Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: SEP 22 2011

From: Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005A)

Subj.: Integrated Project Team (IPT) Guide v2.0 (VAIQ #7150532)

To: See List Below

1. Effective immediately, the Integrated Project Team (IPT) Guide v2.0 is official OIT policy and must be followed by all qualifying projects. The IPT Guide v2.0 provides guidance for establishment, management, roles, and responsibilities of IPTs for VA IT projects.

2. The IPT Guide v2.0 is required for all Project Management Accountability System (PMAS) projects and can be used as a reference for other VA IT projects. This guide must be used in conjunction with ProPath, which contains the processes to be followed and designated artifact formats.

3. I greatly appreciate the continued efforts and contributions of stakeholders, PMs, and IPT members directly involved in the development and review of this guide. As we strive to continually improve project management efficiency and effectiveness, users are invited to provide their operational insights by sending comments and suggested improvements of this guide. Please forward your input and questions to the Program Management Policy, Assessment, and Reporting Office (005E6) via the VA PMAS Policy, Assessment, and Reporting email at: vapmaspar@va.gov.

Stephen W. Warren

Attachment:
Integrated Project Team (IPT) Guide v2.0

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Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Information and Technology

Integrated Project Team (IPT) Guide

Approval for Integrated Project Team (IPT) Guide
The IPT Guide v2.0 is required for all Project Management Accountability System (PMAS) projects and can be used as a reference for other VA Information Technology (IT) projects.

The IPT Guide provides guidance for the establishment, management, roles, and responsibilities of IPTs for all VA IT projects under PMAS. Effective immediately, the IPT Guide v2.0 is official OIT policy and must be followed by all qualifying projects.

This guide was developed using direct input from representatives from the guide's primary target audience, IT Project/Program Managers (PMs) and other IPT members. As we continually strive to improve project management effectiveness, users are invited to provide their operational insights by sending comments and suggested improvements regarding the IPT Guide. Please forward your input and questions to the Program Management Policy, Assessment, and Reporting Office (005E6) via the VA PMAS Policy, Assessment, and Reporting email at: vapmaspar@va.gov.

Approved by:

Stephen W. Warren Date
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology
Department of Veterans Affairs

RECORD OF CHANGES

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	9/17/2010	Initial Version (Replaces A Guide to Plan, Launch and Manage a Project using an Integrated Project Team Framework, v1.2)
1.1	3/2011	Updated Roles resulting from the reorganization
1.2	6/2011	Replace IPRM with OIS
2.0	SEP 22 2011	Updated to improve guidance on membership roles and responsibilities, including how to establish and successfully manage an IPT. Revised format to be consistent with other PMAS guides.

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE.** To update Department of Veterans Affairs guidance issued September 17, 2010.

2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.** This guide sets forth revised roles, responsibilities, and practices for establishing and coordinating IPTs for VA IT projects. The changes include:

   a. Clarification and updated roles and responsibilities of IPT membership, including removal of the Business Sponsor as the IPT Co-Chair
   b. Enhanced guidance on how to establish an IPT
   c. Enhanced guidance on how to successfully manage an IPT
   d. Revised format to be consistent with other PMAS guides

3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.** Assistant Secretary for Information & Technology (005), Architecture, Strategy, and Design (005E), Program Management Policy, Assessment, and Reporting (005E6).

RECISSION

Integrated Project Team (IPT) Guide v1.0, dated September 2010 is rescinded.

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Integrated Project Team (IPT) Guide is to provide guidelines for planning, launching, and managing a project using an IPT framework. This guide provides basic information and constructs to optimize the performance and success of an IPT. All IPT members are the intended audience of this document.

The Project Management Accountability System (PMAS) is a management discipline designed to reduce risks, institute monitoring and reporting discipline, and establish accountability in Information Technology (IT) project development and delivery. The cornerstone of PMAS is to align the customer, project team, vendors, and stakeholders to a single focus: successfully achieving the next increment deliverable, and thus increasing the success rate of IT projects at VA. This cornerstone cannot be achieved without empowered IPT representatives from organizations, disciplines, and functions working on a project to ensure it meets its next PMAS milestone. Each project under PMAS should have a specified project or program level IPT, as appropriate. The same IPT may be asked to govern multiple projects.

2.0 IPT Overview

2.1 IPT Definition

An IPT is a multi-disciplinary team of experts committed to a common purpose, to deliver specified work products and IT solutions that meet business requirements on time and within budget. As with any high performing team, members hold themselves mutually accountable for the success of the effort. Members provide competency-based expertise and advocacy, for their respective areas, throughout all phases of the project's life-cycle. The entire team is collectively responsible for the delivery of work products, as specified by the IPT Charter and committed to by the IPT membership.

The IPT is the basic work unit for product delivery. The IPT does not meet periodically and have minimal involvement until the next meeting. Rather, the IPT works collaboratively on a daily basis to plan, manage, and execute all activities required to deliver a product to the field.

Some key IPT operating principles include:

- **Alignment to leadership priorities.**
  The IPT must support a documented business priority.

