

President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency
Government Performance And Results Act Roundtable - Minutes
January 15, 2004, 9:30 AM Great Hall EPA Ariel Rios, 12th Street. NW
Examining the OIG Role In the Application of the
OMB Program Review Assessment Tool (PART)

Michael Binder, EPA OIG, Chair welcomed all the attendees and introduced the topic and the speaker, Robert Shea, Counselor to the Deputy Director for Management of OMB.

Mr. Shea made the following key points:

Overview of the PART, purpose, process:

- Robert Shea began by saying the purpose of the Program Assessment Review Tool (PART) was help close the gaps and shortfalls in the implementation of GPRA and measurement of performance
- PART is designed to at least improve upon the reporting of performance to give OMB and appropriators better information for improved accountability and decisions.
- It is to be applied to 100% of Federal programs, about 20% a year
- It is not intended to apply to administrative programs - Including the OIGs!

Discussion of OIG involvement and role in PART process

- Robert Shea said that Igs can make important contributions since the PART asks if evaluations have been performed, and IGs have a higher degree of credibility from their independence in both their own evaluations and if they were to review the quality of program own evaluations
- GAO has assessed the PART evaluations (Released in February, link to the GAO report is at end)
- OMB is trying breathe life into GRPA, as the PART assesses the quality of goals
- OIGs can assess the quality of the implementation of PART recommendations
- Some agencies are being re-evaluated based original poor ratings and action on recommendations
- PARTs are used about budget decisions and OMB wants Congress to use PARTs more, but there is a reluctance or lack of understanding about PART, so it is not being used very much
- Poor ratings do not necessarily result in cuts or increases
- PART like information could be built into appropriations and program authorization
- Performance should be a factor in decision making, but Congress is just not there yet
- Appropriators are not used to using performance information
- So far about \$1 trillion in programs have been "PARTED" (verb tense of PART) covering about 80 programs, and many have improved their outcome performance measures
- There is proposed legislation to make PART like reviews a statutory (see link at bottom of page)

How can OIG's build PART into planning and work process

- IG should assess the initial agency assessments and provide information on management from its reviews on behalf of the agency
- Right now there is no systematic way of integrating IGs into the process
- IGs should list or reference current or previous reviews that relate to the program being PARTED
- IGs can assess risk and can assess follow-actions on PART recommendations
- OMB looks for independent sources of information and relies on IG verification of agency claims

Questions and answers

Q. What is being done by OMB to express the need for including the OIGs in the PART process?

A. Nothing yet, but OMB should work with the IGs to develop a more formalized approach.

Q. PART takes a long time, has there been any assessment of how long it takes?

A. Yes - the PART review process should be automated to make it faster

Q. What consistency in the way PART is being implemented?

A. OMB is looking for ways to make it more consistent, but it is still new and consistency will improve with experience.

Q. What is the definition of a program?

A. OMB has issues guidance that says a program is a discrete entity, with discrete funding.

Q. How do OIGs find out about PART reviews that are scheduled since there is a lead time?

A. There usually is a list of programs to be PARTED either with the respective agency or OMB. IGs can consider these

lists in their work/audit planning. OMB can help the IGs get those lists.

Q. Why is Congress resistant to using PART?

A. It appears to be the classic struggle between the authority and views of OMB vs that of the appropriators.

Q. Is there a cross comparison between programs that appear to have similar functions?

A. GPRA was designed to have a cross-cutting view. PART reviews help to see opportunities, redundancies, and help form a basis for asking questions to improve efficiencies.

- **Adjourn:** It was announced that the next meeting will be on Cost Accounting

Post Round Table Information on PART.

Lawmakers weigh institutionalizing program evaluations (Government Executive Magazine 1/24)

By Amelia Gruber

House lawmakers are considering drafting legislation that would require the executive branch to evaluate the performance of federal programs on a regular basis.

Legislation would be one means of institutionalizing a program assessment process similar to that used by the Bush administration for the three most recent budget cycles, a staff member on the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Efficiency and Financial Management said Monday. The subcommittee on Wednesday will begin a series of hearings critiquing the Office of Management and Budget's current system for evaluating federal programs.

To help President Bush formulate his fiscal 2005 budget request, OMB evaluators reviewed 40 percent of federal programs using a 25- to 30-part questionnaire called the Program Assessment Rating Tool. Based on answers to the questionnaire, OMB designated each of the programs as effective, moderately effective, adequate, ineffective, or "results not demonstrated."

Full story: <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0204/020304a1.htm>

PERFORMANCE BUDGETING:

GAO Report: Observations on the Use of OMB's Program Assessment Rating Tool for the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget: January 2004: <http://www.gao.gov/atext/d04174.txt>