

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

April 2011



Objective

To determine (1) the events that led the Social Security Administration (SSA) to terminate the Time Allocation System (TAS) project and (2) whether SSA effectively managed the project.

Background

TAS was the proposed replacement for the District Office Work Sampling (DOWS) used in the Work Measurement System (WMS) for field office and teleservice center workloads. In SSA, WMS provides employee workload information to component-level management. In September 2009, SSA terminated the TAS project and reallocated resources to other projects. When the TAS project was terminated, the total project cost was \$35.8 million.

To view the full report, visit
http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO_BEPDF/A-14-10-20122.pdf

The Social Security Administration's Time Allocation System (A-14-10-20122)

Our Findings

We found several events that led to SSA's decision to terminate TAS. Some of these events raised questions about SSA's management of the TAS project, given that the project was terminated without proper analysis to determine which Workload Management System (DOWS or TAS) more accurately accounted for workload time measurements. We believe if SSA had conducted sufficient project planning before initiating the TAS project, most, if not all, of the events identified in this report could have been resolved before expending approximately \$36 million of Agency resources. We have organized our findings based on the Systems Development Life Cycle used by SSA.

- Planning and Analysis Phase
 - Insufficient Planning and Analysis Leading to the Termination of TAS
 - TAS Benefits and Costs Were Not Identified Timely
- Construction Phase
 - Insufficient Testing Due to Storage Constraints
- Post Release Phase
 - No Post Implementation Review (PIR) after a system was in operation for 6 months, or after TAS was terminated, to determine reasons for the project's failure.
- Maintenance Phase
 - Inability to maintain TAS cost-effectively

Our Recommendations

From an overall perspective, we recommend that:

1. SSA take the necessary steps to validate the accuracy of the current work measurement system or future replacements.
- With respect to the management of TAS or any future Information Technology (IT) projects, we recommend the Agency:
2. Perform comprehensive integrated strategic planning and analysis before starting the Construction phase of complex IT projects.
 3. Prepare a benefit cost analysis before developing complex IT projects.
 4. Conduct sufficient testing before migrating IT projects into production.
 5. Perform a PIR after a system has been in operation for 6 months and for all terminated projects to determine reasons for the project's termination.