

Selecting and Sustaining IT Investments in Government



A GUIDE TO
EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES



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Selecting and Sustaining IT Investments in Government:

A Guide to Effective Strategies

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Introduction

Why does IT procurement in government have to take so long and be so hard? How can we be confident that we're making the right IT investments, especially for the long term? And which of today's IT strategies will best position our government for the future?

These are fundamental questions asked by government CIOs and the stakeholders who hold them accountable for IT investments and deployments. They reflect the challenges inherent in government IT, including large and complex projects, lengthy and rule-driven purchasing processes, and unique measures of value compared to the private sector. To illustrate, a 2012 survey found that "...government procurement rules make it tough to adapt to changing requirements and adopt cutting-edge technologies while others pointed to difficulties in making financial commitments beyond one fiscal year or engaging in cross-jurisdictional shared services."¹

This how-to guide will help CIOs, IT managers and other technical executives within all levels of government formulate answers to these fundamental questions. Broken into four strategies for better government IT investments (see graphic below), this guide will also highlight new ways of planning and managing IT projects so they are simpler and faster to procure, deliver the desired value when implemented and position government for a future of continual technology change.

The graphic is a blue rectangular box containing four numbered strategy cards. Each card has a dark blue header with a white number and title, and a light blue body with a list of points. The strategies are: 1. Improving IT Research and Procurement Practices, 2. Managing IT Projects for Success, 3. Adopting the Right IT Trends, and 4. Positioning Government IT for the Future.

Four Strategies for Better Government IT Investments

- 1 Improving IT Research and Procurement Practices**
 1. Overcoming the limitations of traditional government purchasing practices
 2. Developing IT procurement expertise
 3. Exploring shared services and strategic sourcing
- 2 Managing IT Projects for Success**
 1. Identifying IT project success factors
 2. Measuring the key project factors
 3. Reporting outcomes and results
- 3 Adopting the Right IT Trends**
 1. Evaluating key trends for government IT:
 - Mobility and BYOD
 - Cloud
 - Shared services
 - Case management
 - Enterprise content management
 - Transparency
 - Self-service
 - eGovernment
- 4 Positioning Government IT for the Future**
 1. Defining the enterprise vision
 2. Identifying IT drivers
 3. Implementing key strategies

Strategy 1: Improving IT Research and Procurement Practices

Finding new ways to research and procure technology solutions begins with knowing what you don't want every bit as much as what you do want. To identify this knowledge within your organization, ask the question that is at the core of what you are trying to achieve: What will success look like for your organization and why is it important?

This question about project success is helpful for several reasons. First, it helps everyone focus on defining the project outcomes, not on the technology mechanisms for getting there (especially the latest trendy technology). For example, in document management, are you attempting to improve information access and workflows by enhancing systems and infrastructure? Are you trying to improve work efficiency by handling the same workload with less staff, or outfitting field workers with mobile access to information and applications?

Or, do you want to improve your ability to meet transparency demands, or records management and retention requirements by reducing lost documents and replacing physical storage?

What will success look like for your organization and why is it important?

The core question about what will make for a successful IT project also prompts discussion with the program users about what they need and what they can realistically expect. This discussion is an opportune time to begin educating users and business managers about the terminology of potential solutions and how to view your government business activity from a technology perspective. For example, document management solutions organize a business activity by document type, use keywords and queries for finding and retrieving documents, and include tools for automating workflows. Even this basic knowledge can help users see the value of new technology solutions, even though they may mean significant changes.

Finally, the core question about project success helps the IT team in two critical ways:

1. When evaluating proposals, the core question helps to determine if the vendor understands the connection between their product and the outcomes you want.
2. Once the project has commenced, regularly revisiting the core question helps to avoid the delays of "scope creep" and the costs of change orders.

Crafting the answers about project success that are specific to your IT environment and how your government entity does its business will help you research new technologies more effectively. You'll be able to quickly identify which technologies truly offer a potential solution for your needs instead of those that are simply the latest focus of industry buzz. And with the right solutions identified from your research, you can work with procurement staff and potential vendors to create a smooth and timely purchasing process.

