Reducing Risk & Strengthening Internal Controls with Unanet Automation

10th Anniversary | THE REDSTONE EDGE

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Katherine Donnell

Director – Unanet Practice Services

- Background
  - Public accounting and back-office support
  - Small to mid-sized government contractors
  - Operational experience with Unanet, QuickBooks (ProAdvisor), SpringAhead, Deltek, ADP, Paychex and multiple payroll systems.
  - Certified Unanet ERP Implementation Consultant since 2016
  - BS in Accounting and MBA (Cum Laude)

- Today
  - Director, Unanet Practice Services at Redstone GCI
  - A key member of Redstone GCI's leadership team for over a decade, guiding clients through complex implementations
  - Trusted advisor for implementation, optimization, and GovCon compliance
  - Known for helping clients maximize software ROI while navigating resource constraints and adoption risks
  - Regularly supports clients with DCAA compliance, accounting system audits, and incurred cost submissions
  - Frequently collaborates with Unanet's internal teams as an external expert

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What is Automation?

- **Business Process Automation (BPA):** is the use of technology to automate the execution of daily business processes and operations
- **BPA** aims to streamline operations, increase productivity, and improve overall organizational effectiveness

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Why Automate?

Why Streamline?

Reduce Cost. Time Is Money

- If I can save 3 button clicks in a process, I am going to do it
  - Management is constant intervention
  - How much time will my automation take to ‘cash flow’?
    - Investment versus Return

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Why Automate?

Why Streamline?

Focus managers on strategic efforts

- Decreasing mundane functions adds to innovation
  - Managers have better things to do, they just don’t know them yet
- To support increased activity levels, we must create an environment for processes to multiply in activity levels

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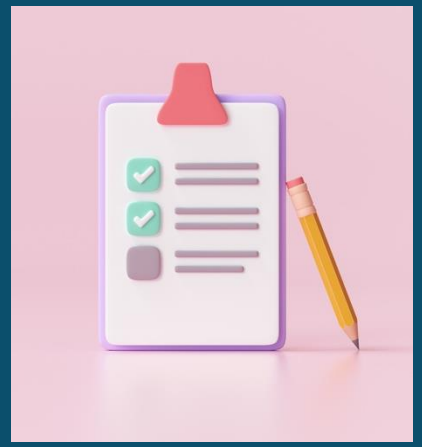
Why Automate?

Why Streamline?



Compliance & Scalability

- Strengthening internal controls not only reduces processing time, but it organizes records and reduces re-work that adds to audit risk
- Not only audit risk, but risks associated with contractual obligations
  - Such as billing customers the incorrect rates
  - Late payment on vendor invoices

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Why Automate?

Why Streamline?

Improved reporting reliability

- Automation means less chance for manual error
- Managers and users will not trust data that is inconsistent or not reconcilable
- Improved staff experience
  - When we care about people, we want them to be satisfied
  - Give managers the tools they need to be successful
    - Down to the User level communicating budgets & other employment information (PTO)

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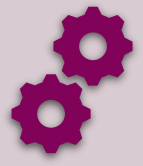
Options to Automation

Current Setup



Using your current environment to implement more advanced processes can streamline processes, reduce manual effort, and improve system reliability by the same definition as more advanced technical automations.

Involves less cost investment in unfamiliar areas

Task automation: Focuses on improving tasks within a larger, existing process

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Options to Automation

New Software

- Newer offerings and automatic connection establishments take all the manual efforts out of the data translation between systems.
- Increased investment to a more major automation.

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Automation Options in Unanet

Can mean an advancement to current environment such as:

- ✓ Validated Stored Procedures (VSPs)
  - Database customizations to prevent setup & processing errors
- ✓ Automating a manual process with an export/import
  - Payroll
  - Bank payments
- ✓ Analytics monitoring
  - Exception reports to analyze data for outliers
- ✓ Reporting
  - Refreshable web query

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Validated Stored Procedures

Database Customizations

- When Prevention is necessary, and Monitoring isn't enough
- Necessary for companies with large or complex accounting environments
- Keeps errors from occurring within data setup and entry
- Engage with Unanet Support for setup, testing, deployment, maintenance

