



USDA NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICES ***CREATING A PROCESS FOR COLLECTING AND MONITORING THE FULL COSTS OF PROGRAMS***

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project was to determine a method for collecting and monitoring true, full program costs and to implement the resulting process and system modifications within four months. The solution had to satisfy four criteria:

- 1) Technically feasible using existing financial management systems and resources;
- 2) Implementable within four months from the start of this project;
- 3) Reduce the administrative burden for both program and administrative people at all levels; and
- 4) Begin to forge the link between financial management and performance management.

OUR APPROACH

Using our performance improvement methodology, we provided the project leadership and facilitation required to enable a cross-functional project team comprised of key personnel representing financial management, program management, and field organizations to develop and implement an immediate solution to the need to monitor full program costs. Over a three month period, the team met in a series of three-day workshops and produced multiple outcomes:

- Project vision and goals
- Understanding and documentation of existing system capabilities, lessons learned from related efforts, and implications of other initiatives
- Criteria for developing the new process and system
- Communication plan for project design and implementation phases
- Streamlined, improved process and approach to collect and monitor full program cost
- Information, technology infrastructure, and system modification requirements
- Training plan
- Strategy for linking financial and performance management
- Programmatic policies, procedures, and rules
- Implementation deliverables and tasks, resource requirements, and schedule
- Barriers to implementation and strategies to overcome them
- Pilot test plan
- Implementation strategy and executive briefing

SERVICES RENDERED

- Process Improvement
- Technology Design
- Performance Management
- Cross-functional Teams
- Communication Planning

INNOVATION AND ACHIEVEMENT

This project is proof of the success that can result from the tenacity of a highly talented, motivated project team, the use of a stringent methodology, and the guidance of our experienced facilitators. Despite the formidable implementation schedule and criteria, the agency began implementation of the new process and system on time with the ability to track full program cost and relate that data to program performance measures as part of an overall Government Paperwork Reduction Act (GPRA) performance management program. The client project manager stated: "We continue to go forward with no reverse. This team is really determined to meet the deadlines and be successful. InterImage contributed greatly to that motivation. All the hard work has really paid off!"