MANAGING IT PROCUREMENT FOR SUCCESS

The purchasing process for IT equipment, software and services can be a critical part of the project's success. Yet, IT procurement activity in the public sector faces several common challenges.

Potentially outdated procurement rules and processes. Yes, procurement departments can be very good at buying many things at the best price and best terms. But for the most part, those "things" need to be commodities that are easily definable and available from multiple vendors. IT purchases don't often fit this approach and instead involve many variables such as which vendors are involved, what is bought, how it is delivered and payment schedules that don't always match government budget cycles.

STRATEGY 1 RECAP:

Improving IT Research and Procurement Practices

- ✓ Overcoming the limitations of traditional government purchasing practices
- ✓ Developing IT procurement expertise
- ✓ Exploring shared services and strategic sourcing

Additionally, technology is usually deployed as a "solution" — a set of products, consulting and support services, and processes that are developed after vendors are selected. This solution definition is very different from purchasing something that can be held in your hand and it leads to difficulties when trying to apply the same purchasing practices that work so well with commodities. *Government Technology* calls strict adherence to these traditional rules one of the "procurement practices that stifles innovation."²

To overcome this challenge, the IT staff and procurement department need to identify how purchasing processes can adapt while remaining compliant with legal and funding requirements as well as the organization's own policies for purchasing decisions and activity.

Standard purchasing terms and conditions. The nature of IT investments may also require adjustments to payment terms, delivery parameters, considerations of warranty coverage and other standards that are defined for general purchasing. In addition, government terms and practices that

are geared strictly toward lowest-bid purchasing don't have the flexibility needed for "best-value" contracting. This type of contract is often a better choice for IT projects because it considers total cost of ownership factors such as the direct and indirect costs involved in the solution's rollout, operation and maintenance.³

Procurement staff and technology expertise. Another challenge is the lack of experience and knowledge for IT procurement among purchasing staff. An IT investment typically includes many variable elements such as multiple licenses, product bundles or versions, and multi-year support contracts or service subscriptions. These elements and how they are combined into a definable purchase may be unfamiliar and confusing to general purchasing staff as they try to compare offerings, prices and work plans of several vendors. And, because specific solutions are bought infrequently and technology changes rapidly, past research and understanding may not exist for the current procurement effort.

The increasing adoption of IT services instead of hardware or software product purchases also requires a new perspective on procurement because services are priced differently than products. For example, a service may be delivered as a defined package or an open-ended engagement, with pricing based on hourly rates or a fixed quote. Consulting projects such as discovery and planning services may be necessary before full-service implementation, with separate pricing and perhaps a different budget allocation.

"Best-value" contracting is often a better choice for IT projects because it considers total cost of ownership factors such as the direct and indirect costs involved in the solution's rollout, operation and maintenance.

For more information, visit www.governing.com/blogs/bfc/col-best-value-contracting.html. ▶



Procurement response burden. The most innovative and affordable solutions often come from small or startup technology companies. Yet these vendors don't always have the knowledge or resources to respond to larger government RFPs and the projects they define. This gap may mean that a government IT department has to settle for less competitive solutions with compromises in price, capabilities and design simply because those were the only submitted proposals. Recently, municipalities found themselves paying more for services when procured through an RFP because the risk of not being selected caused some responding vendors to raise the price to cover the RFP response costs.

Recently, municipalities found themselves paying more for services when procured through an RFP because the risk of not being selected caused some responding vendors to raise the price to cover the RFP response costs.

Reduced IT staff levels. Many government IT departments have seen their share of staff reductions because of budget cuts. The technical personnel who remain must spend more of their time managing day-to-day IT operations. As a result, they have less time available for creating RFPs and supporting the solution research and evaluation activities for new IT projects.

Technology Advancements. In all too many cases, by the time a government IT project is deployed, the underlying technologies have already advanced another generation. Or, if the government agency has leapfrogged to new Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and cloud technologies, this move raises new and unfamiliar procurement issues such as user licensing and pricing plans that are based on unpredictable usage levels.

So, how can you attack these procurement challenges to ensure a process that leads to a good vendor and solution selection? The following actions will give you a positive start.

