

**FAQ's for OMB  
Enterprise Architecture (EA) Assessment  
February 2008  
Version 3.0**

**EA's ROLE**



**Question:** What is EA's role in performance management?

**Answer:** EA is a management practice to maximize the contribution of an agency's resources, IT investments, and system development activities to achieve its performance goals.

Architecture describes clear relationships from strategic goals and objectives through investments to measurable performance improvements for the entire enterprise or a portion (or segment) of the enterprise. However, it is just one link in a chain of integrated practice areas. **To achieve target performance improvements, the EA practice must be strong and fully integrated with other practice areas including strategic planning, capital planning and investment control (CPIC), and program and project management.** EA practice integration means verifying the impact of enterprise architecture on measurable agency performance improvements.

To evaluate the impact of EA products and services, effective EA practice areas measure the value of architectural work products and management processes. This extends to business decisions across all integrated practice areas, monitoring stakeholder feedback - and other value indicators - to continuously improve the quality of EA products and services to enhance decisions and support business results.

The [FEA Practice Guidance](#) helps architects to develop and use enterprise architecture to deliver value by:

- Describing the current and future state of the agency and its segments;
- Defining the desired results for an agency and priority segments;
- Determining what resources are used to achieve measurable performance improvements for an agency's core mission areas and common or shared services;
- Leveraging business and information management resources across the agency;
- Developing a transition strategy to achieve strategic goals and objectives and target performance improvements; and
- Measuring the value of EA products and services to inform decisions in other practice areas and support business results.



**Question:** What is EA's role in implementing Trusted Internet Connections (TIC) and related infrastructure and security initiatives?

**Answer:** As agencies develop their comprehensive plan of action and milestones (POA&M) for TIC (see OMB Memorandum M-08-05), it is critical for agencies to conduct their planning activities holistically, leveraging their architectural planning, IT policy and governance, capital planning, and procurement review activities to optimize implementation success of TIC. Furthermore, agencies need to analyze and resolve relationships between TIC and other related cross-government and agency-specific Information Technology initiatives including, but not limited to, the Information Systems Security (ISS) and Information Technology Infrastructure (ITI) Lines of Business (LoBs), the NETWORKX contract, and the Federal Desktop Core Configuration (FDCC). Additionally, agencies are currently updating their enterprise architecture to support the architect – invest – implement performance improvement lifecycle for the annual assessment by OMB starting March 1, 2008. The POA&Ms provide the specific commitments and plans for implementing TIC. **The architecture activities are the vehicle for identifying, analyzing, resolving, and documenting the impact of TIC and placing it in proper context across the agency.**



**Question:** What is EA's role in the Networkx transition?

**Answer:** Agency Networkx Transition responsibilities include planning actions and alternatives analysis. Agencies are encouraged to plan holistically and leverage segment architecture approaches to resolve relationships between the various cross Government infrastructure and network security initiatives. In particular, the following key Networkx milestones should be incorporated into agency planning activities:

March 31, 2008 – September 30, 2008

Agencies must submit to GSA their provider selection.

January 30, 2009- April 1, 2010

Agencies must submit Transition Orders.

January 2010, - April 1, 2010

Agencies must submit final disconnects.

January 1, 2010

Expiration for Parallel Ops Reimbursement

April 1, 2010

Expiration of all Transition Reimbursement

## COST SAVINGS/COST AVOIDANCE



**Question:** An agency's EA is achieving demonstrable benefits to the agency in cost savings and cost avoidance for IT investments. The agency would like to develop and submit an EA Program Results Analysis demonstrating the improvements to agency IT investment performance attributable to the EA program, and explaining how the EA program activities resulted in cost savings/cost avoidance. Where can an agency find guidance on how to demonstrate cost savings/cost avoidance?

**Answer:** Attachment A of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-06-22 contains an IT cost measurement framework providing guidance for agencies to use in identifying the total cost of projects, including both government and contractor costs, and is based on costing methodologies provided in Attachment C of OMB Circular A-76. M-06-22 is available at [www.egov.gov](http://www.egov.gov) or click [here](#) to download the M-06-22 PDF version.




**Question:** M-06-22 asks for baseline costs in order to calculate cost savings. However; if an agency did not compute baseline costs for a particular alternative (because it was self-evident an alternate approach was a less costly solution), what should the agency report for baseline costs?

**Answer:** The purpose of the Cost Savings/Cost Avoidance criteria in the EA Assessment Framework is to ensure agencies are using their enterprise architectures to help the agency make better, more cost-effective investment decisions. Part of determining what makes an investment decision cost-effective is to compare the estimated cost and risks of various investment alternatives. Agencies are required to complete this type of alternatives analysis for all major IT investments as per OMB Circular A-11, Section 300. Agencies should have already performed baseline cost estimation as part of the alternatives analysis. This is particularly true for large (major) investments, where the cost differential of various alternatives is likely significant.

To obtain an improved maturity level (Level 4) in the Cost Savings/Cost Avoidance criteria, agencies must demonstrate they used the enterprise architecture to inform investment decisions leading to a cost savings/cost avoidance of at least 3% of the agency's total FY07 IT budget. To earn a Level 3 in these criteria, the agency must demonstrate cost savings/cost avoidance of at least 1% of the agency's total FY07 IT budget. At this relatively high level of cost savings/cost avoidance (i.e. high impact), capital planning practices would dictate baseline costs have been estimated and used to inform the investment decision.