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Validated Stored Procedures

Example

- ✓ Redstone GCI has a recommended list of popular VSPs
- ✓ Overtime management
  - Must have 40 regular hours before OT is used
  - Cannot have more than 40 regular hours
  - Excludes PTO
- ✓ Vendor Invoice entry requirements
  - Project Owning Org must be Financial Org in details
    - Ensures GL and Project Reporting by Division is reconcilable

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Excel & VLOOKUP

- Excel is a very powerful tool!
- No need to invest in upgrades
- Unanet is very excel friendly
  - Exports
  - Analytics+
- Flexibility to adjust reconciliation as outliers present themselves

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Exports & VLOOKUP

Example #1

Use these reports in Excel to reconcile total costs at the project roll up to the GL

- Project Summary by Cost Element
  - At actual, posted data only
  - Same Period start & end
- Statement of Indirect Rates
  - Posted, final rates that reconcile in total
  - Same Period start & end
- Income Statement
  - Same Period start & end

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Exports & VLOOKUP

Example #1 (cont.)

- ✓ Project Summary direct totals should reconcile to the Income Statement for Direct Costs and Revenue
- ✓ Project Summary indirect totals should reconcile to the Statement of Indirect Rates for Indirect Costs (except unallowable)
- ✓ You should have a special cost report template designed to tie to the income statement in account order

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Exports & VLOOKUP

Example #1 (cont.)

- GL detail can be exported and pivoted to provide transaction level detail about outlier transactions
- A company should be able to easily run a Project Summary and reconcile to the Income Statement
- This method works for reconciliation and discovery of necessary adjustments at fiscal period end
- Consider running a Trial Balance to reconcile Unbilled & Deferred Revenue to the B&R Summary

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Exports & VLOOKUP

Example #2

Expense Type Mapping

- Hard to monitor, especially if using Project Type mapping and Overrides
  - Expense Type Cost Account Report from Analytics
  - Expense Type Admin Export
    - VLOOKUP for a complete list of expense types and cost accounts

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Unanet Analytics+ for Monitoring

Exception Reports

- Present data that is not structured correctly
- Monitoring, not prevention
- How often is the analysis necessary? Set up scheduled reports for email communication to managing staff member
- Goal is to catch it quickly and fix before financial close or billing
- Automate the analysis for important reconciliations

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Unanet Analytics+ for Monitoring

Example

- Popular Exception Reports
  - T&M billing type requires LCATs
  - Billable project with no cost element in assignment
  - T&M billing type with $0 bill rate on LCAT on assignment
  - ACH Vendor Payment without Bank Routing Information
  - People Profile with no Default Cost Element
- You find the ones necessary for your company by identifying errors cumbersome to fix
  - Fix the error and try to monitor it more closely

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Save Lists, Dashboards & Reporting

- What is a Dashboard?
  - Might mean a few things depending on your Unanet age ☺
    - Green words in Gray ribbon
    - First item in drop-down dashboard list
    - Reporting visual (typically involves graphs and charts)
  - Dashboards are any and all of these things
- List vs Report
  - List provides functional support in the Unanet system
  - Report data is locked for analysis and distribution

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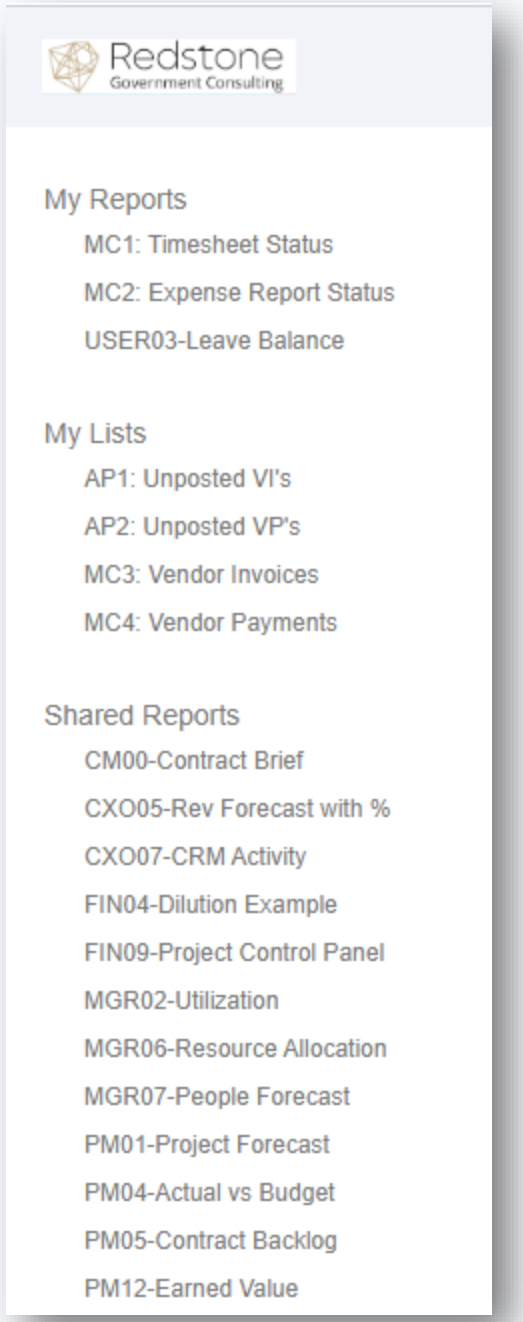
Save Lists, Dashboards & Reporting Example

