

Sultanate of Oman
Information Technology Authority



IT Governance Policy

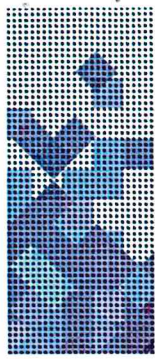
Governance & Standards Division



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1 INTRODUCTION

Information Technology (IT) represents a significant investment as well as a significant enabler of the eOman vision, requiring effective governance and planning. Pursuant to, Royal Decree 52/2006, Information Technology Authority (ITA) is responsible for implementation of the Digital Oman Strategy and to provide professional leadership to government agencies.

ITA act as a central IT governing body and coordinate IT planning efforts and strategies for most effective use of resources across the Government. ITA has exclusive responsibility to make recommendations to the Cabinet of Ministers (Cabinet) on all information technology (IT) related matters for the whole of government. Principal responsibilities include:

- Direct IT Governance strategies to government agencies, and advise technology priorities and major IT investments to the Cabinet of Ministers.
- Formulate and maintain policies for the governance and management of IT across the government.
- Commission IT Governance framework for government agencies.
- Commission analyses and research pertaining to IT portfolio management.
- Ensure IT Assurance and compliance activities
- Recommend, to the Cabinet, strategic IT partnerships for the Government.

With this policy, ITA commissions Governance of Enterprise IT (GEIT) across government agencies in Sultanate of Oman.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to commission IT Governance for government agencies in Sultanate of Oman to ensure that:

- the investments in Information Technology (IT) deliver value to business,
- risks associated with IT usage are communicated and managed,
- IT resources are managed sensibly, and
- performance of IT is measured and monitored.

3 SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

Government Agencies and Statutory Bodies in Sultanate of Oman are required to adhere to this policy and take concrete actions to establish IT Governance in their respective organizations.

This policy covers the aspects related to the Governance of Enterprise IT across the government. It does not cover the aspects of IT Management. Following definitions differentiate the Governance from the Management.

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3.1 DEFINITIONS

Governance - Governance is concerned about defining ‘What’ aspect. Governance ensures that stakeholder needs, conditions and options are evaluated to determine balanced, agreed-on enterprise objectives to be achieved; setting direction through prioritization and decision making; and monitoring performance and compliance against agreed-on direction and objectives. (COBIT 5)

Management - Management is concerned about defining ‘How’ aspect. Management plans, builds, runs and monitors activities in alignment with the direction set by the governance body to achieve the enterprise objectives. (COBIT 5)

4 POLICY

4.1 POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Government agencies shall establish effective IT Governance to ensure benefit realization and risk optimization in business investments in IT initiatives.
2. The primary goals of IT Governance shall be focused on:
 - 2.1. Stakeholder value of business investments in IT
 - 2.2. Financial transparency
 - 2.3. Customer-oriented service culture
 - 2.4. Agile responses to a changing business environment
 - 2.5. Optimization of service delivery costs
 - 2.6. Operational and staff productivity
 - 2.7. Compliance with internal policies
 - 2.8. Product and business innovation culture
3. Government agencies shall define an **IT Governance Structure (ITGS)** for the oversight and delivery of all investment decisions in Information Technology (IT).
 - 3.1. The purpose of the **ITGS** is to ensure the effective and efficient use of technology in enabling the enterprise to achieve its strategy and goals within acceptable levels of risk.
 - 3.2. **ITGS** is a standing (permanent) governance structure. It may be supported by other governance structures — both standing and project (temporary) — as required to effectively achieve its purpose.
4. The **ITGS** is tasked with and accountable for ensuring that technology services deliver business value and that expected benefits from new investments are fully realized.
5. **ITGS** responsibilities include:
 - 5.1. Decide on IT strategy and capabilities.
 - 5.2. Determine the IT investment approach.
 - 5.3. Balance investment risk.
 - 5.4. Ensure a steady flow of communications.
 - 5.5. Deliver results.
 - 5.6. Improve IT governance.

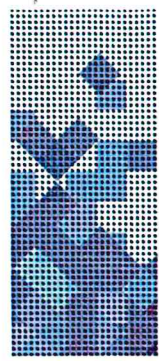
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6. **ITGS** shall define and monitor the key goals and metrics to determine the extent to which the IT-enabled investments and services are generating the expected value and benefits to the business. Subsequently, identify significant issues and consider corrective actions.

