IT Initiatives that require Independent Quality Management Services (iQMS)

Statewide QA Program

Guidance 1 & Guidance 2

ENTERPRISE
information services

Contents

Determining whether iQMS is required (Guidance 1)

Overview
The Statewide QA Program (SWQA) is responsible for ensuring that statewide policy 107-004-030 (the iQMS Policy) is followed and implemented. This guidance outlines the process for determining whether independent Quality Management Services (iQMS) are required, and how that decision occurs.

iQMS determination process:
Only Information Technology Initiatives require iQMS.[1] An Information Technology Initiative is composed of a project or project portfolio and is subject to DAS and EIS review and oversight responsibilities as discussed in the iQMS Policy, the Information Technology Investment Oversight Policy, and other statewide policies. When determining if iQMS is required, the SWQA Program will review information provided by the agency and EIS Project Portfolio Performance (P3) to assess whether the project is an information technology initiative and meets the iQMS policy criteria.

The iQMS determination process begins when a new IT initiative is accepted into the enterprise portfolio. Typically, the iQMS determination will be made by the time of Stage Gate 1 endorsement, although in certain situations a determination may not be possible until Stage 2. The determination may be revisited throughout the project lifecycle if there are changes to the project that relate to the policy criteria.

1. P3 sends oversight welcome email to the agency acknowledging acceptance of the initiative into the enterprise portfolio; SWQA is copied on the welcome email.
2. SWQA reviews project initiation artifacts and consults with P3 and the agency to determine if iQMS is required. SWQA will ensure that the agency understands the reasoning behind the determination and has an opportunity to ask questions.
3. Agency will identify, with the support of their SIPM and ASCIO, whether the agency has upcoming projects which may qualify the agency to structure the iQMS engagement as an iQMS portfolio opportunity. Agency shall inform P3 and the SWQA Program that they have identified a portfolio opportunity. (See *What is an iQMS Portfolio?* for definitions and more information.)
4. SWQA will provide a written notice of the iQMS determination to P3 and the agency.
5. SWQA will add the iQMS determination memo to PPM, using the folder where the project's other EIS endorsements and decisions are kept.
6. If iQMS is required, P3 will mark the Major IT Project indicator in PPM.
7. P3 will document the iQMS requirement in the next Stage Gate memo.
8. P3 will include SWQA in oversight kickoff meeting for introductions and discussion of next steps.

What organizations are covered by the iQMS Policy?
Most executive branch agencies, boards, and commissions are covered organizations, meaning that they are required to follow the iQMS Policy. All covered organizations are required to use the iQMS Master Price and Services Agreement (MPSA) to procure iQMS, including those with higher levels of delegated procurement authority. Covered organizations that voluntarily procure iQMS for projects where it is not required by SWQA should consult with SWQA as a courtesy during the procurement process.

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[1] Information Technology Initiative has the meaning set forth in the Independent QA Act (ORS 276A.223).

Organizations that are not required to adhere to the iQMS Policy may use the iQMS MPSA and request input from the SWQA in tailoring their iQMS SOW.

What types of initiatives may be exempt from the iQMS requirement?

Projects that EIS determines to be to be Operations and Maintenance (O&M) are not required to have iQMS, for example:

- A routine update to or purchase of hardware or software within an existing data processing, office automation or telecommunications system;
- A renewal of an existing contract of an IT system under terms and conditions that are substantially the same as in the existing contract; or
- A replacement of a component of an existing IT system that is not essential for the system to function as designed or that occurs at the end of the component's anticipated life cycle.

iQMS Portfolios (Guidance 2)

What is an iQMS Portfolio?

The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) 7th Edition sets forth the following definitions:

- **Portfolio:** Projects, programs, subsidiary portfolios, and operations managed as a group to achieve strategic objectives.
- **Program:** Related projects, subsidiary programs, and program activities that are managed in a coordinated manner to obtain benefits not available from managing them individually.

An independent Quality Management Services (iQMS) portfolio is a contracting vehicle that allows multiple projects to receive iQMS services under a single iQMS contract. The use of an iQMS portfolio must be approved by P3 and SWQA.

To be approved as an iQMS portfolio, projects must either be part of a program or be otherwise related to each other in a way that supports the achievement of strategic objectives. An example of an IT program would be a large-scale IT modernization or system replacement initiative consisting of multiple projects. A non-program portfolio might include separate projects that support a single strategic objective, system, or operational unit within an agency. A portfolio might also consist of projects that are being initiated during the same biennium.

What are the benefits of an iQMS Portfolio?

- Potential for shared reporting deliverables: These may reduce the cost of reporting deliverables and provide efficiencies related to deliverable review. For example, a program with multiple related projects may choose to have all the projects reported under shared Periodic (3.3.x) and Quarterly (4.1.x) deliverables.
- iQMS contractor's familiarity with agency structure and projects: Having a contractor that is familiar with an agency may reduce cost when new projects require iQMS and may result in better insights from the iQMS contractor. However, this potential benefit must be weighed against the risk that familiarity could adversely impact the iQMS contractor's objectivity and independence.
- Ease of contracting for new projects: Projects that fall into the iQMS portfolio can acquire iQMS under the portfolio without the need to resort to a new RFQ.

Why does the use of an iQMS Portfolio need additional EIS review?

P3 and SWQA must confirm that the portfolio approach is warranted and that the benefits of using this approach outweigh any potential risks. The approval for a portfolio will be noted along with approval of the iQMS SOW. The main goal is to ensure that the iQMS contractor remains independent when reviewing IT projects.

Requirements for the use of iQMS Portfolios

1. A defined portfolio must consist of related projects, usually by business program or operational area of a state agency.
2. A defined portfolio for iQMS purposes must not be overly broad and must have support from EIS, especially the EIS oversight analyst(s) assigned to a project in a defined portfolio SWQA.
3. An iQMS portfolio may include projects that will be initiated within two (2) years. This two-year duration may be extended with the support of SWQA and DAS Procurement Services.
4. Portfolio opportunities must be identified as such in the RFQ and iQMS contract, and known related projects must be identified.