- Roles should determine what is saved to the Dashboards
- Use Prefixes to organize



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Save Lists, Dashboard, & Reporting

Example

Accounting Manager's Dashboard

- Save lists for month close support subledgers
  - Vendor Payments not submitted
  - Customer Invoices not Complete
  - These can be numbered and organized with prefixes

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Save Lists, Dashboard, & Reporting

Example

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Timesheet User's Dashboard

- PTO Request Status Report
- Schedule Report
- Expense Report Status

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Further Automation Options in Unanet

- Can mean newer offerings that add to your environment
- Little to no day-to-day time investment in data transfer
  - AR Automation, Analytics Studio, AP Automation, AIM
  - Unanet Connect
    - Unanet's pre-built APIs
  - API Connections
    - Exchange data from system to system based on self defined logic
    - Stored and protected by an environment like Microsoft Azure
    - Customizable, flexible

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Unanet Hosted Automations

- Analytics Studio
  - *Analytics Studio is an add-on to Unanet Analytics that offers a deeper level of analysis and drill-down capabilities with feature-rich, customizable dashboards, including the CXO Scoreboard and the Project Central Dashboard*
- AR Automation
  - *AR Automation is the only ERP native solution for Government Contractors that automated end-to-end billing and collections processes*

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Unanet Hosted Automations

Part 2

- AP Automation
  - *Unanet's Vendor Invoice Automation is native to the ERP solution – it was built by and supported by Unanet as a key workflow automation tool for ERP customers. It harnesses the power of artificial intelligence to process AP invoices and control payment workflows to increase productivity, establish greater financial control, and ensure healthy vendor relationships*
- AIM
  - *The new add-on solution from Unanet for government contractors seeking to automate and modernize operations for inventory management, project manufacturing, and asset tracking*

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Unanet Connect Integrations

- *Unanet Connect goes beyond APIs and creates the only platform that automates your business processes integrating Unanet with a comprehensive library of best-in-class applications*
- Automatic data transfer
  - API Connections are custom and privately sourced
    - If your needs are unique
    - If you have the resources to maintain and manage the connection
  - Unanet Connect is hosted and supported by Unanet
    - Benefit is a proven solution
    - Engage and re-engage with Unanet Support to set up and maintain

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API Connections & Unanet

- Automatic data exchange between software applications on an established link and communication pathway
- API Connections are custom and privately sourced
  - If your needs are unique – similar to Unanet Connects
  - If you have the resources to maintain and manage the definitions within the data exchange

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API Connections & Unanet Connect

Example

- API Connection
  - Concur expense reports to Bill.com payment system
  - Unique configuration not tied to Unanet
- Paylocity Connect
  - Imports person profile data and changes from Paylocity into Unanet
  - Unanet Support consultant with template and proven process
  - Set it up to support company growth (if you can)
  - Re-engage with Support to modify requirements

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Structural Design Components

- Necessary to have a sound framework for structure in Unanet
- Monitoring is easier with a sound structural design
- To reduce the need for monitoring and prevention, the Unanet system configuration should be well controlled
  - Pay code lists by project and employee type
  - Require UDFs if needed for additional reporting
  - Require Cost Element mapping on Expense Types
  - Streamlined data field use
    - Prefixes for sorting
    - Like values within records (project code structure)

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Structural Design Components

