Title of Nomination: GA's IT Strategic Planning
Project/System Manager: Shawn Whitney
Title: Executive Staff Analyst
Agency: Georgia Technology Authority
Department: Strategic Planning
Address: 100 Peachtree Street, Suite 2300 -
City: Atlanta
State: GA
Zip: 30303-3404
Phone: 404-463-2904
Fax: 404-463-2370
Email: swhitney@gagta.com
CATEGORY: State_IT_Management_Initiatives
Person Nominating (if different):
Title:
Address:
City:
State: AL
Zip:
Phone:
Fax:
Email:

Executive Summary

"There is a common misperception that state government is far different from any other business. While there are indeed inherent differences, the fundamental business processes needed to ensure successful day-to-day operations are the same. We need to make good decisions about recruiting, training and deploying our workforce. We need to use technology and information systems in the most efficient way possible. We need to make wise decisions about capital outlay. This comprehensive strategic planning process will help us to do all these things and help us transform the way we do business."

These words from Georgia's Governor Roy E. Barnes to state agency leadership in January 2001 introduced executive support of planning for Information Technology (IT) resources in Georgia. The commitment to planning shown by the governor's office took courage and vision. Strategic planning is often problematic for government, since the culture is to think in four-year cycles. Further, it can be difficult to gain leadership support for a process that may not yield specific benefits, like cost savings, until years in the future. However, Georgia's leaders realized that the planning efforts of state agencies would result in dramatic savings as well as improved operations due to vision-focused decision-making based on desired outcomes.

By the time Gov. Barnes made these comments in early 2001, the newly created Georgia Technology Authority (GTA), the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) and the Georgia Merit System (GMS) had jointly completed the first statewide consolidated planning methodology linking traditional business planning (vision, mission and goals) with IT and workforce planning.

At the state level, the standardization of an IT planning methodology provides GTA with an opportunity to understand and support the Georgia enterprise. The IT planning methodology collects information creating an enterprise view of Georgia government functions and data needs as well as an inventory of the state's current IT portfolio. However, the power and viability of the methodology lies not only in its macro benefits but also in the benefits it provides to each individual agency. It would not be possible for Georgia to move to an enterprise planning approach without each agency also reaping benefits from its plan. Agencies have far greater incentive to systematically plan for IT because they see opportunities for improving their own operations by committing to the planning process.

Many agencies found opportunities to increase efficiency through their IT planning activities. In many instances, regional offices or organizational units were participating in similar functions and creating in isolation the same information to support the function. Upcoming plans for these agencies will include business cases for future IT solutions that facilitate the sharing of information among regions or units, allowing more time and resources to focus on important operational activities.

Planning also revealed that agencies are building future systems that support the same functionality that already exists in legacy systems. This realization has allowed agencies to decide if IT support in non-served functional areas may be more beneficial to their business than additional support of business functions.

Often, IT has been made the responsibility of the agencies' IT departments and not the business owners. Analysis across state agencies in Georgia showed frequent disconnects between the criticality of a future IT project and its relationship to an agency's business objectives. In one agency, four future IT projects noted as "high" priorities to the agency showed no support for a single agency business function. This revelation led the agency to make substantive changes.

The consolidated planning methodology had finally shown the critical link between IT and the accomplishment of vision and mission.

In the immortal words of Yogi Berra, "You got to be careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there." Georgia knows where it's going. Business planning and IT planning are lighting the way toward a bright future.

A. Description of project, including length of time in operation.

Strategic Planning in Georgia

"There is a common misperception that state government is far different from any other business. While there are indeed inherent differences, the fundamental business processes needed to ensure successful day-to-day operations are the same. We need to make good decisions about recruiting, training and deploying our workforce. We need to use technology and information systems in the most efficient way possible. We need to make wise decisions about capital outlay. This comprehensive strategic planning process will help us to do all these things and help us transform the way we do business." Governor Roy E. Barnes, Speaking Notes, State Strategic Planning Conference, January 2001

In 2000, the state of Georgia entered its seventh consecutive year of strategic planning as developed by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB). From its beginning as a legally mandated[1] process, strategic planning has enabled state agencies to describe their mission and vision statements and delineate their goals and objectives.

