



United States Department of Agriculture eGovernment Program

eGovernment Strategic Plan
FY 2002-FY 2006



January 25, 2002



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Message from the Deputy Secretary

Consumers, nonprofits, and businesses are increasingly becoming accustomed to the electronically-enabled convenience and service offered in the private sector. These heightened expectations of prompt and convenient satisfaction are likewise increasing citizens' and business partners' demands for the same level of service from the public sector. Cognizant of this and to make employees more productive and save taxpayer dollars, the President has emphasized the need for expanding electronic government (eGovernment). Through legislation such as the Government Paperwork Elimination Act and the Freedom to e-File Act, Congress is also mandating action in this regard.

Despite the dot-com implosion, this is not a fad nor is it the latest government initiative or program, here today and gone tomorrow. eGovernment is here to stay and must be an increasing part of our business in the years ahead if we are to remain relevant in the new economy, meet these mandates, and fulfill our social mission. Moreover, eGovernment is a prerequisite to operating a results-oriented, market-driven enterprise in line with the new vision Secretary Veneman has espoused. So the status quo is not an option, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) must embrace this change.

To do this successfully we must realize eGovernment is about

more than technology. It is about fundamentally transforming how we conduct our business. As such it will require all of us – headquarters and the field, all mission areas, agencies and staff offices, executives and non-executives, technical IT professionals and program leads – to act and to act boldly. This is indeed a new day -- one that will require working differently, collaboration, openness to new ideas, leveraging our investments, and an emphasis on being citizen-centered in all that we do.

This Strategic Plan, encouraged by the President's Management Council on which I serve and the Office of Management and Budget, defines where we are and where we need to go in eGovernment. In charting our new course, the Plan underscores that USDA already has a strong agency-based foundation upon which to build. From electronic lending and benefits solutions to Web-based commodity information, from farmer-focused forms automation to Internet-based mapping technologies, and from a consumer food safety hotline to interagency sites on recreation and nutrition, we already have an impressive eGovernment track record. But we must challenge ourselves to do more across USDA agencies, throughout the enterprise and with other Federal and State agencies. We must commit ourselves to new ways of delivering our products, services and informa-

tion – new ways of empowering citizens, helping our business partners be more efficient and effective, and equipping our employees to spend more time serving customers and solving problems and less time processing paper.

At the onset of what will be a long change journey, I look forward to working with you to realize the promise of eGovernment.

Jim Moseley
Deputy Secretary

Introduction

Purpose

The USDA has developed an eGovernment Strategic Plan to establish a comprehensive vision and direction for the Department and its agencies for the use of electronic commerce for the next five years (FY 2002-2006). The Plan was developed to:

- Begin incorporating and aligning eGovernment with USDA and agency annual performance and business operating planning and budgeting processes
- Build on USDA's current Government capabilities and efforts
- Share USDA best practices
- Break down organizational silos by taking a "citizen-centered" view of program and service delivery
- Avoid redundant approaches and save money by leveraging resources — seeking opportunities to collaborate across USDA agencies, throughout the enterprise, and with other Federal departments (including "Quicksilver" initiatives under the auspices of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), see Appendix D);
- Prioritize opportunities and devote resources to those with the largest impact
- Create a sense of ownership and shared vision for the Department as a means to foster cultural change

Process

To advance the President's Management Agenda and comply with guidance from OMB, the Deputy Secretary charged the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) with creating an eGovernment Program and facilitating a structured, Department-wide strategic planning process for eGovernment.

What is eGovernment?

eGovernment is the exchange of value, including services, programs and information, through an electronic medium, and includes interactions and relationships between:

- Government and citizens;
- Government and public and private entities; and
- Government and employees.

eGovernment is enabled by a wide range of electronic, multi-media, and digital solutions, such as:

- The Internet
- Personal Digital Assistants
- Call Centers
- Handheld Wireless Devices
- Machine-to-Machine Devices (i.e. Smart Tags)

This Plan was crafted by an eGovernment Executive Council and Working Group - comprised respectively of champions and sponsors designated within each mission area and agency/staff office. Working Group and Executive Council members provided continual leadership, decision-making and help with communications over a three-month period and will now guide business case development, implementation, performance measurement and oversight.

The unifying force for this Plan was a relentless focus on our customers — the citizens we serve and how we as employees working with our business partners might serve them better — versus how we are currently organized. The EC and EGWG also emphasized building core capabilities within our mission-critical business processes and key support functions by utilizing technology, thus viewing eGovernment as an enabler, a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

The development of this Plan and the opportunities it identifies involved more than 200 USDA employees who participated in interviews, visioning sessions and focus groups representing a broad cross-section of business and technology, management and non-management, field and headquarters personnel. Over 4,800 USDA employees also participated in an employee survey as part of this strategic planning exercise. From these processes, more than sixty ideas, suggestions and opportunities were identified collectively. Through a prioritization process, these were screened and vetted, resulting in the 24 Departmental opportunity areas described herein. These 24 have been in turn approved by the Executive

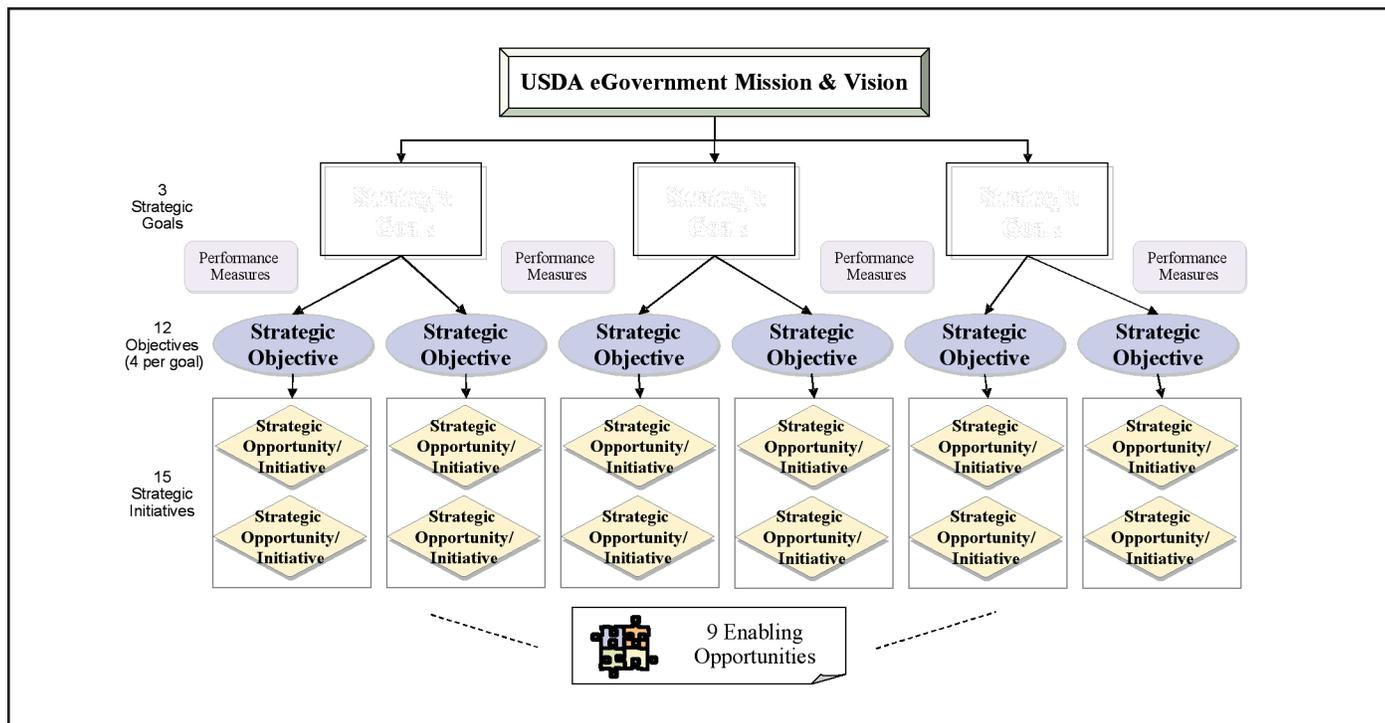
Council, Under and Assistant Secretaries, and the Deputy Secretary.

A number of these opportunity areas were identified as Smart Choice Candidates — high-priority initiatives on which the Department will initially focus its resources over the next 12 to 18 months. These Smart Choice Candidates, selected by the eGovernment Executive Council and approved by the Enterprise Information Technology Investment Review Board (EITIRB) and Deputy Secretary, represent the most promising eGovernment opportunities, especially in the near term.

The Smart Choice Candidates will be pursued immediately with an intention to show demonstrable, measurable progress in these areas in the next 12-18 months. Business cases, integrated into the Department's Capital Planning and Investment Control process, will be written for all Smart Choice Candidates immediately in order to secure funding by FY 2004. Business cases for the remainder of the initiatives will be written upon completion of those for the Smart Choice Candidates, with funding targeted for FY 2005.

Scope and Organization of Plan

USDA is comprised of 29 agencies and staff offices and more than 100,000 employees. Given USDA's structure and size — analogous to a federation or holding company — it is essential that agencies and staff offices inform and enlighten Departmental strategy and goals. Similarly, agencies and staff offices must own the



actual implementation of Departmental strategy.

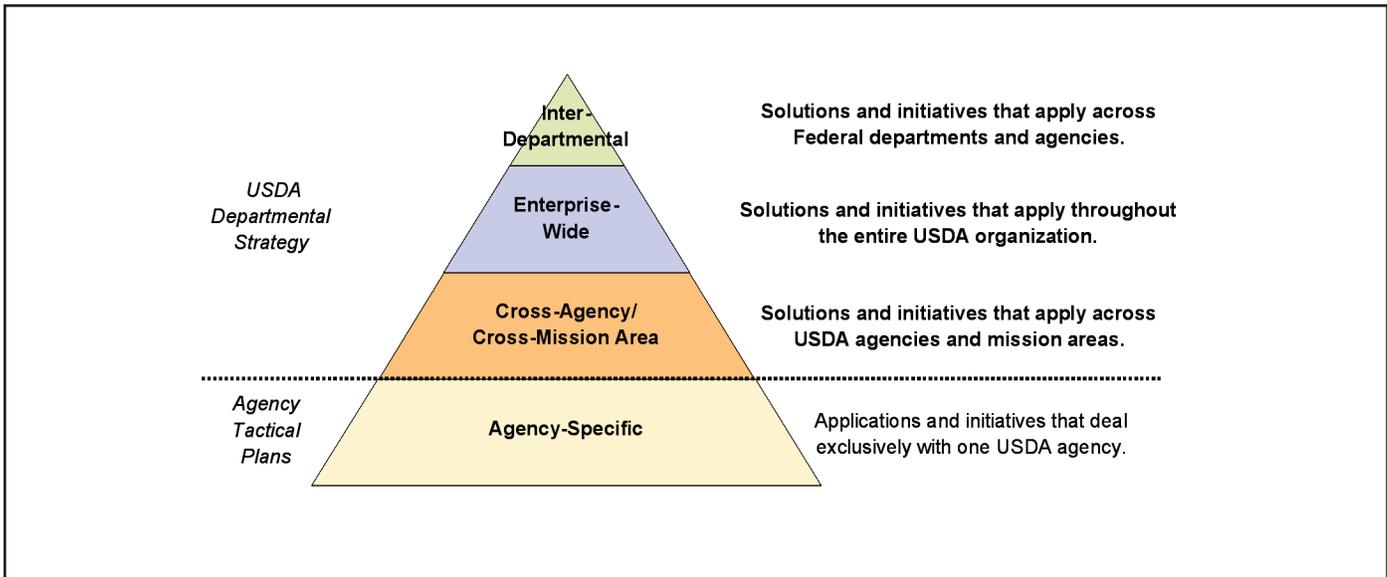
This process requires delicately balancing the pros and cons of agency independence with the advantages and disadvantages of enterprise integration and stewardship; allowing for agency flexibility with corporate requirements; and pursuing "win-wins" that advance the good of the one and the good of the whole.

As such, this five-year Departmental eGovernment Strategy:

- Imparts USDA's eGovernment mission and vision;
- Delineates three overarching goals and associated objectives supporting this mission and vision;
- Establishes performance measures for these objectives;
- Presents short- and long-term action steps for high-level, prioritized opportunities that are interdepartmental, enterprise-

wide, or involve multiple USDA agencies

- Specifies the required capabilities and critical success factors for successful implementation
- Complementing this strategy are five-year Agency eGovernment Tactical Plans outlining:
- Existing and prospective agency-specific (i.e., involving only one agency) eGovernment initiatives and priorities that support Departmental eGovernment goals and objectives;
 - Current and prospective actions an agency is taking to implement the eGovernment opportunities included in this Departmental Strategic Plan;
 - Specific actions (e.g., communications, training, policy enforcement, etc.) an agency is taking to promote and advance the Department's eGovernment Program at the agency level;
 - Agency-specific eGovernment



- implementation roadmaps;
- Project-level performance measures versus goal and objective level performance measures contained in this Plan.

Agency Tactical Plans should be available in Spring 2002. Taken together, this Departmental Strategic Plan and the associated Agency Tactical Plans identify the USDA's eGovernment priorities over the next five years.

This Departmental Strategic Plan and its corollary Agency Tactical Plans are living documents that will be revised periodically and integrated into the Department's financial, business and technical planning processes. They are strategic plans, not workplans, and as such advance a desired course of action – a high-level roadmap for achieving the future. They should be viewed as directional, not directive; and as aspirational, not absolute.

An electronic copy of this Plan and the corresponding Agency Tactical Plans is available on our USDA eGovernment Web site at <http://www.egov.usda.gov>. Please

contact our USDA eGovernment Mailbox, egov@usda.gov, should you have ideas, comments, or questions regarding this Plan, suggestions for ways to improve our eGovernment efforts at USDA, or if you would like to get involved.

Executive Summary

"In recent years the pace of change has been unparalleled. Our producers now operate in a global, technologically advanced, rapidly diversifying, highly competitive business environment that is relentlessly driven by increasingly sophisticated consumers."¹

— Ann M. Veneman
Secretary of Agriculture

For over a century, the USDA has been a pillar of the American economy. Founded in 1862, the Department has a proud heritage of providing stability and assurance for the American people. Although we no longer live in an agrarian economy, the necessities of human life still revolve around an abundant, nutritious and safe food supply, flourishing natural resources, and prosperous rural communities.

