



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We sought to determine whether the processes used by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) managers to oversee the development of information technology projects helped produce intended results. We also sought to determine how well Agency management monitored these projects.

Background

To help ensure EPA manages its information systems in a cost-effective manner, life cycle development guidance requires management involvement at key decision points. These decisions must be documented by EPA management in the system decision documents before the system may advance from one phase of development to the next.

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional and Public Liaison at (202) 566-2391.

To view the full report, click on the following link:

www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2005/20050914-2005-P-00023.pdf

EPA Needs to Improve Oversight of Its Information Technology Projects

What We Found

EPA's Office of Environmental Information (OEI) did not sufficiently oversee information technology projects to ensure they met planned budgets and schedules. The increased cost and schedule delays for the projects we reviewed may have been averted or lessened with adequate oversight. PeoplePlus cost at least \$3.7 million more than originally budgeted and took 1 year longer than planned to deploy. Modifications to developing the Clean Air Markets Division Business System have already increased costs about \$2.8 million and extended the target completion date by 2 years.

Following implementation of the Clinger-Cohen Act, the Agency did not revise procedures under Chapter 17 of the *Information Resources Management (IRM) Policy Manual* to have the Chief Information Officer evaluate information technology program performance. Also, EPA did not include responsibilities under its *Interim Policy* that required the Chief Information Officer to evaluate the performance of the Agency's information technology program. In addition, requirements under the Agency's Capital Planning and Investment Control Process, governed by OEI, did not ensure necessary project documentation. Consequently, OEI did not know that System Sponsors did not require System Managers to completely document risks associated with system development. The lack of project documentation prevents the appropriate level of oversight for the different phases of development, and results in decision makers not having the information needed to make fully informed decisions regarding project risks.

What We Recommend

We recommend that OEI revise its *Interim Policy* to include the Chief Information Officer having responsibility for conducting independent reviews of Agency information technology projects. We also recommend that OEI revise procedures under the *Interim Policy* to define requirements of specific life cycle documentation and address risk elements. Further, OEI should ensure formal procedures are followed to make certain that System Managers prepare required system life cycle documentation, and that System Owners review and approve that documentation before projects advance between life cycle phases. During our review, OEI officials acknowledged their oversight of information technology projects could be strengthened, and said they would initiate corrective action.