Example

- Pay code lists by project and employee type
- Require UDFs if needed for additional reporting ease
  - 8(a) vs Non 8(a) Revenue
- Require Cost Element mapping on Expense Types
  - In Admin Properties
- Streamlined data field use
  - Prefixes for sorting
  - Like values within records (project code structure)

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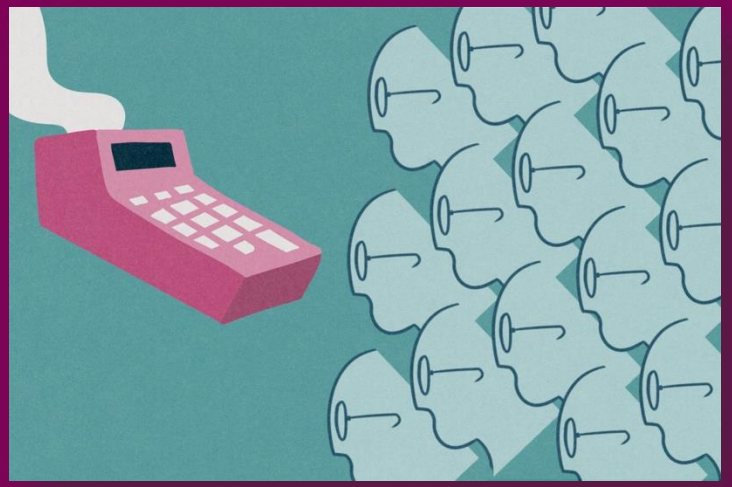
Reconciliation Automation



- Many functional roles in a company require the reconciliation of different types of information
  - Accounting Managers reconcile GL data to financial subledgers
  - Project Managers reconcile resource level budgets to project and task budgets
  - Users reconcile their own budgets back to their actual hours

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Reconciling Data in Unanet

- Not a reporting function, but a function of management
- Different staff members are involved
  - Project leads all the way to finance
  - Bottoms-up approach to budgeting
    - Lower-level feeds the roll-up level
  - Do my budgets feed each other?
- Why would my budgets vary? Should they?
  - I think not. Adds to an inference of system unreliability within management

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Reconciling Budgets

Accounting Manager

- **Option 1:** Connection to Power BI for comparison
- **Option 2:** Exports, Pivot Tables, VLOOKUPs
  - GL Budget vs project level roll-up

- The GL Budget is easily updated with an excel export/import
  - Project level data should feed your GL budget

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Reconciling Budgets

Project Manager

- Reconciling the resource level budget to the project and task budget
  - Reports Dashboard- Project Performance
  - Resource level planning versus project level planning
  - Task Level versus Project Level
- Different budget metrics feed into different reports
  - Except the Performance Report has potentially both
- Does anyone else use a different method for this comparison?

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Reconciling Budgets

Users

- Performance Report
  - Hours from Work Authorization AKA Assignment
- Accrual Details
  - When will I have accrued 40 hours of PTO?

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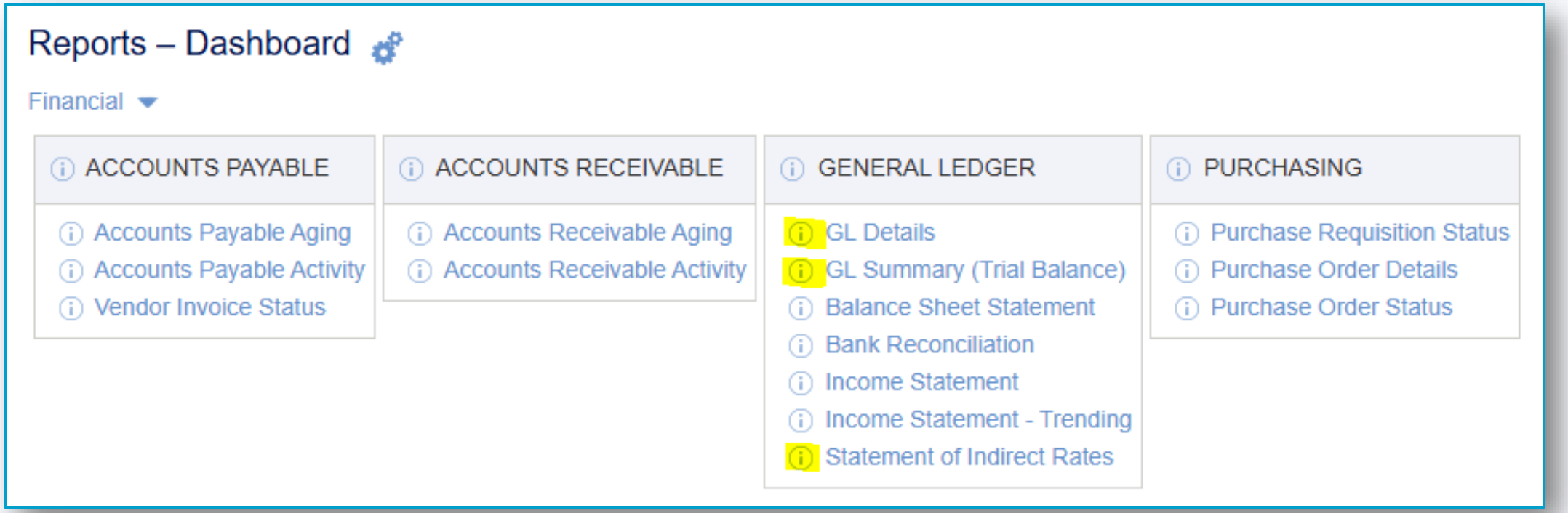
Reports for Reconciliations: Financial



