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## Nuclear Plant Recovery Series

Functional Area Gap Reviews

July 2017

# Introduction

Good nuclear plant performance depends in large part on how well each of the individual functional areas are performing (operations, maintenance, engineering, etc.). When all functions are performing well, the plant will perform well. Good nuclear operators have learned that it is better to identify and address performance declines in individual functional areas early before they lead to a more systemic performance declines. In addition, a focus on functional area improvement may be an important strategy as a part of an overall plant improvement effort.

The best fleets and plants have created a formal approach to conduct a functional area gap review to identify gaps in functional area performance and correct course.

In this edition of the Nuclear Plant Recovery Series, we introduce functional area gap reviews with an overview that answers the following:

- What is a functional area gap review?
- When do you initiate a functional area gap review?
- How do you conduct a functional area gap review?



# What Is a Functional Area Gap Review?

**A functional area gap review is a comprehensive review of a specific department or function, such as maintenance or chemistry**

- Focuses on the defined standards and expectations, adherence to them, and the results being achieved
- Addresses the comprehensive set of elements that could contribute to performance gaps in the functional area
  - Organization and resources: Is the function appropriately staffed and executing according to defined roles and responsibilities?
  - Processes and methods: Is the function operating in accordance with defined standards?
  - Metrics: Are the right things being measured and reported?
  - Culture: Does the function exhibit the appropriate accountability and behaviors?
- Prioritizes the identified functional area gaps so that focused initiatives can be developed
- Establishes actions, with due dates and owners, that will close the identified functional area gaps; these actions are typically tracked through the site's action-tracking tool

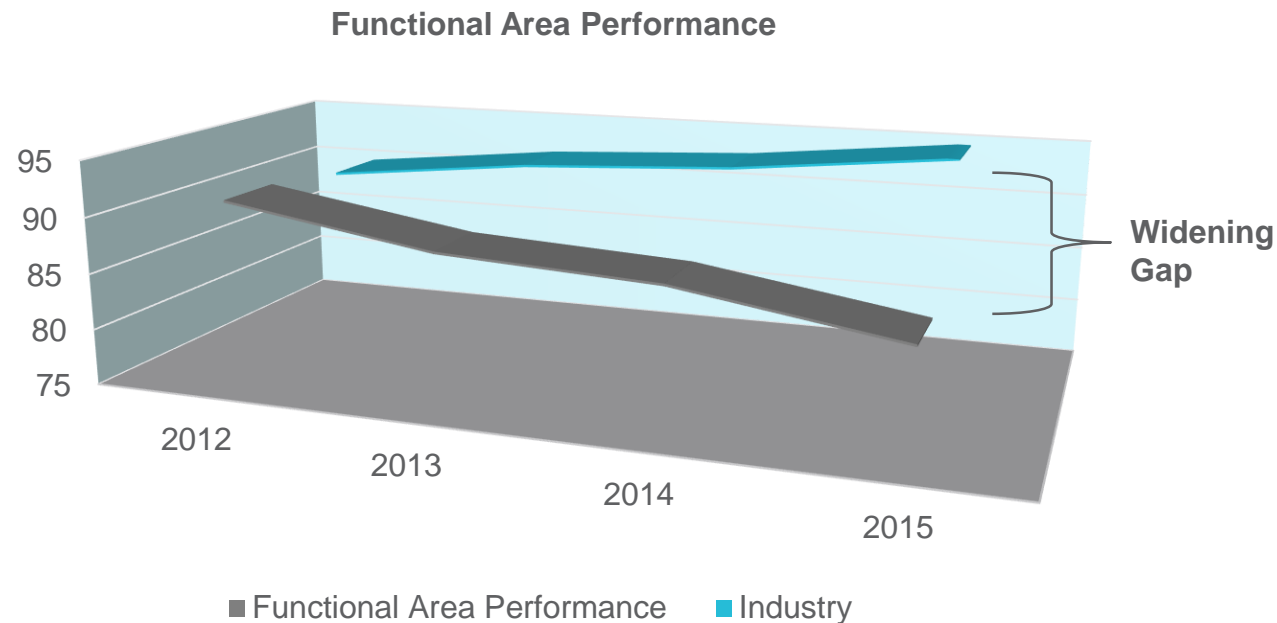


**A functional area gap review results in clear agreement among the leaders on what gaps exist that must be closed for excellent performance and a formal action plan to close those gaps**

# When Do You Initiate a Functional Area Gap Review?

A functional area gap review can be initiated as part of an overall site improvement effort. Even if you have an otherwise well-run site, it can be used as a risk avoidance tool to catch a functional area (and ultimately catch the site) before it falls off. It can be initiated at the discretion of site and/or corporate leadership or if a particular functional area has:

- Decline in performance metrics for the given function (uptick in backlogs, operator workarounds, etc.)
- Repeat events that occur after apparent cause and root cause investigations are performed and acted upon
- Identification of corrective action requests that point to a potential significant underlying issue
- Receipt of feedback from key stakeholders (e.g., INPO, NSRB, etc.) pointing to potential issues



# How Do You Conduct a Functional Area Gap Review?

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- Functional area gap reviews are performed by a team of individuals both from, and external to, the site
  - Participation and ownership by the site as they have to implement the solution; ideally led by a functional area owner
  - Oversight provided by a functional standard bearer to ensure perspective against the standard
  - Participation from someone at another site (internal or external) to provide realistic feedback
  - Facilitated and coordinated by someone to help keep the review on track and to provide challenge
- The review is performed against an established standard, whether the functional area is part of a fleet or not
- Inputs to the process should leverage reports such as those from NOS, INPO evaluation and/or mid-cycle, NSRB, current improvement plans, MRM feedback, etc.
  - The review should not “pile on” to these previous reports, but rather should gain alignment on the gaps and actions to close them
  - The review can help synthesize a meaningful response to feedback rather than multiple one-off responses
- Challenge of, and alignment on, the output of the functional area gap review (i.e., the gaps and actions) is critical
  - Gain alignment on the gaps before spending too much time on the actions; you must first agree on the problem(s) you are trying to solve
  - Have a clear line of sight between the actions and the gaps with clarity that they will close the gaps
  - Review and challenge as a team first before obtaining leadership review and challenge
  - Incorporate the actions into business plans or site improvement plans; track closure with rigor

**Functional area gap reviews can be performed quickly, using participants with defined roles and responsibilities, following a formal, rigorous, and repeatable process**

# Want to Learn More?

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