Target Life Cycle
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Table of Contents

Initiate Phase (General)

What is the GRT?

A. The CMS IT Governance Review Team (GRT) is a planning forum of Subject Matter Experts who provide initial IT project support and guidance to help project teams think through their options and develop well-informed business and technical solutions that satisfy CMS' enterprise standards and strategy. They provide feedback to the project team and the GRB regarding the soundness of a project Business Case as well as the technical feasibility and process requirements of implementing solution alternatives.

The GRT meets every other bi-weekly on Thursdays from 10:00-11:30 AM. A list of the current team members is available on our internal website at https://share.cms.gov/Office/OIT/CIOCorner/SitePages/ITGovernance.aspx.

What is the GRB?

A. The CMS IT Governance Review Board (GRB) is the executive review and decision-making body for CMS IT portfolio management. It manages CMS' IT Portfolio via a capital planning process that ensures that our IT Investments are a wise use of CMS resources, meeting business needs at acceptable costs and without duplication.

The goal is to provide enterprise-wide strategic decision-making, shared leadership, transparency, monitoring, and ownership of major IT decisions, opportunities, and risks. The GRB reviews and approves IT initiatives, expenditures, capital plans, and significant changes thereof. It will ensure that proposed investments contribute to the Secretary's strategic vision and mission requirements, meet the business needs of the Agency, employ sound IT investment methodologies, comply with Departmental systems architectures, and provide the highest return on investment and mitigate project risk.

The CMS Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and Head of Contracting Activity (HCA), chair the GRB. It meets bi-weekly on Tuesdays from 1:30-2:30 PM. A full list of members is available on our internal website at https://share.cms.gov/Office/OIT/CIOCorner/SitePages/ITGovernance.aspx.

Can I have help getting my project through your process?

A. Yes! The IT Governance team will help walk you through the process. There are also a several resources available on https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/CMS-Information-Technology/TLC/TLC-Resource-Library, including helpful training videos that explain important aspects and requirements about the Initiate Phase of the TLC, how to develop a Business Case and more.

Who do I reach out to for an Enterprise Architecture (EA) consultation?

A. Send an email to EnterpriseArchitecture@cms.hhs.gov. EA has an enterprise-level view of the agency and can assist teams by walking them through options that might exist elsewhere in CMS, discussing lessons learned from similar projects, and recommending alternatives to meet your business need.

Who do I reach out to for a Technical Review Board (TRB) consultation?

A. Send an email to cms-trb@cms.hhs.gov.

How do I get the IT Governance signature on my Acquisition Plan?

A. IT Governance must sign off on all IT Acquisition Plans (APs). A signature line for an IT Governance Official appears below the COR signature line. After your COR has signed your AP, please forward it to IT_Governance@cms.hhs.gov.

Initiate Phase (Intake Request)

Who is going to review my Intake Request?

A. The Governance Team and Enterprise Architecture review Intake requests. The Governance team will engage SMEs with additional expertise from within CMS as needed.

Will the Intake request process hold up my Acquisition Plan?

A. The Intake process is part of the acquisition planning process and helps meet some of the key Federal Acquisition Regulation requirements outlined on your AP. Until Intake is complete, acquisition planning, and hence your AP, are not complete. However, should the need to expedite arise, the IT Governance team will work with your Contracting Officer to complete our reviews in parallel.

How do I know if my project hit a trigger requiring GRB approval?

A. The CMS IT Governance team will review your request and/or Request for Funding and inform you if any triggers are hit.

How do I know if my project is IT or not?

A. To determine whether your project qualifies as an IT Acquisition, please see https://share.cms.gov/Office/OIT/CIOCorner/Governance%20Documents%20Repository/IT%20Project%20Definition.pdf.

Initiate Phase (Business Case)

What needs to go into my business case?

A. You'll need to provide a clear and concise description of the business need, benefits to CMS, how it supports CMS' mission and strategic goals to create efficiencies and or cost savings or reduce risk. In addition, it should identify and compare alternative solutions, including the pros and cons of each, and cost estimates for 5 years.

Where do I submit my business case?

A. Customers should submit their Business Case in the EASi system. An excel template for the Business Case is available to help you gather information. If you are encountering access or other technical issues, please report the issue in EASi and notify the IT Governance Team at IT_Governance@cms.hhs.gov.

Initiate Phase (LCID)

How can I get a Life Cycle ID (LCID)?

A. The first step to getting a life cycle ID is entering an intake request into the EASi system at https://easi.cms.gov.

When do I need an LCID?

A. The following business needs / contract actions require an LCID:

- New or re-competed acquisitions and IAAs
- New system project or development
- Major changes to existing systems
- Modernization efforts (i.e., Optimization, Cloud migration)
- Requests for Additional Funding

Why does my LCID have an expiration date?

A. LCIDs expire when a project goes live in production or when the full contract period of performance ends. The IT Governance Team will reach out to you in advance for a project status and to offer technical assistance.

Does my re-compete require a new LCID?

A. Yes. LCIDs are only valid for specific actions and so if you are working on a contract action, funding request, or planning a major change to your project, you'd need to complete a new IT Intake Form (which takes about 10 minutes) describing your current business need. LCIDs expire with contracts. FITARA requires the CIO to review each IT acquisition, including re-competes. However, if not much is changing on the current contract, the review should be quick.

Where/How can I find what the LCID is for my project?

A. The EASi system captures LCIDs. If you do not have access, please contact the IT Governance Team at IT_Governance@cms.hhs.gov to obtain it.

How long does it take to receive an LCID for my project?

A. The IT Governance Team processes contract re-competes for O&M efforts with no significant changes in one to three days, and new IT development efforts in two to five weeks.

Why do I need an LCID now?

A. To comply with the Clinger-Cohen Act and FITARA, OMB requires agency's to perform due diligence before investing. For example, OMB requires to document its business need, consider alternatives, estimate costs and benefits associated with the investment. LCIDs play a key role in documenting and tracking CMS IT activity, ensuring that they meet all requirements. The LCID is a record of approval for your planned IT activities from a capital investment planning perspective. You cannot proceed in the acquisition process without one.

Retire Phase

What do I do with my Disposition Checklist?

A. After you complete the Disposition Checklist and the Business Owner signs, you should email it to IT_Governance@cms.hhs.gov