- **Effective communication within the team and outside the team.**
  Team members need to have a sense of purpose, clear direction, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, and a respectful environment to foster information sharing and collaboration. As the head of the IPT, it is the responsibility of the Project Manager (PM) to create this environment. Optimally, members of the IPT are co-located to help maximize effective communication and decision making. Outside the team, the IPT must ensure that relevant stakeholders have the information they need, when they need it. Standard project management practices require the project have a series of supporting plans (e.g., Communications, Risk Management, etc.) to ensure the project is successful. (For a complete list of supporting plans see the Project Management Plan template on ProPath: http://vaww.oed.wss.va.gov/process/Library/propath_process_04.pdf). The Communications Plan should contain a strategy for communicating with key stakeholders. Any concern with enhancing communication with key stakeholders should be addressed in the Communications Plan, which is ultimately the responsibility of the PM. A Communications Plan template can be found in ProPath. (See link to ProPath in the reference section).

- **Appropriate participation.**
  A sense of ownership from IPT members is key to the success of the IPT process. The IPT must include competent and qualified team members, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities who consistently participate to ensure the business has appropriate visibility into the PMAS process.

- **Identify, raise, and resolve issues.**
  An IPT should have an established escalation process within the governance of the IPT Charter. The IPT must foster an environment where proactive thinking is encouraged so that issues or potential issues may be identified early. As the chair of the IPT, it is responsibility of the PM to demonstrate and encourage proactive thinking and issue resolution.

2.2 IPT Benefits

The primary benefit of an IPT is to reach optimal decisions in the most efficient manner. As qualified individuals work as a team, the IPT increases the probability of successfully producing a quality product on time, within budget, and to the satisfaction of the user (customer) needs. The IPT makes decisions in light of all legitimate stakeholder considerations.

Under the IPT approach, each team possesses the knowledge to collaboratively identify problems and propose solutions, minimizing the amount of rework that has to be done. When this knowledge is accompanied by the authority to make key product decisions, IPTs can make trade-offs between competing demands and more quickly make design changes, if necessary. A successful IPT must include empowered representatives from organizations, disciplines, and functions that have a stake in the success of a project. The IPT must also include representatives of all interested oversight bodies, so that success criteria are known and managed from project inception throughout its full production life cycle.

2.3 Scope and Context

This guide was developed to help PMs and other IPT members successfully establish and run an IPT. It contains best practices in the areas of team formation (how to establish an IPT) and teamwork (how to effectively run an IPT). This guide also clearly identifies membership roles and responsibilities.

Each project under PMAS must establish an IPT or be assigned to an existing IPT. All projects must comply with the applicable ProPath processes and artifacts. A project is defined as any IT activity that consumes staff hours or non-pay funds for the purpose of creating or obtaining a new or enhanced capability. A project has a start and end date and defined deliverables. This guide does not address process issues within the project lifecycle, as these are best addressed by PMAS and ProPath.

2.4 IPT Characteristics

Successful IPTs function by meeting certain benchmarks such as: successfully integrating different stakeholder organizations, achieving shared accountability within the team, and practicing concurrent engineering.

- Successfully integrating different stakeholder organizations is achieved by creating a shared vision to bring the various organizations together. Each organization provides differing perspectives and skills vital to a common outcome.

- Achieving shared accountability within the team requires a true peer environment where team members are mutually accountable for outcomes and consensus building is essential.
- Practicing concurrent engineering occurs when appropriate disciplines are committed to work interactively to conceive, approve, develop, and implement products that meet pre-determined objectives.

IPTs should meet all of these benchmarks. The following table, shown as Table 1, further articulates important characteristics of IPTs.

IPT Characteristics
Team members demonstrate leadership abilities by being empowered enough to make decisions and mature enough to work toward consensus.
Accountability is at the individual and team level.
Although the team's purpose/direction is externally established/overseen, it can be influenced by the team.
Work products are a collective effort.
The environment allows for open-ended discussions and active problem-solving involving the entire team.
Team members are committed. Team members absent from important meetings may cause serious consequences.
The team discusses, decides, and delegates work assignments to various team members.
Decision making in the IPT reflects buy-in from relevant stakeholders.
Membership includes relevant stakeholders. It is essential that decisions be made in parallel with empowered stakeholders present.

Table 1. IPT Characteristics

3.0 Establishing an IPT

3.1 Membership Requirements

There is a practical limit to the number of IPT members that can effectively build consensus over the kinds of difficult decisions an IPT is required to address. Eight to twelve members are optimal to have sufficient participation in the IPT; however, the IPT Chairperson should carefully determine the number of stakeholders that must be involved based on the workload.

The section below describes the member type and suggested qualifications.

3.1.1 Chairperson

The IPT is chaired by the PM. The qualifications of the Chairperson are highlighted below in Figure 1.

Qualifications of IPT Chairperson (IT PM)

- Possess excellent oral and written communication skills
- Be able to lead
- Be able to build consensus through collaboration
- Demonstrate Project Management skills
- Be able to manage external relationships
- Demonstrate team building and engagement skills
- Be inclusive
- Be decisive
- Demonstrate time management skills
- Effectively elevate/delegate decisions
- Be committed to the success of the IPT

Figure 1. Qualifications of IPT Chairperson (IT PM)

3.1.2 Members

Each IPT is comprised of empowered members who are able to make binding decisions for the organizations they represent. IPT members cannot be expected to have the breadth of knowledge and experience of their leadership in all cases. However, they are expected to be in frequent communication with their leadership, thus ensuring their advice to the PM is sound and will not be changed later, barring unforeseen circumstances or new information.

