

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The following provides answers to some frequently asked questions about key components of the CMS Integrated IT Investment & System Life Cycle Framework:

### What is an Information Technology (IT) Project?

An IT project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique information technology product, service, or result (e.g., an automated system). An IT project should have specific starting and ending dates, well-defined objectives and constraints, established responsibilities, and a budget and schedule. An IT project may be self-contained or may be part of a larger project. An IT project further refers to a project that uses, collects, manipulates, transfers, stores, or automates information. To determine if a project is considered an IT project, there are four main questions to answer:

1. Does the project require the collection or receipt of data, or the storage of data in a database?
2. Does the project generate data that is used by another system or entity, or that is made available to people through the Internet?
3. Does any part of the project involve automating all or part of a process, or improving all or part of a process by moving to newer technology?
4. Does the project take raw data and turn it into information for analysis or decision-making?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, then the project is considered an IT project and is subject to the CMS Integrated IT Investment & System Life Cycle Framework.

### What is a "Major" IT Investment/Project?

A "Major" IT investment/project at CMS meets one or more of the following criteria:

- An IT investment or project with total life cycle costs of \$10 million or greater over a five-year period (development/modernization/enhancement (DME), steady state (operational), or mixed);
- A project with an annual cost of over \$2.5 million;
- A financial management system with an annual cost greater than \$500,000;
- A system or IT investment that requires special management attention because of its importance to CMS' mission (e.g., one that will steer CMS into a future direction, will change the way CMS performs a business function, or that has significant program or policy implications);
- A project that is of high visibility to important stakeholders (e.g., Congress, Office of Management & Budget (OMB), Department of Health and Human Services, CMS Administrator);
- An investment that was a major investment in the FY2007 budget submission and is continuing;

- A project using e-business technologies or related to E-Gov initiatives, regardless of cost;
- A project that is directly tied to the top two layers of the Federal Enterprise Architecture (Services to Citizens and Mode of Delivery); or
- A project that is an integral part of CMS' modernization blueprint (Enterprise Architecture).

### **How do I get funding for my IT Project?**

Contact the Director of the Division of Enterprise Architecture Program Management (DEAPM) in the Enterprise Architecture & Strategy Group (EASG) of the Office of Information Services (OIS) to begin the process.

### **Where can I go for help with my IT project?**

The CMS Integrated IT Investment & System Life Cycle Framework provides a foundation and supporting structure designed to aid in the successful planning, engineering, implementation, maintenance, management, and governance of CMS IT investments and system life cycle projects. A wealth of detailed information and guidance about the individual elements of the Framework is available from within this website.

The Framework covers the entire life cycle of an IT investment. In most cases, an IT investment is equivalent to an IT project. While there are various types of IT investments and IT-related projects that exist at CMS, the Framework is designed primarily to address IT investments/projects associated with automated systems.

If you are beginning a new IT project, or if you have questions or need assistance in determining how the Framework may apply to your specific IT project, contact the Director of the Division of Enterprise Architecture Program Management (DEAPM) in the Enterprise Architecture & Strategy Group (EASG) of the Office of Information Services (OIS).

### **What is an Automated System versus an Information System?**

An "Automated System" is a configuration of hardware and software infrastructure, applications, and associated documentation, either custom designed or commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software, or combination thereof, that automates the activities of collecting and/or accessing data or information and performing logical computations in support of CMS' processes.

An "information system" is a discrete set of information resources organized for the collection, processing, maintenance, transmission, and dissemination of information, in accordance with defined procedures, whether automated or manual. [OMB Circular A-130]

### **What are the mandatory things I must do for my IT project?**

In consideration of the specific circumstances associated with a given IT investment/project or automated system and the system development methodology being employed, the following

deliverables and reviews are generally required for all IT projects or automated systems, to an appropriate level of detail:

**Deliverables:**

- Candidate Project Fact Sheet
- Business Process Models
- Requirements Document
- High-Level Technical Design Concept/Alternatives
- Project Charter
- Project Schedule
- Project Management Plan (PMP)
- Project Process Agreement (PPA)
- Information Security (IS) Risk Assessment (RA)
- System Design Document (SDD)
- Test Plan
- Business Product/Code
- Version Description Document (VDD)
- Contingency Plan
- Implementation Plan
- Test Summary Report
- Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Manual
- Budget/Funding Deliverables & Activities
- Project Management Deliverables & Activities
- Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)

**Reviews:**

- Architecture Review
- Investment Selection Review (ISR)
- Project Baseline Review (PBR)
- Preliminary Design Review (PDR)
- Operational Readiness Review (ORR)
- Post-Implementation Review (PIR)
- Annual Operational Analysis Review

In addition, for each automated system, the following are also required:

- System Certification
- System Accreditation
- System Re-Certification (every 3 years)
- System Re-Accreditation (every 3 years)

If the IT project will be utilizing the services of a contractor or other Federal agency, or will require other procurement actions, then the following will also likely be required:

- Acquisition Deliverables & Activities

If the IT project involves personally identifiable data, then the following additional deliverables may likely be required:

- System of Records (SOR) Notice
- Computer Match Agreement (CMA)
- Data Use Agreement (DUA)

Additional deliverables that may be required depending on the specific circumstances of the IT project, or which may be encouraged as best practices include the following:

- Logical Data Model
- System Security Plan (SSP)
- Interface Control Document (ICD)
- Database Design Document
- Data Conversion Plan
- Release Plan
- Test Case Specification
- Training Plan
- User Manual
- Training Artifacts
- Change Requests
- Problem Reports
- System Disposition Plan
- Corrective Action Plan

Additional reviews that may be required depending on the specific circumstances of the IT project, or which may be encouraged as best practices include the following:

- Requirements Review
- Detailed Design Review (DDR)
- Validation Readiness Review (VRR)
- Implementation Readiness Review (IRR)
- Disposition Review
- IV&V Assessment

## **What is a Standard?**

In the *Master Plan for Software Engineering Standards, Version 1.0*, published on December 1, 1993, by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Software Engineering Standards Committee (SESC) Long Range Planning Group, the SESC established that a standard can be:

1. an object or measure of comparison that defines or represents the magnitude of a unit;
2. a characterization that establishes allowable tolerances or constraints for categories of items; and
3. a degree or level of required excellence or attainment.

Standards are definitional in nature, established either to further understanding and interaction, or to acknowledge observed (or desired norms) of exhibited characteristics or behavior. At CMS, an Information Technology (IT) Standard is an officially categorized convention, methodology, or preferred product authorized for use within CMS.

## **What is a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)?**

A Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is a decomposition of the planned work effort into specific phases, tasks, activities, milestones and deliverables necessary to accomplish project objectives. A WBS is a task-oriented or deliverable-oriented grouping of identified elements or components of a project, which organizes and defines the total scope of the project. A WBS follows an outline structure where each descending level represents an increasingly detailed definition of a project component. Project components may be products or services. There are no time, cost, or resource assignments associated with a WBS.

## **What is the Enterprise System Development (ESD) Contract?**

The ESD is an Indefinite Delivery / Indefinite Quantity (ID/IQ) umbrella contract that CMS awarded in September 2007 to support IT systems development, engineering, integration, maintenance, and technical support solutions. This contract provides a vehicle for IT procurements across the Agency. It streamlines the procurements and enables CMS business components to put a task order in place faster, easier, and with IT contractors who know CMS' environments.

The following systems life cycle services are 100% set-aside for small business awardees only:

- Initiation and Planning Services
- Requirements Services
- Test Services
- ESD Support Services: User Documentation, Product Management, Test Coordination, Training, Help Desk, and ESD Program Management.

The remaining services will be competed among all awardees:

- Design Services
- Development Services
- Maintenance Services

### **Small Business Awardees:**

2020, ALTA Systems, Buccaneer Computer, Data Computer Corporation of America (DCCA), IDL Solutions Inc., iFED, Maricom Systems, and OSSI.

### **Other Awardees:**

CGI Federal, CSC, EDS, IBM, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, SAIC, and ViPS.