



OFFICE OF SYSTEMS/CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Information Technology Acquisition Approval Policy

Version: 1.0
Date: 9/29/2017

1.0 PURPOSE

This document establishes the policy for the Chief Information Officer (CIO) to approve or delegate approval of Information Technology (IT) acquisitions at the Social Security Administration (SSA). This document provides a starting point for understanding:

- a. CIO's role in the IT acquisition approval process
- b. When the CIO can delegate approval authority

The Policy section below describes the fundamental premise of the SSA IT acquisition approval approach. It refers the reader to the governing sources that define the requirements, procedures, and responsibilities for the approval of IT acquisitions.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to the CIO and designated IT acquisition approving officials.

3.0 AUTHORITIES

The following laws, regulations, orders, policies, directives, and guidance authorize and govern this policy:

- The Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996
- Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) Memorandum M-15-14 (June 10, 2015)
- 40 United States Code (U.S.C)
- Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)

4.0 POLICY

4.1 Background

FITARA and the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Implementation Guidance (M-15-14) outline the following roles of the CIO in the IT acquisition approval process:

1. Review and approve acquisition strategies and acquisition plans¹
2. Review and approve contracts²

¹ [OMB Memo M-15-14](#)

² [40 U.S.C § 11319](#)

Acquisition Planning

Acquisition planning is the process by which the efforts of all personnel responsible for an acquisition are coordinated and integrated through a comprehensive plan for fulfilling the agency need in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost. It includes developing the overall strategy for managing the acquisition³.

An Acquisition Strategy summarizes the overall approach to acquiring the capability (to include the program schedule, structure, risks, funding, and the business strategy). It contains sufficient detail to allow senior leadership and the Milestone Decision Authority (MDA) to assess whether the strategy makes good business sense, effectively implements laws and policies, and reflects management's priorities. Once approved by the MDA, the Acquisition Strategy provides a basis for more detailed planning. The strategy evolves over time and should continuously reflect the current status and desired goals of the program.⁴

An Acquisition Plan addresses all of the technical, business, management, and other significant considerations that will control the acquisition⁵.

IT Resource Statement

It is the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) to notify the CIO when planned acquisition strategies and plans include IT.⁶ In conjunction with the Agency IT budget submission to OMB, SSA must also provide an IT Resource Statement. The IT Resource Statement includes a declaration whereby the CIO and CFO affirms their joint approval on all IT expenditures.

4.2 CIO's Role

4.2.1 Acquisition Strategy/Plan

The CIO shall primarily consider the following factors when reviewing acquisition strategies and acquisition plans⁷:

- Appropriateness of contract type;
- Appropriateness of IT related portions of statement of needs or statement of work;
- Appropriateness of above with respect to the mission and business objectives supported by the IT strategic plan;
- Alignment with mission and program objectives in consultation with program leadership.
- Adequately implementing incremental development⁸

³ [FAR Part 2.101](#)

⁴ [DAU – Glossary of Defense Acquisition Acronyms and Terms](#)

⁵ [FAR Part 7.105](#)

⁶ [OMB Memo M-15-14](#)

⁷ [OMB Memo M-15-14](#)

⁸ [OMB Memo M-15-14](#)

Major Investments⁹

The Agency CIO is responsible for reviewing and approving acquisition strategies or plans that include IT ¹⁰ and are associated with the major investment. The Agency CIO cannot delegate this authority for the major investments.¹¹

Non-major Investments¹²

The Agency CIO is responsible for reviewing and approving acquisition strategies or plans that include IT and can delegate this authority for the non-major investments.¹³ The process by which the CIO delegates authority is outlined in [Section 3.0 – PLANNING / SELECT PHASE of the Capital Planning and Investment Control \(CPIC\) Guide](#).

4.2.2 Approving Contracts

Major Investments

The Agency CIO is responsible for reviewing and approving IT acquisitions where the costs are associated with the major investment. This authority cannot be delegated¹⁴.

Non-major investments

The Agency CIO is responsible for reviewing and approving acquisitions that include IT and can delegate this authority for the non-major investments.¹⁵ The process by which the CIO delegates authority is outlined in [Section 3.0 – PLANNING / SELECT PHASE of the Capital Planning and Investment Control \(CPIC\) Guide](#).

4.3 Supporting Policies/Procedures

- [Certification of Incremental Development Policy](#)
- [CPIC Guide](#)

4.4 Policy Statement

In accordance with the Federal Information Technology Reform Act (FITARA) of 2014 and OMB Memo M-15-14, the CIO shall approve all acquisition strategies, plans, and awards for

⁹ Major IT investment means an IT investment requiring special management attention because of its importance to the mission or function to the government; significant program or policy implications; high executive visibility; high development, operating, or maintenance costs; unusual funding mechanism; or definition as major by the agency's capital planning and investment control process.

¹⁰ [OMB Memo M-15-14](#)

¹¹ [40 U.S.C § 11319](#)

¹² Non-major IT investment refers to any IT investment in the Agency's IT Portfolio that does not meet the definition of a major, funding transfer, IT migration, standard, or non-standard investment.

¹³ [40 U.S.C § 11319](#)

¹⁴ [40 U.S.C § 11319](#)


¹⁵ [40 U.S.C § 11319](#)

major investments and delegate authority for approving acquisition strategies, plans, and awards for non-major investments within defined thresholds.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

5.0 Approval

X


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Chief Information Officer

6.0 Change History

Version	Date	Reason for Change
1.0	09/29/2017	CIO-approved version