Decisions reached in the IPT are binding, except in rare cases when new information comes to light after agreements have been reached, and where new information is significant enough (e.g., default of a prime contractor) to warrant a review of prior decisions. IPT processes are assessed for improvement each time a decision is overturned by higher authority. Multiple occurrences result in

reassignment of one or more IPT members. The qualifications of IPT members are highlighted below in Figure 2.

Qualifications of IPT Members

- Possess current technical or functional expertise in their areas
- Knowledgeable in the missions and organizations they represent
- Open-minded
- Team players; committed to the success of the IPT
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Empowered to make binding decisions on behalf of their organization

Figure 2. Qualifications of IPT Members

Each IPT member has a designated "back up," with comparable skills/expertise, who can participate on the IPT in the event of the member's absence and make decisions when necessary. To the extent possible, it is important to strive for continuity and consistency of the core team members.

3.1.3 Domain Subject Matter Experts

A domain subject matter expert (SME) is an individual who is an expert in a particular area or topic, such as engineering, process management (ProPath), operations, etc. These individuals provide specialty knowledge and points of view which are vital to IPT planning and decision making. Members serving as SMEs and in independent oversight roles are as equally important to the IPT as other IPT members.

3.2 Team Composition

The following table, shown as Table 2, provides an example IPT composition with the applicable contact organization. In some cases, a member may serve more than one role. For example, in the absence of an Implementation Manager, the PM may serve in this capacity. The Product Quality Assurance/Tester (PQA) provides knowledge and expertise in all areas of testing. Supporting the PQA are the subject matter or domain experts from the various testing communities. Appendix B provides a summary of the roles of each of the members listed in the table.

IPT Members	Contact
Chairperson, PM	Applicable OIT Office of Responsibility (OOR)
Business Sponsor	Applicable VA Administration or VA Central Office staff office

Business IT Liaison	Enterprise Systems Management (ESM), Office of Business Process Integration (OBPI), NCA Business Representatives
Product Manager	Mail group – Architecture, Strategy, and Design
Service Delivery and Engineering (SDE) PM	Mail group – VA IT SDE Requests
Implementation Manager	Applicable OIT OOR
Risk Manager	Applicable OIT OOR
IT Resource Management (ITRM)	ITRM
Process Engineer	Mail group - Process Management Service
Training Manager	Mail group - VA IT Training Requests
Domain Subject Matter Experts	Varies
Enterprise Architect	Mail group - Enterprise Architecture (enterprise@va.gov)
Product Quality Assurance/Tester	Applicable OIT OOR
Functional Analyst	Applicable OIT OOR
Privacy Officer	Applicable OOR
Information Security Officer (ISO)	Mail group – VAFSSISOREQUESTS@va.gov
Security Engineer	Mail group - LeadSecurityEngineer@va.gov
Office of Acquisition and Logistics (OAL) Representative	Executive Director of the Technology Acquisition Center (TAC) Mail group – TAC@VA.GOV
Office of General Counsel (OGC) Representative	Assistant General Counsel
Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR)	Applicable OIT OOR
Recorder	Applicable OIT OOR/Program Asset/Contractor
Facilitator	Applicable OIT OOR/Program Asset/Contractor
Health Product Support Release Coordinator	Mail group – 005QD3 Product Support Managers
Systems Quality Assurance Service (SQAS)	Mail group – AAC 043B SQAS IV&V

Table 2. IPT Composition

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

This section describes key roles and responsibilities of IPT members, as well as, lead OIT and VA participants.

4.1 Accountable Information Technology (IT) Executive

The Accountable IT Executive (similar to the Secretary's 16 Major Initiative Leads) is a Senior Executive Service (SES) staff member assigned to an IPT to serve as the champion for the effort. This individual is responsible for:

- Establishing decision parameters based on risks at the time of the IPT launch
- Reviewing progress at various high risk gates or milestone reviews
- Ensuring enterprise-level integration
- Resolving problems when applicable.

The IPT escalates issues to the Accountable IT Executive when they fall outside the decision parameters or when concurrence cannot be achieved within the IPT.

4.2 Accountable Assistant Deputy Chief Information Officer (ADCIO)

The Accountable ADCIO is a SES staff member within the OOR of the PM. The ADCIO (or designee) is responsible for:

- Ensuring that an IPT is established for every project
- Resourcing IPTs appropriately and tracking labor hours
- Requisitioning for adequate space
- Budgeting for support of the IPT
- Educating PMs on their responsibilities
- Providing timely and appropriate direction and feedback to the PMs/IPT Chairpersons
- Ensuring that cross-cutting issues, recommendations, and decisions are appropriately escalated and communicated
- Resolving issues as appropriate.