Ensuring continued American prosperity and world food security requires innovation, flexibility, and foresight. Globalization, new Presidential mandates and Congressional regulations, new programs and services, increasing sophistication of agriculture and food markets, and threats of bioterrorism are just a subset of the mission-critical challenges that will demand the attention

and response of the USDA over the next few years. This complex environment will present mounting obstacles for the Department to deliver its promise to the public. Furthermore, the heightened expectation of the public for more products and services, delivered "better, faster, cheaper," is driving the Department to rethink its traditional business and create new approaches to fulfill its mission.

The emergence of the Internet and eCommerce technologies presents dramatic new opportunities to transform the Department into a more results-oriented and responsive organization. It offers the potential to:

- Reach out to farmers, rural businesses, low-income families and agriculture-related companies throughout the world via new and innovative channels;
- Transmit real-time information and knowledge to our Federal, state and local government partners; and
- Provide virtual education and learning opportunities for a geographically-dispersed network of employees and partners.

Furthermore, the opportunities to streamline processes, reduce costs and create more internal efficiencies will expand the Department's capabilities to deliver new programs and better services.

¹"Food and Agriculture Policy: Taking Stock in the New Century." USDA, 2001, pg. ii.

USDA eGovernment Mission		
<i>"Transform and enhance the delivery of USDA's programs, services and information."</i>		
USDA eGovernment Vision		
<i>"USDA, electronically available any place, any time."</i>		
Goal 1: Citizens	Goal 2: Public and Private Organizations	Goal 3: Employees and the Enterprise
"Improve citizens' knowledge of and access to USDA to enhance service delivery."	"Enhance collaboration with public and private sector organizations to develop and deliver USDA's mission."	"Improve internal efficiency by promoting enterprise-wide solutions."

Enabling USDA's mission and vision

eGovernment is a means to realizing the fundamental elements of USDA's organizational mission and vision. Thus, the Department's eGovernment mission, vision, goals and objectives flow from and are premised upon USDA's fundamental purpose, focusing on the most critical issues of our business.

Our eGovernment mission, vision, goals and objectives are outlined in the chart above. The mission statement attempts to convey our purpose and the vision statement our desired end state. Both will necessitate fundamental changes in our culture and how we operate.

The USDA's first eGovernment goal represents the Department's commitment to create a "citizen-centered" government and more directly and effectively respond to and fulfill the demands of the people USDA serves - including farmers, low-income families, school children, and rural communities. As the "People's Department," the USDA is com-

mitted to serving people and empowering communities. To this end, the human element in the USDA's services will neither be diminished nor displaced by the Internet. The Internet, supported by a robust USDA telecommunications infrastructure, will simply be used as a channel to enhance more meaningful and purposeful interactions with the public and between employees.

These 24 eGovernment opportunities represent a balanced "portfolio" addressing different types of opportunities, levels of involvement, and strategic goals met: The second eGovernment goal focuses on improving the USDA's working relationship with public and private sector organizations — including Federal, state, and local governments, regulated and partner industry groups, university and research communities, non-profit organizations, producers and agribusinesses, and international entities.

Finally, the third eGovernment goal will empower employees and improve internal operations within the Department. It focuses on ensuring employees can work more collaboratively within and

across each agency and staff office and can quickly execute administrative functions.

As a whole, the eGovernment mission, vision, and goals will be achieved by meeting associated objectives via the implementation of short and long-term strategic and enabling opportunities. The table below presents USDA's eGovernment objectives by goal, as well as associated Departmental implementation opportunities that we have committed to pursuing during the next five years, FY 2002-2006. The table also includes a very brief description of these opportunities; additional detail on each can be found in Section IV of this Plan.

Goal 1: Citizens

"Improve citizens' knowledge of and access to USDA to enhance service delivery."

Strategic Objectives	eGovernment Opportunities
<p>1.1 Promote a stable, safe, and affordable food supply and improve nutritional status.</p> <p>1.2 Enhance the efficiency and commercial viability of agricultural producers and promote the expansion of agricultural trade.</p> <p>1.3 Increase the capability of all citizens, especially those living in rural communities, to benefit from eGovernment.</p> <p>1.4 Provide the public with information and services to benefit from and preserve natural resources and the environment. Strategic Opportunities:</p>	<p>"One-stop" eligibility shop for customers to determine the USDA programs/services for which they are eligible, across all agencies</p> <p>eLoans Provides opportunities for citizens and businesses to apply for, obtain, and manage USDA loans (direct and guaranteed) via the Internet</p> <p>eRulemaking Online forum for accepting public and internal comments on proposed rules and regulations authored by USDA agencies</p> <p>Nutrition/Dietary Guidelines/Food Safety Awareness Personalized multimedia outreach and education program to improve citizens' nutritional habits and food safety awareness</p> <p>Online Export Assistance and Marketing Virtual export center for USDA customers, regulated industries, and partners to learn about exporting agricultural commodities, such as accessing permits/requirements and gaining foreign market data.</p> <p>Enabling Opportunities:</p> <p>USDA Web Presence Allows users, including citizens and partners, to navigate USDA's Web site via portals based on their desired tasks or topics, and includes a standard look and feel</p> <p>eLearning Allows employees and citizens to track their progress in completing personalized curricula, register for courses and allow management and trainers to track progress</p> <p>Customer and Public/Private Organization Database A single data store that houses all citizen and public/private organization data for the use of all agencies</p> <p>CRM for Service Centers Allows Service Center employees to manage the relationship between the USDA and its customers by tracking visits, correspondence, inquiries and services provided through customer data summaries</p>

Goal 2: Public and Private Organizations

"Enhance collaboration with public and private sector organizations to develop and deliver USDA's mission."

Strategic Objectives	eGovernment Opportunities
<p>2.1 Empower organizations by providing appropriate and meaningful data and knowledge for timely decision-making.</p> <p>2.2 Enable business transactions with partners through user-friendly applications and seamless integration across the Department.</p> <p>2.3 Streamline oversight, regulatory, and cooperative activities with standardized electronic solutions.</p> <p>2.4 Provide leadership in intergovernmental initiatives to improve service delivery.</p>	<p>Strategic Opportunities:</p> <p>eGrants Central source for all organizations that receive USDA grant assistance (e.g., rural businesses, state/local governments, and universities) to access, apply for and manage awards for all USDA grants</p> <p>eMaps Provides capabilities for users to generate environmental and social maps to be displayed electronically, via the Internet</p> <p>ePermits/eCertificates Provides electronic options to issue permits, certificates and other regulation-based verifications to USDA's customers and partners</p> <p>Food Safety and Security Tools Provides real-time access to government agencies for entering and tracking data for decision-making purposes and for investigations into causes of food-borne illness</p> <p>Web-based Supply Chain Management of Food Leverages supply chain management technologies to enable USDA agencies and their partners (primarily USAID, school districts, domestic producers, state agencies and industry), to manage commodity purchasing and food distribution seamlessly</p>

Goal 3: Employees and the Enterprise

"Improve internal efficiency by promoting enterprise-wide solutions."

Strategic Objectives

eGovernment Opportunities

3.1 Foster seamless collaboration to make informed decisions and minimize redundancy to achieve USDA's mission.

3.2 Increase USDA employees' skills, understanding, access and use of available eGovernment tools.

3.3 Develop and enhance administrative and support functions that satisfy employee and enterprise needs in an effective, efficient and interoperable manner.

3.4 Create and maintain a management and technical infrastructure capable of supporting USDA's eGovernment vision.

Strategic Opportunities

Survey Capability

Provides a global survey instrument, including a suite of survey capabilities and/or outsourcing arrangement to perform surveys requiring data collection from both internal and external sources

Department-wide eProcurement (IAS)

Designed to streamline and automate contract management and acquisition processes throughout USDA, and ultimately enhance support of USDA mission-critical activities

Financial Management Tools

Provides capabilities including online reporting for existing financial management packages and a global eCommerce capability to handle billing needs

Human Resources Online

Enables employees to manage human resource-related issues online and assist in human resource planning and administration through a single Internet interface

Physical Asset Management

Allows USDA to efficiently manage all of its physical assets, including real estate, vehicles, plans, computers, furniture, etc., at Headquarters and in the field

Enabling Opportunities:

User Authentication and Electronic Signatures

Set of solutions for handling electronic signatures for citizens, partners and employees

Application Hosting

Enhances application-hosting capabilities to establish a tiered service model

Data Management

Provide the guiding principles and framework for implementing a corporate data management program, including an enterprise taxonomy and metadata model

Documents/Records/Correspondence Management with Workflow

Integrated solution will allow USDA and its employees to more easily electronically store, track, and transmit documents

Knowledge/Content Management

Departmental solution for managing the publishing, sharing, and classification of Web pages, documents, official records, and correspondence

These 24 eGovernment opportunities represent a balanced "portfolio" addressing different types of opportunities, levels of involvement, and strategic goals met:

Type	Level	Strategic Goal Met
Strategic: electronically automating a core business process or support function	Interdepartmental: opportunities involving USDA agencies and other Federal agencies/Departments	Citizens
Enabling: policy, practices, technology and infrastructure supporting one or more strategic initiatives	Enterprise-wide: opportunities that include and involve all USDA agencies	Public & Private Organization
	Cross-mission area and cross-agency: opportunities that involve collaboration among two or more USDA agencies	Employees and the Enterprise

The Transformation Journey

To realize our vision and achieve our goals, we must create the right environment for success. This environment will involve a transformational journey that will affect the entire organization. Fulfilling the intent of this Plan will be dependent upon infrastructure and technical improvements, human and financial capital, participation from USDA's partners, and continuous executive leadership and support. Fifteen (15) success factors, indicated below, will be critical to USDA's eGovernment implementation efforts. If the eGovernment opportunities and associated short and long-term initiatives identified in the Plan represent the "What" of our eGovernment efforts, these success factors reflect the "How" of making it happen.

1. Executive leadership and sponsorship
2. Effective governance with clear roles and responsibilities
3. A cultural shift committed to collaboration and integration
4. Financial support for new development, ongoing maintenance, and the retirement of outdated legacy systems
5. Skills development and training
6. Awareness and understanding of eGovernment by USDA stakeholders
7. Supporting telecommunications infrastructure improvements
8. Required technical capabilities
9. Assurance of privacy and security in cyber-transactions
10. An integrated Information Technology (IT) Capital Planning and Investment Control process that prioritizes eGovernment initiatives
11. A structured, established Enterprise Architecture
12. Formal linkages with information collections
13. Reengineering of key business processes
14. A measurable and attainable timeline for opportunities/initiatives
15. Partnerships with private sector and government entities

1.0 A Challenging New Environment

USDA's Mandate For Change

For over a century, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been a pillar of the American economy. Founded in 1862, the Department has a proud heritage of providing stability and assurance for the American people. Although we no longer live in an agrarian economy, the necessities of human life still revolve around an abundant, nutritious and safe food supply, flourishing natural resources, and prosperous rural communities.

By promoting agricultural exports and improving the safety and competitiveness of domestic production, the USDA helps to support over \$1 trillion of economic activity annually and ensure jobs for 1 out of every 6 working Americans. Moreover,

the USDA administers over 15 nutritional programs that feed more than 40 million people in need; fosters stewardship of 75% of the country's total land area; supports over 65 million people living in rural America; and provides food assistance to 80 countries. The USDA's expansive reach and diverse mission truly make it "the People's Department," and its continued success will be crucial to American economic and social prosperity as we progress into the 21st century.

At the dawn of a new millennium, the Department faces a changing environment — one filled with new challenges and opportunities such as consumer-driven agriculture, increasing globalization, and advances in information and communications technology. These trends, among others, are bringing fundamental changes to the world in which the USDA operates and fulfills its mission.

Leading the USDA's move toward eGovernment are:

- Transformations in industries the USDA supports and regulates;
- Increasing expectations from citizens, private and public sector organizations, and employees;
- Demands for electronic government, improved customer service, and citizen-centered government from the legislative and executive branches; and

- Internal challenges such as the need to "do more with less;" a new focus on market-driven policies and programs; and an emphasis on results-oriented solutions.

1.1 Mission-Critical Challenges

The Department's diverse agencies span nearly every major business function within government (e.g., benefits administration, loans, insurance, research, regulatory oversight, etc.), operating throughout the world to ensure accountability, oversight, and development of US industries and markets. The rapid adoption of information technology has radically transformed the sectors in which the USDA fulfills its mission by contributing to industry consolidation, enabling new value propositions, speeding service delivery, and increasing collaboration and information exchange. As the areas in which the USDA operates evolve, they will create additional pressures for the USDA to respond in ways that empower our constituencies, ensure fair market conditions and enhance the competitiveness of American agriculture.

Business Trends and Internet Impacts on the Industry		USDA Implications
<i>Agricultural Production and Trade</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advances in biotechnology promise benefits such as higher yields and more nutritious crops, although consumers remain suspicious of genetically modified foods • Consolidation has resulted in the top four agribusinesses controlling over 45% of market share in more than ten agricultural industries² • Smaller farmers are more vulnerable, as larger processors' market power increases and global competition brings lower commodity prices • Over a dozen agriculture-related eMarketplaces and commodity exchanges have started, but only those with the backing of major agribusinesses have shown signs of success • The Internet increases price transparency and the potential to link suppliers and buyers more directly 	<p>USDA can provide the appropriate tools, policies and market conditions to ensure both that small farmers are not further disadvantaged by technological and industry changes, and that rural and other geographically-isolated farmers can benefit from new market opportunities presented by new and emerging technologies.</p>
<i>Consumer Food and Nutrition</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) in Food Stamps has resulted in overall cost savings of \$424 million for both retailers and governments by streamlining processing and reducing handling costs³ • Emphasis on homeland security and preventing bioterrorism have increased pressure to ensure a safe and secure food supply • Only 12% of Americans have healthy diets; over 70% need improvement⁴; more effective methods of education and outreach are needed to influence diet and eating habits 	<p>USDA can continue its innovation in assisting consumers, building on the success of EBT to improve benefits delivery and ensure a safe food supply. New channels and processes are necessary to improve the availability and quality of nutrition and food safety education.</p>
<i>Rural Economic Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Internet access has increased but still lags behind metropolitan areas (38% in rural areas, versus 44% in urban areas)⁵ • Rural unemployment continues to exceed levels in urban areas, as high as 9.4% in 2001⁶ • Rural Americans continue to have less access than urban dwellers to essential services such as education and health care, especially specialized or advanced services 	<p>USDA's leadership in developing rural infrastructure will be critical to ensure rural populations can benefit from distance learning opportunities and other benefits of Internet technologies.</p>
<i>Environmental Stewardship and Conservation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising natural resource costs and the expansion of urban and suburban areas have increased focus on conservation • Urban and suburban areas in particular face critical land use and planning issues • Conservation is becoming more closely linked to agriculture as sustainable resource use becomes more important and necessary • Geographic information systems (GIS) have helped environmental planners better analyze data and trends, leading to better decisions and more accurate forecasting 	<p>USDA will need to reach out to new constituents, partner with private landowners and discover ways to reduce depletion and educate the public.</p>

²"Concentration of Agricultural Markets." William Heffernan, Douglas Constance, Robert Gronski and Mary Hendrickson; University of Missouri, 1996.