- **Stay up to date on procurement rules and processes.** Start a review of current rules and processes before you are in the throes of purchasing. You can research new procurement methods through resources such as technology industry analysts, Center for Digital Government (CDG) reports and affiliated magazines, and peer groups. One such group, the National Association of State CIOs (NASCIO), publishes documents on relevant issues such as the value of joining collaborative groups for shared services.⁴
- **Ensure standard purchasing terms and conditions meet IT needs.** Review your standard purchasing contracts and determine whether the terms are applicable to IT needs, funding requirements or other relevant factors. Adjust the standard terms and conditions required by your jurisdiction to

better reflect IT needs and practices. Place terms that are specific to a funding source into separate addenda so they can easily be removed if that funding source is not part of the procurement.

Look to neighboring jurisdictions who may have updated their terms and conditions, especially those in the same state or at the same governmental level, for advice and examples.

Explore the possibility of using interlocal agreements to leverage another jurisdiction's procurement or the possibility of procuring together in order to share services or reduce costs.

Explore whether your state and jurisdiction allows you to purchase through contracts such as GSA or state term schedules. This type of purchasing will allow you to simplify or eliminate some procurement steps while also enabling you to focus on finding the best solution.

- **Educate procurement staff on technology.** Invite vendors to teach the terminology and basics of a solution to users and procurement staff before the RFP is developed.

Visit neighboring jurisdictions that have implemented a solution or use an online meeting to see actual solutions that address your needs so you can understand realistic outcomes before you write requirements.

Check resources like the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, NASCIO and CDG to learn more about solutions and who is using them. This allows you to find product information, implementation dos and don'ts, and relevant government examples when you research a particular solution.

Use free white papers and guides to help identify your needs and to research the solution's benefits for government. This information can help you define what you want the solution to do for your organization.

- **Review vendor limitations.** As you consider your terms and conditions and RFP documents, ask: Are they bigger than they need to be? RFP templates often grow over time and sometimes retain clauses that may have been superseded or should be omitted. Consider whether a reduced response requirement might make it easier for smaller vendors to reply (and potentially offer cost savings and technology advantages over larger

Overcoming Procurement Challenges

- ✓ Stay up to date on procurement rules and processes.
- ✓ Ensure standard purchasing terms and conditions meet IT needs.
- ✓ Educate procurement staff on technology.
- ✓ Review vendor limitations.
- ✓ Address reduced IT staff levels.

Technology Resources to Educate Staff

- ✓ www.centerdigitalgov.com
- ✓ www.naco.org
- ✓ www.nascio.org
- ✓ www.nlc.org

vendors). Smaller, more focused and more relevant proposals are also easier for your organization to review and rate.

Additionally, review your RFP template for its applicability to technology purchases and consult your peers for examples, especially from those who have streamlined proposal requirements.

- **Address reduced IT staff levels.** Explore the possibility of using interlocal agreements to leverage another jurisdiction's procurement or the possibility of procuring together in order to reduce the demand on your IT staff for procurement as well as deployment, operation and management of the purchased solution.

Explore whether your state and jurisdiction allows you to purchase through contracts such as GSA or state term schedules in order to eliminate some procurement activities for your IT staff.

Consult with peers who have purchased similar solutions for best practices and areas to avoid as a way to help your staff create an effective RFP and benefit from work done by other jurisdictions.

Take advantage of technology advancements that can automate document creation and review/approval workflows to reduce the demand of these routine tasks on your IT staff.

Strategy 2: Managing IT Project Implementation for Success

The research and evaluation process is done, a solution and vendor for the IT project have been identified and the purchasing process is complete. Now it's time for implementation — and for strategies to help you manage this IT project for positive results.

The discussion for this strategy uses an enterprise content management (ECM) deployment as a representative example of a large, complex and far-reaching IT project. The process for implementing an ECM solution encompasses several major activities, among them: defining the project, measuring the right success factors and managing the managers.

