

Align and ERO SEL Release 2 Start, Stop, Continue Guide

Regional Entities

Use this document to familiarize yourself with Regional Entity Align process changes related to Release 2!

Executive Summary

Overview



Align is a software tool that supports the ERO’s vision of a single business process shared across our industry, tracking compliance data through a central hub that integrates CORES registration data with compliance monitoring and enforcement activities.

All Regions began using Release 1 of Align as of May 24, 2021. Release 1 included self-reporting/self-logging, enforcement processing, and mitigation functionality in the Align system, as well as the deployment of the ERO Secure Evidence Locker (ERO SEL). The ERO SEL is used to collect registered entity-provided evidence as part of the ERO Enterprise’s CMEP activities.

The upcoming Release 2 will include Self-Certifications, Periodic Data Submittals, Technical Feasibility Exceptions and Attestations in Align. Align and the ERO SEL are built in a way that requires changes to the processes and language you use today, and this guide will help you better understand those changes and what to expect upon our second production release. Please note that the Release 2 go-live dates differ by Region starting July 19, 2021.

To what level is my work impacted due to this change?



Moderate

Start/Stop/Continue

**What should you
start doing?**







- Performing activities related to Self-Certification in Align
- Performing activities related to most Periodic Data Submittals in Align (see PDS section for more details)
- Performing activities related to Technical Feasibility Exceptions in Align
- Request, receive, and review attestations related to Self-Certification and PDS in Align
- If necessary, reviewing associated evidence in the ERO SEL

<p>What should you stop doing?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing activities related to Self-Certification using existing tools • Performing activities related to most Periodic Data Submittals using existing tools (see PDS section for more details) • Performing activities related to Technical Feasibility Exceptions using existing tools • Request, receive, and review attestations related to Self-Certification and PDS using existing tools • Collecting evidence through legacy tools
<p>What should you continue doing?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing processes related to Compliance Audits, Spot Checks, Compliance Investigations and Complaints using existing tools • Performing all Compliance Planning activities (e.g., COP, IRA, ICE) using existing processes and tools • Performing activities related to Periodic Data Submittals that are currently received through MIDAS, GADS, and TADS
<p style="text-align: center;">Additional Details</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Align Release 2 Start, Stop, Continue Executive Summary provides only high-level information on process, terminology, and tool changes • Please see the section below for detailed information on what processes will be completed in Align vs. existing tools 	





Impact Scale	
Significant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant impact resulting in fundamental changes in tools and/or processes. You will likely require significant training to perform in your role. In addition, new tasks may be added, or current tasks may be eliminated from your role
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several ways in which you do your jobs will change. You may have new work, requiring new skills that will potentially require some training
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal changes to the way you do your jobs. Existing tools and processes will remain in place. Training not required.

Detailed Guides:





1. Self-Certifications

Overview	
	<p>All Self-Certifications will be created, scheduled, and sent to the Registered Entity within Align. CEA users will have the ability to create and manage custom questions to be included in the Self-Certification. Registered Entities will receive and respond to Self-Certifications in Align, and the CEA will be able to create new PNCs as applicable.</p>
<p>To what level is my work impacted due to this change? Significant</p>	
Start/Stop/Continue	
<p>What should you start doing?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using Align to create and manage custom questions to be included in Self-Certifications based on requirement and CEA Creating, scheduling, and sending Self-Certifications in Align Receiving and reviewing Self-Certification responses in Align Creating PNCs related to Self-Certifications in Align Receiving related evidence through the ERO SEL Requesting, receiving, and reviewing Attestations related to Self-Certifications in Align
<p>What should you stop doing?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating, scheduling, and sending Self-Certifications in existing tools (e.g., CITS, WebCDMS, etc.) Receiving and reviewing Self-Certification responses in existing tools Creating PNCs related to Self-Certifications in existing tools Receiving evidence through legacy tools
<p>What should you continue doing?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issuing RFIs as needed in Align <p><u>For non-U.S. jurisdictional Self-Certifications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing all Self-Certifications in existing tools Receiving evidence through legacy tools
Additional Details	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select CEA users will have the capability to create and manage custom Self-Certification Questions. These questions will automatically be included in new Self-Certifications based on the Requirement a question is related to and the CEA of the user creating the Self-Certification. It will be possible to create, schedule, and send a Self-Certification for multiple Registered Entities at once. 	