In July 2000, the newly created Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) began operation, charged by the governor and the General Assembly with the task of setting the direction for the state's use of technology. Included in GTA's mandate was the obligation to obtain information technology (IT) plans from each state agency[2]. During this same year, a separate planning effort was beginning at the Georgia Merit System (GMS), which was given responsibility for assisting each agency with an annual workforce plan according to statewide criteria and guidelines[3].

Recognizing three disparate planning processes being developed, the governor directed OPB, GTA and GMS to design a consolidated planning model for the state. Gov. Barnes issued the first consolidated guidelines to agencies at a kick-off meeting on January 22, 2001.
(Video of the Governor's remarks is available at www.ganet.org/gaplanners)

The IT Strategic Plan Guidelines

Since agencies had been completing plans for OPB since 1993, the foundation of the consolidated plan (mission, vision, goals) was nothing new. However, planning for information technology in a formal way was quite unfamiliar, even though IT was a very large consumer of each agency's resources. The commitment to planning shown by the governor's office and consolidated planning team took courage and vision. Strategic planning is often problematic for government, since the culture is to think in four-year cycles. Further, it can be difficult to gain leadership support for a process that may not yield specific benefits, like cost savings, until years in the future. However, Georgia's leaders realized that the planning efforts of state agencies would result in dramatic savings as well as improved operations due to vision-focused decision-making based on desired outcomes.

To help agencies with the IT portion of their comprehensive strategic plans, GTA developed a methodology based on the identification and analysis of agencies' business functions, subject areas, information needs and IT projects. The methodology uses a matrix analysis approach to look at the relationships among all of the planning "core elements" as well as the strategic goals and objectives. The intent of the methodology is to assist agencies in better understanding their "business objectives" and making informed decisions about allocating their resources in support of business objectives.

Figure 1 illustrates the consolidated strategic planning model developed by the consolidated planning team.

IT Strategic Planning Support

With the governor's endorsement in January 2001, the consolidated planning team began conducting the "Georgia Planning Matters" curriculum and training agencies on the new consolidated methodology. During the spring of 2001, OPB, GTA and GMS as a team conducted strategic planning training sessions for agencies. Approximately 300 state employees attended the sessions, and agency planning coordinators then used the information they learned to educate their own planning teams.

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[1] The Budget Accountability and Planning Act of 1993 (O.C.G.A. 45-12-73 & 175) requires that the Governor, through the Office of Planning and Budget, develop and annually revise a statewide strategic plan.
[2] OCGA 50-29-1
[3] OCGA 45-20-1 (f)

In addition to this training, GTA assigned six planning consultants to assist agencies in their IT planning efforts. To further facilitate the completion of the IT plan, an Excel-based planning template was created by GTA, enabling agencies to spend more time on plan analysis than matrix production. At the same time, the first Georgia planning Web site,

