm. Or a notification that a document has been uploaded. Or a notification that, it has been assigned. We have notifications built in.

We also have reader receipt for SBA analysts, so that if the analyst goes to the messages section, they will be able to see if the message was opened, and when it was opened.

Moderator: *The next question reads – I may have missed this, but when BOS's receive messages in Certify, will we receive an email notifying us, or will we need to log on to Certify, in order to know that we have a message?*

Stephanie: Analysts will receive notification as well, telling them that they have received a message. And they will be able to login to that. They will be directed to login to read their message.

Francine: So that goes back to what we were saying. That we want to keep everything inside the system. So, the analyst won't receive the email. They will receive a notification to go into the system to respond. And so, the firm gets the same thing. They will receive a notification to go into the system, to respond. So we want to keep everything inside the system.

Moderator: *When will DSBS be moved to Certify?*

Francine: Can you say that question again, please?

Moderator: *When will DSBS be moved to Certify?*

Francine: Sorry, I didn't hear the "D". So DSBS is – will probably come to Certify – we'll probably start discovery around the end of 2018. Into 2019 is probably when we will start building on the DSBS system. So that's when we are looking right now on the roadmap. Please don't hold me to those dates, but we'll start – the plan is – to start looking at the DSBS from a discovery perspective around the end of 2018.

We want to get 8(a) up and running. We want to get the HUBZone moving. WOSB, we're looking at enhancements to – if that turns into a certification program – but, DSBS is on the map to start being reviewed, 2018 into 2019.

Moderator: Our next question – and we just have two more, at this time. *Initial 8(a) reminder letter has been sent via Certify mail. Recently, we were told to submit via email, and obtain delivery receipt. Is there any way to create or submit the initial annual review reminder letter into Certify in 2019. Don't want to begin sending emails, then tell the firm, no emails – mixed message.*

Rick: We'll be building email reminders into the system. So, it will work in a similar fashion to many of the other official notifications that go out through the system. They'll receive an email telling them that there is something in the system that they need to do. They'll be able to come into the system, look at the reminder, and they'll also receive an in-application notification. So, yes, we will be affirming that.

Moderator: Question – *Will firms get the 8(a)-approval letter through Certify?* Not sure if that is a repeat.

Stephanie: Yeah, so that's for the 8(a)-initial application process. And they will be receiving – when the head of GCBD affirms or declines – makes the ultimate decision on an application - he or she will be putting in the approval or decline letter text into a message, and then sending that directly to the firm. If it is declined, it will have reconsideration instructions and that allows the application for the firm to start doing the reconsideration if they want to, immediately.

Van: This is Van. Just to add on to Stephanie, so for the annual review – when you determine that the firm still remains - if the firms are still eligible to participate, you send out the approval letter, as well. So you follow the same process as Stephanie indicated where the firm receives a notice to log into Certify, when they log into Certify they will see the approval letter, in the queue.



Moderator: Question – *Many entity-owned 8(a) firms have a compliance manager or other person assigned to complete the annual updates for multiple 8(a) subsidiary firms. Will they be able to continue to do it this way, in Certify?*

Stephanie: So they will be able to do it. The only unfortunate reality, right now, in the system is that they won't be able to use the same email address to login and do each one. You need a separate email address to associate with each firm, within the system. And so they will want to use a separate email to be able to create all of those individual accounts.

We are hoping, again, as a future enhancement to be able to make it so that one person could have multiple applications under that same email address, especially for entity-owned firms. That makes good sense. But we haven't built that into the initial MVP, minimal viable product, that we have launched.

Francine: There were cases, when I was out in the field, that entities had email accounts for each of their 8(a) firms and they were able to – the manager was able to have an email that was associated with each of the 8(a) companies. So that may be a resolution for now until we make that enhancement.

Moderator: *Repeats instructions*

Our last question, at this time, and we did get one more in – *Any chance you can set up a dummy training account at certify.SBA.gov for resource partners, like PTACs, to use?*

Stephanie: So, we would love to do that. Right now, we haven't been able to develop the engineering resources and to create a training environment, that would be user-friendly to the resource partner.

What we do have, which is this Knowledge Base that has webinars and user Quick Start Guides, and application checklists.

The other best thing that we could do, is we do have some links to clickable prototypes that looks very much like the site, that you could use for training. We had that for initial application, and we'll create something similar for annual review. And so that's really the best thing – we are happy to share that prototype link, if it's helpful for people. It's not going to be 100% functional, but at least it's something that you could click through and kind of explain to people generally how to go through the process.

That's the best that we have, even though it's not – it doesn't – again, it's not like every function will work on there. And not every question – the questionnaires haven't been programmed. But it gives you an idea of the platform. And what the basic functionalities are.

Francine: And I would add to that, for now, I think with the system being newly developed, it's probably best if that training is coming from us, right now. And then as everyone gets more familiar with the system, then we can consider doing something like that. But for now, I think it would be best for the trainings to come out of the Certify team.

Moderator: And our final question, at this time – *Will we get an email regarding the new training dates for current 8(a) firms?*

Stephanie: So, we're just waiting for AT&T Connect to send us the final call-in information. And once they do, Van is going to circulate all of the final training dates to all the resource partners. And we'll also post those on the Help page, under "upcoming trainings". You'll be able to see all that information. But we just move – as I mentioned, we pushed back two trainings. And so, we just want to update that page and make sure that it has all the current call-in data. So, you can receive it on that page, directly. And it will also come to all the resource partners in an email from Van.

Van: And also, I will be sending it to Michelle King, who will be distributing it to all the BOS's in the field.

Moderator: And we did get one more question. It reads – *I might've missed this. What is the email point-of-contact for technical on the Certify website?*

Stephanie: So, the email is [help@certify.SBA.gov](mailto:help@certify.SBA.gov), and if you go to the Help tab again, on the Certify website, to look at the Knowledge Base, on the bottom, it actually has that help email address, right there, if you forget it.

Moderator: And at this time there are no further questions.

Stephanie: Great. Well, I just want to say thank you to everyone who joined. Again, in about three business days, we will have this webinar up and available on that Knowledge Base website. And you can refer to it. And we'll have the PowerPoint there as well, so if you are giving any presentations on an overview of the annual review process for 2018, you can use these slides instead of the BDMIS slides.

Just so we are giving firms the correct information as we are moving into the new year.

So, thank you again. And I'm just going to pull up the last slide in our presentation – it actually has the link that you will see up on your screen. And so that link is – if you have any feedback or suggestions for Certify, go ahead and send them there. We always look through that inbox to add different ideas of functionalities that we are missing to our backlog for our engineers to develop in future iterations. So, with that, thank you again, and have a great Thanksgiving, everyone.

Francine: Thank you everyone, and have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Moderator: Thank you to all of our speakers and to the audience for joining today's call. Your call has concluded, and you may disconnect.

**[End of Recording]**