2. Periodic Data Submittals (PDS)

Overview	
	<p>Periodic Data Submittals are collected by the Regions on a periodic basis. Some PDS are initiated by the CEA as a data request, while others are event-driven and submitted by the Registered Entity ad hoc as required by the NERC Standards. As a general rule, if a PDS is currently collected through a NERC tool that will NOT be retired by Align (e.g., MIDAS, GADS, TADS), then it will continue to be collected in those tools. All other submittals will now be collected through Align.</p>
<p>To what level is my work impacted due to this change? Moderate</p>	
Start/Stop/Continue	
<p>What should you start doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p><u>For PDS that are NOT currently collected through MIDAS, GADS, or TADS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and scheduling PDS requests in Align for FAC-003-4 and PRC-023-4 R5 submittals • Receiving PDS submittals in Align for both the scheduled submittals listed above and event-driven PDS for requirements: EOP-008-2 R8, PRC-023-4 R6.2, PRC-002-2 R12, TPL-001-4, and TPL-007-4 • Creating PNCs related to PDS in Align, if applicable • If necessary, reviewing associated evidence in the ERO SEL • Requesting, receiving, and reviewing Attestations related to Self-Certifications in Align
<p>What should you stop doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p><u>For PDS that are NOT currently collected through MIDAS, GADS, or TADS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and scheduling PDS requests using legacy tools • Receiving PDS submittals in legacy tools for both scheduled and event-driven PDS
<p>What should you continue doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing RFIs as needed in Align <p><u>For PDS that ARE currently collected through MIDAS, GADS, or TADS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to receive PDS submittals in MIDAS, GADS, and TADS for the requirements for which you currently receive them today <p><u>For non-U.S. jurisdictional PDS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing all PDS in existing tools • Receiving evidence through legacy tools
Additional Details	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be possible to create, schedule, and send a PDS request for multiple Registered Entities at once. 	





3. Technical Feasibility Exceptions (TFEs)

Overview	
	<p>Registered Entities create a TFE when they are unable to meet their compliance obligations for a Requirement. Regions review and approve/reject TFEs on a case by case basis. This entire process will now take place in Align.</p>
<p>To what level is my work impacted due to this change? Moderate</p>	
Start/Stop/Continue	
<p>What should you start doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving and reviewing TFEs and Material Change Requests (MCRs) in Align Approving or rejecting TFEs and MCRs in Align Monitoring approved TFEs in Align
<p>What should you stop doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving and reviewing TFEs and Material Change Requests (MCRs) in existing tools (e.g., CITS, WebCDMS, etc.) Approving or rejecting TFEs and MCRs in existing tools (e.g., CITS, WebCDMS, etc.) Monitoring approved TFEs in existing tools (e.g., CITS, WebCDMS, etc.)
<p>What should you continue doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Additional Details	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within Align, there is no functional difference between a TFE and a Material Change Request (MCR) Registered Entities will be able to reduce their asset count on a TFE without requiring CEA approval 	

4. Self-Certifications, PDS, TFEs, Compliance Audits, Spot Checks, Compliance Investigations, and Complaints

Overview	
	<p>The processes for IRA, COP, Compliance Audits, Spot Checks, Compliance Investigations, and Complaints will not change due to Align Release 2. Continue to use the current established process & systems for conducting IRA, COP, Compliance Audits, Spot Checks, and Compliance Investigations, and for receiving Complaints.</p>
<p>To what level is my work impacted due to this change? Low</p>	
Start/Stop/Continue	
<p>What should you start doing?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
<p>What should you stop doing?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
<p>What should you continue doing?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting IRA, COP, Compliance Audit, Spot Check or Compliance Investigation using existing tools (e.g., CITS, WebCDMS, etc.) Creating a PNC in Align if discovered through a Self-Certification, PDS, Compliance Audit, Spot Check, Compliance Investigation or Complaint (this started in Align Release 1) Documenting and tracking Complaints using existing tools
Additional Details	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to note that if a potential Non-Compliance (PNC) is the outcome of one of the above activities during Release 2, that PNC must be initiated in Align. Once a new PNC is initiated, follow the new Align process for completion 	

5. Support Process

Overview	
	<p>Support for Align will follow the new ERO Enterprise Application Support Process. Support of enterprise applications, including Align, will follow a disciplined process to ensure requests are handled in a timely manner, and are prioritized according to business importance and criticality.</p>
<p>To what level is my work impacted due to this change? Low</p>	
Start/Stop/Continue	
<p>What should you start doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
<p>What should you stop doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
<p>What should you continue doing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requesting and receiving support for all existing CMEP applications using current processes and tools for noncompliance started in CITS/CDMS. Requesting and receiving support for the Align application and existing CMEP applications via a support request ticket (enabled by FootPrints) for noncompliance started in Align.