

Treasury Reprimanded for Erroneous IT Dashboard Reporting

Posted At : May 5, 2015 9:13 AM | Posted By : Angie Petty

Related Categories: Waste, Fraud, Abuse, Treasury, Transparency

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee is scrutinizing federal agencies' IT Dashboard reporting. Treasury is the first agency under fire for discrepancies between IT project information reported to Congress and ratings for the same programs on the IT Dashboard.

On April 20th, Senators Ron Johnson (R-WI) and Tom Carper (D-DE), the chairman and ranking member of the committee, sent Treasury CIO Sonny Bhagowalia a letter requesting explanations for the reporting differences. "Inaccurate or dated information prevents the public from understanding how their tax dollars are being used and inhibits Congress' ability to track the progress of IT projects over time," states [the letter](#).

The IT Dashboard was established by OMB in 2009 to provide the public with performance and risk information regarding federal IT projects. CIOs rate project performance for cost, schedule, and risk on an ongoing basis.

The IRS is also required to report summary level risk assessments to Congress on a quarterly basis for 13 major IT programs. The assessments are based on meetings between the IRS CTO and Deputy CIOs regarding each project's performance in the areas of cost, schedule, scope, risk, technology and organizational readiness.

In the fourth quarter of FY 2014, three IRS projects were cited as "red" and four as "yellow" for cost and schedule variances by the IRS CTO in the report to Congress. The seven projects represent more than \$1.4B in spending for FY 2015. However, the IT Dashboard ratings for these projects show a rating of "green," low risk or moderately low risk for all of FY 2014.

The discovery of these discrepancies follows in the wake of a March GAO report chastising IRS for continued problems with IT project reporting. GAO stated that IRS had made limited progress regarding Congressional reporting on IT projects, and admonished IRS for not fully implementing their prior recommendations regarding cost, schedule and performance reporting for IT projects.

Additionally, GAO reported earlier this month that agency CIOs claim IT reporting to OMB as not useful for their own IT management. This makes me wonder if reporting to the IT Dashboard is viewed as just another item on the CIO "To Do" list rather than a valuable exercise that deserves a high level of attention and effort.

The Senate committee has asked Bhagowalia to explain why there are discrepancies between what was reported to Congress by the IRS CTO and what is reported on the IT Dashboard. Additionally, the committee wants to know the degree to which component CIOs and CTOs are consulted for IT Dashboard ratings, and why none of the 60 major Treasury projects tracked on the dashboard are rated as "red" and only eight rated as "yellow." The Treasury CIO has until May 8th to respond.