

2024 - 2026 IT Strategic Plan

Agency: 411 Department of Forestry

Date: 3/29/2024

Current IT State

In this section, describe the high-level strategy the agency will use to manage existing operational IT investments over the next year to 5 years. This section should align with identified Business Requirements for Existing Technology (BReTs). At minimum, please address the following questions in your description of your agency's strategy for managing existing operational IT investments:

Are there existing IT investments that will require additional funding over the next year to 5 years, such as license renewals, re-competition of current IT contracts, or system enhancements required by the Agency Strategic Plan?

If there are systems that will no longer support the agency's business needs, either through poor performance or excessive cost, how does IT leadership in the agency plan to address the issues?

If the agency does not have the staff or funding to meet increasing demand for IT services, how will IT leadership fulfill the requests?

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDof) was established in 1914 to prevent and suppress forest fires and reforest bare lands. More than 100 years later, we still fight wildfires and plant trees, but the agency has grown and evolved to meet the needs of Virginians and the forestry community.

Mission: The agency's mission is to protect and develop healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians.

Vision: A healthy, abundant, diverse forest resource, providing environmental and economic benefits for all Virginians. A forward-thinking agency, backed by solid technology, strong ethics and science that is a national leader in managing and protecting the forest resource. A professional, creative and adaptive workforce, providing exceptional forestry services to our constituents and customers.

Values: In dealing with our customers we believe in:

- Exceeding customer expectations by delivering quality products and services in a response, professional manner.
- Treating customers courteously, honestly and respectfully.
- Actively listening, appreciating, understanding and responding to customer needs.
- Being trustworthy professionals who seek to ensure the integrity of the forest resource.

In working together, we believe in:

- Providing a well-trained, well-equipped, technologically advanced and responsive workforce.
- Communicating in an open, honest, effective manner.
- Being helpful and supportive to one another, demonstrating the spirit of cooperation/teamwork and mutual trust and respect for each other.
- Providing a working environment that fosters quality and creativity, rewards team performance, is challenging and enjoyable.
- Clearly defining, communicating and understanding vision, strategies, goals, objectives, roles and responsibilities.

Current IT staff have the appropriate skill levels to meet current agency technology needs. The agency is committed to ensuring that technology staff are sufficiently trained to support whatever technologies the

agency used in the future. As with other agency staff, IT employees benefit by training to upgrade skills and remain current with emerging technologies and concepts.

Objectives:

Upgrade IFRIS Mission Critical Application:

The most important current initiative is the analysis of the IFRIS application to provide information to determine a path forward for either revision or replacement. IFRIS is a 16 year old system that needs to be transitioned off the old platform into a new one. Currently IFRIS is critical to the agency and is accessed daily by agency staff to carry-out VDOF's core agency functions, as well as support agency administrative functioning. The program data and information stored in IFRIS is critical to successfully meeting the agency's mission to customers. The administrative aspects of the system are also critical to ensuring accurate and complete staff pay and leave accounting. A significant challenge is meeting the demands of a centralized computing environment. The ongoing needs to meet data security requirements assigned to an ISO, as well as strategic plan updates and changes, IT project requirements and other ongoing and ad hoc requirements are significant for any agency, but are more problematic for small agencies with limited staff. The requirements for security, inventory, various system upgrades and changes, and other mandatory requirements are the same for all agencies and are especially difficult for agencies with limited staffing. The assistance provided by both funding and contract personnel to assist with meeting agency IT security compliance is helpful, but there are still significant tasks that fall to the agency to complete. The challenge continues to be trying to meet agency computing needs and keeping up with central agency requirements. We will continue to work with agency management, VITA customer management and DPB staff to address these issues from multiple perspectives.