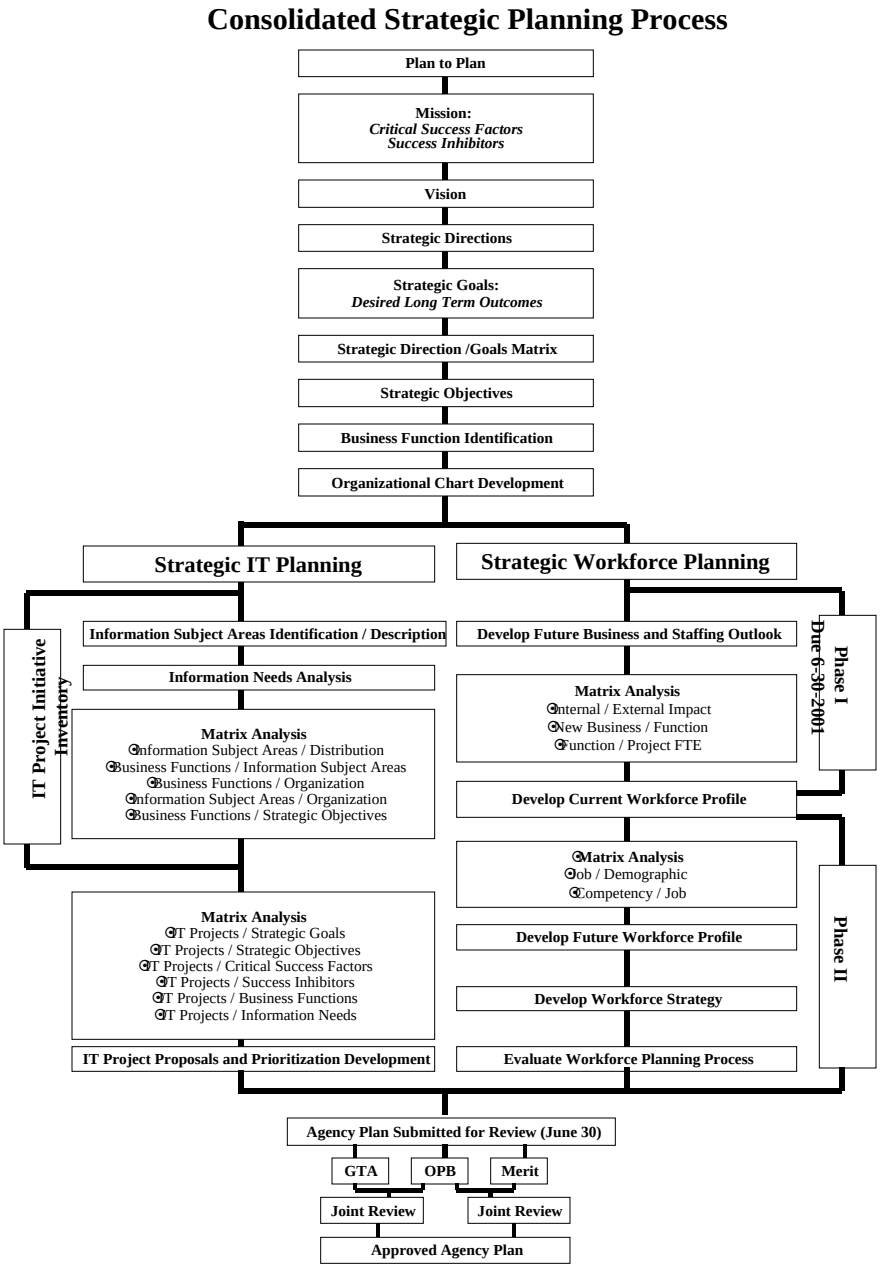

Figure 1. Consolidated Strategic Planning Process

Georgia Planning Matters, was launched. Using the site, agencies could get electronic copies of training curriculums, guidelines and the template used for plan production. Finally, since some agencies wished to procure a vendor to assist in their planning efforts, GTA established a planning contract for qualified vendors and conducted a vendor orientation regarding the planning approach being used.

IT Strategic Plan Review

By June 2001, 60 state agencies had submitted strategic plans to the three agencies. Each agency completed a criteria review checklist indicating compliance with the consolidated planning methodology. In addition, GTA developed a review instrument for making observations about the agency's IT plan, including a comprehensive review of the matrices and opportunities for either further investigation or improvements. The thorough analyses aimed to increase the value of the IT plan to the agency. Analyses for the larger agencies took a planning analyst eight hours to complete and resulted in 10 to 12 pages of detailed information lending support to an agency's planning efforts.

Based on the analyses, GTA then conducted one-to-two-hour consultative feedback sessions with operational and executive leadership from each agency. These sessions were thematically based and included key topics: 1) interaction of the IT plan's core elements, 2) opportunities for sharing resources, 3) observations on prioritization of resources, and 4) IT strategic plan balance. These sessions conducted from December 2001 through May 2002 gave agencies suggestions for improving their next plan submission.