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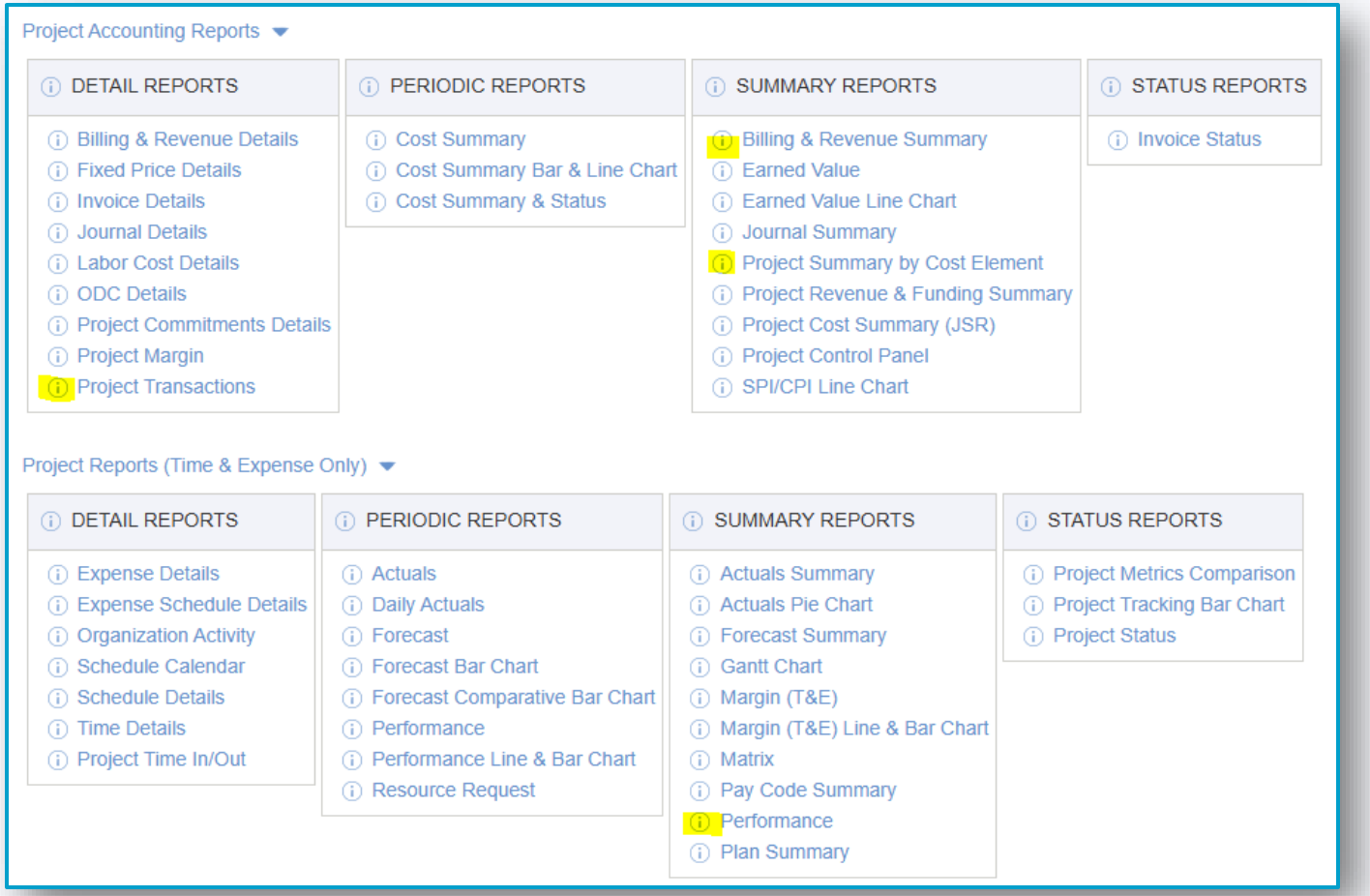
Reports for Reconciliations: Project



