

Executive Summary:

A reset and recalibration of the agency's strategic initiatives is essential to placing the organization on a sustainable and effective path toward digital transformation. Many IT initiatives have not progressed due to a lack of assigned resources. As the newly appointed CIO, I am submitting this IT Strategic Plan Annual Progress Report to the best extent possible under current circumstances.

The previous CIO departed in early 2024, and I assumed the role later that year. The earlier IT strategic plan, titled "2024–2029 Oregon Water Resources IT Strategic Plan," laid out a forward-looking vision but requires updating for effective execution. While progress has been made on some initiatives, internal computing stability concerns have emerged as a priority. Foundational groundwork is now being established to enable rapid progress across multiple areas. The updated strategic plan will better align with the agency's current operational realities and ensure initiatives are matched with appropriate resources.

Moving forward, our priority is to stabilize the IT Section's structure and operations, positioning it to support the department's growing and evolving needs. We intend to submit an updated, actionable IT strategic plan, "2025–2030 Oregon Water Resources IT Strategic Plan," reflecting this renewed direction.

Strategic Objectives:

The "2024–2029 Oregon Water Resources IT Strategic Plan" called out the following strategic objectives:

1. IT Strategy & Governance
 - a. Work on IT strategy has been ongoing to understand the new alignment.
 - b. Initiated in Jan 2025; governance meetings are now held monthly.
2. Stakeholder Relations
 - a. One on one meetings have been setup with Agency Divisional Leadership
 - b. Cross collaboration has been initiated with divisions
 - c. Work intake processes are being setup to bring visibility into work and improve stakeholder engagement.
 - d. Divisional Leadership is invited to IT Section Team Meetings.
 - e. Optional Monthly Agency wide IT Intro series has been started to educate staff on IT and its services.
 - f. Mandatory Monthly Agency wide IT Tech Essentials trainings with the CIO have been initiated for 30min a month.
3. Project Portfolio Management
 - a. As part of IT Governance, a compilation of projects is being done
4. Project Management
 - a. No resources available to initiate the strategic objective.
 - b. We are working with the Director's office to request an IT PM for 2027-2029 POP
 - c. Ad-hoc meetings have been initiated with people helping on Project Management work
 - d. Evaluation of cloud project management software in ongoing.
5. Data Governance
 - a. Agency's Data Coordinator has initiated meetings, but lack of IT resources has not allowed for any milestone achievement.
6. Data Architecture
 - a. Not initiated

Metrics and Targets:

The metrics are as follows:

- IT Satisfaction (poll)
 - 2025 Goal: 71%
- IT Value (poll)
 - 2025 Goal: 75%
- Count of core processes not more than 3, with
 - High importance
 - Low effectiveness

The refresh period is scheduled for August 2025. As a result, we don't yet have updated data for the period in question. The previous period yielded:

- IT Satisfaction: 64%
- IT Value: 73%

Initiatives:

IT Strategic Initiatives

Initiative	Initiative Type	Start Month & Year		Estimated Duration (Months)	Update
Formal standards-based decision making	IT Excellence	Jan	2024	6	Initiative was not implemented, per internal review.
Apply Executive sponsorship needed to drive adoption	IT Excellence	Jan	2024	6	As of Oct 2024, the CIO participates in executive team meetings, providing IT insights and supporting several initiatives.
Define data ownership and classification	Business Support	Jan	2024	6	Not implemented due to limited resource capacity.
Creation of formal IT Governance Program	IT Excellence	Jul	2024	6	Initiated in Jan 2025; governance meetings are now held monthly.
Creation of business engagement program	Business Support	Jan	2025	6	A flavor of business engagement has started with strong support from OWRD Business.
Define data dictionary and establish cycle for review	Business Support	Jan	2025	3	Not implemented due to limited resource capacity.
Adopt formal project management methodologies,	Business Support	Apr	2025	6	Not implemented due to limited resource capacity. As of Nov 2024, agency project managers began