## SEGMENT ARCHITECTURES



**Question:** How many segment architectures must an agency declare in their EA submission to satisfy the requirement in the Completion Capability Area?


**Answer:** To obtain an integrated maturity level (Level 4), an agency must complete one new segment architecture (since the last EA assessment) for a core mission line of business, business service, or enterprise service. The intent of this requirement is to ensure agencies are driving the use of enterprise architecture as a strategic planning tool throughout the agency – one business segment at a time. OMB is looking to see the agency is achieving results in a particular segment (based on previously completed architectural work), and then moving on to apply the practices and lessons learned from this effort in another area of the organization. Appendix B of the [OMB EA Assessment Framework v2.2](#) defines the different types of segment architectures and is available at [www.egov.gov](http://www.egov.gov).



**Question:** Are there examples where segment architectures are being used today?

**Answer:** Yes. The Program Manager, Information Sharing Environment (ISE) released the ISE Enterprise Architecture Framework (EAF) in August of 2007. The ISE EAF establishes a long-term approach for information resource planning and management, and promotes terrorism-related information sharing business process transformation and structure that can be leveraged within segment architectures of Federal departments and agencies. The Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security have now defined their information sharing segment architectures that will identify and interface agency-wide information sharing architectures to the ISE consistent with the ISE EAF. More information on the ISE architecture program and the ISE EAF may be found at the organization's website, [www.ise.gov](http://www.ise.gov).

## EA TRANSITION STRATEGY



**Question:** Agencies are now focusing on segments, as opposed to trying to re-architect the whole agency at once, does the agency still need to maintain (and submit to OMB) an enterprise-wide EA Transition Strategy?

**Answer:** Yes. Agencies are expected to both maintain an enterprise-wide EA Transition Strategy and complete a segment architecture. The EA Transition Strategy is the “mile-wide/inch-deep” view of the IT plans and investments at the agency. The EA Transition Strategy identifies all of the IT investments the agency plans to make in the coming year(s) to achieve the target architecture and provides a timeline (or sequencing plan) for the change

occurring in the organization. In contrast, the segment architecture is the “inch-wide/mile-deep” or “deep dive” into a more narrowly scoped business function. It reflects a more extensive amount of detail typically required by this type of in-depth, re-engineering effort.



**Question:** The EA Assessment Framework requires agencies to include the achievement of performance targets (from the target performance architecture) as milestones in the EA Transition Strategy. What does this mean?

**Answer:** The sequencing plan within the EA Transition Strategy should show implementation milestones for the various IT projects within the agency, as well as dates performance improvements will be achieved and realized (as a result of implementation). This allows project managers and agency leadership to gauge when the tangible benefits of re-engineering efforts will be realized within the agency’s business operations. Although it is important to track implementation goals, it is equally, if not more important to track the achievement of performance goals. This ensures agencies are focused on the outcomes (improved business performance), not just outputs (systems implemented).



**Question:** According to the current framework, in order to receive the maximum score (level 5) on the Enterprise Transition Strategy and EA Governance Plan criteria, the agency's head must approve each in writing. Will obtaining a signature from the Deputy Secretary be satisfactory in achieving the maximum score for these criteria?

**Answer:** The Secretary **or** Deputy Secretary must sign the agency Transition Strategy and the EA Governance Plan in order to achieve a Level 5 in each criteria. It is important to an agency’s mission for the Chief Architect to have that commitment and buy-in in order to truly be a change agent within the Department.

## **MEASURING EA PROGRAM VALUE**



**Question:** Are agencies required to perform surveys in order to demonstrate their EA value?

**Answer:** No. Agencies are not required to perform surveys. Actual stakeholder survey instruments can use different formats and techniques to solicit stakeholder responses, e.g., on-line or e-mail survey forms. Agency surveys should be developed to reflect agency-specific requirements, terminology, survey guidance and standards, and relevant EA value indicators. Other techniques recommended by OMB to measure EA value include performing stakeholder interviews and coordinating workshops to collect feedback on EA products

and services. Please refer to section 5 of the [FEA Practice Guidance](#) for further assistance on establishing an EA Value Measurement program.



**Question:** Does OMB assess the EA program value results?

**Answer:** OMB does not assess the results (i.e. feedback from stakeholders) of an agency's EA program value measurement process. Rather, OMB assesses whether or not the agency has a process in place to measure how well the EA is serving the business needs of its stakeholders and incorporating the feedback into updated EA products and services.

## EA TOOLS



**Question:** Please explain the relationship between the following documents: "FEA Practice Guidance" and "A Practical Guide to the FEA". Does the latter supersede the former? Are they concurrently relevant documents?

**Answer:** "A Practical Guide to the FEA" was published in 2001 by the Chief Information Officer Council as a step by step process guide to assist agencies in defining, maintaining and implementing Enterprise Architectures (EA) which would result in a model for effective EA Management.

The "FEA Practice Guidance" was published in 2007 by the Federal Enterprise Architecture Program Management Office (FEA PMO) within the Office of Management and Budget and referenced the CIO document above. It offers **concepts** that will deliver value to the business and improve results but can be applied to a variety of architectural frameworks. The 2007 FEA Practice Guidance **does not** cover EA development and maintenance.

The "FEA Practice Guidance" does not supersede "A Practical Guide to the FEA" and the documents are concurrently relevant.

To view these documents click below:

[A Practical Guide to Federal Enterprise Architecture](#)  
[FEA Practice Guidance](#)