³"From Paper to Electronics: Creating a Benefit Delivery System That Works Better & Costs Less - An Implementation Plan for Nationwide EBT." Federal Electronic Benefits Transfer Task Force, 1994.

⁴Healthy Eating Index (1998), USDA Economic Research Service/Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion.

⁵"Falling Through the Net." Department of Commerce/NTIA, 2000.

⁶Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics/US Census Bureau

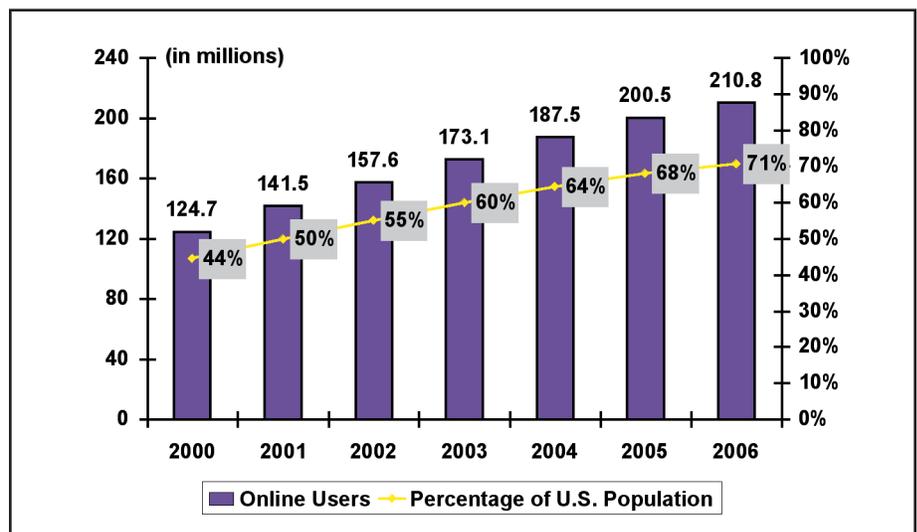
1.2 Rising Stakeholder Expectations

The proliferation of information and communication technologies has caused significant changes in the way people and businesses interact. Consumers now expect to be able to conduct transactions with businesses and access real-time information any time, anywhere. Further, consumers increasingly expect, and demand, to receive from government the

eCommerce/eGovernment. The number of Internet users who've made at least one online purchase grew at a rate of 45% in 2000, to a total of 58%⁷. Further, online retail purchases are forecasted to rise from \$34 billion in 2001 to more than \$130 billion in 2006, a fourfold increase in only five years — even after the bursting of the dot.com bubble.

Moreover, the Internet's significant growth will continue. As shown in figure 1, the number of Americans online will continue to grow, reaching 210 million by 2006 — 71% of the U.S. population. Even more importantly, the

Figure 1: Growth of U.S. Internet Use⁸



same options and convenience they can now receive from the private sector.

Rising use of services such as online banking and shopping confirms consumers' desire for convenient options such as those afforded by

quality of access will continue to increase; 20% of Internet users used a high-speed, broadband connection in late 2001, 90% greater than the number of high-speed connections at then end of 2000⁹. Further, by 2006, 41% of home Internet use will be via high-speed connections.

⁷Pew Internet & American Life Project survey, March 2001

⁸Jupiter Research Internet Population Model, October 2001

⁹Nielsen/NetRatings, November 2001

Figure 2: Growth of U.S. Internet Use & eCommerce¹⁰

Internet Usage	2001	2006
Percentage of U.S. Population Online	44%	71%
Business to Consumer eCommerce	\$34 B	\$128 B
Number of Consumers Using eCommerce	65 M	129 M
Business to Business eCommerce	\$466 B	\$5,450 B

Citizens

USDA's customer groups are currently online in impressive numbers. Forty-one percent of farmers are online (according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service), proportionally close to the 44% of the total population that uses the Internet in 2001 (Jupiter Research).

And while Internet use by both low-income Americans and rural

residents lags behind other groups, both groups' use has been growing quickly: rural Internet use grew by more than 70% from 1998 to 2000, and low-income use has grown by 80% over the past year¹¹—the fastest growth rate of any income group. Furthermore, 89% of all American children have Internet access at home or school.

Figure 3: Internet Access for Major Citizen Groups Served by USDA

Major Citizen Group	Estimated Total Number Served	Internet Access
Children	30 Million	89% ¹¹
Farmers/Producers	2.2 Million	43% ¹²
Rural Communities & Businesses	2.5 Million (direct), 50 Million (indirect)	39% ¹³
Low-Income Families & Individuals (\$15-\$25K/yr)	20 Million	24%
Landowners and Conservationists	10 Million	N/A ¹⁴
All Americans	285 Million	44% ¹⁵

¹⁰Jupiter Research Internet Population Model, October 2001

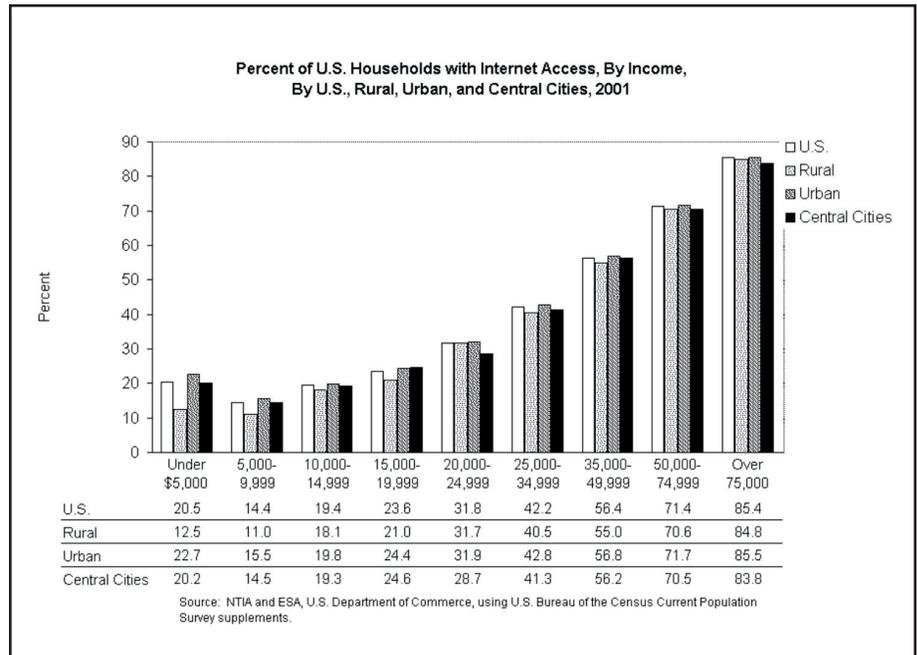
¹¹Current Population Survey (August 2000), U.S. Department of Labor/U.S. Census Bureau

¹²"Farm Computer Usage and Ownership," National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2001.

¹³"Falling Through The Net: Toward Digital Inclusion", U.S. Department of Commerce, 2000.

¹⁴NTIA and ESA, U.S. Department of Commerce (from 2001 Current Population Survey).

¹⁵Jupiter Internet Population Model, Jupiter Research, 2001.



Public and Private Partners

Business-to-business commerce has been the fastest-growing sector of the Internet, with innovations such as knowledge management, supply chain management, electronic payments, and eProcurement leading to cost savings and greater organizational flexibility. With so much potential, business-to-business eCommerce is experiencing enor-

mous growth — total transactions will rise from \$460 billion in 2001 to over \$5.4 trillion in 2006¹⁶— more than one-third of all business-to-business commerce in the U.S.

Similarly, USDA's major partner organizations have pervasive Internet access. Ninety-eight percent of research and academic partners are online, and 90% or more of banks, insurance companies, governments, and major agribusinesses are online as well.

Figure 4: Internet Access for Major Public/Private Organizations¹⁷

Organization	Internet Access
Colleges/Universities and Research Partners	98%
Insurance Companies/Agents	93%
Agribusinesses & Land-based Products Companies	93%
Federal, State and Local Agencies & Organizations	91%
Banks & Lenders	90%
Food Distribution and Supply Chain Companies	66%

¹⁶Jupiter Research, September 2001.

¹⁷Current Population Survey (August 2000), U.S. Department of Commerce/NTIA, 2000.

USDA Employees

USDA's employees equally have rising expectations regarding the Internet, indicating that they are eager to realize the benefits of eGovernment. According to a survey administered by the USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer in December 2001¹⁸:

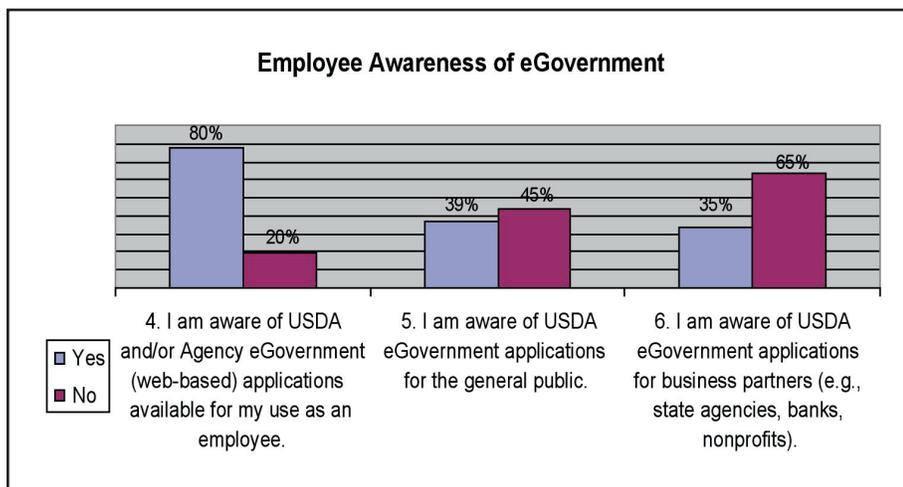
- 47% of USDA employees surveyed currently use agency Intranet sites to assist them with work
 - 53% use the Internet for business purposes
 - 76% would like to telecommute
 - 93% feel comfortable using technology and the Internet to complete business tasks
 - 60% either do not receive enough information electronically or do not receive appropriate information electronically
- Additionally, employees generally are aware of the eGovernment tools available for their use (as shown in Figure 5 below), indicat-

ing interest in using such tools. However, less than half of employees surveyed were aware of USDA eGovernment applications for citizens or public and private organizations

1.3 Legislative and Government Drivers

The need for—and promise of—eGovernment has led to the issuance of both legislation and Executive Branch directives encouraging or requiring its implementation.

- The Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) of 1998 (P.L. 105-277) requires federal agencies to enable their customers and business partners to conduct all transactions online by 2003. Specifically, the law



¹⁸Note: The eGovernment survey was administered via e-mail and the World Wide Web; accordingly, the survey's sample may be somewhat biased toward already technically savvy employees. As a test the survey instrument was also given to a small group of field employees in paper format.

(as implemented by the Office of Management of Budget) requires that "Federal agencies, by October 21, 2003, provide individuals or entities that deal with agencies the option to submit information or transact with the agency electronically, and to maintain records electronically, when practicable."

- The Freedom to E-File Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-222) creates an accelerated schedule for USDA to make both information and transactions electronically available, with some agencies required to enable electronic forms and most transactions requiring online functionality by October 2002.
- The Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (ESIGN) of 2000 (P.L. 106-229) gives electronic signatures the same legal standing as written signatures, empowering federal agencies, including USDA, to conduct a wide range of truly paperless transactions.
- The President's Management Agenda makes "Expanding Electronic Government" one of five major initiatives for reforming government¹⁹; it aims to enable the public to easily transact with and receive quality service from the Federal Government, no matter which channel is chosen. Further, it stresses citizen-centered government — presenting government services based on citizens' needs instead of agencies' organizational structure. In order to ensure success of the President's Management

Agenda, OMB and the President's Management Council created a Quicksilver Task Force to develop government-wide eGovernment initiatives; 24 such initiatives have been approved, with planning for their implementation underway.

Legislation and directives such as GPEA, E-File, ESIGN, and the President's Management Agenda offer guidance for eGovernment and provide the impetus for agencies to evolve in order to meet rising stakeholder expectations. Additionally, they encourage agencies to use technology to reap the increased productivity, employee efficiency, and cost savings seen in the private sector. Finally, OMB and the General Accounting Office (GAO), as well as Congress and the White House, are closely monitoring the progress of all Federal agencies toward meeting these legislative and executive mandates. (Further information on legislation and executive directives can be found in Appendix D).

1.4 Internal Challenges: Doing More With Less

In addition to the many external forces affecting the future of USDA, a number of internal factors — including budgetary and resource pressures; insufficient collaboration and coordination to deliver integrated programs; and

¹⁹The President's Management Agenda, Fiscal Year 2002. The four other major government-wide initiatives are strategic management of human capital; competitive sourcing; improved financial performance; and budget and performance integration.

insufficient employee tools — are shaping how the Department and its employees perform in the changing environment.

First, the USDA is challenged to do more with fewer resources. Our responsibilities are expanding, especially in environmental stewardship and food assistance. Programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program and the WIC Program have grown significantly, and this growth is expected to continue. The USDA's budget, however, does not reflect this growth; the overall budget has been shrinking for the past several years, and several agencies have seen yearly declines of more than 10%. Financial constraints have brought a new focus on efficiency and innovative ways to stretch limited resources. Accordingly, it is essential for the USDA to streamline its processes and reduce costs through new channels and service delivery mechanisms.