Note: The existing structures (if any), like IT Steering Committee/e-Transformation Committee/Strategic Planning Committee, need to be enhanced or aligned with the proposed ITGS to assume the accountabilities and to deliver the required responsibilities to satisfy this policy.

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4.2 IT GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The principles by which IT shall be governed, managed and operated are as follows:

4.2.1.1.1.1 Principle 1 - Maintain clearly understood responsibilities for IT.

Ensure that individuals and groups within the agency understand and accept their responsibilities for IT. Ensure that clear and well understood contracts exist for external suppliers. Ensure that acceptable use and related policies are known and adhered to by staff. Examples would be maintaining current job descriptions for staff with IT functions, developing a basic matrix of authorities for IT (i.e. who is authorized to what and when, who needs to be informed, who needs to be consulted in the process "RACI model").

4.2.1.1.1.2 Principle 2 - Plan IT to best support the agency.

Ensure that IT plans fit the current and ongoing needs of the agency and that the IT plans support the eOman Strategy. Include IT at a strategic business planning level informed through needs analysis.

4.2.1.1.1.3 Principle 3 - Acquire IT validly.

Ensure that IT acquisitions are made for approved reasons in an approved way; on the basis of appropriate and ongoing analysis. Ensure that there is appropriate balance between costs, risks, long-term and short-term benefits. This may translate into tighter purchasing and planning processes which would refer to existing architecture and due budgeting process.

4.2.1.1.1.4 Principle 4 - Ensure that IT performs well, whenever required.

Ensure that IT is fit for its purpose in supporting the agency, is kept responsive to changing business requirements, and provides support to the business at all times when required by the business. This implies that IT Services are defined, e.g. Email services, Printing services and that a level of evaluation and monitoring is developed. Service availability is one measure that might be considered, a Staff Satisfaction / Feedback system would be another.

4.2.1.1.1.5 Principle 5 - Ensure IT conforms to formal rules.

Ensure that IT conforms to all external regulations and complies with all internal policies and practices.

4.2.1.1.1.6 Principle 6 - Ensure IT use respects human factors.

Ensure that IT meets the current and evolving needs of all the 'people in the process'. Design and specify systems with people in mind, and align IT formally as a service to the

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business and to the staff. Provide transparency to staff and accountability to management.

4.3 IT GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

To achieve policy objectives and the overall eOman strategy, ITA strongly recommends to the ministries and agencies to establish following practices on high priority.

- Establish IT Management Framework
- Formulate IT Strategy
- Manage Enterprise Architecture and Innovation
- Manage IT Investment and Procurement
- Manage IT Risks
- Manage Program and Projects
- Manage IT Service Delivery
- Manage Information Security
- Manage IT Performance

To guide government agencies on establishing these high-priority practices, ITA will provide advice and guidance through supported frameworks and guidelines.

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 POLICY MANAGEMENT

- 1 This policy is issued by Information Technology Authority (ITA).
- 2 Creation and maintenance of this IT Governance Policy is vested with the ITA.

5.2 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- 1 The Undersecretary/CEO of the government agency is responsible to ensure policy implementation and compliance according to the schedule given below.
- 2 ITA provide advice on the implementation of this Policy to all government agencies.
- 3 ITA conduct policy compliance audits and report improvements in IT Governance and Management arrangements to the Cabinet of Ministers.

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Implementation Schedule

Agency Actions	Target Date (From the date of publication of Policy)
1. Establish IT Governance Structure and assign Roles and Responsibilities through formal communication.	3 months.
2. Define plan for establishing high-priority practices as defined in section 4.3 above.	6 months.
3. Define IT Strategy aligned with the Business Objectives and approved by IT Governance Structure.	9 months.
4. Document Agency Specific Enterprise Architecture to support IT Strategy implementation.	12 months.

6 RELATED GUIDANCE

- This Policy operates consistently with all existing applicable laws, policies and standards.
- ITA is publishing '*IT Governance Charter*' to assist government organization in implementation of this policy.

End of Document

Dr. Salim Sultan AL Ruzaiqi

Chief Executive officer

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