

The Social Security Administration's Information Technology Investment Process

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Office of Audit Report Summary

Objective

To determine whether the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Information Technology Investment Process (ITIP) supports strategic decision making and allows the Agency to plan for, manage, and implement information technology (IT) investments as projected.

Background

SSA established ITIP in 2016 to provide guidance on the selection, tracking, and management of IT investments. The goal was to optimize IT investments and ensure those investments were delivered on time and on budget. Since its inception, ITIP has undergone changes including the creation of ITIP Online, updated templates and documentation that considered Agile and Product Management, and the creation of the IT Investment Review Board and Investment Advisory group.

ITIP organizes the Office of Systems' IT investment decision-making process into four phases: Plan, Select, Control, and Evaluate.

Results

After we started our audit, SSA informed us it was developing a new process for ITIP. For this reason, we discontinued our audit. However, we noted several issues with ITIP that could prevent it from supporting strategic decision-making and allowing the Agency to plan for, manage, and implement IT investments as projected.

Recommendations

We made recommendations to address issues in:

- Process documentation,
- IT Investment Process supporting tools,
- Approval of Agency IT investments,
- The Evaluate phase, and
- Meeting Federal requirements.

We plan to initiate a review of SSA's IT investment processes, including ITIP and projects that are not subject to ITIP requirements. SSA should keep us informed of the progress of its IT Investment Governance Refresh and other decisions it makes for its IT investment processes.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.