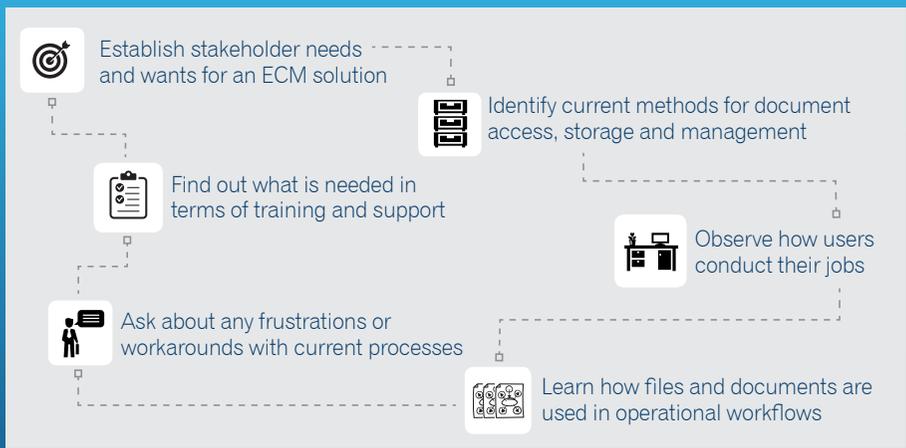
DEFINING THE PROJECT

A clear and thorough project definition sets the stage for success from the very start. Conducting both formal and informal discovery of stakeholder needs and wants — as well as organizational hurdles and opportunities — produces essential input for this IT project definition.

One activity that is often overlooked in this discovery process is the simple act of talking to users and observing how they do their jobs. These conversations will likely yield insights that not only point to potential new solutions, but also cast light on the operational, training and support factors that will influence user adoption.

THE DISCOVERY PROCESS:

An Enterprise Content Management Example



For example, in an ECM project, users can help IT identify core factors such as current methods for document access, storage and management; how documents are used in operational workflows; and records retention requirements for inactive documents. User frustrations and workarounds for current processes can also become important criteria for selecting an ECM solution.

IDENTIFYING SUCCESS FACTORS

In Strategy 1, you identified what comprises overall success for a government IT project and the departments or organizations it serves. Now it's time to focus that question: Which factors will really indicate whether *this* IT project is a success?

To answer this question, establish the baseline measures of key project factors to assess before and after project implementation. These measures may be qualitative and quantitative, for example: What are you being asked to justify and count when reporting on results? How does your organization measure success for both IT and the business-side stakeholders you serve?

While you may also measure financial factors such as return on investment (ROI), payback and total cost of ownership (TCO) in a fashion similar to private companies, these factors may not necessarily be at the top of your list. Instead, “public good” factors that reflect the mission and organization of the department or government as a whole may have an overarching importance. Examples of these factors include:

- Reduced over-the-counter time for transactions
- Increased self-service opportunities to meet constituent expectations
- Reduced backlog of cases, permit applications, etc.
- Fewer calls for general information and help with applications and processes
- Increased client and citizen satisfaction because of better service

The table to the right shows a detailed example of project factors to assess before and after implementing a new content management system. By creating a similar worksheet that reflects your project, you can collect essential data that will help you assess and report on project effectiveness and results.

MANAGING THE MANAGERS

The value delivered by an IT project and its impact on organizational goals may not be readily apparent to elected officials and business-side managers. Reports on IT project status and outcomes, based on the parameters in the before-and-after worksheet, can help your non-IT colleagues recognize the results achieved. This data can also help to justify budget requests for the next round of IT initiatives.

STRATEGY 2 RECAP: Managing IT Projects for Success

- ✓ Identifying IT project success factors
- ✓ Measuring the key project factors
- ✓ Reporting outcomes and results