4.3 Project Manager (PM)

The PM is accountable for the project. The PM is responsible for:

- Serving as IPT Chairperson
- Providing leadership, including setting clear goals and expectations for the team and providing clear delineation of member roles and responsibilities
- Evaluating and approving change requests in a timely manner
- Managing the project and delivering expected outcomes on time and within budget
- Requesting IPT representation from key stakeholders
- Ensuring the IPT Charter is created and signed by the OIT CIO or designated representative per the PMAS Guide
- Ensuring that all members understand their roles, responsibilities, and IPT "business rules"
- Ensuring that IPT performance goals are established
- Ensuring a collaborative work environment whereby all IPT members are kept informed of plans, issues, actions, risks and risk mitigation strategies, assumptions, lessons learned, and decisions

- Posting and sharing IPT work products in the PM database
- Leading work sessions
- Ensuring that members understand their roles regarding IPT artifacts
- Identifying the interfaces and/or dependencies with other projects
- Reviewing and approving the Project Management Plan, which includes tasks, resources, schedules, and dependencies
- Recognizing and awarding team and individual successes
- Disbanding the IPT when requirements are fulfilled and accepted by business community and senior leaders
- Executing in accordance with ProPath processes
- Communicating with other IPTs to ensure knowledge and information is shared across OIT and the agency.

4.4 Business Sponsor

The Business Sponsor is responsible for:

- Providing leadership and critical thinking
- Providing, accepting, and communicating business requirements for the project to the project team
- Monitoring and approving project changes such as scope, cost, and schedule
- Approving and signing off on increment deliverables
- Requesting IPT representation from key stakeholders
- Ensuring that IPT performance goals are established
- Ensuring a collaborative work environment in which all IPT members are kept informed of plans, issues, actions, risks and risk mitigation strategies, assumptions, lessons learned, and decisions
- Leading work sessions when appropriate
- Identifying the interfaces and/or dependencies with other projects.

4.5 Members

Members are responsible for:

- Participating on a full-time basis.
- Being empowered to make binding decisions on behalf of their constituency's leadership
- Ensuring that their representative organization is appraised of IPT issues, actions, risks, risk mitigation strategies, assumptions and decisions; and providing feedback to the IPT
- Ensuring that the designated "back up" representative is well apprised of IPT agenda, issues, and decisions
- Advocating for the success of the project
- Voicing their constituency's position on issues appropriate to the IPT's area of responsibility
- Communicating face-to-face whenever possible.

5.0 Governance Structure

5.1 Decision Resolution

Each IPT is assigned an Accountable IT Executive. The IPT escalates issues to this individual for guidance or decisions when they cannot be resolved by the IPT. For trade-off decisions that impact the business capability or schedule across IPTs, the Accountable IT Executive involves customer leadership above the Business Sponsor level in the decision making process. Having established the decision parameters for the IPT, the Accountable IT Executive reviews high risk decisions at certain gates or milestones before they are finalized. These decision points are:

- Approval of Project Plan
- Selection of Design/Data Architecture
- Determination of Acquisition Strategy
- Review of Project Quality Assurance Plans (Testing)

The IPT follows PMAS, ProPath, Enterprise Architecture, Information Assurance, Change Management, Configuration Management, Release Management, and Lifecycle Management policies and procedures established by OIT, Product Development (PD), and Service Delivery and Engineering (SDE).

5.2 Resource and Operational Issues Resolution

In order to address unresolved resource or operational issues associated with IPTs, issues can be presented before one of two Senior Executive forums. OIT internal issues are presented at the Initiative Resource meeting. Issues requiring resolution from organizations or assets external to OIT are presented at the Transformation Synchronization meeting.

5.3 Red Flag Process

The PM may use the PMAS Red Flag process to raise IPT issues as necessary. Anyone associated with the project is expected to issue Red Flags in a timely manner in order to provide management visibility and the opportunity for a timely resolution. A description of the Red Flag process is available in the PMAS Guide (Section 2.4.5).

5.4 Working Integrated Project Teams (WIPTs)

IPTs may establish Working Integrated Project Teams (WIPTs) to work on specific topics and focus areas. For example, the IPT may determine that there is a need for a security solution which requires SMEs working with the Security Engineer to resolve. The WIPTs are not chartered and report directly to the IPT.

6.0 Considerations in Planning, Launching, and Managing IPTs

PMAS requires that all projects have an operational IPT. The Program Executive Officer, working with PMs, determines how many IPTs are needed and how they are structured. In some instances, it may make sense to "bundle" more than one project under a single IPT, particularly if they have similar business requirements and/or proposed technical solutions or dependencies. In other instances, a project may be sufficiently large in scope and dollar value that it has its own IPT. In this later case, the project may also be a program, such as Chapter 33.

The following models, shown as Figure 3, illustrate how IPTs may be structured around a particular program or set of projects.

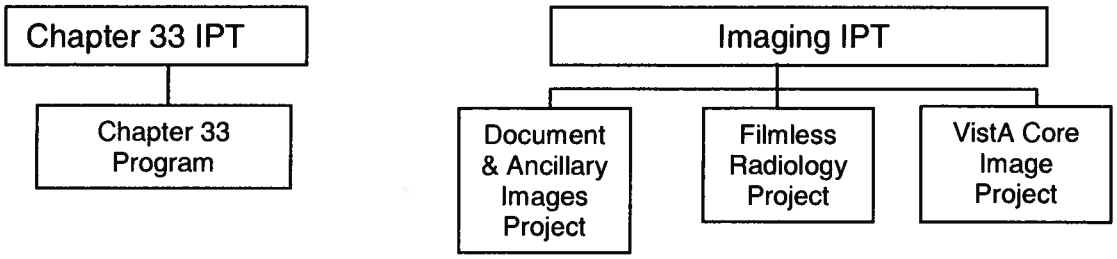

Figure 3. Structuring of IPTs Around Program or Projects (Sample)

6.1 Planning

The following checklist, shown as Figure 4, includes key activities required in preparing to plan for an IPT. Details of the process and artifacts associated with planning are found in ProPath. It is the responsibility of the PM to complete the listed activities.