Second, USDA's evolution has led to the development of separate agencies and mission areas; while this has advantages, particularly the development of expertise in each agency, it has perpetuated organizational 'silos' or 'stovepipes' in each agency. Indeed, as the challenges the USDA faces become more complex and intertwined, single, separate approaches and programs are proving not to be enough. Integrated approaches, involving the participation of multiple agencies, will be critical to providing holistic solutions for the nation's food and farm system. Such unified approaches require the ability to collaborate, share information and manage organizational knowledge.

Finally, USDA employees often do not have the tools they need to



effectively perform their jobs. Specifically:

- Differing technical environments not only make IT support difficult, but also slow communications between agencies due to network bottlenecks and differing data formats;
- Managers and executives do not have the financial reporting tools they need to make effective decisions and forecasts; and
- Employees need continual access to training and education opportunities to execute their jobs quickly, especially workers in geographically dispersed field locations and county-based Service Centers.
- Constantly increasing telecommunications (bandwidth/capacity) requirements are further multiplied by eGovernment mandates and the need for 7x24 performance guarantees.

2.0 Establishing a Departmental Strategic Direction: USDA's eGovernment Mission, Vision, Goals and Objectives

The evolving cycle of emerging information and communications technologies presents a wealth of opportunities for the USDA to dramatically transform the way it does business. The USDA will need innovative approaches to solve its mission-critical challenges and provide leadership in an uncertain environment. The USDA's eGovernment Strategic Plan articulates a bold vision and strategic agenda to exceed future expectations and operate a world-class organization. eGovernment will be a cornerstone of change and transformation for the Department. It will expand the Department's capabilities, enable delivery of new services to our customers, and help USDA reach out to farmers, rural businesses, low-income families and agriculture-related companies throughout the world through innovative new channels.

2.1 eGovernment Mission and Vision

USDA eGovernment Mission

"Transform and enhance the delivery of USDA's programs, services and information."

The fundamental mission of eGovernment is to better achieve and fulfill the USDA's mission and vision. To this end, the USDA's eGovernment mission establishes the Internet and information technology as a primary means for organizational "transformation". Transforming and enhancing delivery of the Department's core programs, services and information necessitates significant changes in the current nature and execution of the Department's program delivery. Successful fulfillment of this mission would involve initiatives that are:

- **Innovative** — finding new and better ways of delivering programs and services
- **Comprehensive** — satisfying all of customers' USDA-related needs
- **Integrated** — working across all appropriate USDA agencies to provide front-end and back-end solutions

USDA eGovernment Vision

USDA eGovernment Vision
"USDA, electronically available any place, any time."

USDA's eGovernment vision statement, while simply stated, is a powerful and ambitious commitment by the Department to create and operate a virtual enterprise. If achieved, this vision would offer all USDA programs, services and information electronically. Accomplishment of this vision would include:

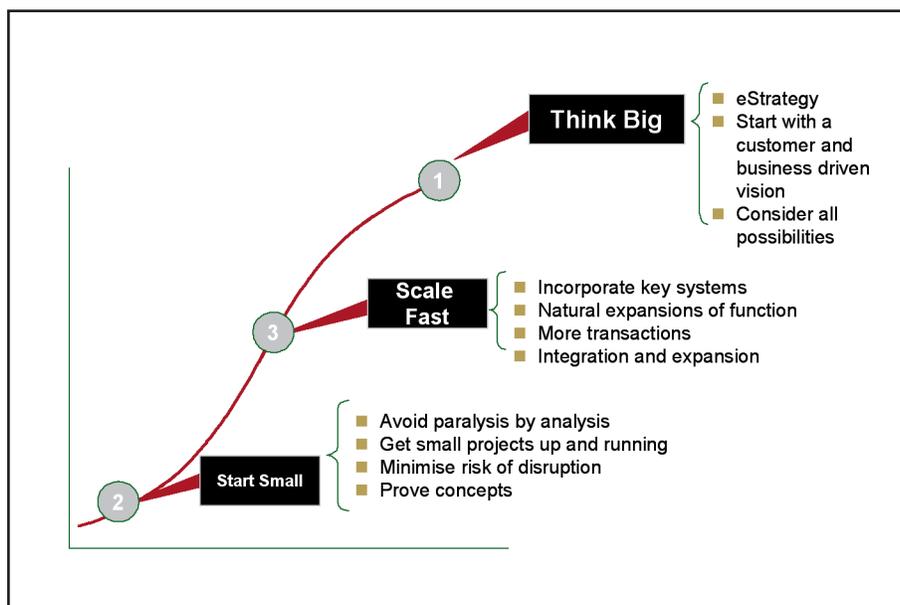
- Multiple channels — Internet, Integrated Voice Response Systems (IVRs), cell phones, Personal Digital Assistants, smart machines/kiosks
- Convenience and ease of use — ensuring that systems and interfaces are designed around users' intentions and needs
- Sufficient infrastructure — ensuring services are accessible through sufficient and redundant telecommunications capabilities.

2.2 Guiding Principles

As the USDA transforms itself from traditional business to an eGovernment environment, clear guiding principles will provide a common set of values to direct the change journey for attainment of the mission and vision. The guiding principles for eGovernment echo the USDA's fundamental guiding principles.

The Department's eGovernment Program is committed to and will be led by the following guiding principles:

1. Think Big, Start Small, Scale Fast – Leadership must be willing to generate bold new ideas and envision the future of the organization. Once the larger vision has been articulated, then "small steps" and "quick wins" can be developed, tested and rolled out to initially obtain clear, measurable results.



2. Build off of Current Successes

– Existing capabilities and efforts should be leveraged and used as foundations upon which the entire USDA enterprise can expand. This principle also includes a commitment to documenting and sharing best practices across agencies.

3. Innovate and Transform

– eGovernment must be about USDA's business, not technology. Leadership must be willing to embrace new models of conducting business, to address root causes instead of symptoms, and to build eGovernment solutions into significant new or significantly expanded programs from the outset.

4. Collaborate, Partner, Respect – USDA agencies must work together to drive change. Multiple USDA agencies often serve the same customer, and internal collaboration will be critical to providing a unified customer experience. This principle involves striking a balance between allowing for agency flexibility and corporate responsibility, agency independence and corporate synergies. The principle also necessitates a seamless and mutually reinforcing interaction between OCIO efforts in Enterprise Architecture, Cybersecurity, IT Capital Planning, telecommunications and infrastructure, and eGovernment. Governance is key to realizing this principle.

5. Augment, Don't Replace – In achieving eGovernment, USDA will add new channels and services to improve its interactions with the public while maintaining traditional channels in order to ensure access for all stakeholders. The USDA is first and foremost about people and for people; we cannot and will not allow technology to diminish the importance of human connections and instead must employ technology to enhance value-added interactions.

6. Educate, Market and Advocate – both internal and externally, the USDA must educate its customers, partners and employees about the value and benefits of eGovernment. Similarly, the USDA must share the good news of its eGovernment efforts with regulatory bodies.

2.3 eGovernment Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Citizens

"Improve citizens' knowledge of and access to USDA to enhance service delivery."

The USDA's first eGovernment goal represents the Department's commitment to create a "citizen-centered" government. It is an affirmation that the Department will use eGovernment to provide services and programs in a manner that is convenient, user-friendly, and designed to meet the needs of the American public. The Department will strive to increase citizen awareness of USDA's programs; streamline service delivery to reduce time and complexity in receiving services; and enhance the ability for program beneficiaries to improve their lives from USDA's programs, services and information. Continuous improvements in interactive and collaborative technology will cause the Department to constantly rethink the way it can most directly and effectively respond to and fulfill the demands of the people it serves — including farmers, low-income families, schoolchildren, landowners/conservationists, and rural Americans.

Goal 2: Public and Private Organizations

"Enhance collaboration with public and private sector organizations to develop and deliver USDA's mission."

The second eGovernment goal focuses on improving the USDA's working relationship with public and private organizations — including Federal, state, and local government agencies, regulated and partner industry groups, university and research communities, and non-profit organizations. The Department partners with public and private organizations across the world to deliver many of its programs and services; USDA will improve collaboration with these groups to seamlessly provide programs, share information and provide resources to enhance their organizational capabilities. Similarly, USDA will use information technology to enhance its relationship with industries it reg-

ulates by improving two-way communication and providing more timely responses and data.

Goal 3: Employees and the Enterprise

"Improve internal efficiency by promoting enterprise-wide solutions."

The third eGovernment goal will empower employees and improve internal operations within the Department. It will focus on ensuring employees can work more collaboratively within and across each agency and in the field. Further, it will provide

electronic solutions to administrative functions and reduce time spent on repetitive data entry. The intent of this goal is to minimize duplicative processes and functions across the Department and foster a continuously learning, knowledge-rich enterprise.

2.4 eGovernment Strategic Objectives and Performance Measures

Goal 1: Citizens	
<i>"Improve citizens' knowledge of and access to USDA to enhance service delivery."</i>	
Objectives	Expected Performance Measures
<p>Objective 1.1 "Promote a stable, safe, and affordable food supply and improve nutritional status."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of eligible persons participating in USDA food assistance programs • Increase in citizen awareness and use of nutrition and food safety education programs • Improvement in measures of food inspection accuracy and quality
<p>Objective 1.2 "Enhance the efficiency and commercial viability of agricultural producers and promote the expansion of agricultural trade."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in farmer/producer satisfaction with USDA farm assistance services • Decrease in program delivery time, such as application submission/approvals and payment disbursement • Increase in the number of farm technical assistance and education programs delivered online • Increase in participation in agricultural export assistance programs
<p>Objective 1.3 "Increase the capability of all citizens, especially those living in rural communities, to benefit from eGovernment"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the percentage of rural Americans that have access to the Internet • Increase in the capacity of Internet access points managed by USDA or USDA service providers. • Increase in the number of rural citizens receiving USDA training or services via the Internet
<p>Objective 1.4 "Provide the public with information and services to benefit from and preserve natural resources and the environment"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in persons using the Internet for environmental and recreational permits and National Forest information • Increase in the number of conservation program applications, status reports, and communications transmitted online • Increase in the number of conservation aid recipients receiving education through electronic channels

Goal 2: Public and Private Organizations	
<i>"Enhance collaboration with public and private sector organizations to develop and deliver USDA's mission."</i>	
Objectives	Expected Performance Measures
<p>Objective 2.1 "Empower organizations by providing appropriate and meaningful data and knowledge for timely decision-making."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of USDA data products available electronically • Increase in the number of channels through which data is made available (e.g., the Internet, telephone, and wireless devices) • Reduction in time between data collection and release to the public
<p>Objective 2.2 "Enable business transactions with partners through user-friendly applications and seamless integration across the Department."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in completion time for transactions between USDA and partner organizations • Increase in partner organizations' satisfaction with USDA services • Increase in the number of services and processes integrated across multiple USDA agencies and/or mission areas • Increase in the number of transactions that can be completed online • Increase in partner organizations' use of Internet-based tools
<p>Objective 2.3 "Streamline oversight, regulatory, and cooperative activities with standardized electronic solutions"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in multiple requests to partner organizations for the same data • Decrease in partner organizations' burdens from mandatory regulatory/oversight activities • Decrease in time burdens from cooperative activity reporting • Increase in the number of mandatory and voluntary reporting transactions that can be submitted electronically
<p>Objective 2.4 "Provide leadership in intergovernmental initiatives to improve service delivery."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of services provided and initiatives coordinated in conjunction with other Federal agencies and departments • Increase in the number of processes and initiatives coordinated in conjunction with State and local governments • Reduction in time spent by both citizens and public and private organizations on interactions with the Federal Government • Increase in the number of citizens and partner organizations who can transact with the Federal Government through a single point of contact

Goal 3: Employees and the Enterprize

"Enhance collaboration with public and private sector organizations to develop and deliver USDA's mission."

Objectives	Expected Performance Measures
<p>Objective 3.1 "Foster seamless collaboration to make informed decisions and minimize redundancy to achieve USDA's mission."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in communication between USDA employees across agencies and mission areas • Increase in collaboration and information sharing between USDA employees • Reduction in redundant applications, systems and/or processes
<p>Objective 3.2 "Increase USDA employees' skills, understanding, access and use of available eGovernment tools."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of USDA employees with individual access to USDA net works/intranets and the Internet • Increase in the number and percentage of USDA employees receiving training relevant to eGovernment • Increase in the percentage of USDA employees using eLearning to complete eGovernment and other training needs • Increase in the percentage of USDA employees with adequate eGovernment skills
<p>Objective 3.3 "Develop and enhance administrative and support functions that satisfy employee and enterprise needs in an effective, efficient and interoperable manner."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in time spent on support functions and administrative tasks • Increase in the number of support and administrative functions deployed Department-wide • Decrease in redundant support systems across agencies and/or mission areas • Increase in employee satisfaction with support and administrative functions
<p>Objective 3.4 "Create and maintain a management and technical infrastructure capable of supporting USDA's eGovernment vision."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of existing systems upgraded for compatibility with eGovernment or new eGovernment-related information and computer systems installed • Increased accuracy of management reporting and analysis • Increase in the number of management processes reviewed or redesigned for compatibility with eGovernment initiatives and services

3.0 Charting a New Path: Making USDA Electronically Available, Any Place, Any Time

Making the USDA "electronically available any place, any time" involves transformation of the organization's culture, people, processes and technology. To realize our collective vision, we must integrate and expand upon our current eGovernment efforts and

support solutions that reach beyond the boundaries of individual USDA agencies

The Department has a strong eGovernment foundation upon which to build, with several agencies already implementing innovative eGovernment initiatives that meet the intent of the Department's eGovernment vision. The USDA is considered a government pioneer in providing some information and services – such as benefits, food safety information for consumers, and loans – electronically through customer cards/electronic benefits transfer (EBT), call centers, and the Web. (In Appendix A, we underscore just a handful of our eGovernment successes that meet some of the specific Departmental eGovernment strategic objectives outlined in Section 3.4.)

As the Department strives to expand these capabilities and create new initiatives, it will pursue 24 eGovernment opportunities, representing a mix of strategic and enabling opportunities.

- **Strategic opportunities** are eGovernment initiatives that directly fulfill the USDA's mission, achieve the USDA's eGovernment strategic goals and objectives and/or relate to the USDA's core business processes.
- **Enabling opportunities** are technology and/or process foundations that directly support strategic eGovernment initiatives and applications.



