



IT Program Assessment

ICE – Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) conducted a program review of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) – Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). This assessment represents the program's status through March 2012.

Description and Background:

SEVIS is a web-based system that tracks and monitors student visa categories for nonimmigrant students while they are in the U.S. education system. SEVIS also maintains information on the schools, sponsor organizations, and the appointed representatives for the nonimmigrant students and exchange visitor programs. The program is currently in the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) stage of the system life cycle while its successor, SEVIS II, is in the Development, Modernization, and Enhancement (DME) stage. SEVIS is moving towards SEVIS II, a modernized and enhanced version, due to be released by FY14. SEVIS II enhancements will address process, performance, functional, and technical gaps that cannot be closed under the constraints of the current SEVIS architecture. It will also close vulnerabilities identified by the Homeland Security Council Policy Coordinating Committee.

Risks and Issues:

The roles and responsibilities for members of the SEVIS II Student and Exchange Visitor Program and OCIO organizations, as well as the governance, scope, and escalation channels related to the IT Acquisition Review Process, may be challenged. In addition, the program has identified the following high risks:

- If SEVIS II is delayed, then the transition of SEVIS to SEVIS II may be delayed causing planning and staffing level issues
- There is a possibility that certain development, test, training, and acceptance infrastructure environments will not be ready due to funding and/or other support requirements. There is also concern that certain environments will not have consistent configurations reflecting the actual live intranet and Internet E-Gov environments that will be used to host SEVIS II functionality.
- If the project is perceived by the DHS Under Secretary for Management/Program Accountability and Risk Management (PARM) 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 and may have difficulty receiving continued support from DHS.
- Based on restrictions placed on the program by its academic partners, there are two, short windows of opportunity for fielding the full operating capability each year. As a result, any development of the system will have to wait until this window to be deployed.



Mitigation Strategy:

SEVIS will ensure collaboration and responsive communication through the SEVIS II Integrated Project Team, ICE-OCIO Program Executive Office (PEO), and Homeland Security Investigations Executive Steering Committee. The program has also identified the following ways to mitigate the risks noted above:

- The program will conduct monthly standing meetings to discuss program status, risk and issues, as well as encourage open communication and knowledge sharing.
- The SEVIS II Project Management team will coordinate with OCIO divisional elements and Senior Management to ensure risk is appropriately addressed as part of an enterprise-wide mitigation strategy. The project has established a joint Test and Evaluation Working Group that collaborates with OCIO and management, as well as coordinates regular meetings with all involved personnel and organizations.
- SEVIS II project management and ICE-OCIO PEO are coordinating with PARM and tracking all DHS communication and interfaces.
- The program will propose alternate development strategies including having the DME contractor complete the development work in compliance with the current schedule, and delaying implementation until deployment is acceptable by the academic partners.

Assessment:

Despite external factors that could influence the program's success, SEVIS has a sound working relationship with external organizations and an effective risk management plan in place. The program takes part in overarching governance processes, such as internal Program Reviews and Executive Steering Committees that spark communication and collaboration with ICE leadership and other stakeholders. SEVIS demonstrates effective program management and requirements management processes that are being captured in up-to-date plans. The CIO assesses the ICE-SEVIS program as **Medium Risk**.

Score: 3