standards, and procedures					evaluating a project management tool. No dedicated IT Project Managers are in place.
PPM Information System	Innovation	Jul	2025	6	Initiated in Nov 2024. Some benefits identified, but full IT adoption is limited by resource constraints.
Apply project management to all projects	Business Support	Jul	2025	12	Discussions are ongoing as part of IT Governance to formalize project execution.
Analysis effort to catalog current state data infrastructure needs	Innovation	Jul	2025	6	Initiative is underway. Significant infrastructure gaps have been identified. Considerable restructuring will be required.
Addition of Project Portfolio Management	IT Excellence	Oct	2025	6	Coordination with SIPM has begun.
Project Portfolio Manager Position	IT Excellence	Oct	2025	6	Not submitted for inclusion in the 2025–2027 budget.
Having Business Analyst(s) in IS Department	Business Support	Oct	2025	6	One Business Analyst position was submitted in the 2025–2027 budget proposal.
Dedicated Project Manager Positions	Business Support	Oct	2025	6	Not submitted for inclusion in the 2025–2027 budget.
Evaluate and address data schema gaps	Innovation	Jan	2026	6	Not implemented due to limited resource capacity.
Understanding of IT Capacity	IT Excellence	Mar	2026	3	Significant mapping of work and capacity has been conducted since Jan 2025. Initial IT Governance reviews revealed major capacity gaps, especially in maintaining basic operations.
Identify stakeholder metrics for success	Business Support	Apr	2026	6	Not yet initiated.
Data Centralization and normalization	Innovation	Jul	2026	36	Not yet initiated.

Resource Allocation:

No planned resources were allocated beyond maintaining base-level operations.

- There are significant position and skill gaps within the IT Section, as outlined in both the previous and updated IT strategic plans. Current staffing levels only cover a small fraction of the agency's actual needs.
- Despite being a relatively small agency, we manage numerous large systems and face an extensive scope of custom development requirements. This complexity stems from the unique computing demands—ranging from tracking water masters' field activities and mapping specific well locations to supporting dam safety data collection.

Risks & Mitigation Strategies:

There is a significant backlog of unresolved operational issues, including outdated infrastructure, insufficient documentation, critical resource gaps, and challenges with IT organizational structure and setup. Key risk areas identified include:

- **Stabilization:**
The advanced age of IT hardware and some software, legacy network topology designs, and fragile infrastructure at statewide remote locations have brought this unplanned initiative to the forefront. Reliable, fast networks and systems are essential for all employees to perform their duties effectively.
- **Resource & Skill Gaps:**
Many initiatives depend on securing adequate resources. Without them, planning efforts will continue to be undermined. Last year's lack of resources prevented major improvements, and this risk remains. Critical gaps exist in project management and business analysis, compounded by outdated IT processes and technologies. We are actively fostering a culture of continuous learning and modern technology adoption to address this.
- **Security:**
The evolving security landscape has introduced critical tasks not originally included in the IT Strategic Plan. Addressing these demands further strains limited technical labor resources, forcing difficult prioritization decisions.

If these backlogs and risks are not addressed, the agency will remain vulnerable to operational disruptions, security breaches, and compliance failures.

Next Steps:

A reset and recalibration of the agency's IT strategic initiatives is essential to stabilize IT operations and establish a foundation for sustainable, effective digital transformation. This will involve aligning initiatives with available resources, addressing critical skill and infrastructure gaps, and updating the strategic plan to reflect current and future operational needs.

Conclusion:

The Oregon Water Resources Department's IT environment is at a pivotal moment requiring decisive action and renewed focus. While the 2024–2029 IT Strategic Plan laid important groundwork, current operational realities demand a comprehensive reset—one that stabilizes IT infrastructure, addresses critical resource and skill shortages, and aligns strategic initiatives with the agency's evolving needs. Without these adjustments, ongoing risks related to outdated technology, staffing gaps, and security vulnerabilities will continue to hinder progress and expose the agency to operational and compliance challenges.

With the upcoming "2025–2030 Oregon Water Resources IT Strategic Plan," the agency is committed to establishing a resilient, modern IT foundation that supports efficient operations and enables effective digital transformation. Through strengthened governance, enhanced stakeholder engagement, and prioritized resource allocation, IT will be positioned as a vital enabler of the department's mission and long-term success.