Sections 4.1 and 4.2 both provide a summary chart that categorizes each of these types of opportunities by the primary and secondary eGovernment strategic goal they address as well as by the expected long-term scope of the opportunity. The summary charts are followed by high-level descriptions that focus on how these opportunities would be implemented for USDA stakeholders. Additionally, short-term action steps and a long-term vision are detailed for each of these opportunities.

A number of these initiatives have been identified as Smart Choice Candidates — high-priority initiatives on which the Department will initially focus its resources over the next 12 to 18 months. These Smart Choice Candidates, selected by the eGovernment Executive Council and approved by the Enterprise Information Technology Investment Review Board (EITIRB) and Deputy Secretary, represent the most promising eGovernment opportunities, especially in the near term.

The Smart Choice Candidates will be pursued immediately with an intention to show demonstrable, measurable progress in these areas in the next 12-18 months. Business cases, integrated into the Department's Capital Planning and Investment Control process, will be written for all Smart Choice Candidates immediately in order to secure funding by FY 2004. Business cases for the remainder of the initiatives will be written upon completion of those for the Smart Choice Candidates, with funding targeted for FY 2005.

3.1 eGovernment Strategic Opportunities

The eGovernment opportunities presented in this section represent the key areas that the USDA's Department-wide eGovernment Program will focus on for the next five years and beyond. They were crafted by the Executive Council and Working Group — after a series of visioning sessions, focus groups, surveys, interviews and examination of best practices— and approved by the Deputy Secretary and Under Secretaries via the EITIRB.

Many of the strategic opportunities meet more than one USDA eGovernment goal by satisfying the needs of multiple stakeholders — citizens, public and private organizations, and employees. Each opportunity spans across other Federal Departments, extends throughout the entire USDA enterprise, or impacts two or more mission areas or agencies. Additionally, many of these opportunities are related to one of the interdepartmental Quicksilver eGovernment initiatives, and USDA will participate in and coordinate with these related initiatives (descriptions of each Quicksilver initiative can be found in Appendix E). Following are USDA's 15 eGovernment strategic opportunities; opportunities identified as Smart Choice Candidates are shaded in gray:

Opportunity Area	Primary Goal	Secondary Goal	Expected Scope	Related Quicksilver Initiative?
eEligibility	Citizens	N/A	Interdepartmental	Yes
eLoans	Citizens	Public/Private Organizations	Interdepartmental	Yes
eRulemaking	Citizens	Public/Private Organizations	Interdepartmental	Yes
Nutrition/Dietary Guidelines/ Food Safety Awareness	Citizens	Employees and the Enterprise	Cross Mission Area	No
Online Export Assistance and Marketing	Public/Private Organizations	Citizens	Interdepartmental	Yes
eGrants	Public/Private Organizations	N/A	Interdepartmental	Yes
eMaps	Public/Private Organizations	Citizens	Interdepartmental	Yes
ePermits/Certificates	Public/Private Organizations	Citizens	Cross Mission Area	Yes
Web-based Supply Chain Management	Public/Private Organizations	Employees and the Enterprise	Interdepartmental	No
Food Safety and Security Tools	Employees and the Enterprise	Public/Private Organizations	Cross Mission Area	No
Department-wide eProcurement	Employees and the Enterprise	Public/Private Organizations	Enterprise-wide	Yes
Financial Management Tools	Employees and the Enterprise	N/A	Enterprise-wide	No
Human Resources Online	Employees and the Enterprise	N/A	Enterprise-wide	Yes
Physical Asset Management	Employees and the Enterprise	N/A	Enterprise-wide	Yes
Survey Capability	Employees and the Enterprise Organizations	Citizens, Public/Private	Cross Mission Area	No

3.1.1 Strategic Opportunities: Citizens

eEligibility

Description: eEligibility will be a "one-stop" eligibility shop for customers to determine the USDA programs and services for which they are eligible across all USDA agencies. Once citizens and public/private organizations create an initial prescreening profile and determine their potential eligibility, they will be able to apply through multiple mechanisms to manage the application process online. Internally, customer relationship management capabilities will be built to assist program administrators in managing and communicating with citizens.

Value Proposition: This initiative will directly expand the reach of the Department to increase USDA’s program participation and allow more citizens to benefit from programs designed to assist them. This initiative could allow well over 50 million potential program beneficiaries including farmers, low-income families, schoolchildren, seniors, and rural households, to quickly determine what benefits they are eligible to receive from USDA.

Short- and Long-term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One central eligibility location on USDA’s Web site • Comprehensive listing and search tool for all USDA programs • Contact information for appropriate state and local offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-time eligibility for all USDA programs given customer-entered data • Applications routed to the appropriate Federal, state, or local agency • Integrated citizen management capability to track status of program application and applicant’s file • Proactive identification of potential eligibility candidates from customer database

eLoans

Description: eLoans will provide opportunities for citizens and businesses, including farmers, producers, and rural entrepreneurs, to apply for, obtain and manage USDA loans (direct and guaranteed) via the Internet. This initiative should include online customer access to accounts, credit approval and income verification, bill presentment, automatic disbursement to bank accounts and loan documentation routing to appropriate local representatives. eLoan services should be provided through a common customer interface to simplify customer access to multiple agency services. The initiative requires full integration with the government-wide effort under Quicksilver.

Value Proposition: This initiative will empower farmers/producers, rural businesses, and rural homeowners to proactively manage their accounts in the manner most convenient to their own schedules and preferences. Additionally, as a major provider of federal loans, USDA will significantly benefit from electronic loan processing and management. Specifically,

a consolidated approach will reduce delays in processing and receiving financial payments, provide a more efficient, streamlined loan process, and reduce the time customers and employees spend seeking and providing personal updates, completing forms, and performing administrative tasks. This initiative could also improve the internal processes of handling loans; shorten decision time and remove human error.

Short and Long Term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and submission of loan applications online • Automatic notification of loan application status • Customer account updates available online • Online bill presentment and loan statements • Provision of guarantee providers' contact information • Online risk management education and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration with industry and partners for guaranteed loans and risk-management tools • Real-time integration with customer data to determine qualification, assess preliminary approvals/denials and provide counseling • Proactive management of high-risk accounts and defaults

eRulemaking

Description: eRulemaking will be an online forum for accepting public and internal comments on USDA agencies' proposed rules and regulations. It will expedite collaboration by receiving and processing comments on all USDA policies, procedures and regulations that impact the general public and USDA constituency groups, such as environmentalists, regulated industries; and benefits recipients (including both individuals and businesses).

Value Proposition: This initiative is designed to promote democratic participation and "bring Washington closer to the people." It will directly improve the quality of USDA's policies, many of which rely heavily on industry and public knowledge and comment, and will further improve policy/regulation adoption and awareness. Furthermore, eRulemaking will instill a greater sense of trust in the USDA and improve the satisfaction of citizens and organizations that work with the USDA.

Short and Long-term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules and public commentary portal • Feedback and comments capability for citizen and industry input • Third-party webcast capability for oral presentations/announcements of policies, regulations or procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated discussion boards and chat rooms for real-time comment and dialogue • Aggregation of all comments provided through multiple sources (email, discussion boards, phone calls) to a single source for searching and viewing by regulators and/or policymakers • Proactive solicitation of comments from experts and notification to relevant groups

Nutrition/Dietary Guidelines/Food Safety Awareness

Description: The Nutrition/Dietary Guidelines/Food Safety Awareness initiative will involve a personalized multimedia outreach and education program to improve citizens' nutritional habits and food safety awareness. This campaign will focus on nutrition and eating habits for school children, low-income families, and the general population, and will use traditional media outlets, such as television and radio, and new media, such as the Web and grocery store kiosks to encourage healthy and safe eating habits. In addition to information services, people will be connected with local dieticians, conduct online dietary assessments, and be provided with a wealth of nutritional information based on a personal profile. Besides Departmental efforts, opportunities exist to develop an interdepartmental approach by collaborating with the Department of Health and Human Services and building off the US Surgeon General's healthy eating campaign.

Value Proposition: By empowering Americans with valuable information and resources on nutrition and food safety, this initiative will be a vehicle to help millions of people improve and ensure their health. Specifically, this initiative strives to improve the nutritional status and dietary intake of children, high-risk nutrition groups, and the American public in general. Education and awareness, especially from a trusted brand such as the USDA, has been proven to be one of the most effective means of influencing nutritional habits.

Short and Long Term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive redesign of Nutrition.gov to centralize USDA nutrition information (including healthy menus and the Interactive Healthy Eating Index) and to ensure that the site links consumers to scientifically sound information • Brand awareness of Nutrition.gov and FoodSafety.gov through advertising/marketing campaign • Targeted outreach to school children and low-income program recipients • Partnership with the Office of Surgeon General and Department of Health and Human Services • Extension and promotion of Meat and Poultry Hotline, especially strong Web integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Push" technologies to promote and alert about food safety and nutrition (available via email, pager, cell phone, instant messenger or PDAs) • Customer personalization of nutrition.gov and integrated 800 number for routing calls to local dieticians, outreach programs and food safety hotlines. • Collaboration with industry, including retailers for nutrition promotion in grocery stores

3.1.2 Strategic Opportunities: Public and Private Organizations

eGrants

Description: eGrants will involve a central source for all organizations/agencies that receive USDA grant assistance (including rural businesses, state and local governments, and universities) to access, apply for, and manage awarding and management of all USDA grants. Seamless integration with back-end capabilities will allow USDA agencies to manage the grant lifecycle online from customer applications through USDA financial disbursements. This initiative will be developed in conjunction with the Federal eGrants Quicksilver initiative, which will be a one-stop shop for all Federal grants.

Value Proposition: eGrants will provide public and private organizations faster, more flexible and more direct means in which to navigate and manage USDA’s grant process. Similar to online loan management, eGrants will enable better two-way communication between USDA agencies and grant recipients and more efficient financial allocations and performance reporting.

Short and Long-term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership and participation in interdepartmental Quicksilver eGrants effort • Comprehensive listing and search engine for all USDA grants • Online grant applications, eligibility and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web-based grants management workflow system over entire grant lifecycle • Grant-writing collaboration capability and integration with web-based grants management system • Web enablement of entire grant lifecycle, including performance reporting

eMaps

Description: eMaps will provide capabilities for users to generate environmental and social maps to be displayed electronically via the Web. This initiative will allow farmers, rural planners, conservationists, researchers, and other agriculture and land management specialists to enhance planning and development with tools and real-time information about land usage.

Value Proposition: This initiative will empower practitioners and researchers with tools to enhance their decision-making and analysis processes. By allowing users to analyze data geospatially, eMaps enables better discovery of trends, more specific and robust analyses, and more accurate forecasting. Finally, it will leverage USDA’s existing GIS data, which is some of the best in the world.

Short and Long-term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of existing Departmental efforts and definition of requirements for Department and Inter-departmental application • Online retrieval capability for currently available GIS data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscription capability for other Federal Departments and partners, potentially including revenue generation opportunities

ePermits/eCertificates

Description: The ePermits/eCertificates initiative will provide electronic options to issue permits, certificates and other regulation-based verifications to USDA’s customers and business partners. This Internet-based tool will allow users to submit permit applications, receive notifications of expirations, and access options for renewal. Internal workflow technologies will be used to appropriately route submissions for application reviews, scheduling of physical inspections and other appropriate actions to the responsible USDA agencies.

Value Proposition: Submitting applications and receiving permits and certificates via the Internet or through an interactive voice response system will save USDA applicants a tremendous amount of time and effort spent on one of USDA’s most paper-intensive processes. It will also reduce burdens on USDA by reducing data entry, processing, and issuance/delivery time and expense.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit and certificate applications completed and submitted online • Applications routed to the appropriate agency • Online payments and annual renewals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User authentication • Automatic notification of renewals • Automatic scheduling and notification of inspection/certification visits. • Automatic creation and mailing of permits and/or certificates • Integrated citizen relationship management

Online Export Assistance and Marketing

Description: Online Export Assistance and Marketing will establish a virtual export center for USDA customers, regulated industries, and partners to learn about exporting agriculture commodities, including accessing export permits and requirements, and gaining market information about potential selling opportunities. The online export environment would focus on expanding marketing opportunities for small agriculture producers, reduce information gaps and search time, and create an

opportunity for collaboration within the industry. This initiative would allow small farmers to aggregate supply to fulfill international demand, access a central location for agriculture trade promotion, and use an export assistance toolkit that would provide step-by-step guidance and assistance for exporting agriculture products. This initiative will integrate with the International Trade effort under Quicksilver.

Value Proposition: This initiative will help achieve USDA’s goals to increase U.S. agriculture market share from 18% to 22% of the world market. It will empower small, medium and disadvantaged farmers with education and toolkits to expand their reach. Finally, it would also provide a central resource for the meat and poultry industry and other USDA regulated industries to expedite their international trading processes, further encouraging exports.

Short and Long Term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with existing Federal export assistance efforts • Definition of customer requirements and "pain points" through focus groups for exporting and marketing products • User-supported knowledge base of best practices and lessons learned during export process • Integration with International Trade Data System efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online "wizards" that guide citizens and/or partners through the export process; from online wizards, users have access to all relevant forms, contact information, and assistance • Integration with new CRM capabilities to provide real-time assistance, both live and via online chat • Integration with customer and public/private partner database to enable collaboration

Web-based Supply Chain Management of Food

Description: This initiative will leverage supply chain management technologies to enable USDA agencies (including FAS, FSA, AMS, FNS) and their partners (primarily USAID, US school districts, domestic producers, state agencies and industry), to manage commodity purchasing and food distribution seamlessly for USDA programs. Such capabilities should allow the USDA to replace many isolated initiatives with flexible new technologies that provide real-time inventory management, food tracking and estimated delivery cycles, order fulfillment, and financial management and allocation.

Value Proposition: USDA’s commodity operations measure over \$7 billion every year. Enhancing USDA’s commodity programs with an electronic supply chain capability will dramatically reduce costs for USDA agencies and their partners and improve the delivery and management of one of USDA’s largest functions. In addition, supply chain improvements will reduce duplicative processes, improve service to customers and partners, and streamline administrative functions. Finally, this initiative

will support US national defense and security interests by enhancing USDA's ability to effectively provide international food assistance.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental effort to build on FATES solution to include functionality for all appropriate agencies • Construction (on paper) of model that includes real performance data from system and manual processes to understand potential benefits all participating partners and agencies • Limited-use pilot program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration with specialized portals for buyers and sellers • Just-in-Time (JIT) inventory tracking and purchasing capabilities across the supply chain • Advanced data mining and reporting capabilities in central data repositories

3.1.3 Strategic Opportunities: Employees and the Enterprise

Department-wide eProcurement (IAS)

Description: This initiative reinforces USDA's Integrated Acquisition System (IAS), a web-based solution designed to streamline and automate contract management and acquisition processes throughout USDA.

