
MEMORANDUM

August 28, 2001

To: Michael Bartell
From: Walter Stachnik
Re: IT Decision Making Process (Report No. 334)

In response to risks identified in a risk assessment of Information Technology (IT) (Report No. 336), the Office of Inspector General conducted a “Business Process Review” (BPR) of the Commission’s IT capital investment decision-making process.

The initial objective of the engagement was to improve communication between the Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the users in the Commission. Workshops were conducted with regional and headquarters ADP Liaisons to identify issues and recommendations for improvements¹. Subsequent to the workshops, the scope of the review was modified to focus on IT capital investment decision-making. The revised objective was to develop “repeatable, successful IT project-level control processes and basic selection processes”² with OIT and other Commission components.

Working closely with OIT management, a proposal was developed to create an Information Officer Council (IOC) consisting of senior managers from Commission divisions and major offices. As initially conceived, the IOC would evaluate and recommend projects and IT rules to the IT Capital Planning Committee (CPC). The IOC would also direct the preparation of IT proposals from their components and work with OIT project managers and contractors in managing IT projects underway.³ The proposal was discussed and approved by the OIG Advisory Committee and CPC (see Attachment A). Information Officer selection criteria were also presented.

In concert with OIT staff, initial, minimum evaluation criteria were developed from a survey of laws and regulations applicable to making IT capital investment decisions in the federal government (see Attachment B). A group decision-making methodology, using OIT personnel and COTS software, was identified that would aid the IOC in making better IT decisions.

On July 25, 2001, presentations on applicable IT laws and regulations (Attachment C) and the minimum evaluation criteria were given to the IOC by OIG staff (other training was provided by OIT staff).

¹ Training in laws and regulations applicable to IT in the Federal government was also provided to the Liaisons.

² That is “ITIM Stage 2,” described in *Information Technology Investment Management: A Framework for Assessing and Improving Process Maturity* (GAO/AMID-10.1.23).

³ The IOC may expand its reach into other IT areas as its expertise and knowledge expands.

We plan to evaluate the operation of the IOC in Spring/Summer 2002 using the GAO *Framework for Assessing and Improving* (the IT capital investment) *Process Maturity*.

I commend you and your staff for your efforts in developing the proposal and working with the divisions and offices to train and develop their senior staff on IT matters. I also want to thank you and your staff for all your assistance to our office.

Cc: James McConnell
Mark Radke
Jonathan Karp
Leanne Vaeth