Steps	Checklist for Planning an IPT	√
1	Request assignment of an Accountable IT Executive to the ADCIO PM through the appropriate OOR	
2	Develop an IPT Charter consisting of: Need, purpose, and scope statement Outcomes, outputs, and performance Authority Key external processes Key stakeholders Membership (IPT Roles Matrix) IPT functions Decision process Meeting management Deliverables	

Steps	Checklist for Planning an IPT	√
	Charter Expiration Approval/Signatures	
3	Request assignment of members from key stakeholders	
4	Develop an indoctrination plan for IPT members	
5	Secure work space for team members	
6	Develop objectives and plans for launch of the IPT	
7	Schedule a face-to-face kick off meeting to include sending invitations, arranging location, scheduling audio/video conferencing	
8	Establish daily work routines and assignments	

Figure 4. Checklist for Planning an IPT

6.1.1 Assigning an Accountable IT Executive

The PM requests, through their OOR and ADCIO, an Accountable IT Executive from the OIT CIO when planning to stand up an IPT. The Accountable IT Executive may be assigned from any of the OIT executive organizations.

6.1.2 Developing an IPT Charter

Development of an IPT Charter must be done early in the IPT planning process. Appendix B provides a synopsis of what is included in the Charter. A link to a Charter template is provided in Appendix A. The IPT Charter is prepared by the PM during the planning phase.

6.1.3 Requesting Member Participation

To obtain IPT membership the PM uses the procedures provided by the appropriate OOR or through the Major Initiative IPT. The PM should refer to Table 2 as a guide for selecting IPT participants. Table 2 also provides appropriate contact information which the PM may use to discuss membership needs with others in the organization before initiating a formal request for members.

OIT management must respond to the request within 3 business days and either provide the necessary resource, indicate that the resource is not available, or indicate that they do not think this kind of resource is needed on the IPT.

If the PM does not believe their request for membership has been adequately addressed/resolved, the PM follows the Obtaining IPT Membership Process in the PMAS Guide (Section B.9).

In the future, an OIT IPT membership coordination website will be provided. Until the OIT IPT membership coordination website is available, the PM should follow the procedures identified above for requesting IPT member participation.

6.1.4 Training/Indoctrination of IPT Members

Preparing a Training or Indoctrination Plan for IPT members is critical to the success of the IPT. Extensive knowledge and research suggests that taking the time, early on, to educate the IPT members on IPT best practices, roles, and internal IPT processes pays off greatly in the long run. All IPT members must understand the unique purpose of an IPT and how the IPT is supposed to function.

Aside from the general training on how an IPT functions, there may also be a need to train on skills specific to tasks. For example, if the IPT is expected to prepare funding requests and contractual documents, the entire team may need at least a basic understanding of acquisition policies and procedures. The PM should work with the Contracting Officer early in the IPT planning stage to ensure all contracting and acquisition policies are met. IPTs can reference ProPath for an understanding of contracting and acquisition basics.

Another example of a potential training need is a basic understanding of the processes documented in ProPath. IPT Workshops and other training materials are available by contacting the ADCIO PM or Director of Quality and Administration in PD.

6.1.5 Work Space

It is the responsibility of the PM, working through the OOR, to request adequate co-located space for all IPT members. A collaborative environment which allows for thoughtful planning, communication, and deliberations is highly recommended.

If co-located space is limited or not possible, periodic "face-time" for IPT members who are not co-located is recommended. In addition, liberal on-line meeting and collaboration support systems (e.g., VANTS, LiveMeeting, and Office Communicator) should be used to achieve full collaboration among IPT members who are not co-located.

6.1.6 Special Instructions

The section below lists special instructions related to planning an IPT.

6.1.6.1 Service Delivery and Engineering (SDE) Services to Projects Managed by PD or Other Entities

- To obtain SDE services, the PM submits a request to the mail group VA IT SDE Requests. Requests are tracked and managed in the SDE Intake System.
- The SDE Program Administration Office (PAO) assigns a SDE PM to collaborate with the Program/Project Manager on project planning for infrastructure engineering, capacity planning, testing, release, deployment, and operations activities. The SDE PAO PM provides reach-back coordination with domain owners within SDE and coordinates the SDE activities in support of the project.

6.1.6.2 Section 508 Compliance

- A Section 508 Compliance Engineer assists the project team with creating a compliant product. Section 508 domain experts assist with a wide variety of

Section 508-related functions to include team training, determining requirements, legal questions, technical issues, process liaison, and product evaluations and certification.

6.1.6.3 Veterans Health Administration

- Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Employee Education System (EES) IT National Training and Education Office provides support to IT initiatives. The education PM coordinates with the project team in the development of the project training plan. Forward requests for training support to the VA IT Training Requests mail group.
- The Enterprise Systems Management Office provides suggestions for IPT membership from the Office of Health Information (OHI) in such specialized knowledge areas as Privacy, Security, Patient Safety, etc. Forward requests for OHI support to the VHA 10P7S ESM Triage mail group.

