

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to dark navy blue, creating a modern, layered effect.

Joint Fiscal Office Independent Review of IT Projects Daniel Smith / JFO IT Consultant

House Committee on Energy and Technology
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Background

- ▶ The Legislative IT consultant was authorized under H.492/36 (Capital Bill) in the spring of 2015.
- ▶ “Sec. 36. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REVIEW (a) The Executive Branch shall transfer, upon request, one vacant position for use in the Legislative Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) for a two-year staff position, or the JFO shall hire a consultant, to provide support to the General Assembly to conduct independent reviews of State information technology projects and operations.”
- ▶ The contractor was selected in July of 2015, the contract began in September 2015, and the contract runs through August 2017.
- ▶ Primary tasks:
 - ▶ Project and operations reviews
 - ▶ Legislative and JFO support as assigned

Project Review Key Areas

- ▶ **Project Justification**
 - ▶ *Does the project really need to be done?*
- ▶ **Clarity of Purpose**
 - ▶ *Is there a clear definition of success so that all participants will know when the project is properly completed?*
- ▶ **Organizational Support**
 - ▶ *Is the affected organizational entity (“the business”) fully supportive of the project, and is the business willing and able to adapt where required?*
- ▶ **Project Leadership**
 - ▶ *Will there be strong and effective leadership to guide the project?*
- ▶ **Project Management**
 - ▶ *Will there be qualified and effective project management to assist project leadership?*
- ▶ **Financial Considerations**
 - ▶ *Are costs through the system lifecycle properly estimated, and is there funding?*
- ▶ **Technical Approach**
 - ▶ *Are the proposed technical solutions achievable, realistic, and appropriate for this project?*

Projects Reviewed to Date

- ▶ Judiciary: Next Generation Case Management System (NG-CMS)
- ▶ Agency of Human Services: Integrated Eligibility (IE)
- ▶ Agency of Human Services: Vermont Health Connect (VHC) - Operations
- ▶ Agency of Administration: Enterprise Resource Planning Expansion (ERP Expansion)
- ▶ Department of Labor: Unemployment Insurance Modernization (UIM)
- ▶ Posted reports can be found at: http://www.leg.state.vt.us/jfo/state_it.aspx

Definitions

- ▶ **Leadership:** The act of directing and leading participants in an organizational activity. This includes establishing a vision, sharing the vision, and providing the guidance necessary to realize the vision.
- ▶ **Management:** The combination of planning, supervision, monitoring, and reporting that supports the completion of an organizational activity. These activities may be performed by the leader, or in support of the leader.
- ▶ **Project:** A temporary activity undertaken to create a unique product, service or result. It has a defined start and end date, a clearly defined outcome, and cannot have been done before.
- ▶ **Program:** A group of related projects that are managed in a coordinated way.
- ▶ **Governance:** The processes of decision making and interaction among various participants in an organizational activity.
- ▶ **Oversight:** The process of monitoring (passive) and regulating (active) an organizational activity.

Sample Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Project Overview: The Vermont Judiciary, recognizing that its legacy Case Management System is no longer able to support current and future organizational objectives and imperatives, has begun an initiative to select and implement a Next Generation Case Management System (NG-CMS). A well-designed, modern NG-CMS will drive and enable the transformation of Judiciary's case management process from a paper-driven to an electronic-focused business model that will improve access to justice for Vermont citizens, strengthen inter-agency communication, and enable more efficient court operations through faster court case initiation, more accurate electronic case files, and improved document availability and accessibility.

Project Phase: This project is currently early in the standard project lifecycle. The need for a new system has been articulated and the initial investigation of alternatives has been accomplished, but detailed planning has not yet begun. In project management terms, the project is nearing the end of the Initiating phase and about to begin the Planning phase. It will make that transition once the Project Charter is completed and approved.

Initiating Phase: During this phase the project is proposed, initially defined, and approved. The Initiating Phase is considered complete when a Project Charter has been accepted that defines what is going to be accomplished, why it is necessary, when it is going to be completed, and who is responsible and accountable for the project's success.

Planning Phase: In the Planning phase the groundwork is laid for the Executing phase. This includes developing project plans and defining the specifics of scope, requirements, schedule, and cost. The procurement process is started (RFPs), and risk management is planned. Communications between stakeholders (status reports, etc.) are established.

