January 28, 2011

TechStat Toolkit

On December 9, 2010, I launched the 25 Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal Information Technology Management to deliver more value to the American taxpayer. A central tenet of this plan is to streamline governance and improve accountability by reforming and strengthening Investment Review Boards (IRBs).

IRBs were created to control and evaluate the results of all major IT investments. In practice, these review boards have failed to take the corrective actions necessary to establish successful projects and sustain a healthy IT portfolio. Today, typical IRB meeting agendas currently set aside two hours to review the entire IT portfolio, far too little time to adequately review dozens of technical projects. These IRBs will be restructured according to the TechStat model.

A TechStat is a face-to-face, evidence-based review of an IT program with OMB and agency leadership. TechStat sessions enable the government to turnaround, halt, or terminate IT investments that do not produce dividends for the American people. TechStats have led to accelerated deliverables, budget reductions, and project terminations.

TechStat Results include:
- $3 billion reduction in lifecycle costs; and
- Average acceleration of deliverables from over 24 months to 8 months.

As outlined in the 25 Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal IT, agency leaders must stand up the TechStat model at the departmental level to turn around or terminate at least one-third of underperforming projects in the IT portfolio within the next 18 months.

To assist agencies in reforming IRBs, we have developed this TechStat Toolkit. The Toolkit provides a comprehensive guide for agencies to establish their own TechStats, from templates for briefing staff and executives on the TechStat model to templates for documenting a detailed action plan for correcting problems.

Effective implementation of TechStats will help strengthen IT governance, improve line-of-sight between project teams and senior executives, increase the precision of ongoing measurement of IT program health, and boost the quality and timing of interventions to keep projects on track.

Sincerely,

Vivek Kundra
U.S. Chief Information Officer