6.1.6.4 Systems Quality Assurance Service (SQAS)

- As an oversight activity, SQAS provides independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) consisting of Systems Integration Testing and a full range of Quality Assurance services. These activities help ensure the integrity of VA systems and compliance with applicable guidance such as PMAS and other governing directives. An SQAS team member serves on the IPT for those projects in which IV&V services are being provided by SQAS or the systems fall under the purview of the Chief Financial Officer.
- SQAS was realigned from the Office of Management to OIT in October 2006. SQAS continues to provide IV&V for financial applications under the purview of the Chief Financial Officer, their interfaces, and related systems. These include the Financial Management System, Strategic Asset Management, Personnel Accounting and Integrated Data, Fee Basis, Centralized Administrative Accounting Transaction System, Financial Reporting Data Warehouse, and others. Non-financial systems, such as Veterans Relationship Management are also provided with IV&V services in support of the Secretary's Major Initiative or as directed by OIT management.

6.1.6.5 Contractor Involvement

- Contractors who provide program and/or administrative support may participate on an IPT. Their role is to: perform administrative functions; recommend suggestions for improvement; provide advice on best practices and solutions; research various topics; serve as SMEs; and provide white papers and/or briefings. Under no circumstances should contractors make decisions on behalf of the government or commit resources. Attention must be paid to avoid situations where conflicts of interest may arise. Contractors should be excused during discussions that are acquisition sensitive, particularly if there is a chance that they may be bidding on future work efforts. Contractors are excused if their existing contract or replacement contract is being discussed. When product development is contractor-based, a contractor will be an IPT member.

6.2 Launching

An IPT does not meet periodically; rather, an IPT has daily work routines where members work closely with each other and the PM to produce a viable product as defined by business requirements. Co-location of all members is preferable as it facilitates frequent and timely communication, problem-solving, and decision-making.

The following checklist, shown as Figure 5, includes key activities required to launch an IPT.

Steps	Checklist for Launching an IPT	√
1	Agree to working ground rules, consisting of: • Frequency and length of sessions • Read-aheads and agendas provided 48 hours in advance • Documentation of actions, discussions, and decisions • Location/access/distribution of project artifacts • Attendance/Absences • Cell phone and Blackberry courtesies • Change Management • Use of existing guidance, standards and templates (e.g., ProPath) • Communication mechanisms (e.g., Live Meetings, SharePoint, email, etc.)	
2	Review, sign, and recommend approval of IPT Charter	
3	Set expectations and common goals	
4	Establish IPT measures of success	
5	Understand roles and responsibilities of everyone, to include roles/responsibilities for production and approval of artifacts	
6	Decide on decision making process	
7	Determine conflict resolution and escalation process	
8	Establish a 3 month rolling IPT calendar of events	
9	Capture contact information of all members to include back up representatives	

Figure 5. Checklist for Launching an IPT

6.2.1 Launching Requirements

The PM ensures that the following requirements are met when launching an IPT:

- All IPT members receive training or indoctrination regarding the purpose and operations of IPTs. It is preferable that training or indoctrination be conducted just prior to launching the IPT.
- All members participate in the launch or kick off of the IPT in person. This gives the team the opportunity to meet each other and begin to focus entirely on the specified effort, establish business rules, and allow them to fully engage.

- Daily routines and work assignments are established at the time of launch.
- All members have the adequate space and equipment necessary to successfully perform their work.
- An email message is sent advising all IPT members of the launch meeting details.
- ***NOTE:*** *It is highly recommended that these meetings are held in two hour increments over several days to make sure all necessary information is thoroughly covered.*
- WIPTs are established when specific work products are needed by the IPT. WIPTs meet outside the IPT time and have a lead assigned to them. WIPTs also bring work products to the IPT for status and final disposition.
- If required, a facilitator is scheduled well in advance so that the facilitator can adequately prepare for the IPT.
- The IPT utilizes ProPath as the official site for related artifacts and processes. All artifacts required for delivering a product to the field are detailed in ProPath.
- All members know their role and level of participation regarding the IPT artifacts.
- All IPT members have reviewed each artifact from their perspective, even though there are only certain signatures required for final artifact approval. Refer to the artifact's Approval Signature page (in most cases Appendix A of the artifact) to identify who is responsible for signing.
- ***NOTE:*** *Process Management Service owns the versioning of all artifacts. Therefore, removing or changing approvals without direction from Process Management is prohibited.*
- An IPT Recorder or Administrative Assistant (from the program management organization or contractor support) is assigned to ensure that:
  - The IPT meetings are scheduled well in advance
  - Members are notified via email
  - Audio/Video support is scheduled
  - Briefers are notified and confirmed
  - Minutes, to include action items, decisions, and lessons learned from the previous meeting, along with the agenda, and read-aheads for the upcoming meeting are sent to all members
  - All supporting artifacts are available to members
  - Room is prepared and audio/visual connections work.
- The following are additional special considerations for launching IPTs:
- Setting expectations is important so that all members have a clear understanding of why they are there, what is expected of them, how business is conducted, and who is responsible for what. Things to consider in setting expectations are establishing common goals, use of the WIPTs, acceptable and unacceptable individual and group behaviors, open communication channels, escalation of issues or unresolved problems, determining decision making process, and managing disagreements.
- During the kick-off, it is important to establish a goal of 100% participation of the members. It is equally imperative for all members to hear the ideas and experiences of other team members in order to apply that expertise to the effort.
- Care must be taken to set and keep to schedules.

