

What’s on the department’s IT project plate?

BORDER AND TRANSPORTATION SECURITY DIRECTORATE	<p>PROJECT: Automated Commercial Environment — The Customs and Border Enforcement Division will upgrade customs processing systems. Received \$441 million.</p> <p>MILESTONES: The \$1.3 billion, 15-year program began five years ago under the aegis of the Customs Service. Program managers expect to accomplish Release 4 of ACE in the spring and Release 5 in the fall. The new releases will implement automated truck manifests and electronic customs bonding.</p> <p>RISKS: ACE funding was cut by 29 percent from the administration’s fiscal 2004 request. The General Accounting Office has recommended that DHS conduct additional ACE tests to limit risks.</p>
	<p>PROJECT: Citizenship and Immigration Services Modernization — CIS plans to introduce additional online services to its users. The agency this month began accepting credit card payments for electronically filed applications. Received \$27.5 million.</p> <p>MILESTONES: CIS seeks to deploy electronic filing of additional immigration forms next year.</p> <p>RISKS: Immigration systems face issues such as missing data, overlapping functions and security vulnerabilities.</p>
	<p>PROJECT: U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology — U.S. Visit will track travelers as they enter and leave the country using biometric data collected from visa applicants. Received \$330 million.</p> <p>MILESTONES: DHS next month will begin deploying the first U.S. Visit increment at all international airports and seaports. Officials plan to award an integration contract in May and deploy a more robust system at the 50 largest land ports by December of next year.</p> <p>RISKS: Congressional auditors have characterized U.S. Visit as risky for multiple reasons, ranging from the large and complex scope of the project to program management issues and problems in existing immigration subsystems.</p>
CFO’s OFFICE	<p>PROJECT: Electronically Managing Enterprise Resources for Government Efficiency and Effectiveness — Through Emerge2, DHS will consolidate back-office and financial systems. Funding unknown.</p> <p>MILESTONES: Emerge2 is in the concept stage; CFO officials plan to brief vendors about it this month.</p> <p>RISKS: Merging the back-office financial operations of the department’s agencies is an ambitious IT project facing risks in funding, planning and execution, according to GAO.</p>
CIO’s OFFICE	<p>PROJECT: DHS Infonet — This program provides seed money for regional portals to link emergency response and infrastructure protection agencies and companies. Funding unknown.</p> <p>MILESTONES: The department plans to provide start-up funds for regional networks in Atlanta, Indianapolis and Seattle.</p> <p>RISKS: DHS will have to forge a partnership with law enforcement agencies and state and local agencies to build an effective nationwide net for emergency response.</p>
	<p>PROJECT: Homeland Secure Digital Network — Officials plan to make HSDN the department’s sole network for classified information. Funding unknown.</p> <p>MILESTONES: DHS plans to release a request for proposals for the project within weeks.</p> <p>RISKS: The department faces technology, budget and policy issues as it seeks to integrate the HSDN with other classified networks..</p>

COAST GUARD	<p>PROJECT: Integrated Deepwater System — Multiple command, control, computer, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance projects throughout the Guard are part of a broader program to replace about 100 aging cutters and 200 aircraft. Received \$101.4 million.</p> <p>MILESTONES: Under the 25-year, \$17 billion program, the agency will finish retrofitting older cutters with classified nets in 2004.</p> <p>RISKS: The project has powerful friends in Congress who secured additional fiscal 2004 funding for the project. But funding shortfalls in previous years have delayed Deepwater.</p>
	<p>PROJECT: Security Planning and Integrated Resources for IT — The \$10 billion SPIRIT program will set up 32 contracts that agencies DHS-wide will use to buy IT goods and services. Funding unknown.</p> <p>MILESTONES: The Guard plans to issue an RFP early next month, receive proposals in late February and award a contract in June.</p> <p>RISKS: Vendors have shown a great deal of interest in the Spirit procurement, but the methods of shifting legacy contracts to the new vehicle still must be worked out.</p>
INFORMATION ASSURANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION DIRECTORATE	<p>PROJECT: Joint Regional Information Exchange System — This pilot for sharing sensitive but unclassified data across levels of government began life as a Defense Intelligence Agency network. Funding unknown.</p> <p>MILESTONES: In a pilot stage since April, DHS has said it wants to expand the program to serve as a data-sharing platform.</p> <p>RISKS: DHS officials must resolve technical and organizational issues surrounding the interconnection of JRIES to existing sensitive but unclassified networks used by law enforcement and intelligence agencies.</p>
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORATE	<p>PROJECT: Project Safecom — This is an effort to create a central wireless communications program for first responders. Funding unknown.</p> <p>MILESTONES: DHS soon plans to invite proposals for Safecom projects.</p> <p>RISKS: Binding together 53,000 public-safety groups using largely incompatible wireless networks will be a daunting and expensive project. Systems that work well in cities may not be appropriate for rural areas.</p>
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION	<p>PROJECT: Airport IT upgrades — TSA plans to progressively upgrade systems and connectivity at airport facilities. TSA has installed broadband connections and LANs at about 130 of 500 locations. Funding unknown.</p> <p>MILESTONES: Under its central IT contract, awarded to Unisys Corp. in August 2002, TSA plans to continue deploying to additional sites next year.</p> <p>RISKS: TSA will have to carefully manage the transition from the Unisys contract, which expires in 2005, to a follow-on pact.</p>
	<p>PROJECT: Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System II — CAPPS II will use data-mining technology to analyze data about passengers boarding planes. Received \$35 million.</p> <p>MILESTONES: CAPPS II is due to roll out in November.</p> <p>RISKS: The program has attracted criticism from privacy advocates and scrutiny from Congress because of privacy concerns.</p>
	<p>PROJECT: Transport Worker Identification Card — TSA plans to develop and deploy smart cards to authenticate transportation workers. Received \$55 million.</p> <p>MILESTONES: The TWIC program office plans to begin a seven-month prototype early next year following pilots in the Los Angeles and Philadelphia areas. Live implementation is set to begin late next year or in early 2005.</p> <p>RISKS: TSA must establish processes for conducting background checks and setting up an identity verification system. It had problems earlier this year with checks that failed to spot problems in job candidates’ backgrounds.</p>