CIOs Claim IT Reporting to OMB is Not Useful for Their Own IT Management

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In a recent GAO study, CIOs claimed that required IT reporting to OMB was not useful to their own IT management. OMB uses the information reported by CIOs with the goal of improving the management, oversight, and transparency of the federal government's IT as a whole. But according to CIOs, reporting efforts on their part are burdensome and not helpful in improving IT management.

OMB requires agencies to routinely report on IT management in five areas:

- IT strategic planning
- Capital planning and investment management
- IT security
- Systems acquisitions, development, and integration
- E-government initiatives

OMB directs agency CIOs to respond to 36 IT management reporting requirements within the five IT management areas. Reporting frequency varies from monthly, quarterly, annually and "as needed" depending on the requirement, with most requiring quarterly or annual reporting.

Agencies report and transmit the information regarding their IT initiatives via the following methods/systems:

- CyberScope – for 5 requirements
- Integrated Data Collection – for 7 requirements
- MAX Portal – for 3 requirements
- Federal IT Dashboard - for 6 requirements
- Agency Websites – for 9 requirements
- Data Point – for 1 requirement
- DHS Continuous Monitoring Dashboard – for 1 requirement
- Federal Data Center Consolidation Initiative Program Management Portal – for 1 requirement
- Meetings with OMB Officials – for 2 requirements
- E-mail to OMB – for additional requirements as needed

CIOs reported that addressing the reporting requirements did not always clearly support departmental priorities and took a significant level of effort to implement. Agencies reported spending approximately $150M to $308M annually to report to OMB, in part due to the frequency, formatting, duplicative elements and differing data collection systems in use.

CIOs identified the following reporting as most useful in managing IT:

- Information Resources Management strategic plan
- Enterprise roadmap
- Exhibit 53
- IT investment performance updates

Although OMB has taken steps to streamline some IT reporting requirements, the efforts do not address additional challenges, such as the use of multiple online tools to report information. If OMB addressed the IT reporting issues identified by CIOs they could make the reporting effort and information gained a more useful tool for IT management at the agency level. GAO recommends that OMB collaborate with CIOs to address proposed reporting improvements and challenges and ensure a common understanding of priority IT reforms.