B. Significance to the improvement of the operation of government.

Improved Agency Operations – Finding IT Opportunities

One of the purposes of the IT strategic planning methodology is assisting agencies in finding opportunities for shared IT resources within the organization, reducing possible redundancy in current and future systems and ensuring that IT resources are being expended in the support of business objectives. The process has resulted in improved operations throughout state government:

Opportunities for sharing resources: Many agencies found opportunities to increase efficiency through their matrix analyses. In most instances, regional offices or organizational units were participating in similar functions and creating in isolation the same information to support the function. Future plans for these agencies will include business cases for future IT solutions that facilitate the sharing of information among regions or units, allowing more time to focus on more important operational activities.

Reducing Redundancy in IT: The IT planning methodology requests documentation of both future and legacy IT systems. Matrix analysis has revealed that many times agencies are building future systems that support the same functionality that already exists in legacy systems while neglecting the IT support of functions with no existing IT support. Some agencies were not aware of this duplicative IT support of functions. This realization has allowed agencies to decide if IT support in other non-served functional areas may be more beneficial to their business than additional support of business functions.

IT Should Support Business Objectives: If there were a mantra for the information technology section of the strategic plan, it would be:

"Information technology supports business objectives."

In many organizations, IT has often been made the responsibility of the agencies' IT departments and not the business owners. Analysis across state agencies in Georgia showed frequent disconnects between the criticality of a future IT project and its relationship to an agency's business objectives. In one agency, four future IT projects noted as "high" priorities to the agency showed no support for a single agency business function.

The standardization of an IT planning methodology provides GTA with an opportunity to understand the Georgia enterprise. The IT planning methodology collects information creating an enterprise view of Georgia government functions and data needs as well as an inventory of the state's current IT portfolio. However, the power and viability of the methodology lies not only in its macro benefits but also in the benefits it provides to each individual agency. It would not be possible for GTA to move to an enterprise planning approach without each agency also reaping benefits from its plan. Agencies have far greater incentive to systematically plan for IT because they see opportunities for improving their own operations by committing to the planning process.

In addition, IT planning efforts have promoted a statewide acknowledgement of the Georgia enterprise. Prior to the IT planning process, many agencies did not recognize common interests among their own organizational units; each worked and operated independently. The IT planning methodology clearly shows agencies that it is no longer sound business practice to operate as "siloed" organizational units, each developing its own IT support. The process highlights common functionality across organizational divisions. This micro-enterprise thinking at the agency level validates the possibility that there may be similar opportunities across the Georgia enterprise for sharing resources. Agencies are interested in the opportunities that may be available if the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Audits, and the Office of School Readiness share functionality that could be supported by the same or parts of the same IT solution.

The consolidated strategic planning effort saw a rejuvenation of overall "planning" in state agencies. And for those like Yogi Berra who believe, "You got to be careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there," this emphasis on planning has very positive implications for Georgia government. Some of this rejuvenation was due to the fact that the consolidated planning team had created a methodology linking IT resources and workforce to the accomplishment of vision and mission. Agencies were looking for assistance in "living" the plans they had been creating since 1993. The new methodology assisted in building a bridge from vision to operations. Further, GTA's linking of the IT strategic plan to the approval of new and continued IT expenditures encouraged many agencies to take notice of the planning process now that it had *definite* budgetary implications. Lastly, leadership support for planning is crucial to its survival and success. The governor made planning a focus of many agency executives by endorsing the process as valuable to the state.

C. Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state.

Georgia Enterprise Benefits

GTA uses agency IT plans to support its enterprise-wide goals: 1) launching the state of Georgia government portal, www.georgia.gov; 2) building a world-class telecommunications infrastructure; 3) establishing IT as a reliable utility; and 4) assuring privacy and security with government as a trusted partner. (See www.gta.ga.gov for Georgia's Strategic IT Plan Version 1.0)

- Georgia's Enterprise Architecture Framework uses agencies' IT strategic plans as the foundation for its model.
- Georgia portal architects use IT plans to identify communities of interests among the agencies and design the portal in a way that maximizes the benefit to Georgia's constituency.
- During strategy development for the state's vision of component reuse, the IT plans are used to target reuse efforts that are the most important and prevalent in supporting agency business objectives.
- The Georgia Digital Academy was established by GTA to assist in statewide IT standard and policy development. Future academy sessions will be influenced by the projects documented in IT plans. In addition, in order to participate in an academy session, agencies must have a business case supported by their strategic plan for the project being studied.
- Agency business continuity planners are utilizing the priorities and functionality in the agency's IT strategic plan as a foundation for their planning efforts.
- The Georgia budget guidelines now require that requests for new IT projects include information regarding the project's support of the strategic plan.