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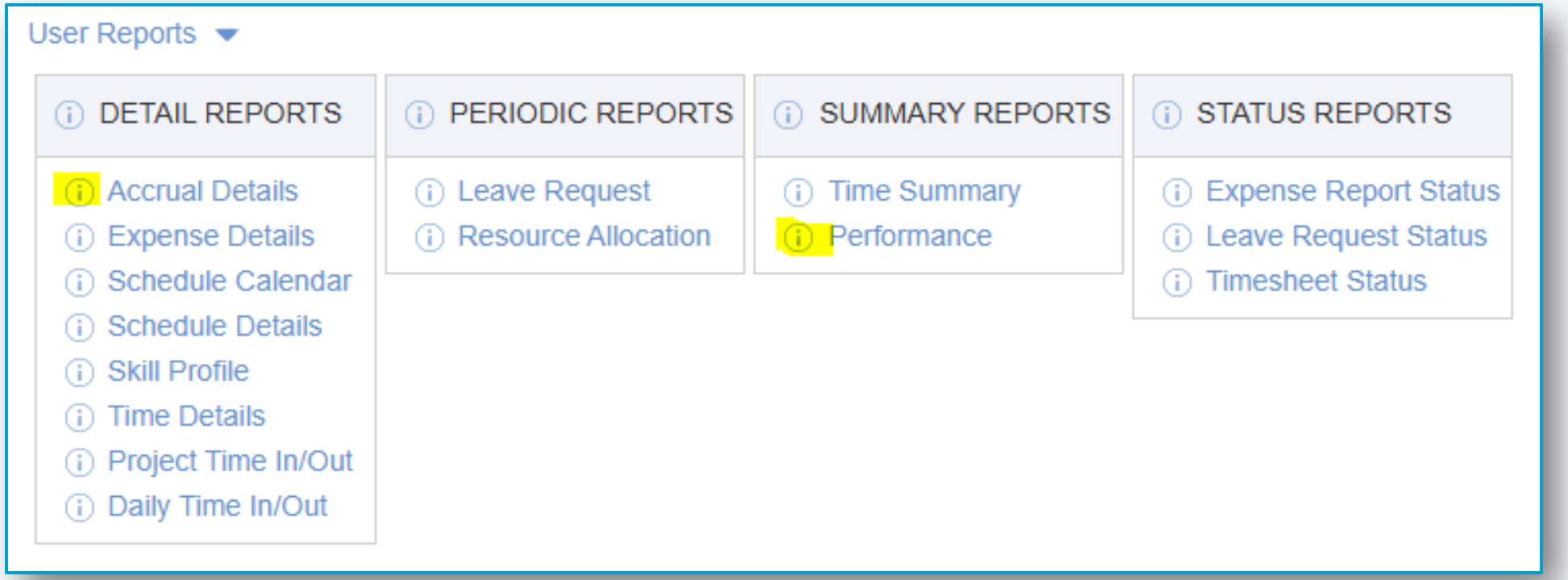
Reports for Reconciliations - Users



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Questions and Discussion

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2025 Critical Deadlines for Government Contractors

This guide provides you with all of the essential information and dates you need to know, including:

- Important deadlines for your internal departments
  - Accounting,
  - Human Resources,
  - Contracts & Subcontracts, and
  - Government Compliance
- Contract performance and delivery deadlines
- Deadlines for reporting and compliance requirements
- Deadlines for audits and reviews

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