

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		Number: 3150-002
SUBJECT: IRM Review Program	DATE: January 30, 1989	
	OPI: Planning, Review and Standards Division, Office of Information Resources Management	

1 PURPOSE

This directive establishes Departmental policy, responsibility, and procedure for the Information Resources Management Review Program.

2 CANCELLATION

This directive supersedes DR 3150-1, IRM Review Program, dated June 27, 1985.

3 BACKGROUND

The Office of Information Resources Management (OIRM) provides leadership and management direction to USDA Agencies and Staff Offices through many means, one of which is the IRM Review Program. Good management practices traditionally require reviews sufficient to provide management oversight and policy assurances to top management officers.

Various external factors, not only IRM reviews, affect IRM generally in the Department of Agriculture. Congress, OMB, GSA, and GAO have imposed requirements on IRM. There also arise ad hoc obligations, as, for example, when Congress calls for some special information or assurance. The Department must respond to both kinds of requirements, often with limited resources at the headquarters or agency level.

OIRM leads and guides IRM in the Department, but each agency retains its own mission as its primary responsibility. In recent years OIRM has increasingly delegated to agencies greater authority for obtaining needed IRM technology to support their missions. This greater delegation increases the importance of IRM reviews in assuring compliance with Departmental and external regulations and in assuring good management practices.

The above factors strongly influence the concept and implementation of the IRM review program.

4 POLICY

The Information Resources Management Review Program is divided into two components: the IRM Self-Review Program and the IRM Selective Review Program.

Within any three-year period each Agency and Staff Office shall review all its necessary IRM systems, IRM organizations, and other IRM activities and resources.

The Office of Information Resources Management shall perform IRM Selective Reviews of all major IRM systems, designated Agency IRM organizations, and other USDA IRM resources as required by law, requested by appropriate management, or in the best interest of the Secretary of Agriculture.

5 DEFINITIONS

a Information Resources. All of the data, information, and information facilities, sources, services staff resources, products and systems that are useful to an organization in meeting its information requirement. Information itself is the primary information resource; all other information resources are secondary to it.

b Information Resources Management (IRM). That aspect of general management that deals with the utilization of information and other information resources and is concerned with the acquisition, processing, communication, and retention of information. It embraces and employs specific disciplines such as automated data processing, data administration, software management, telecommunications, office automation, information management, and records and paperwork management; but it extends beyond all of these to include the flow, use, and responsibility for information throughout the organization.

c Selective Review. Review of a USDA agency automated system, or project, or its IRM management. The reviews are performed jointly by OIRM and the agency to produce an assessment of the system and its management.

d Self-Review. An IRM review which an agency conducts on one or more of its IRM systems, organization, or activities.

6 GOALS OF IRM REVIEW PROGRAM

The IRM Review Program exists to:

a Help agencies improve their program delivery. This is the primary working goal, since IRM is meant to support agency programs. IRM regulations and programs come from agency programs.

b Help agencies improve their IRM. This goal assumes that improved IRM will improve program delivery. It also recognizes IRM as a distinct discipline, which is distinguishable from other agency activities.

- c Comply with legislative and other external and internal IRM requirements: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, The Paperwork Reduction Reauthorization Act of 1986, the Computer Security Act of 1987, OMB Circular A-130, and USDA directives. This goal treats compliance as a way of improving IRM, besides simply meeting the external requirements.
- d Allow and foster increased integration of agency IRM into agency mission programs. This depends particularly on agency self-reviews which should occur as by-products of normal agency operations. A self-review can serve as an in-house tool of managers familiar with their agency programs. Managers can cite program benefits achieved by their agency's IRM activities, with consequent enhancement to program efficiency.
- e Provide some feedback on OIRM policies from USDA agencies. Selective reviews give OIRM a closer look at agency IRM than comes from a self-review plan or summary.
- f Coordinate and integrate the IRM Review Program with IRM strategic planning in USDA and provide a common submission date for both the IRM long-range plan and the self-review plan.

7 APPROACH

The OIRM review program divides reviews into two categories. Agency self-reviews belong in the first category. The agency plans and conducts these on its own activities or resources, typically an important IRM system, resource, service or facility. The agency provides OIRM only a summary report of the previous year's self-reviews and a brief self-review plan for the coming three years. Self-reviews belong entirely to the agency, but their objectives serve not only the agency's goals but also the requirements of the Department and oversight agencies.

Agencies schedule self-reviews so as to cycle through all the relevant IRM within the term of years prescribed by regulation. OIRM will continue to provide Departmental guidance on self-reviews.

The program's second category refers to OIRM selective reviews. These are scheduled by OIRM, with agency agreement, normally after a period of preparation. OIRM conducts these reviews itself, with the agency participating. Selective reviews occur for a variety of reasons, but they typically give OIRM more comprehensive IRM insight than comes from a self-review summary. Agencies also gain an outside party's reaction to their efforts. An in-depth review (another form of selective review) can take place when reasons exist for a minute or extended scrutiny of some activity or resource.

Selective reviews do not duplicate the audit function; they are conducted by OIRM in partnership with the agency to provide more direct input to agency management of information resources. These reviews are of short duration, on-site, and collaborative. They bring together IRM policy staffs in the agencies with those in OIRM and provide feedback on OIRM policies. Selective Reviews are joint efforts to provide agencies with recommendations for improvement, maximize use of OIRM's limited resources to validate agencies' management of information resources and assure the Secretary that IRM policy is working as intended.

The above approach allows agencies the autonomy of self-review, and OIRM the flexibility to focus its efforts.

8 RESPONSIBILITIES

- a The Office of Information Resources Management will:
 - (1) Manage the USDA Review Program;
 - (2) Provide guidance to USDA agencies and staff offices concerning IRM reviews;
 - (3) Schedule and conduct with the appropriate agency IRM reviews of selected USDA programs and management activities on behalf of the USDA Senior IRM Official; and,
 - (4) Represent the USDA Senior IRM Official to OMB, GSA, NIST, GAO, OIG and other Federal oversight agencies for Federal review programs.
- b The Agencies and Staff Offices will:
 - (1) Provide to OIRM a three-year schedule of IRM self-reviews the agency will conduct. This schedule should accompany the agency's submission of its Long-Range IRM Plan;
 - (2) Participate, when requested by OIRM, in selective reviews;
 - (3) Conduct IRM self-reviews and provide to OIRM a one-page summary of each by the date prescribed in the self-review planning guidance;
 - (4) Maintain sufficient documentation of IRM self-reviews conducted to substantiate them and respond to requests for self-review information by external oversight agencies.

9 IMPLEMENTATION

- a The provisions of this directive will be effective immediately.
- b The Office of Information Resources Management will issue IRM Self-Review Guidance for the three-year IRM review schedules to be submitted by each agency and staff office as an attachment to its Long-Range IRM Plan. This guidance will advise agencies of specific content, format, media and due date for their IRM Self-Review Schedule, and specify a date for submission of self-review summaries.
- c The first IRM Self-Review Schedule which agencies and staff offices will prepare will cover FY 1990-1992. These schedules will be

submitted to OIRM by July 1989 on the basis of guidance which OIRM will issue.

10 EXEMPTIONS

An Agency Head may request a permanent exemption from the IRM Self-Review Program by applying in writing to the Director, OIRM. The relatively small size of an Agency's IRM program would ordinarily be the only reason for granting such an exemption. If granted, the exemption may be rescinded in the future if the Agency's IRM program changes.

Temporary exemption for one year may be requested as described above if some Agency organizational situation warrants it. If granted, the Agency would resume its IRM self-reviews the following year.

END