

Can GSA help agencies gain efficiencies?

By Lisa Pafe

In 2014, many legislators and pundits hailed the Federal Information Technology Reform Act (FITARA) as the most significant changes to the federal IT procurement system since the [Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996](#).

Bolstered by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance giving agency CIOs more authority for delivering IT on schedule and within budget, agency CIOs are accountable for reporting results through an IT scorecard.

However, at the [May 18 House hearing](#), the [scorecard](#) was dismal. The scorecard reports four key measures of technology reform success:

1. Incremental Development
2. Risk Assessment Transparency
3. IT Portfolio Review Savings, and
4. Data Center Consolidation.

Overall scores of 24 agencies were as follows:

- Zero received an A
- Only one agency received a grade of B
- 22 received grades of C to D, and
- One received an F.

Those are poor grades, and if an IT contractor received such a score, they certainly would not get any repeat business. Sadly, one of the worst grades related to IT Portfolio Review Savings, an area arguably of greatest interest to taxpayers. A stunning 75% of agencies received a grade of F.

The associated Government Accountability Office (GAO) testimony criticized agencies for inefficiently spending “billions of dollars on failed and poorly performing IT investments, which often suffered from ineffective management.” This is disappointing testimony given the fact that the Federal Government plans to spend \$89 billion on IT in FY 2017.

This hearing occurred a couple of weeks after the General Service Administration (GSA) announcement of its third service line: the Technology Transformation Service (TTS). The new service consolidates technology initiatives such as 18F, the Presidential Innovation Fellows program, and the Office of Citizen Services and Innovative Technologies and will likely actively help manage the \$3.1 billion IT modernization fund proposed by the White House. In combination with recent Category Management initiatives, TTS also promises to help agency CIOs drive better outcomes through sharing best practices, in other words, saving time and money.

Will the TTS and Category Management help agencies improve their scorecards? GSA had one of the better scorecard grades (a Satisfactory C). Let's hope they leverage new cross-agency initiatives to help agency CIOs realize their own FITARA goals.

This article was originally published June 7, 2016 in WashingtonTechnology.com.