IT Program Assessment
FEMA- Disaster Management E-Government Initiative (2010)

Review:

The DHS CIO conducted a review of the FEMA- Disaster Management E-Government Initiative program on March 30, 2010. Disaster Management's (DM) mission is to use the latest technologies to provide disaster victims with online access to disaster-related information and operations, to foster coordination across all levels of Government, and to align with other disaster-related programs to improve disaster management services. To this end, the focus of the program is to finalize DM-OPEN and DM-Framework, provide a self-help portal for disaster victims, and implement a new Content Management System (CMS).

Disaster Management is an E-Government (eGov) program and is scheduled to be funded through 2012. In 2010, the program is wrapping up work on DM-OPEN and DM-Framework in preparation to be passed off to the FEMA- Integrated Public Alerts and Warning System (IPAWS) program. Currently, analyses of alternatives (AoA) are being conducted to determine the best solution for upgrading current functionality for a self-help portal to provide citizens, specifically disaster victims, with necessary information and the implementation of a new content management system. The program will coordinate through the DHS OCIO to explore enterprise-wide website hosting and CMS possibilities. Any new capabilities undertaken by DM will need sponsorship from other programs that can take over support of those capabilities after eGov funding ends in 2012.

Major findings from the review include the following:

- In reference to the DM-OPEN and DM-Framework incident alert capabilities, the PM will coordinate a meeting with the A&O – Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) and FEMA – IPAWS program managers to determine a schedule for integration between the two systems.
- In reference to the discussion surrounding commercial web hosting alternatives, the DHS OCIO will review hosting costs for both the Akamai and commercial web hosting services and examine the possibility of leveraging the CMS to support the Department.
- In reference to the Program organization, the Program Manager will establish additional, dedicated government FTEs prior to moving past the AoA.
- In reference to the pending PIA and PRA submissions, the Program Manager will submit these packages to the DHS OCIO.

Assessment:

Disaster Management is a well organized and managed program, positioned to complete current activities in 2012 within the scope and funding expected. The program has the potential to provide services that other Department organizations can leverage, and there is a potential for DM to also leverage enterprise capabilities via HSIN. The ratio of FTE's to contractors for a program with a budget exceeding $12 million appears to be a risk. More government employees, perhaps temporary, must be added before progressing beyond the AoA. Although minor programmatic risks are present, the program appears to have the proper management support in place.

Score: 4