- Establish a 3-month rolling calendar of IPT planned meetings to ensure that members block times on their calendars.
- The Chairperson should use flexible development methods and problem solving and decision-making tools to focus the discussion.
- Templates are available in ProPath (see reference section) for an IPT Agenda and Minutes.

6.3 Managing

The PM is expected to manage the project based on the latest PMAS guidelines, ProPath process descriptions, flexible development methods, and industry best IT practices. Effective use of resources and assigned staff is critical to the success of the project. It is anticipated that over the life of the project, the extent of member participation may vary. Throughout the process the PM must use caution to ensure decisions are made with due diligence and participation by pertinent members. Of equal importance, the **PM must collaborate horizontally, that is, with other peer IPTs**, not only with the IPT that he/she chairs. These peer IPTs may influence the design of the IPT's product and its implementation, may interface to the IPT's product, and/or are dependent upon the IPT's product and items implementation.

The following checklist, shown as Figure 6, includes key activities required to manage IPTs.

Steps	Checklist for Managing an IPT	√
1	Ensure approval of IPT Charter	
2	Execute the vision, mission, goals, and objectives as defined by the IPT Charter and business requirements	
3	Provide a high-level review of program structure and roles and responsibilities	
4	Provide an in-depth review of the business owner's requirements and reengineered business processes	
5	Review and discuss the assumptions, work breakdown structure, risks, risk mitigation strategies, project management plans, acquisition strategies, software development life cycle, etc.	
6	Discuss and assign responsibility for sub-working groups (WIPTs) and provide direction on getting feedback and deliverables	
7	Ensure that the Accountable IT Senior Executive at a minimum reviews and approves decisions at the four (4) key gates/milestones	
8	Review, discuss, document, and distribute all assumptions, minutes, artifacts, issues, lessons learned, actions, and decisions	
9	Archive IPT artifacts in the specified OIT Repositories	
10	Compare IPT plan versus actual	

Steps	Checklist for Managing an IPT	√
11	Update Plans	
12	Recognize and award team members for success	
13	Address and communicate specific PM dependencies (e.g., interaction with other IPT activities, PMs, product development, implementation, and resourcing)	

Figure 6. Checklist for Managing an IPT

Reviews are conducted early in the management phase to establish a common understanding of the baseline from which change can be managed and to prioritize work efforts moving forward.

APPENDIX A. References and Related Links

- PD Change Control process
  http://vaww.oed.wss.va.gov/process/Library/change_control_process_guide.doc
- PMAS Guide
  http://vaww.oed.portal.va.gov/pmas/documents/pmas_guide.pdf
- Integrated Project Team Agenda and Minutes Template
  http://vaww.oed.wss.va.gov/process/Library/integrated_project_team_kick-off_meeting_agenda_and_minutes_template.doc
- IPT Charter
  http://vaww.oed.wss.va.gov/process/Library/integrated_project_team_charter_template.doc
- ProPath
  http://vaww.oed.oit.va.gov/process/propath

APPENDIX B. Roles of IPT Members

Member	Role Description
Accountable IT Executive (OIT)	SES assigned to serve as the champion of the effort. Oversees, reviews, and approves IPT decisions and efforts at high risk milestones. Resolves IPT escalated issues. This role is similar to the Secretary's Major Initiative Lead.
Accountable Assistant Deputy CIO	SES within the OOR of the PM. Ensures IPTs are established, resourced, and budgeted. Provides timely and appropriate direction and feedback to IPT Chairperson. Resolves issues as appropriate.
Project Manager	Serves as IPT Chair. Manages the project, IPT workflow and delivers expected outcomes on time and within budget. Leads and coordinates all activities associated with designing, developing, and testing the product. Orchestrates the detailed technical work and plans on the project, including development, 508 compliance, quality assurance, and user documentation. In absence of Implementation and Risk Manager fills these roles as well.
Business Sponsor	Publishes policies and procedural guidance based on business process reengineering analyses. Sets project requirements, monitors and approves changes. Accepts project milestone deliverables. Signs off on all project requirements. Approves and signs off on increment deliverables and customer acceptance form. Determines business benefits from product implementation.
Business IT Liaison	Validates that project plans are consistent with business process reengineering policies and procedures. Identifies variances and issues. Resolves issues through the IPT. Interacts with end users throughout the project – walks them through prototype, demonstrates new releases, and elicits feedback from users. Complements the Product Manager.
Product Manager	Plans for and manages the life cycle of the product at the business level. Integrates the project work at the business level to include forecasting, marketing, end-user support, and cut-over to new product. Assesses user satisfaction once product is deployed.

