

MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

1. PURPOSE

This Directive:

- a. Delegates authority to the Information Technology Service (ITS) for coordinating the management of information technology within the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).
- b. Contains definitions related to information technology management.
- c. States policy, assigns responsibilities, and gives basic procedures for carrying out information technology management activities.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive replaces and updates AMS Directive 3130.9, Management of Information Technology, dated 4/16/07. The principal changes include:

- a. Acquisition thresholds for the approval of information system development have been removed from this Directive, and the existing thresholds of Directive 3130.1, Capital Planning and Investment Control, are referenced for policy guidance.
- b. The organization name and acronym has been updated throughout this Directive to reflect the name change from the Information Technology Group to ITS.

3. SCOPE

This Directive is applicable to the purchase, lease, contracting, and utilization of information technology, equipment, software, and services by all AMS Programs and Staff Offices, and reflects policy requirements of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), General Services Administration (GSA), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO).

4. DEFINITIONS

- a. Economic Feasibility. The judgment as to whether or not financial resources exist to develop, implement, and maintain a system throughout the system's life cycle at a reasonable cost.
- b. Information System. A set of hardware, software, and support resources used to accomplish specific mission objectives. Information systems are administered using methodology known as Systems Life Cycle Management.
- c. Information Technology. The planning, budgeting, organizing, directing, training, and control associated with the functions of creation, collection, processing, transmission, dissemination, use, storage, and disposition of information. This encompasses both the information itself and the resources, such as personnel, equipment, funds, and technology used in the information processes. It also includes office automation, telecommunications, records management, and their associated activities.
- d. Operational Feasibility. The judgment as to whether or not a proposed system can, in fact, be accomplished efficiently, given organizational, personnel, and environmental constraints.
- e. Systems Life Cycle Management. The process of managing the development of an information system from its inception and earliest planning stages through its termination, incorporating the phases of:
 - (1) Initiation and problem investigation;
 - (2) Definition and identification of functional requirements and alternatives;
 - (3) System design and specification development, programming, testing, and data conversion; and
 - (4) Implementation and training.
- f. Technical Feasibility. The judgment as to whether something exists in the marketplace hardware and software for the automation of a system.

5. POLICY

AMS endorses the concepts of cooperative processing and resource sharing in the interest of providing the most effective and efficient services to Program customers. The management and practice of information management within the Agency will be governed by the following concepts:

- a. AMS will promote and foster information technology through the development of policies, standards, and guidelines to improve management and control of data and to increase data and information sharing.
- b. ITS will oversee, coordinate, and administer a system of technology and investment controls for the efficient and effective use of information technology in Agency Programs.
- c. All information technology will be planned, managed, and conducted to maximize the Agency's return on investment and productivity. This policy includes the general requirements that all current and projected IT-related activities be:
 - (1) Adequately considered and planned by program management in advance of procurement/acquisition to permit the necessary review, modification, and approval by appropriate Department and Agency offices.
 - (2) Satisfactorily documented, in advance, with specific details of the project's justification, objectives, expected accomplishments, costs, performance measurements, and schedule of development.
 - (3) Periodically reviewed for continuing validity, security, adequacy, and cost-effectiveness.
- d. As part of the planning program, all AMS managers must consider the full information system life cycle when evaluating the technical, operational, and economic feasibility of proposed and existing systems. Individual managers must consider the availability of resources to be shared across organizations and programs within the Agency and avoid costly duplication in the acquisition of information technology equipment, software, and service.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The Associate Administrator will:
 - (1) Ensure that all information technology investments are leveraged within AMS, and that opportunities to avoid duplication of efforts (system development, reporting, and maintenance) and increased costs are taken. This includes ensuring that an enterprise approach is implemented in AMS for requesting, approving, and maintaining investments.
 - (2) Ensure that opportunities to engage in the Federal and USDA enterprise solutions are implemented to the maximum extent practicable.
 - (3) Determine the organizational responsibility to administer services for cross-agency solutions (e.g., commodity procurement, market news) involving multiple Programs within AMS.

b. The Deputy Administrator, ITS, will:

- (1) Coordinate the acquisition and use of information technology to provide for information compatibility and the efficient use of information technology to the maximum extent possible within the Department and the Agency. The coordination of information management functions will be through technical centers of expertise assigned to ITS divisions and branches.
- (2) Serve as the Agency's liaison with the Department regarding information technology management policy, procedures, and reporting.
- (3) Advise the Agency's Administrator, Associate Administrator, and Deputy Administrators in the appropriate management of information technology.

c. The Deputy Administrators will:

- (1) Coordinate the program-specific acquisition and use of information technology with the Agency to promote information compatibility and the efficient use of information technology to the maximum extent possible.
- (2) Obtain approval for information system development in accordance with the requirements of AMS Directive 3130.1, Capital Planning and Investment Control Process.
- (3) With the assistance of the Deputy Administrator, ITS, ensure compliance of program-specific information systems with appropriate Federal, Departmental, and Agency information technology policies and standards.
- (4) Appoint a certified Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR) for each program-specific information system developed using contractor services.
- (5) Require that the following system activities be accomplished when developing and operating a program-specific information system:
 - (a) Establish functional requirements;
 - (b) Conduct feasibility and cost-benefit studies commensurate with the size and complexity of the system subject to the requirements of OMB, USDA, and AMS directives;
 - (c) Effectively manage system planning, design, and implementation;

- (d) Clear all required system documentation through the AMS Change Advisory Board before advancing to the next phase of the system life cycle;
- (e) Maintain the system's security plan and disaster recovery plan and regularly test the effectiveness of security controls and the disaster recovery plan; and
- (f) Certify and accredit the system prior to operation and maintain accreditation throughout the system's life.

7. INQUIRIES

- a. For more information about information technology management in AMS, contact the AMS Information Technology Service at 202-720-1234.
- b. This Directive is available online at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/amsissuances>

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