Baseline Factors/Examples	Before Situation	After Situation
<p>Key Processes and Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Current document processing times ▫ Copies made ▫ Printing costs ▫ Paper used ▫ Revision time ▫ Delays due to lost documents 		
<p>Hard Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Document and forms printing ▫ Paper ▫ Postage ▫ Storage (offsite and onsite plus a growth factor) ▫ Gas and courier fees for physical file transport 		
<p>Soft Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Duplication of effort ▫ Manual compliance tasks in order to maintain funding ▫ Stakeholder satisfaction ▫ Over-the-counter time for document copies 		
<p>Productivity and Efficiency Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Backlog: files sitting on a desk, case volumes, caseload per worker, inspections per day ▫ Time it takes to find critical information, go through the necessary processes and make a decision ▫ Number of people who need to touch a file, how fast they can access it, whether documents are lost, etc. 		
Advanced Measures/Examples	Before Situation	After Situation
<p>Website Usage and Visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Number of daily or weekly visitors ▫ Time spent on page ▫ Other website usage metrics 		
<p>Online Applications or Documents Submitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Submission numbers ▫ New types of documents 		
<p>File Completeness and Process Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ All necessary documents in place ▫ All associated processing completed ▫ Ratio of files or cases ready to move forward in the right timeframe 		
<p>Streamlined Workflow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Ability to handle same amount of work with fewer staff 		

HOW NEW IT SOLUTIONS DELIVER RESULTS FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Lessons from the solution choices and project strategies of government peers, as shown in these case studies, can be very helpful in planning your own IT projects.

Higher efficiency from online case management.

Even if this state's child support enforcement office could find file space for 60,000 active cases, a 40 percent reduction in staff made it difficult to keep up with document filing. Compounding the problem of difficult-to-find information, case data was dispersed between paper files and a legacy electronic case management system.

After implementing a new online system for managing child support cases, enforcement staff were able to process most files electronically; paper filing was performed only selectively and the amount of filing came under control. When actively working on a case, staff received the electronic files 60 times faster, which improved client service. The ability to store data and documents centrally benefited the entire organization with lower costs and improved efficiency.

Cost savings and increased productivity from ECM.

Employees in a state housing finance agency regularly handle files that range from 300 pages for a single-family home loan to more than 7,000 pages for a commercial loan. Staff continue to add documents to the file throughout the life of the loan.

Slow retrieval and paper-intensive loan processes hindered staff productivity. Complying with many regulations, including retention periods that stretch as long as 60 years, was difficult. Customers and partners sometimes found it hard to work with the

agency, a concern for this customer-focused organization.

After implementing a new enterprise content management system, agency employees are three times more productive because they no longer need to search for paper documents. Electronic document storage allowed the agency to reduce almost 1,000 square feet of office space, saving \$175,000 in annual lease costs.

Increasing workloads, same staff levels.

Departments that deliver employment and family services at the county level have realized increased caseworker efficiency after implementing ECM systems. In one county, the system makes it easier for caseworkers to manage the volumes of files they deal with and meet requirements for expedited and routine processing of benefits. Without needing to handle and track paper, caseworkers can do their processing work much faster. Client appointments are expedited because employees can look up information on the spot and determine at a glance if all needed documents have been submitted, which eliminates the frustration of multiple visits for clients.

In another county, moving more than 300 unique forms to an electronic document system has produced a level of efficiency that allowed the government to forgo new staff hires but still respond to a 40 percent increase in caseloads caused by the recession.

Another county is improving client service by retrieving documents immediately instead of waiting for delivery of paper files. And with the associated reduction in document processing and storage costs, the county can reallocate funds to more direct services.

Strategy 3: Adopting the Right IT Trends

New technologies come to market so rapidly it can be hard for any enterprise to keep up. And when it comes to the latest trendy technologies, it's hard to know which ones truly offer robust, useful and long-lived solutions for government.

Deciding which technology trends to follow — and when to adopt them — is a difficult decision for government IT managers due to these common constraints:

- **Slow replacement of legacy systems and long refresh cycles for equipment and other IT infrastructure.** These longer lifespans for government IT systems are often necessary because of limited budgets and lengthy cycles for planning and funding requests.
- **More demands on IT staffs that are shrinking in numbers because of hiring freezes and budget cuts.** Even when new or replacement staff can be hired, government IT managers face recruiting challenges due to the often lower salaries than what are offered in the private sector. In a state IT workforce survey conducted by NASCIO, the majority of respondents reported that state government salary rates “present a challenge in attracting and retaining skilled IT talent.”⁵

Additionally, budget freezes and cutbacks mean that skilled IT workers no longer view government employment as offering good job security and advancement opportunities. To improve recruiting, government entities are now considering alternatives such as telework and remote staff.