Member	Role Description
Service Delivery & Engineering PM	Collaborates with the PD Program/Project Manager on project planning for infrastructure engineering, capacity planning, testing, release, deployment, and operations activities. Provides reach-back coordination with domain owners within SDE and coordinates the SDE activities in support of the project.
SW Maintenance Manager	Plans for and manages the maintenance of the product software when fielded.
Implementation Manager (PD)	Principal author of Implementation Plan. Serves as expert on all aspects associated with executing the Implementation Plan.
Risk Manager (PD)	Evaluates all aspects of the project from a risk perspective. Works with IPT members to identify risks and define mitigation strategies. Tracks risks to closure.
IT Resource Management	Ensures project funding is available and alerts ITRM if project needs more funds.
Process Engineer	Evaluates, identifies, and reports variance from established processes in ProPath. Monitors to ensure compliance.
Training Manager	Develops and implements the Training Plan. Integrates training activities with other on-going field and user activities. Measures the effectiveness of training in the field. Captures lessons learned.
Domain Subject Matter Expert	Authoritative source to the IPT in their area of expertise such as finance, budget, enterprise strategy, technologies, etc.
Enterprise Architect (OIT)	Approves project's plans and technical solutions to ensure alignment with OIT operational (business), data, technical, and system architectures.
Product Quality Assurance/Testers (PD)	Plans and manages test activities, creates detailed test plans, performs tests and reports results. Sets and manages realistic test environments.
Functional Analyst (PD)	Breaks down high level business requirements and business rules into understandable specifications for use by the software developers. Contributes during development, testing, and implementation to ensure business requirements are being met.

Member	Role Description
Privacy Officer	Evaluates and validates that plans and technical solutions meet privacy requirements when deployed to the field. Prepares field site for product deployment from a privacy perspective. Contributes to authoring security plans and design documents. Provides information on data privacy from a business perspective.
Information Security Officer (Field)	Provides information security requirements and validates that technical solutions adhere to such requirements when deployed to the field. Communicates with Field Security Service management and field ISOs for product deployment. Contributes to the creation of security artifacts.
Security Engineer	Authors the Security Plan and related documents. Evaluates and validates that plans and technical solutions meet information security requirements. Works closely with developers, testers, and systems engineers to ensure that the product meets all information security specifications.
Office of Acquisition & Logistics Representative	Evaluates and validates that project documentation and technical solutions meet acquisition regulations. Approves contract related actions for the IPT.
Office of General Counsel Representative	Evaluates and validates that project documentation and technical solutions meet statutory requirements. Approves all legal agreements and documents.
Contracting Officer Technical Representative	Authors project contract documents. Evaluates vendor contract documents such as proposals. Receives, accepts, or rejects all contract deliverables. Seeks definitive guidance from the Contracting Officer. Single project point of contact for vendor. Authorizes payment to vendor.
Health Product Support Release Coordinator	Confirms product and documentation have met requirements for support as a deployed Class I application. This is done prior to the product approval by the Release Manager.

Member	Role Description
Systems Quality Assurance Service	Performs Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V). Includes Software Quality Assurance reviews and Systems Integration Testing. Ensures software solutions satisfy defined requirements, applicable standards, and users' expectations. Involved in all project System Development Life Cycle phase activities from Planning and Acquisition to Operations and Maintenance.

APPENDIX C. The Core Elements of the IPT Charter

1) **Need, Purpose, and Scope** – The purpose of the IPT is clearly stated, including the background and need. Boundaries between what is and is not included in the IPT are stated, particularly with regard to other organizational bodies with potential overlapping work. This includes clarifying what deliverables are required and when the work of the IPT is to be concluded.

2) **Outcomes, Outputs, and Performance** – The specific IPT outcomes, outputs, and performance metrics (agile/scrum metrics) are stated, along with how they are measured and the specific standards and policies that apply.

3) **Authority** – The scope and authority of the IPTs to make unilateral decisions is articulated. Where and how to elevate decisions is discussed. This part of the Charter goes into detail about what specific kinds of decisions are elevated to the Accountable IT Executive or other governing bodies.

4) **Key External Processes** – This section addresses only those processes that extend beyond the internal functioning of the IPT. Internal processes are defined by the IPT.
   a) Oversight – How often the IPT reports progress in the PM Database.
   b) Interface with Key External Processes – A description of how the IPT interfaces with the most important of the external processes with which it needs to work. For example, on interoperable projects with the Department of Defense (DoD), consideration is given on how the IPT collaborates and works with DoD to be mutually successful.

5) **Key Stakeholders** – The IPT develops and maintains a list of key stakeholders. This list is critical when disseminating communications to appropriate stakeholders.

6) **Membership (IPT Roles Matrix)** – Chairperson and members roles and responsibilities are described as well as a list of names and contact information for back up representatives.

7) **IPT Functions** – Key functions of the IPT are listed. For example, the function of the IPT is to ensure integration of all activities across the OIT organization, business communities and others over the life cycle of the project.

8) **Workforce Management** – A description of how the workforce is managed is noted.

9) **Decision Process** – The IPT Charter states explicitly how decisions are reached.

10) **Deliverables** – List the deliverables which are due at the conclusion of the IPT as agreed to by leadership, particularly the Overarching IPT OIPT.

11) **Charter Expiration** – Provide the date when the IPT Charter expires or is due for renewal.

12) **Coordinating Signatures** – Signature of the IPT Chairperson and all members are required.

13) **Approval Signatures** – Accountable IT Executive and OIT CIO or designee.