Statewide Bandwidth Upgrades and Analysis:

Due to increase usage of the network, VDOF is utilizing a majority of its network's bandwidth and will need to increase bandwidth to avoid future network issues and allow for phone/VCE upgrades, especially in our most rural areas. Network equipment is also reaching End of Life. VDOF plans to work with VITA to complete a full bandwidth analysis and kick-off our statewide upgrade project. As our bandwidth is upgraded, VDOF will utilize VITA's SD-WAN technology. Managed software-defined wide area network (SD WAN) enables the seamless connection of multiple networking technologies, creating a consistent user experience by leveraging Ethernet and broadband networks. Adaptive software-defined policies enable intelligent traffic routing that takes into account performance, security requirements, dynamic real-time network conditions and utilizing low cost connections for non-mission-critical applications. SD-WAN allows agencies to control the flow of data and determine the priority level of applications. Lower-priority applications, such as email, get routed to the internet (e.g., broadband). This ensures that performance is not affected along the mission-critical pipeline but keeps data flowing for all users. Using virtualized technology, SD-WAN can help alleviate much of the network management burden.

Better Broadband Availability:

VDOF will be looking statewide at a broadband/bandwidth initiative. In order for this project to be successful, VDOF will leverage VITA approved vendor contracts to extend broadband service to currently unserved areas.

Factors Impacting the Current IT

In this section, the agency will describe the changes in their business environment that will require or mandate changes to the agency's current IT investments. These are requirements and mandates from external sources, such as other agencies or business partners, the agency's customer base, product and service providers, or new federal or state legislation or regulations. The agency must identify the business value of the change, any important deadlines that must be met, and the consequences if the deadlines are not met. In your discussion, be sure to note whether the proposed enhancements are funded or not. If the agency's existing current IT investments will not need enhancement due to requirements or mandates from external sources in the foreseeable future, the agency should enter

the following text rather than leave the Factors Impacting the Current IT section blank

For each mandated change, summarize your agency's response from your Agency Strategic Plan, and is it the opinion of agency IT leadership that the IT portion of the response is adequately funded?

Do the mandated changes effect IT in other Commonwealth agencies, or in other states? If so, how?

There are no known external or internal factors that will require changes to VDOF IT investments. If budget proposals in the Governor's introduced budget are approved, we may be adding more modules to IFRIS. We will need to make sure that we continue to support existing and any new agency programs while we determine next steps for IFRIS or a successor. This means continuing to work with Timmons, for IFRIS maintenance/support, during this period. In looking at a new or revised IFRIS we will be looking at all possibilities including customizable solutions using VITA approved vendors such as ESRI.

IT staffing continues to be a challenge for VDOF. In large part, this is driven by the size and limited resources at the agency's disposal. A significant challenge is meeting the demands of a centralized computing environment. The ongoing needs to meet data security requirements assigned to an ISO, as well as strategic plan updates and changes, IT project requirements and other ongoing and ad hoc requirements are significant for any agency, but are more problematic for small agencies with limited staff. The requirements for security, inventory, various system upgrades and changes, and other mandatory requirements are the same for all agencies and are especially difficult for agencies with limited staffing. The assistance provided by both funding and contract personnel to assist with meeting agency IT security compliance is helpful, but there are still significant tasks that fall to the agency to complete. The challenge continues to be trying to meet agency computing needs and keeping up with central agency requirements. We will continue to work with agency management, VITA customer management and DPB staff to address these issues from multiple perspectives.

Proposed IT Solutions

In this section, describe the high-level strategy the agency will use to initiate new IT investments over the next year to 5 years in support of the agency strategic objectives documented in your Agency Strategic Plan. The agency does not need to consider specific technologies at this time, however, the strategy should identify how the IT implementation will provide business value to the organization. This section should align with identified Business Requirements for New Technology (BRnTs). At minimum, please address the following questions in your description of your agency's strategy for initiating new IT investments:

What are the most important solutions, based on the priority assigned to the requirements by the business sponsors in your agency, and what is the approach to achieving these priority solutions?

If any new IT initiatives will be started in the upcoming budget biennium, is it the opinion of agency IT leadership that it is adequately funded?

Does the agency's current IT staff have the appropriate skill set needed to support future agency technologies? If not, what skill sets need to be acquired?

If the agency will be engaged in multiple new IT initiatives, how will agency IT staff and agency subject matter experts be used across the initiatives?