- **Uncertainty about taking technology risks.** Tight budgets and high scrutiny of all expenditures mean that a successful IT project is essential. Government CIOs and IT managers can increase their organization's comfort level with technology risk-taking by defining the success parameters and practicing strategic sourcing as described in Strategy 1.⁶

STRATEGY 3 RECAP:

Adopting the Right IT Trends

Evaluating key trends for government IT:

- ✓ Mobility and BYOD
- ✓ Cloud
- ✓ Shared services
- ✓ Case management
- ✓ Enterprise content management
- ✓ Transparency
- ✓ Self-service
- ✓ eGovernment

KEY TRENDS FOR GOVERNMENT

Government IT leaders today are actively grappling with the technology trends below — and the new products and services, IT operational and support processes, and ways of conducting government work that comes with them. These trends are frequently identified as current concerns of state, county and city CIOs when they are interviewed by the Center for Digital Government.

There is a two-part goal behind government consideration of these trends:

- To simplify, centralize and consolidate IT infrastructure as well as IT operations, maintenance and support services
- To leverage changing technologies while meeting constituent expectations for delivery of new services and information access

Mobility and bring your own device (BYOD). As smartphones and tablets become more popular, employees expect to be able to use their own devices to access work email accounts and applications. At the same time, the more frequent shifting of many work activities to non-business hours and non-office locations also increases employee expectations for mobility support by government IT departments. Mobility is no longer a special service reserved just for employees who have traditionally been classified as in-the-field workers. Today, mobility and BYOD support are increasingly viewed as normal work tools for every employee.

Cloud. One of the most talked about IT trends is moving data and applications from on-premises systems to services hosted on the network "cloud." This trend is drawing so much attention because it has the potential to deliver cost savings, simpler implementation and maintenance, easy flexibility for scaling usage up or down, and access to the latest technologies. Government IT departments are exploring cloud services through pilot projects and small implementations in order to assess performance, reliability, migration, and data security and privacy issues.

Shared services ranked in the top 10 for 2013 CIO priorities in a recent NASCIO survey.

Shared services. To take advantage of lower costs and reduced operational burden, more governments at all levels are making increased use of shared IT services. This model is especially beneficial for small towns, counties and other public entities that would not be able to implement the required IT systems or obtain price discounts on their own. For example, the city of Ann Arbor, Mich., "piggybacks" on the ECM system license of its county government (Washtenaw County). The city simply pays for the user seats it needs, avoiding the time, effort and expense of a separate ECM implementation. Interest in this IT model is reflected in a survey of state CIOs, who ranked shared services among their top 10 priorities for 2013.⁷

Case management. The economic recession has increased the caseloads for health, employment and human services, especially at the county level. Large files of records and the multiple activities and employees involved with every case make this function ideal for automation through new or improved ECM systems for document and workflow management. As governments seek to improve constituent service, they are adopting a case management approach that allows staff in multiple departments to understand constituents in the context of all their interactions with the government entity. Solutions like case management combine documents, data, automation, communication records and more to provide a complete picture of a task, project or request. Content management solutions also place this content in a convenient interface for all authorized staff, a valuable capability when processes cross multiple departments.

Enterprise content management (ECM). With documents at the core of most government functions and processes, many government entities are taking an enterprise-level view of document management and extending ECM solutions beyond a single department or function. The value of enterprise content management includes streamlined workflows, easier access to documents and records for employees and citizens, and reduced costs across a public sector entity.

Transparency. In today's political climate, nearly all government spending is receiving more scrutiny by taxpayers, who expect more transparency at all levels about how and for what results their tax dollars are used. To meet those expectations, government CIOs need the tools and methods for data analysis and tracking that will allow reporting on IT project factors such as financial ROI, quantitative results (e.g., employee productivity or operational efficiencies) and qualitative impact (e.g., new or improved service delivery).

