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FAQ: IT Initiatives That Require Independent Quality Management Services (IQMS)

Statewide Quality Assurance (SWQA)

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Determining whether IQMS is required

Overview

Statewide Quality Assurance (SWQA) is responsible for ensuring that Statewide Policy 107-004-030 (IQMS for Information Technology Initiatives, or the IQMS Policy) is followed and implemented. The IQMS policy and its companion procedure set forth requirements, responsibilities, and actions that must be followed to comply with the policy. This FAQ provides additional information about the IQMS determination process.

When does the IQMS determination happen?

The IQMS determination process begins when a new IT initiative (project or program) 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 a later stage. Further, a determination may be revisited throughout the project lifecycle if there are changes to the project that relate to the IQMS determination criteria.

What information does SWQA review when making an IQMS determination?

When determining if IQMS is required, SWQA will review project initiation artifacts and consult with the agency, EIS Project Portfolio Performance (P3), and other EIS or DAS partners as relevant. SWQA will strive to ensure that the agency understands the reasoning behind the determination and will provide an opportunity for discussion.

What criteria does SWQA use to determine if IQMS is required?

There are three scenarios where IQMS is required:

1. IQMS may be required for a given project by a specific legislative action or executive mandate.
2. IQMS is required by law (ORS 276A.223) for projects that are estimated to exceed $5 million in total cost. (Total cost typically includes implementation costs plus five years of anticipated IT-related operational costs.)
3. IQMS may be required at the discretion of SWQA based on an assessment of the project's profile for risk and complexity.

When determining if IQMS is required under scenario #3, SWQA will review the unique characteristics of the project and consider whether IQMS is likely to add value. The following are typical characteristics of projects that require IQMS. The more of these characteristics a project has, the higher the likelihood that SWQA will require IQMS for the project. Projects with only a few of these characteristics may require only limited IQMS, or no IQMS at all.

IQMS Project Characteristics

- ❑ Project has significant impact to internal business processes, external entities, and/or the public.
- ❑ Implementation will bring significant technological change, or involves technology or solutions that are complex, high-risk, and/or new to the agency or the state.
- ❑ Total cost estimated at $3 million or more, and cost is larger than an average sized IT project within the agency. (Total cost typically includes implementation costs plus five years of anticipated IT-related operational costs.)
- ❑ Schedule is estimated to run two years or longer, or there is a fixed/mandated schedule.
- ❑ Project requires multiple solution vendors to deliver solutions.

- ❑ Project has several governance related dependencies (e.g., with other agencies or other high-complexity projects) that require coordination for decision making or funding.
- ❑ Project impacts IT system(s) considered mission critical by the agency or EIS.
- ❑ Project impacts IT systems that use sensitive and confidential data (Level 3 or above) as defined in the Information Asset Classification Policy (Statewide Policy 107-004-050).
- ❑ The project is subject to Level 2 or Level 3 oversight, as determined by EIS P3.
- ❑ Other criteria deemed relevant by SWQA.

IQMS Portfolios

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 SWQA in consultation with EIS P3.

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 would benefit from a comprehensive IQMS perspective and understanding to ensure quality management across the related projects.

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.
- Visibility across multiple projects: Utilizing an IQMS portfolio could increase effectiveness of IQMS contractor and reduce overall risk by enabling enhanced coordination and visibility across the related projects.
- 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?

To 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.

What are the requirements for the use of an IQMS Portfolio?

1. A defined portfolio must consist of related projects, usually by business program or operational area of a state agency or component projects that are part of a larger program.
2. A defined portfolio for IQMS purposes must not be overly broad and must have support from SWQA and EIS P3.
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 State Procurement Services.
4. Portfolio opportunities must be identified as such in the RFQ and IQMS contract, and known related projects must be identified.