Value Proposition: IAS is being pursued in conjunction with multiple agency efforts (including FSA, the Forest Service, and NRCS). Efforts to provide a single gateway for all USDA suppliers and buyers will optimize the value of USDA's investments in this area by passing along cost savings to every agency that uses the system. With over \$2 billion in procurement transactions each year, an eProcurement solution has the potential to show significant impact. The IAS will provide a streamlined eProcurement tool that will allow USDA to use the functionality in the government-wide Quicksilver project called the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE).

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of IAS as Department-wide procurement solution • Migration effort from existing legacy procurement systems and processes to Departmental solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration with financial management tools • Integrated document management capability to be used with industry partners for seamless information exchange • Fully electronic bidding and contract system • Integrated eProcurement solution with eMarketplaces in the private sector • Integrated eProcurement solution with Department supply chain management solution for full automation of inventory and asset management

Financial Management Tools

Description: Financial Management Tools will provide Department-wide financial management capabilities including online reporting for existing financial management packages and a global eCommerce capability to handle billing needs. This initiative will focus on providing tools for managers and program directors to quickly access budgeting and financial information, as well as providing reporting capabilities between agencies, the National Finance Center and the Department of the Treasury.

Value Proposition: Improved and updated financial management tools will enhance decision-making, increase transparency, enhance stewardship of USDA resources and enhance the trust and credibility in USDA's financial reporting.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting engine to aggregate and report on legacy data across disparate financial systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online invoice/tracking/payment system Online connectivity between NFC financial management applications and agency data for real-time status checks, packaged analysis, and decision support capabilities

Food Safety and Security Tools

Description: The Food Safety and Security Tools initiative will focus on developing interdepartmental capabilities for collaboration, real-time data collection, and tracking and retrieval of port- and plant-specific data regarding food and animals. All Government parties with responsibility for food safety (including USDA agencies as well as other Federal and state agencies) will have real-time data entry and access to tracking data for decision-making and investigations into the causes of foodborne illness.

Value Proposition: Homeland security heightens the expectations that USDA can effectively respond to emergencies, quickly communicate outbreaks, and thoroughly prevent threats of bio-terrorism. By ensuring the safety of the US food supply and improving USDA's execution of its mission, this initiative will be critical to protecting the health of all Americans.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active collaboration on existing efforts in other government Departments (FDA, EPA, Customs) • Integration with the Wireless initiative under Quicksilver to improve instant communications capability • Hardware and software tools for field staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart ID tags that link to a central data repository to assist in tracking food from initial processing to distribution • Develop a harmonized coding system for identification of products. • Handheld computers for field workers for data input and access at time of need • Integration with industry and government shipping and tracking data to provide field workers richer data upon which to act. • Advanced data mining and reporting capabilities on central data repositories

Human Resources Online

Description: Human Resources Online will enable employees to manage human resource-related issues online and assist in human resource planning and administration. This initiative will allow centralized online HR functions such as benefits administration, time and attendance, workforce planning, and recruiting to be managed through one Internet interface. It will provide self-service tools for employees to update their personal information, check vacation time, and access benefits information. It will also allow managers to assess their human resource needs quickly, provide greater insight on employees' skill sets and make available internal job postings and listings.

Value Proposition: This initiative will consolidate multiple efforts in the Department and its agencies; further, successful agency initiatives, such as CAMS, can be leveraged to achieve results quickly across the Department. Significant cost savings can be achieved by moving to an Internet-based HR system, and employees will be able to spend more time on mission-critical work instead of administrative tasks. Service will also be delivered more quickly, leading to higher job satisfaction and lowered administrative costs.

Short and Long-term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of time and attendance efforts into one Department-wide solution • HR portal with informational content and centralized contact capability • Definition of formal strategy and investigation outsourcing opportunities • Employee database enhanced to include secure, expanded, editable data about each employee • Web-based employee directory integrated with enhanced employee database • Partnerships with industry leaders in online classified ads (monster.com, hotjobs.com) to advertise USDA positions outside traditional government recruiting mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online benefits and compensation access across the Department • Standard online recruiting tool and recruiting support solution • Web-based travel management and expense reporting, tracking, and approval system

Physical Asset Management

Description: Electronic tracking mechanisms will be deployed to efficiently manage all USDA-owned physical assets, including real estate, vehicles, plans, computers, furniture, etc. in USDA Headquarters and the all state and local offices.

Value Proposition: This initiative will improve security, reduce theft, and mitigate waste, fraud, and abuse. It will also provide insight in reducing costs, recommending upgrades at the necessary times and optimizing asset usage. Finally, asset management allows the Department to better track inventory and manage surplus goods.

Short and Long-term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online maintenance request tracking system • Service request assignment tool (management tool for work allocation) • Automatic notification system for security/emergency events • Online equipment registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset tracking database and reporting capability • Security tags on all physical assets in all USDA buildings for active tracking and management • RF-ID tags for sensitive assets to constantly report status of asset to central data repository • Integration with eProcurement capability to purchase new assets and manage surplus goods based on reports generated from asset management system

Survey Capability

Description: Survey Capability for the Department will provide a global survey instrument: a suite of survey capabilities and/or outsourcing or insourcing arrangement to perform surveys requiring data collection from both internal and external sources.

Value Proposition: This initiative will save agencies money and enable surveys to be delivered and analyzed more quickly. It will provide agencies with tools to learn more from their customers, consolidate existing data collection methods, and improve customer service.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidation of agency efforts and definition of requirements for Department-wide solution Investigation of outsourcing and insourcing opportunities for certain surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey solution integrated with customer database to ensure data collection is not redundant Survey "creation center" for agencies that would like to conduct surveys; purchase, creation, and management of survey is conducted from one central location Robust online reporting and data analysis capabilities

3.2 eGovernment Enabling Opportunities

Below are USDA's eGovernment enabling opportunities; opportunities identified as Smart Choice Candidates are shaded in gray.

Opportunity Area	Primary Goal	Secondary Goals	Expected Scope of Initiative	Related Quicksilver Initiative:
Application Hosting	Employees and the Enterprise	NA	Enterprise-wide	No
Citizen and Public/Private Organization Database	All	NA	Enterprise-wide	Yes
Service Center eEnablement and CRM	Citizens	Employees and the Enterprise	Cross Mission Area	Yes
Data Management	All	NA	Enterprise-wide	No
Document/Records/Correspondence Management and Workflow	All	NA	Enterprise-wide	Yes
eLearning	Employees and the Enterprise	Citizens	Enterprise-wide	Yes
Knowledge/Content Management	All	N/A	Enterprise-wide	No
USDA Web Presence and Portal Strategy	All	NA	Enterprise-wide	Yes
User Authentication and Electronic Signatures	All	NA	Enterprise-wide	Yes

Application Hosting

Description: Application hosting will enhance current Department-wide application hosting capabilities to establish a tiered service model. Cross-Mission Area efforts and Department-wide efforts will be able to use this model to sign service level agreements (SLAs) to obtain various levels of service to host their eGovernment applications.

Value Proposition: Although current hosting capabilities exist, enhanced capabilities will accommodate the deployment not only of more applications, but additionally the higher-quality, more interactive applications required for eGovernment initiatives such as eLoans and eGrants.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of existing hosting capabilities and creation of recommendations for change • Evaluation of current staffing model based on coming eGovernment applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional data centers hosted by same group • Service Level Agreement model to be utilized by agencies and the Department for hosting new applications • Vendor assessment group for making Department-wide decisions on software (coordinate with Enterprise Architecture group) • Standardized eGovernment technical architecture (Microsoft, Sun, etc.)

Citizen and Public/Private Organization Database

Description: The Citizen and Public/Private Organization Database will create a single data store that houses citizen and public/private organization data (while maintaining compliance with Federal privacy laws and regulations). All internal USDA agencies will contribute to, access, and use this data as it relates to their needs and access rights; further, this data can also be used for authentication of citizens and industry partners.

Value Proposition: Few USDA agencies have all of their customer and partner information centrally stored in an easily accessible and maintainable manner; further, agencies do not share customer information, requiring citizens and public/private organization that interact with multiple USDA agencies to provide duplicative information. This capability will reduce the information-sharing burden placed on the public, enable cross-agency collaboration, and provide enhanced customer service. Further, a common customer database is a necessary prerequisite for cross-agency customer relationship management capabilities.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards for data model/information to be stored Aggregation and consolidation of all existing customer and partner databases Development, deployment, and population of initial database Creation of API/stored procedures for standard queries to the database from any online application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced reporting capabilities on repository Online application for citizen use to search repository on non-private data for collaboration purposes Applications to support "communities of interest" and "communities of buyers" based on database profiles and participation

Content/Knowledge Management

Description: Content and knowledge management will consist of a Departmental solution(s) for managing the development, approval, publishing, sharing, and classification of web pages, documents, multimedia, official records, and correspondence.

Value Proposition: As the Department transitions to increasingly the creation and use of information electronically, new tools and processes must be created to facilitate the creation and sharing of this information both internally and externally. Content and knowledge management prevent the USDA from "re-inventing the wheel" by giving visibility to the knowledge employees have built throughout the Department. Content and knowledge management also increase collaboration enterprise-wide, throughout the Federal government, and with the private sector, potentially saving significant time and resources.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A corporate taxonomy for consistent classification of all information Vendor analysis of content management capability and execution of pilot Employee directory for knowledge sharing purposes Yahoo-style directory of all internal sites, classified using the corporate taxonomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced search and retrieval capabilities (potential integration with web site search capabilities to locate document types in addition to web pages) Integration of Agriculture Library for primary knowledge managers to review content and facilitate consistent classification, and manage corporate taxonomy Integration of content management toolset in to all information sharing processes Knowledge sharing "culture" throughout the Department by using knowledge contributions as formal job performance metric

Data Management

Description: Provide the guiding principles and framework for implementing a corporate data management program, including: 1) The definition of a Department-wide data dictionary for back-end data sharing, 2) The creation of centralized databases "of record" and a corporate data architecture, and 3) Data life-cycle management and data sharing strategy.

Value Proposition: The number of legacy systems at USDA and the public and private organizations with which it interacts is very large. A data management strategy with all of its components will enable the Department to better perform back-end integration to enable enhanced services and consolidate disparate data stores into databases of record. This translates to the reuse of data, large time savings for system integration, additional support for a knowledge management capability, and an opportunity to lead government and industry in setting data standards.

Short and Long-term Vision

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common data dictionary (consistent with Federal datasets and standards) for future development of database-driven applications • Identification of redundant data elements across the Department • Development of Department data management strategy for use by all application development efforts • Develop migration plan for legacy data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of redundant data to "databases of record" throughout the Department • Department-wide data warehouses that include robust API's for interaction with all applications • Archiving, storage, backup and aging strategy • Participation in and leadership of data exchange forums

eLearning Engine

Description: The eLearning Engine will be a Department-wide eLearning curriculum platform to facilitate online training. A curriculum management system would allow employees and citizens to track their progress in completing a pre-defined curriculum, register for new courses, and allow management and trainers to track progress and add new courseware to the online repository. This capability allows any employee or customer to develop, monitor, and manage their respective training curriculum while leveraging common training content. This capability also allows individual agencies to publish courseware to one location to enable sharing of courseware and cross-agency collaboration.

Value Proposition: A top priority for the Department is training of its employees. The definition of a Department-wide curriculum management system will facilitate the migration to a hybrid model of online and classroom-based training. This will ensure training goals can be met more effectively than with an exclusively classroom-based curriculum.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department-wide curriculum management capability (outsourced or developed) • Online registration capabilities for offline course material • Migration of existing online course material to run within curriculum management system • Definition of standards (user interface, language support, system requirements, etc.) for eLearning applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsourcing arrangements for migration of offline curriculum to be provided online • USDA Graduate School as an online university • Advanced business simulation capabilities • Integration with knowledge management system to provide training at "point of need"

Electronic Document/Records/Correspondence Management/Workflow Tools

Description: Development of a Departmental solution for managing documents, official records, and correspondence electronically. This initiative would specifically develop:

1. Electronic management of records (including record identification, expiration tracking, and archiving);
2. Workflow capabilities (defining the flows, paths, and sign-off points that documents, records, and correspondence need to follow); and
3. A search capability for the intelligent storage and retrieval of documents and records.

This initiative will integrate with the corporate taxonomy development effort under the content/knowledge management initiative.

Value Proposition: As the Department transitions to using more electronic forms of information, ensuring that information moves throughout the organization and can be appropriately stored and easily retrieved is critical. A Department-wide model would provide multiple benefits, not only consolidating multiple ongoing data and records management efforts, but also greatly accelerating and improving agencies' ability to comply with Federal records management requirements and the information collection/reuse requirements outlined in the Paperwork Reduction Act and Government Paperwork Elimination Act.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of current agency efforts and definition of Department-wide requirements • Approval and enforcement of electronic records management policy • Pilot for single end-to-end workflow process for a standard office document, an official record, and/or a correspondence • Department-wide deployment of the controlled correspondence initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployment of document/records/ correspondence management client software to all PC's in the Department (or creation of a web-based solution) • Advanced search and retrieval capabilities (potential integration with web site search capabilities to locate document types other than web pages) • Integrated solution with NARA for outsourcing storage and archiving capabilities • USDA forms made available online using document/record management and workflow capability

Service Center eEnablement and CRM

Description: This initiative will provide internet access for Service Center customers and integrated capabilities for Service Center customers to interact with USDA through multiple channels, i.e. telephone calls, Internet accounts and in-person visits, and access the same customer accounts and appropriate data. This initiative would allow Service Center employees to manage the relationship between the USDA and its customers by tracking visits, correspondence, inquiries and services provided through customer data summaries. Citizens would be provided a similar customer experience regardless of the method in which they interact with the Service Center.