Self-service. Citizens and other users expect government information to be available on the Internet in an easy-to-access format. Making data and documents more readily available online is a way for governments to improve service to constituents. Yet that information access must be managed carefully to assure compliance with privacy and security mandates as well as records management and retention requirements.

eGovernment. Implementing the IT systems and services that allow government employees and elected officials to do more of their work online is the continuing goal of eGovernment programs. Examples range from council or board meeting materials that are delivered to a tablet instead of as a thick stack of paper to fully online processes for licensing and permitting. Although eGovernment is a long-running trend, realizing its value in the future will require choosing and implementing IT solutions on an enterprise basis, instead of for only specific, isolated department or function needs.

Strategy 4: Positioning Government IT for the Future

In order to make effective investments today, IT must always keep in mind future needs and opportunities. The key strategy to position government IT for the future is to stay focused on an enterprise-level view. This viewpoint is important because it helps all of the stakeholders involved understand the balancing act necessary among core functions, funding availability and staff allocations.

According to a NASCIO committee, an enterprise architecture can also streamline IT procurement, decrease costs and increase the value of IT investments.⁸

The initial goal of an enterprise view is to simplify, centralize and consolidate IT infrastructure, systems, applications, documents and data. Follow-on goals may include reduced costs, duplication avoidance, simplified management, and the flexibility for future growth and change.

But what do these enterprise goals mean in a government context when it comes to IT deployments? They mean adhering to several IT principles that deliver enterprise-level value.

Central repositories, no silos. For reasons of cost savings, employee productivity and efficiency for delivering services, data and documents can no longer be isolated and duplicated among departmental or system silos. The enterprise view is to create a central data repository that is accessible (with appropriate security controls) to multiple users and systems.

Integrated systems, data and documents. Centralization also makes it possible to achieve greater integration among systems and the data and documents they access. Outcomes include better information, improved flow of work tasks and data, and faster decision-making.

Single, secure, scalable platforms. By taking an enterprise view, IT computing and network infrastructure can be consolidated onto single platforms that are simpler to manage and secure, and can be scaled up or down to meet changing needs.

STRATEGY 4 RECAP:

Positioning Government IT for the Future:

- ✓ Defining the enterprise vision
- ✓ Identifying IT drivers
- ✓ Implementing key strategies

Phased and flexible. With the needs of the enterprise in mind, IT projects can be implemented in flexible yet controlled phases. This type of deployment can often be completed faster, with fewer problems and rework, which reduces overall project costs. Enterprise solutions often have flexible components and functionality that can be used in multiple departments, stretching your investment's impact and reach.

Departmental solutions based on an enterprise vision. Cross-departmental solutions become apparent in an enterprise view. For example, listing new properties for tax and land-use planning purposes may involve records in multiple departmental systems within a municipality. Integrating these records for central access is a cross-department implementation that will simplify the property listing records and workflow.

Understanding the interests and initiatives of elected officials and constituents can give you clear directions for your roadmap of IT investments and solutions.

IT DRIVERS

Knowing the underlying factors that drive your IT decisions is also an important element in defining your positioning for the future and identifying where to start making IT investments. Additionally, understanding the interests and initiatives of elected officials and constituents can give you clear directions for your roadmap of IT investments and solutions.

For instance, your roadmap might be *trend-driven* if you are asked to focus on the transparency of IT systems, user self-service, shared IT services and mobile access. Examples of solutions include agenda management, online access to documents/records, accounts payable solutions, online application processes, GIS applications and ERP solutions.

Or, your efforts could be *strategy-driven* if you need to focus on stakeholder adoption, prioritization of competing departmental needs, return on investment (ROI) and total cost of ownership (TCO) factors. Solutions for a strategy-driven roadmap often cut across the entire organization such as HR solutions that automate employee actions, integrations that connect a data system and document management, or online solutions that generate revenue through Web-based document access.

