



IT Program Assessment CBP- Secure Border Initiative (SBI net) - (2010)

Review

The DHS CIO conducted a comprehensive program review of the CBP SBI net program on November 24, 2010. The review initially focused on the program history, specifically cost, schedule, technical, and program management setbacks. The SBI net Program Manager provided detail regarding the current SBI net scope and funding, which has been reduced over time to reflect scope modifications and significantly reduced funding. Discussion of SBI net going forward focused on the initial deployment of SBI net (Block 1) to demonstrate effectiveness in meeting security threats and environmental constraints, to the Southwest U.S. border. The following are findings resulting from the program review.

- “Project 28”, the initial prototype for the SBI net system, did not perform as planned. Project 28 was not scalable to meet the mission requirements for a national comment and control system, and experienced significant technical difficulties. However, Project 28 did provide “proof of concept” and initial operational capability in the Tucson Sector. SBI net has incorporated the lessons learned from Project 28 into first generation design of the next increment of SBI net known as “SBI net Block 1”.
- SBI net is in the process of their first deployment of SBI net (Block 1) to replace P28, covering 23 miles of border in Arizona.
- The funding profile for the SBI net program has been reduced significantly since the program was initiated, resulting in both scope revisions and schedule baseline delays.
- SBI net has identified 75 new technologies which have been approved by the CBP Technology Review Council and the CBP Architecture Review Board as “emerging.” This means the products are being utilized in a very limited capacity during the prototype phase of program development. These products are under further evaluation by CBP and the Program Offices to determine their effectiveness in fulfilling the business need. The SBI net program is working diligently to compile trade studies that demonstrate the viability of these technology products and will submit Technology Insertions to the EAB in conjunction with their EAD-3 (Critical Design Review) submission.

Assessment

Given the troubled history of this program, there are still significant challenges to overcome and the program still faces substantial risks in terms of technologies, program management, and deployment. However, current oversight and component governance are improving, personnel capabilities are being improved, and strong program management is now in place. Significant strides have been made to improve program schedule. Funding reductions to the original program baseline are not currently reflected in OMB’s performance rating of SBI net. DHS CIO assessment is that SBI net program/project acquisition strategies, plans and baselines have improved and will continue to improve. Continued emphasis on user acceptance and realistic stakeholder expectations is critical.

Score: 2