D. Return on investment, short-term/long-term payback (include summary calculations). Projects must exhibit measurable operational benefit.

The IT planning requirement and GTA's subsequent analysis of the plans yielded interesting and surprising information about the state of Georgia's agency and enterprise operations. Since you cannot begin to make the most of an opportunity until you realize you might have one, the articulation and observance of these plan findings fosters immediate positive change within an agency's executive office.

- The IT planning methodology's emphasis on matrices gave many agencies a first look at the relationships between business functions, information, strategic objectives and information technology projects. Some of the realities the matrices indicated to agencies were:
    - Lack of functional support for agency objectives.
    - Critical functional support from unexpected activities.
    - Disconnects between an IT project's support of agency goals and the corresponding objectives.

- Proposed and current IT projects that showed little or no support of agency goals or objectives.
- Functional activities having little or no relationship with an agency's strategic objectives.
- Organizational units with the redundant ability to create the same information.

· The IT planning methodology requires an inventory of an agency's IT projects. According to many agencies:
  - The articulation of a complete inventory assisted them in the first comprehensive picture of their IT and the need to prioritize.
  - Prioritizing each project (high, medium, or low) required business owners to put on their "commissioner's" hats to see their projects in context of the entire agency's business objectives.

Twenty-nine agencies manage 99% of the state of Georgia's IT budget. Here are examples from some of these agencies:

The **Department of Revenue (DOR)** knows that technology is crucial to the provision of government services to a state of 8.2 million people. The agency's first IT plan confirmed their business need for 19 modernization projects and indicated opportunities for an additional eight projects in support of their business objectives. Through their IT planning efforts, DOR has seen a shift in staff thinking concerning the ownership of IT. Business owner knowledge of IT has improved greatly, and projects are now approved or disapproved not by the IT department but by a group of operational managers known as the executive steering committee. Recent planning activities facilitated the articulation and approval of a $1 million system rewrite that will generate within one month of implementation the revenue required to pay for its own development.

The **Department of Human Resources (DHR)** is one Georgia's largest agencies, employing more than 18,000 staff statewide providing a diverse array of essential services. Jim Bricker, DHR's planner, states that the IT strategic planning process has helped his agency refine a long-standing IT goal – linking its data systems. "The process has guided us in defining ways to integrate systems to share information to assist our staff and the people we serve," Mr. Bricker says. DHR's planning efforts have assisted the agency in becoming one of the first that will join the Georgia government portal, www.georgia.gov.

The office of the **Secretary of State** completed an extraordinarily thorough analysis of functions and information requirements in their IT plan. This additional effort assisted the agency in identifying duplication of efforts in some of their functional areas. This awareness led the office to add a strategic objective to centralize three functional areas to improve efficiencies.

The **Department of Transportation (DOT),** through diligence in working through the IT planning methodology, has seized the opportunity to understand its business in a different way, functionally. DOT's IT staff, along with the agency's business owners, are now building upon these IT planning insights to develop a cost-effective IT strategy to support similar business needs.

The **Department of Administrative Services (DOAS)** readily shares how the IT planning methodology has improved its IT project prioritization efforts by focusing on mission critical functions and their support. Previously, the agency focused on implementation of several projects it considered valuable. However, the planning methodology revealed to DOAS that these projects were not directly assisting in the achievement of objectives. As a consequence, the agency placed a lower priority on those projects and focused its attention on IT solutions that would actually provide greater support to agency business objectives. The IT planning methodology has assisted DOAS in moving one step closer to its vision.