

IT Program Assessment ICE - Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

Review

The DHS CIO conducted a comprehensive program review of the ICE Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) in September 2011. Program observations include the following:

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a web-based system that tracks and monitors F/M/J (student visa categories) for nonimmigrant students throughout the duration of their participation within the U.S. education system. SEVIS also maintains information on the schools, sponsor organizations, and their appointed representatives for these nonimmigrant students and exchange visitor programs. SEVIS and SEVIS II are part of the DHS Law Enforcement Portfolio. The beneficiaries of SEVIS include government users at DHS, ICE, CBP, CIS, and Federal law enforcement.

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) within the ICE Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) is the business sponsor that funds SEVIS. Currently SEVIS is in the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) stage of the system lifecycle. SEVIS modernization efforts are underway to replace the current SEVIS in the FY13 - FY14 timeframe with a modernized and enhanced SEVIS II. The current SEVIS will be retired (dispositioned) 30-90 days following the SEVIS II go-live Full Operational Capability (FOC) at which time SEVIS II will become the formal system of record. The following are risks to the SEVIS program:

- The most significant risk is related to the system interfaces that SEVIS II will have with many schools and with multiple government agencies and their respective information management systems. If all interfaces in SEVIS II are not fully documented and technical specifications are not confirmed prior to development stage then there could be a schedule delay. There are risks to external interface dependencies for the following agencies: NPPD, USCIS, CBP, FBI, DoS, and Treasury systems. Interface/interoperability dependencies may not occur as planned or may change.
- If the SEVIS II project is perceived by the DHS Office of the Chief Procurement Officer (OCPO) as being deficient in responding to previous Acquisition Decision Memorandum (ADM) conditions placed on the project, then the SEVIS II program may not meet these previous conditions.
- If requirements visualization efforts are not adequate in capturing complex business rules and translating them into functional requirements, then there a

possibility of requirements scope growth beyond the initial needs identified by the business sponsor. Any significant measurable change in requirements for SEVIS II capabilities would impact the basis of estimate used to calculate lifecycle cost and schedule for the program.

- If fully operational and configured development and testing environments are not be established by ICE at the DHS Data Center in time for SEVIS II project development, test, and integration lifecycle stages, then development and/or testing may not occur according to current plans.

Mitigation Strategy

Several Operations and Maintenance releases were implemented in to the SEVIS production environment addressing a total of 71 enhancement and corrective system change requests. Six scheduled SEVIS enhancement releases are planned for implementation. SEVIS started development of Release 6.9 to address 18 system change requests. An Interface and Interoperability focus group was created by the SEVIS Modernization IPT.

The SEVIS II project began requirements visualization in support of the requirements definition stage of the IT lifecycle. The SEVIS II project will continue requirements visualization that: defines an architecture prescription, conduct a project planning reviews, incorporate a change management process, and enter the acquisition lifecycle obtain phase.

SEVIS II acquisition review process documentation will be completed to include an Acquisition Plan, Concept of Operations, Integrated Logistics Support Plan, Integrated Master Schedule, Lifecycle Cost Estimate, Project Management Plan, Test and Evaluation Master Plan, and procurement package.

As a response to the “On-Report” status placed on SEVIS II by the DHS OCPO, an Integrated Program Team (IPT) is tracking and managing all ADM communication and interface. Involvement of the ICE OCIO Program Executive Office (PEO) is in coordination with the Acquisition Program Management Division (APMD) and Cost Analysis Division (CAD) to support ADM risk to SEVIS II.

Assessment

The SEVIS program demonstrates effective program management and requirements management processes that are being captured in up-to-date plans. SEVIS appears to have good operations management in place and risks are identified and managed with mitigation plans in place. The risks to SEVIS, along with those identified above, include acquisition management and producing the plans needed to meet DHS acquisition requirements. The CIO assesses the ICE SEVIS II program as a Level 3 - Medium Risk.

Score: 3