Executing Phase: During this phase the actual work required to meet project goals is performed in accordance with the project plans. This includes the execution of contracts, the performance of project work, and the management of communications between project participants and stakeholders.

Closing Phase: In the closing phase the project is determined to be complete, and for most projects the transition is made from a project mode to an operations mode. Procurements are closed, project teams are released to other tasks, and lessons learned are documented.

Throughout: During all phases the project team monitors project status and controls scope, schedule, work, costs, quality, communications, risks, procurements, and stakeholder engagement.

Project Analysis: The NG-CMS project is in good shape considering the phase of the project. Sufficient justification has been provided for undertaking the project, adequate research has been done on what other States are doing to address similar challenges, preliminary planning is appropriate for the project phase, and initial funding has been secured. The project is well conceived and has clear overall goals, and has a good chance of success assuming adequate planning, execution, and oversight. The primary challenges will be clearly defining the specific goals of the project, keeping project leadership and stakeholders actively engaged, and selecting a product/vendor to implement the desired system.

The following page provides evaluations of overall project status and the seven key areas that were investigated during the project review. These areas are considered with respect to the project's current phase; for example, lack of detailed requirements is less critical during the Initiating Phase than during the Executing Phase.

Overall Status:



The Judiciary knows that they need a new Case Management System, they have a general idea of what is in use by other states and what is available (Commercial Off the Shelf, or COTS systems), they have a general idea of how much such a system should cost, and they have a good initial plan on how to go about procuring and implementing such a system.

1. Project Justification: (Why are we doing this? Is the project necessary and beneficial?)



The legacy system from 1990 (VTADS) is overdue for replacement with a modern, more capable system.

2. Clarity of Purpose: (Is there a clear definition of success? Is the scope statement complete?)



While general goals have been described, specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic goals must be developed, agreed to, and documented as the project matures.

3. Organizational Support: (Is the organization ready to undertake this project? Has the potential need for business process change been acknowledged, and is there a Change Management Plan?)



Judiciary support and governance for the project has been documented, and must be included in the Project Charter. In addition, a Change Management plan must be developed to ensure business practice adaptation as the NG-CMS is implemented.

4. Project Leadership: (Has a qualified person been designated to lead the project, and has that person been empowered to do so?)



Project leadership has been officially assigned to one individual, and this must also be documented in the Project Charter. This leader must be continually empowered by the key stakeholders to drive the project to a successful conclusion.

5. Project Management: (Is the project management staff appropriate, and will project management conform to State of Vermont standards?)



A qualified Project Manager ([Bernie Dunn](#)) has been selected. This PM will work in partnership with the Project Leader, who will ensure that the PM is conforming to State and Industry standards.

6. Financial Considerations: (How much will it cost to complete the project, how much will it cost to maintain and operate the system, and how it will all be paid for?)



Initial estimates of development and maintenance costs are adequate for this phase of the project. The Project Leader and PM must ensure that costs and budgets (to include post-deployment maintenance and operations) are updated and tracked through the Planning and Executing phases of the project.

7. Technical Approach: (Is the proposed solution achievable, realistic, and appropriate?)



The proposed technical approach (obtain a commercially available system) is sound. Project leadership must ensure that the system selected matches project goals, gaps between system capabilities and current business practices are identified and addressed, and adequate planning is performed for system implementation and operation.

Common Risk Factors

- ▶ **Organizational complexity**

- ▶ *Projects that cross organizational boundaries may be at increased risk due to the potential for confusion regarding ownership, priorities, governance, and oversight.*

- ▶ **Technical complexity**

- ▶ *Large projects that are not based on proven solutions may overtax State resources, resulting in delays, higher costs, and failures.*

- ▶ **Inadequate leadership and management**

- ▶ *The lack of clearly defined leadership that is motivated and empowered to successfully complete the project can adversely impact a project, while the lack of qualified project management staff can result in poor planning, monitoring, and reporting.*

- ▶ **Procurement issues**

- ▶ *Procurement timelines that do not support project timelines can increase project risk. This is a bigger risk for those programs or projects that require multiple contracts over the activity lifecycle.*

- ▶ **Oversight issues**

- ▶ *While there is a risk inherent in having too little project oversight (both internal and external to the executing organization), there is also a risk in having too much. Inadequate, duplicative, and contradictory oversight can all contribute to project problems.*

Questions?