

APPENDIX J—POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEWS

PURPOSE

Post-Implementation Reviews (PIRs) support the Evaluation Phase of the process (see Chapter 5—Evaluate Phase). PIRs help determine whether investments have achieved expected benefits, such as lowered cost, reduced cycle time, increased quality, or increased speed of service delivery.

The PIR has a dual focus:

- It provides an assessment of the implemented investment, including an evaluation of the development process.
- It indicates the extent to which the USDA's decision-making processes are sustaining or improving the success rate of IT investments.

The PIR usually occurs either after a system has been in operation for about six months or immediately following investment termination.

A team of agency and/or staff office personnel should conduct the PIR. However, in order to ensure the review is conducted independently and objectively, the PIR team should not include members from the investment under review. The PIR team should review the following investment elements:

- Mission alignment
- IT architecture and telecommunications infrastructure (including security and internal controls)
- Performance measures
- Project management
- Customer acceptance
- Business process support
- High performance workforce
- Cost versus anticipated savings.

As a minimum, the PIR team will evaluate stakeholder and customer/user satisfaction with the end product, mission/program impact, and technical capability, as well as provide decision-makers with lessons learned so they can improve investment decision-making processes.

The review will provide a baseline to decide whether to continue the system without adjustment, to modify the system to improve performance or, if necessary, to consider alternatives to the implemented system. Even with the best system development process, it is quite possible that a new system will have problems or even major flaws that must be rectified to obtain full investment benefits. The PIR should provide decision-makers with useful information on how best to modify a system, or to work around the flaws in a system, to improve performance and bring the system further in alignment with the identified business needs.

PROCESS

As detailed below, there are seven major steps to conducting a PIR:

1. Initiate PIR

The review team initiates a PIR by preparing and sending a memorandum to the Project Sponsor stating the review has begun. The memorandum should include a schedule for the planned review and indicate any areas that may receive special review emphasis.

2. Analyze Documentation

The review team attains any existing investment documentation and analyzes the information to understand the investment scope, generate interview and survey questions, prepare for system overview briefings, and plan the PIR. The review team also reviews any existing reports and memos from the Pre-Select, Select, and Control Phases to uncover any findings or outstanding issues.

3. Interview Key Players

The review team interviews all key IT and business process players. The interviews should help the team develop an understanding of the system's goals, objectives, benefits, and costs as described in the business case submitted during the Select Phase. Additionally, the interviews will help the team determine how efficiently and effectively the system's objectives, goals, performance measures, and benefits are being achieved, as well as identify system deficiencies and enhancement needs.

4. *Measure Performance*

The review team assesses the investment performance measures established during the Select Phase. These performance measures are compared to actual data generated during the operations/production stage. In the absence of certain statistics, the review team may perform onsite observations to measure specific criteria.

5. *Perform User Surveys*

The review team conducts qualitative surveys with users to determine user satisfaction with the system. Executing the survey includes designing questionnaires, distributing survey questionnaires to remote users' locations, receiving responses, analyzing results, and generating a survey results memorandum. The survey measures the system's efficiency and effectiveness in achieving its stated goals and benefits and in satisfying user needs.

6. *Perform Analysis*

The review team analyzes all documentation, survey results, and performance measurements to determine if the system efficiently and effectively achieved its objectives.

7. *Issue Report*

After comments are received from the Project Sponsor, the review team prepares the Final Report and submits it for OCIO and E-Board review. Report findings and recommendations must be clear and concise to avoid any misunderstandings.