IT Program Assessment
USCG – Direct Access

Review

The DHS CIO conducted a comprehensive program review of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) – Direct Access program during September 2011. Major observations include the following:

Direct Access is a military payroll and human resources (HR) system that uses commercial off the shelf (COTS) products and achieved full operating capability in FY2004. It continues to meet or exceed the original investment expectations for HR and payroll delivery and integration and is fully aligned with USCG mission needs. In addition to the USCG, it supports the Protective Health Services (PHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The program has mature business processes in place. It meets regularly to review project and technical risks and update the Risk Tracking Matrix and also makes use of an Executive Steering Committee (ESC). It has implemented earned value management and regularly reviews the data to determine variances.

The program is undergoing an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) technical refresh and is following Agile development concepts with an approximate 6 month deliverable schedule for it. Direct Access has fully embraced the 25 Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal Information technology Management as evidenced by its use of COTS products and Agile development concepts.

The planned migration of Direct Access into a DHS data center has introduced a risk for the program due to the unknown cost and schedule impacts of the move. The program has issued a task order for gathering information to assist in developing the migration plan, migration schedule, and the cost. Once developed, these plans will allow the program to make informed decisions about its future direction.

Assessment

The Direct Access Program is a well-run, steady state program with mature business practices, requirements management, and risk management. They have recognized the potential risk of unknown information dealing with data center migration and have taken steps to gain the knowledge which will allow them to plan their response.

The CIO assesses USCG Direct Access program as level 4 – Moderately Low Risk.

Score: 4