Value Proposition: Service Center CRM is important for the USDA aim of providing better service and for the President's goal of 'citizen-centered government.' CRM capabilities will allow USDA employees to provide improved customer/citizen service by empowering them with more complete information and customer histories. They will enable the development of robust self-service and online service tools that can be integrated with other means of communicating and transacting with the Department, allowing customers to conduct business with USDA using whatever channel they prefer most.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple interaction points for citizens to achieve similar tasks including phone, email, Web, and fax). • Single '1-800-ASK-USDA' phone number citizens can call to reach any agency • Kiosks at Service Centers to enable online access for those customers without home access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer centers with Internet access for citizens in Service Centers • CRM package for use by Service Representatives and Call Centers to better manage customer relationship and have real-time access to relevant information • Integration with customer database to enable Service Center to provide more guidance and personalization online and to help customers more effectively • Global "work order" number for all tasks that follow the lifecycle of a business process. Customer can reference that number at any point and Service Representative can retrieve relevant data and status of completion, etc.

User Authentication and Electronic Signatures

Description: User Authentication and Electronic Signatures will be a Department-wide strategy to define policies and a set of solutions for electronic alternatives to traditional ink signatures for citizens, partners and employees. This initiative will outline the specifications for selecting the most appropriate method based on risk and security levels and will develop a core set of Departmental capabilities around each one. This initiative will be developed in conjunction with the Quicksilver authentication initiative.

Value Proposition: A user authentication and authorization capability is critical to enabling eGovernment. Properly identifying, verifying, and authenticating users will enable USDA to execute business transactions and accept data online. Further, implementing a consistent solution will enhance capabilities for cross-agency and cross-initiative integration and reduce design, implementation, and support costs.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing of electronic signatures guidance for the Department • Enhanced employee database to serve as globally available user authentication tool • Guidance/vendor analysis on PKI or similar solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration with other Federal Departments on cross-government user authentication and rights management

USDA Web Presence and Portal Strategy

Description: One of the essential components of the eGovernment Program will be to enhance USDA web presentation to improve usability and provide a consistent customer experience. This initiative will allow all users to navigate USDA's websites and portals based on their desired tasks or topics, rather than by USDA's organizational structure. The initiative should redesign and restructure USDA's web sites based on standard user-interface guidelines for a consistent look and navigation across all USDA sites and web-based applications. The initiative also includes the definition of a portal strategy to ensure the Department is implementing their customer-centric portals consistently and in a manner that can be integrated with other Department applications.

Value Proposition: As USDA's web presence matures, and increasing amounts of data and applications are available online, USDA must ensure a simple and consistent user experience across the Department. While many USDA agency web sites and future portals are unique and do not share customer groups, these web standards will instill a high level of usability and ease of navigation, ultimately translating to a more effective customer experience. The web presence is also highly visible to all of USDA's constituencies and will likely become the primary information dissemination mechanism; how information and applications are presented will shape opinions about working with the USDA.

Short and Long term Vision:

Start Small	Think Big
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive UI style guide for all USDA web-based portals, web sites, and online applications along with templates and graphics for use • Definition of Departmental requirements for a portal capability • Definition and scope for main USDA portal • Agency pilot as a proof of concept prototype (AMS) • Suite of portal products for Department-wide use • Advanced search engine for searching all USDA web sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust metadata standards for all publicly and internally available web pages in order to yield better search results • Usability lab for testing all online applications to ensure ease of use • Multiple portals based on customer need • Integration with other high priority initiatives • Global style sheet standards across the Department

4.0 Execution and Delivery

USDA has established a concrete set of priorities and initiatives that will be implemented over the next 5 years. To achieve our collective mission and vision, this section will outline:

- The sequence of initiatives and an estimate of their development time
- The governance and leadership policy to ensure these initiatives are implemented and maintained appropriately
- The importance of integrating eGovernment into USDA's IT Capital Planning Process, improving this process, and developing new potential sources of funding
- The skill set and training required for implementing and using eGovernment
- The prerequisite internal technical capabilities to develop, launch, and maintain the strategic and enabling recommendations



4.1 High-level Time Line

The timeline is shown below: As mentioned previously, a subset of the 24 opportunity areas have been prioritized by the eGovernment Executive Council and approved by the CIO and Deputy Secretary as high priority Smart Choice Candidates. Qualification as high priority denotes an intention to show demonstrable, measurable progress in the first 18 months of developing this Plan. Therefore, execution of all high priority opportunities begins immediately. The timeline is shown below:

Time (months)

	eGovernment Opportunity Area	High Priority Areas	1-6	6-12	12-18	18-24	24-30	30-36	36-42	42-48	48-54	54-60
1	eRulemaking		Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
2	Survey capability		Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
3	Nutrition/Dietary Guidelines/Food Safety Program		Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
4	Physical Asset Management		Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
5	Financial Management Tools		Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big
6	Department-wide eProcurement (IAS)	High Priority	Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
7	Online Export Assistance and Marketing	High Priority	Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
8	Food Safety and Security Tools	High Priority	Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
9	Human Resources Online		Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big
10	Online Management of eLoans	High Priority	Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big
11	eEligibility		Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing
12	eGrants	High Priority	Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big
13	ePermits/Certificates		Start Small	Think Big								
14	Web-based Supply Chain Management	High Priority	Start Small	Think Big								
1	USDA Web presence (UI Guidelines and portal strategy)	High Priority	Start Small	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Think Big	Ongoing
2	User Authentication Electronic Signatures	High Priority	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
3	Customer and Public/Private Organization Database		Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
4	Service Center eEnablement		Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
5	Data Management	High Priority	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
6	Application Hosting		Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
7	CRM for Service Centers		Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big
8	eLearning	High Priority	Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big
9	Document/Records/Correspondence Management with workflow	High Priority	Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Start Small	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big	Think Big
10	Knowledge management/content management											Think Big

- Start Small Development Time
- Think Big Development Time
- Ongoing enhancements and maintenance



There are several important highlights to note about the timeline:

- Many opportunity areas must be repeated on a regular basis in accordance with business requirements. For example, the USDA web presence must be regularly updated to accommodate new types of technology and applications being deployed online.
- Most enabling opportunity areas will be completed by the end of the short-term period to lay the groundwork for development and enhancement of long term strategic initiatives.
- All opportunity areas require maintenance and enhancements once the initial implementation has been completed
- While high priority initiatives will be emphasized, we will undertake as many opportunities as human, financial, and technical resources allow for; the presence of these opportunities – with their associated short-term (Start Small) and long-term (Think Big) actions – suggests the importance of their being undertaken to varying degrees at some point during this five year period.

4.2 Governance

eGovernment crosses major organizational boundaries and raises critical strategy, policy, and control issues at the core of the Department's mission.

Successfully capitalizing on the eGovernment opportunities delineated in this Plan requires effective leadership across USDA.

And, increasingly, the complexities of eGovernment require not only effective leadership, but also the creativity to align the organization and key policies in the right way to translate a vision into productive results.

Additional, more detailed coverage of these topics can be found in a Governance document and in the eGovernment Working Group and Executive Council Charter both of which are on the USDA eGovernment Web site.

4.2.1 Leadership

Fortunately, many traditional leadership qualities are relevant to implementing eGovernment. Good communication, organization, and negotiation skills are imperative. However, to effectively lead the development of eGovernment opportunities and direct the eGovernment change journey successfully, our leaders must also develop and exhibit additional behaviors. Effective leaders of eGovernment must:

- Work toward achieving USDA's eGovernment mission, vision, strategic goals and objectives
- Create and use a broad perspective outside their own agency to formulate a direction and facilitate efforts that will benefit the Department as a whole

- Withstand risk that comes with accelerated timelines and working with new technologies
- Understand eGovernment projects' needs in relation to the agency or Department's needs
- Be sensitive to the needs of other stakeholders and encourage an atmosphere of understanding and shared communication within the agency and within the Department
- Balance top-down pressure with bottom-up concerns
- Take advantage of the next best course of action when targeted opportunities fall through and be able to redirect the eGovernment initiative
- Maintain high motivation and a tireless work ethic

Given these leadership characteristics, it is clear these qualities need to be exhibited beyond the executive level. As initiatives progress and stakeholder commitment expands, leaders can be found at many levels, from the most junior developer to a senior executive sponsor. At USDA, leaders can be segmented into three types: sponsors, change agents and champions.

Sponsors, such as the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, Under and Assistant Secretaries, and Agency Administrators, should demonstrate their support by providing direction, funding and resources. Leadership responsibilities include:

- Sanctioning, launching and sustaining eGovernment efforts,
- Being accountable for the success of eGovernment at USDA,
- Allocating essential resources throughout the USDA, and
- Maintaining and building visible buy-in and commitment.

Change agents are also vital to eGovernment because they are the official advocates in making inter-

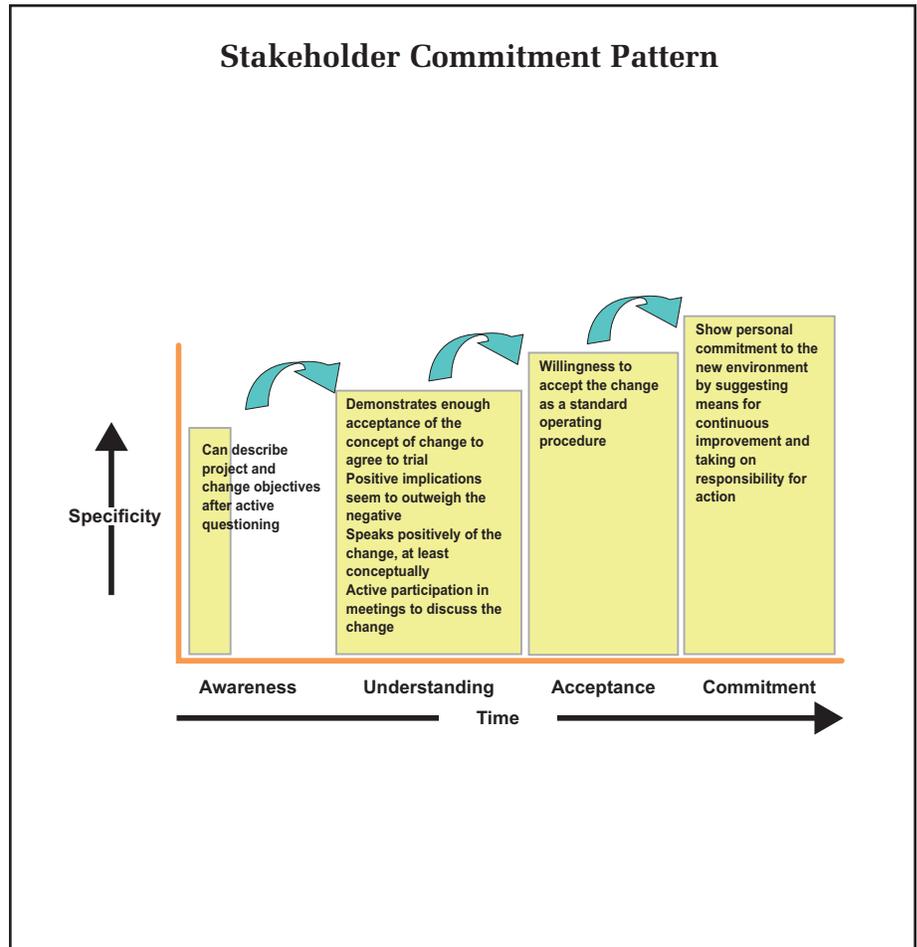
nal and external audiences aware of changes. They include the eGovernment Executive Council and Working Group, Webmasters, and eGovernment Project Managers. Leadership responsibilities include:

- Displaying visible ownership and establishing proper direction and focus,
- Identifying eGovernment opportunities,
- Assessing potential problems and resolving issues and risks, and
- Highlighting success stories and share best practices.

eGovernment champions not only serve as initiators by motivating co-workers to embrace eGovernment, but they also demonstrate their long-term unyielding commitment and support through their day-to-day activities. eGovernment champions can be found at all levels, but examples include full time eGovernment representatives from each mission area, Program Leads, and IT professionals. Leadership responsibilities include:

- Maintaining proper direction and focus,
- Creating excitement and motivating others,
- Gaining commitment and support from co-workers, and
- Executing the implementation of individual eGovernment initiatives.

To effectively implement eGovernment at USDA, leaders must understand and leverage four stages of stakeholder expectations about change such as that required by eGovernment transformation. Communication and leadership play a critical role in ensuring users pass through each stage successfully. The four stages are:



To move USDA stakeholders along this spectrum, ongoing leadership and sponsorship are necessary, as are collaborative working relationships between OCIO and agencies and staff offices, between the field and headquarters, between executives and non-executives, and between USDA and the public and private organizations it works with to deliver information, services and programs to the public USDA serves.

4.2.2 Structure

The governance structure for eGovernment extends to the highest levels of the Federal government as both a top priority for

Congress and a central tenet of President Bush's Management Agenda. At USDA, the Deputy Secretary serves as the executive sponsor for eGovernment and has charged the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) with leading a Departmental eGovernment Program that facilitates collaboration and provides overall strategic direction and tactical guidance to the agencies and staff offices.