The most important current initiative is the analysis of the IFRIS application to provide information to determine a path forward for either revision or replacement. Currently IFRIS is critical to the agency and is accessed daily by agency staff to carry-out VDOF's core agency functions, as well as support agency administrative functioning. The program data and information stored in IFRIS is critical to successfully meeting the agency's mission to customers.

As the agency adopts technologies new to the organization we will likely utilize experts in those technologies

to ensure agency staff are using them correctly and most effectively. We will determine whether to use outside expertise or in house resources with a case by case analysis of each circumstance.

IT Strategic Plan Budget Tables

Agency:	411 Department of Forestry			
Date:	3/29/2024			
Current IT Services				
	Costs Year 1		Costs Year 2	
Category	GF	NGF	GF	NGF
Projected Service Fees	\$852,334.36	\$364,136.32	\$877,904.39	\$375,060.41
VITA Infrastructure Changes				
Estimated VITA Infrastructure	\$852,334.36	\$364,136.32	\$877,904.39	\$375,060.41
Specialized Infrastructure	\$34,920.00	\$200,000.00	\$34,920.00	\$200,000.00
Agency IT Staff	\$387,618.00		\$387,618.00	
Non-agency IT Staff	\$48,000.00		\$48,000.00	
Cloud Computing Service				
Other Application Costs	\$75,000.00	\$140,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$140,000.00
Total:	\$1,397,872.36	\$704,136.32	\$1,423,442.39	\$715,060.41
Proposed IT Investments				
	Costs Year 1		Costs Year 2	
Category	GF	NGF	GF	NGF
Major IT Projects:				
Non-Major IT Projects:				
Agency-Level IT Projects:	\$240,000.00		\$240,000.00	
Major Stand Alone IT Procurements:				
Non-Major Stand Alone IT Procurements:				
Agency-Level Stand Alone IT Procurements:				
Procurement Adjustment:				
Total:	\$240,000.00	\$0.00	\$240,000.00	\$0.00
Projected Total IT Budget				

	Costs Year 1		Costs Year 2	
Category	GF	NGF	GF	NGF
Current IT Services	\$1,397,872.36	\$704,136.32	\$1,423,442.39	\$715,060.41
Proposed IT Investments	\$240,000.00	\$0.00	\$240,000.00	\$0.00
Total	\$1,637,872.36	\$704,136.32	\$1,663,442.39	\$715,060.41

Business Requirements For Technology

Agency:	411 Department of Forestry
Date:	3/29/2024
DOF - Security Audit & Security Risk management	
BRT Type:	Business Requirement for Existing Technology
Requested Start:	2/21/2024
Mandate:	Yes
Mission Critical:	Yes
Description:	
The Department of Forestry currently subscribes to the Commonwealth's Centralized Information Security Service and Centralized IT Audit Service and plans to continue using those services.	
DOF IFRIS Upgrade	
BRT Type:	Business Requirement for Existing Technology
Requested Start:	3/13/2024
Mandate:	No
Mission Critical:	Yes
Description:	
iFRIS is an aging system that needs to be transitioned off the old platform into a new one. Analysis is now complete and it is recommended that it be replaced on a new platform.	
DOF SD-WAN Upgrade	
BRT Type:	Business Requirement for Existing Technology
Requested Start:	3/1/2023
Mandate:	Yes
Mission	Yes

Critical:	
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Description:

Configure existing routers to support SD-WAN capability across all agency locations. This approach prepares agency location(s) with the ability to add additional network capabilities (multiprotocol label switching (MPLS), broadband, wireless (i.e., Cradlepoint)) to take advantage of application -aware routing over private and public networks.

Three step process:

Remote internetwork operating system (IOS) software upgrade on the router.

Remote SD-WAN deployment

Circuit deployment as needed

DOF Website Modernization

BRT Type:	Business Requirement for New Technology
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Requested Start:	6/16/2023
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Mandate:	No
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Mission Critical:	Yes
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Description:

The primary objective of the COV Website Modernization and the CMS Virginia.gov projects are to ensure all state sites are on a single common platform and are following required VITA, COV and 508 standards

Commonwealth Projects \geq \$250,000.00

There are no projects for this agency.

Commonwealth Procurements \geq \$250,000.00

There are no stand alone procurements for this agency.