By contrast, your IT department might be *reaction-driven* if you are asked to focus on addressing constituent demands, staff reductions, funding cuts, compliance problems and the changes driven by new organization managers or elected leaders. Solutions for document management and workflow that enable online access to public records help to meet constituent demands for

Types of IT Drivers

Trend-driven

- ✓ **Focus:** Transparency of IT systems, user self-service, shared IT services and mobile access
- ✓ **Some solutions:** Agenda management, online access to documents/records, accounts payable solutions, online application processes, GIS applications and ERP solutions

Strategy-driven

- ✓ **Focus:** Stakeholder adoption, prioritization of competing departmental needs, return on investment (ROI) and total cost of ownership (TCO)
- ✓ **Some solutions:** HR solutions that automate employee actions, integrations that connect a data system and document management, or online solutions that generate revenue through Web-based document access

Reaction-driven

- ✓ **Focus:** Constituent demands, staff reductions, funding cuts and compliance problems
- ✓ **Some solutions:** Solutions for document management, accounts payable and human services

accountability and transparency while reducing the number of staff needed to do this work. Solutions for accounts payable and human services can help offset staff cuts, and automation and document management solutions can be the foundation of creating systems for better compliance.

Understanding the drivers for your IT organization can help to shape new IT investments and ensure that those investments match the expectations of your elected officials and constituents.

KEY STRATEGIES

The following strategies are important to implement throughout the IT project lifecycle. They will help you ensure your organization is investing in a sustainable solution that supports the enterprise vision.

Process maps. Clear and detailed diagrams, flow charts, or lists of systems and work processes give you a solid understanding of IT roles in your organization's business activity today. These visuals can also help you define where IT needs to go for the future. Create these process maps as part of your discovery activity for a new IT project, then remember to update them after the new system is in place.

User introduction and training. Educating users is critical to adoption of a new IT solution and to the project's overall success. Internal user groups and user days are great ways to demonstrate and share information about new IT solutions. For example, you can illustrate how a new solution will yield improvements in the user experience and/or reductions in user workload. Current users can explain to new adopters how they work with and benefit from a particular technology solution in clear, relevant and non-technical terms.

Additionally, the education resources available through your vendor can be a cost-effective way to train users instead of developing your own programs or bringing in a consultant.

Reporting results. For many users and business managers, IT is invisible until they experience a problem. A government IT annual report can discuss issues and progress on your organization's challenges as well as improvements in systems, processes, information access, and other technical and business parameters.

Revisiting the enterprise vision. The work of IT truly is never done. So it's important to follow a regular process for evaluating IT progress and defining new plans at the enterprise level. This review will help IT and business stakeholders recognize and plan for new directions in technology and the enterprise vision.

Conclusion

Yes, it is possible to make better investments in government IT — and to choose solutions that deliver value today and sustainable positioning for the future. Following the strategies discussed in this guide will give you a good start. For detailed guidance, download the Center for Digital Government Issue Brief, "The Four 'P's of Selecting an Effective IT Solution: A Checklist for CIOs" at www.govtech.com/library/papers/An-IT-Checklist-for-CIOs.html.

Put these practices and strategies for effective IT procurement into action today, reaffirm them with each new IT project and watch for substantial, real and measurable results.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ "Is Procurement Killing Innovation?" *Government Technology*, www.govtech.com/budget-finance/Is-Procurement-Killing-Innovation.html
- ² "5 Government Procurement Practices That Stifle Innovation," *Government Technology*, www.govtech.com/pcio/articles/5-Government-Procurement-Practices-That-Stifle-Innovation.html
- ³ "Contracting for Value, Not Just Cost," *Governing*, www.governing.com/blogs/bfc/col-best-value-contracting.html
- ⁴ "Why Should Governments Join Up?" National Association of State CIOs, www.nascio.org/committees/EA/download2.cfm
- ⁵ "State IT Workforce: Under Pressure," National Association of State CIOs, www.nascio.org/publications/documents/NASCIO_ITWorkforce_UnderPressure.pdf
- ⁶ "Special Report: How Strategic Sourcing Helps Local Government Spend Smarter," *Government Technology*, www.govtech.com/policy-management/How-Strategic-Sourcing-Helps-Local-Government-Spend-Smarter.html?page=5
- ⁷ "State CIO Priorities for 2013," National Association of State CIOs, www.nascio.org/publications/documents/NASCIO-CIO-Priorities-2013.pdf
- ⁸ "Leveraging Enterprise Architecture for Improved IT Procurement," National Association of State CIOs, www.nascio.org/publications/documents/NASCIO_LeveragingEA_July2012.pdf

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