To achieve an enterprise-wide approach to eGovernment, the OCIO worked closely with USDA agencies and staff offices to define an organizational structure that could execute a Department-wide Program and guide this long-term change journey. The following

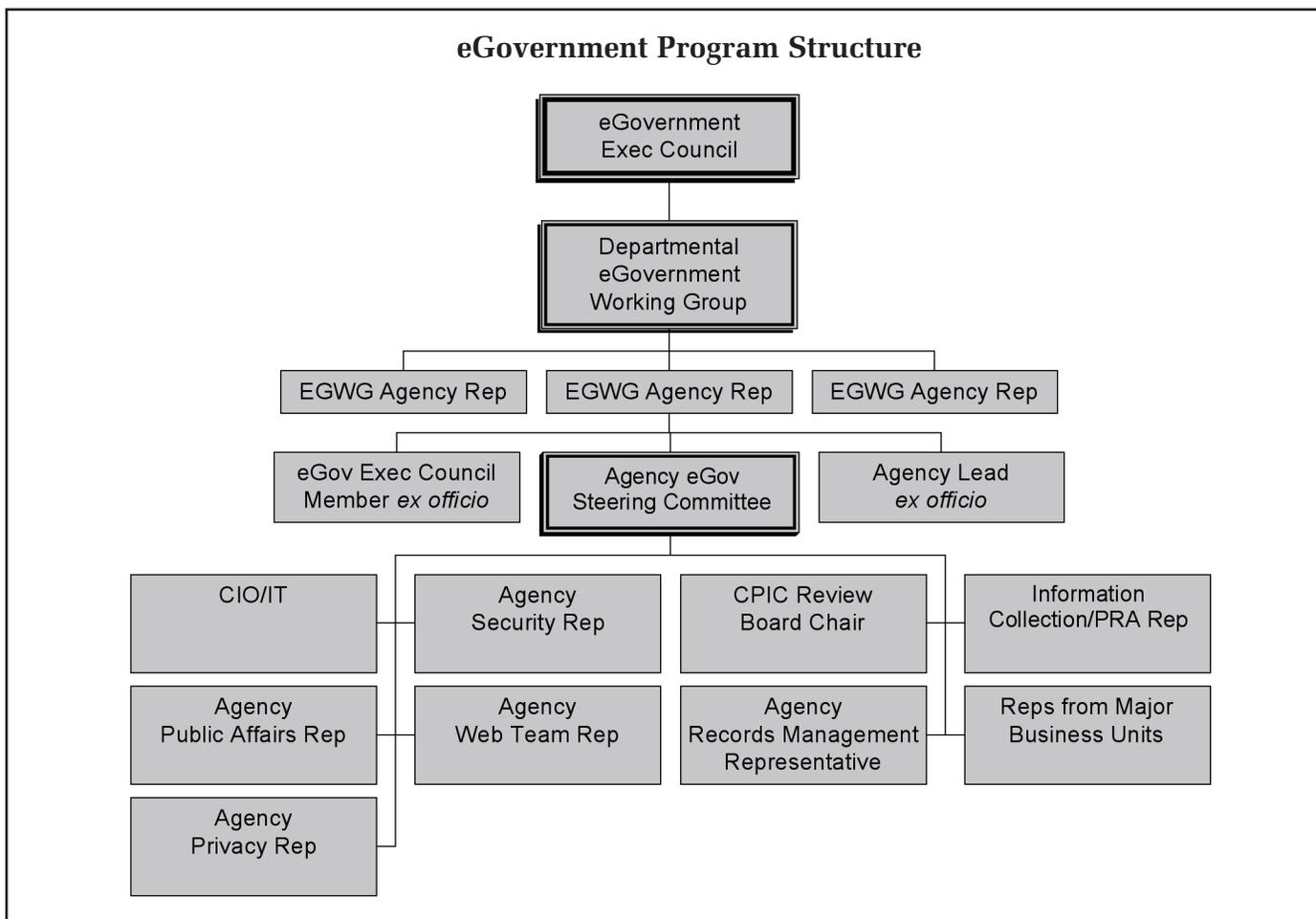
chart represents USDA's eGovernment Program, which consists of an eGovernment Executive Council, a Working Group, Agency Representatives and Agency eGovernment Steering Committees.

The Executive Council is an advisory board comprised of Senior Executive Program Leaders appointed by their Under Secretaries to represent their respective mission areas. Members of the Council provide guidance, leadership and final decision in establishing the Department's eGovernment goals, objectives, opportunities and communicating eGovernment as a priority to all USDA managers and employees. Council members

identify and raise cross-agency issues and represent the eGovernment champions for their mission area.

Working Group members are Executive Sponsors designated by their Agency Administrators. eGovernment Working Group members represent their respective agencies and actively work to develop the eGovernment mission, vision, goals and objectives. eGovernment Working Group members coordinate their agencies' eGovernment efforts, including the refinement and implementation of agencies' eGovernment tactical plans.

Agency eGovernment Steering Committees, chaired by each agency's eGovernment Working



Group member, help define issues unique to each agency to represent in the larger Department-wide forum. These committees are generally comprised of program leaders as well as specialists representing eGovernment-related issues such as Web sites, capital planning and investment control, public affairs, information technology, security, privacy, information collection and PRA forms management, records management and telecommunications.

As the Department moves from the strategic planning stage of eGovernment into the tactical planning and implementation stages, continuing to utilize this existing governance structure is critically important. It provides the foundation to:

- Establish a shared vision,
- Share best practices and lessons learned,
- Determine solutions to common problems,
- Raise and resolve issues, and
- Make key programmatic decisions.

The shared management structure of the Deputy Secretary's office, the OCIO, and the enterprise-wide eGovernment Executive Council and Working Group provides comprehensive oversight and integration of USDA's eGovernment efforts. However, agency eGovernment leaders will be challenged to align their efforts with the direction of the Departmental eGovernment Program while also maintaining the spirit of their agency's own unique needs and eGovernment environment, which can vary widely.

Leveraging the Agency eGovernment Steering Committees to oversee and integrate their agencies' individual eGovernment projects and related activities is

the key link between governance at the Departmental level and at the agency level. Just as the enterprise-wide Executive Council and Working Group oversee and coordinate eGovernment efforts across the Department, each agency's eGovernment Steering Committee should provide the same level of integration across all of the eGovernment initiatives in which that agency participates. Each individual project should also have its own formal project management structure that rolls up into this broader agency-level program management.

Given that this Plan delineates a full range of eGovernment opportunities, from internal USDA interagency efforts to enterprise-wide efforts to interdepartmental efforts, each of these types of initiatives will require increasingly complex degrees of collaboration with an increasing number of parties. The specific level of project management collaboration will differ according to the type of initiative and according to the nature of the initiative itself, but in all cases the collaboration will be necessary from the requirements stage through to the implementation and maintenance phase.

Finally, in this vein, USDA has changed SES performance measures to ensure that agency and Departmental leadership are actively engaged in providing stewardship to eGovernment. All SES leadership will be held accountable at the objective level and at the project level where appropriate.

4.2.3 Process and Policy

Ensuring a robust, comprehensive policy framework is in place and aligned with the USDA



eGovernment mission, vision, goals and objectives is essential not only to achieving those goals but also to maintaining the stability and integrity of the eGovernment Program. The nature of eGovernment necessitates a variety of policies and procedures, including:

- IT Capital Planning and Investment Control,
- Information Collections Processes,
- System Development Methodology,
- Enterprise Architecture,
- Web and Application Hosting,
- Security,
- Authentication and Authorization,
- Privacy,
- Data Management,
- Electronic Records Management,
- Collaboration and Messaging,
- Internet Usage,
- User Interaction; and
- Telecommunications

Currently, in a number of cases, eGovernment needs are addressed by existing USDA policies, but are not communicated, monitored, or enforced adequately.

Additionally, USDA's suite of policies is lacking in a number of areas critical to successful eGovernment implementation. For example, USDA needs an enterprise-wide solution to electronic signatures, a consistent web and application hosting approach, and user interaction guidelines in order to support its eGovernment efforts fully.

For a successful eGovernment Program, USDA must ensure all affected agencies and staff offices are consistently involved in the full lifecycle of policies and directives regulating eGovernment. This lifecycle includes the steps of:

1. Conception,
2. Development,
3. Communication,



4. Monitoring, and
5. Revision.

At the outset, stakeholders should have a role in determining the need for policies, standards and guidance. Likewise, all stakeholders should be involved during policy and standards development and given the opportunity to provide feedback before policies are finalized. When implementing new policies, proper communications are critical to gaining an appropriate level of awareness, acceptance and usage. If modifications to eGovernment-related policies, procedures, and standards are necessary, proper communications must also be taken to inform employees and affected partners of the amended policy.

Throughout this process, USDA should monitor and enforce the consistent implementation of these policies to guarantee policy utilization. This phase should also include an assessment of how the current policies meet eGovernment needs and whether they need to be revised. As we follow this lifecycle for governing the implementation of eGovernment across the Department, USDA should aim to standardize eGovernment-related policies to accomplish the greatest impact across all agencies and staff offices while still allowing them flexibility in determining the procedures by which they comply with Departmental policy.

Additional treatment of these policy issues can be found in a recent gap analysis paper on eGovernment policies available on the USDA eGovernment Web site. Moreover, additional information regarding the governing legislation spurring adoption of these policies can be found in Appendix D.

4.3 Finance

For the most part, USDA's agencies receive funding as separate line items in Congressional appropriations bills, including separate capital and IT asset amounts by agency. This adds an extra layer of complexity to USDA's efforts to strategically manage its portfolio of IT investments as mandated by Clinger-Cohen and encouraged by the President's Management Agenda, OMB and the Government Performance and Results Act. In a few limited examples such as the Common Computing Environment (CCE) and Y2K initiatives, USDA has seen the benefit of centrally managed, funding streams controlled by the Deputy Secretary and CIO.

The Department is currently in the process of revising its Capital Planning and Investment Control (CPIC) processes that are managed by the EITIRB and chaired by the Deputy Secretary in order to effectively integrate eGovernment and GPEA. It is also amending its directions to USDA agencies in this regard as part of a broader effort to assure standardization and consistency of approach for IT Capital Planning across all USDA agencies and staff offices. While IT investments for FY 2003 have already been identified, each investment will be re-evaluated against the high priority areas (also referred to as "Smart Choices Candidates") and other criteria defined in the eGovernment strategy to ensure that mission area objectives are in alignment. Those investments that do not support the eGovernment goals established by the eGovernment Executive Council may need to be revisited.

Additional reviews will occur during the acquisition approval process, the information collection approval process, and the rulemaking clearance process. In each of these types of reviews, determinations will be made as to whether the program areas are supporting the eGovernment goals.

The Department has undertaken this eGovernment strategic planning effort in accord with the President's Management Agenda and OMB guidance that specifically encourages the development of enterprise-wide eGovernment strategies that prioritize IT investments. Through eGovernment strategic planning, the development of a robust eGovernment Program, thorough and timely responses to mandates such as GPEA and E-File, and the crafting of an Enterprise Architecture, we are attempting to build the confidence of oversight groups and Congressional appropriators that USDA is on the right course in terms of electronically-enabled modernization and business transformation. We in turn hope that this will lead to increased funding levels for IT in general and eGovernment in particular for the Department and its agencies in the future.

The Department is also cognizant of the need to prepare stronger, consistent business cases to meet OMB's standards for funding for major investments.

In addition to improving the process and establishing more formal linkages with the Department's annual budgeting processes, we are also exploring new ways to increase the amount of funds available for eGovernment:

- Applying for competitive interagency funding – last year GSA

gave out \$1.2 million for creative interagency efforts. This year, President Bush has requested \$20 million and a Congressional proposal has requested \$200 million for a general eGovernment pool of funds for which Departments would compete. This source of funding, analogous to Y2K funding, should be increasing over time.

- Leveraging resources from other Departments and other USDA agencies – through Quicksilver and partnerships with other Federal agencies and by combining efforts and funding streams across USDA agencies – economies of scale should be realized. Similarly, instead of several agencies attempting to solve common problems independently, human and financial resources can be saved by integrating efforts in to a Departmental endeavor. For example, one of our opportunity areas is Online Human Resources, toward which multiple agencies have been working on a solution. By combining efforts, the Department can create a single, more efficient solution to serve all its agencies.
- Securing funding for eGovernment solutions upfront in the authorization and appropriations process – it is much easier to get a new process enabled than to try and fix a broken process. All managers of new and significantly expanded programs must be encouraged to consider electronic options from the start. Similarly, all new information collections with over 50,000 respondents should be electronically enabled from their inception.
- Testing new procurement options – other government

agencies domestically (e.g., Department of the Navy, Office of Student Financial Aid at the Department of Education) and internationally have used creative, competitive procurement vehicles to partner with the private sector including value-based arrangements such as Share-in-Savings, Share-in-Revenue, and incentives-based contracting. These arrangements change the risk-reward tradeoff for private sector firms and pay them for quantifiable results delivered.

- Employing user fees and transaction-based charges that are returned to the IT Capital pool for maintaining and improving eGovernment capabilities – a minimal charge to suppliers for procurement transactions, for citizens on loan transactions, on nonprofits for an electronic grants systems, withholding a portion of state/local or non-profit administrative overhead funding are potential examples.
- Creating a pool of monies for future eGovernment spending based on demonstrated savings – if for example an eGovernment application saves the Department an estimated \$50 million annually, a portion of those resources should be apportioned to continual enhancements and improvements in information and communications technologies. This is an increasingly common practice in the private sector that USDA should replicate.
- Reprogramming funds from program dollars to IT/Capital dollars when surpluses exist.
- Segregating funds for new development versus maintenance and establishing dollar/percentage targets in both areas.

- Making an integrated, Departmental case for a centrally controlled pool of funds similar to CCE and Y2K for eGovernment under the auspices of the Deputy Secretary and CIO to facilitate transformation and reform across USDA in line with Secretary Veneman's vision expressed in Food and Agricultural Policy in the Fall of 2001. OMB, the USDA Office of Budget Policy and Analysis (OBPA), and CFO initially have expressed support for such an idea to fund enterprise-wide solutions.

4.4 Skills and Training

This section describes the skills and training that are necessary to actually create and develop each eGovernment opportunity. Building an eGovernment application will require a multi-disciplinary team, consisting of personnel with five distinct skill sets:

- Project Management
- Strategy Development
- Business Process Development
- Technology Development
- Change Management

This section describes the specific skills needed in those five areas to successfully deliver any future eGovernment applications, as well as skills necessary to successfully use eGovernment applications.

4.4.1 Skills Necessary to Build eGovernment

Project Management

Project management resources are required to coordinate the



activities of the team and to communicate and collaborate with other efforts that may be concurrent. Specifically, project management includes understanding and gaining agreement on project objectives, deliverables, scope, risk, cost, approach, and other factors. Project managers are also responsible for ensuring that the team has the right skill set to complete the project and must track progress against a workplan.

Given the nature of the role, the necessary project management skill set revolves around leadership and organization abilities:

- Strong communication/interpersonal skills and a willingness to collaborate
- A working understanding of Internet technologies
- Work planning and resource management
- Writing skills

- Understanding of business processes and organization impacts due to business process change
- A strong business acumen to collaborate effectively with the business owners of the application

Strategy Development

Strategy Development involves planning and oversight related to the USDA's overall direction. It includes assessment of the environment in which the USDA operates (including both internal and external factors), and the creation and execution of plans to best accomplish our mission given that environment. A strategy is usually created at the outset of application development to understand the broader impact of development and how it affects the overall business from a monetary perspective.

Skills needed to be successful at Strategy Development include:

- Leadership Skills
- Forecasting and Analysis Skills
- Writing skills
- Understanding of business processes and organization impacts due to business process change
- Strong communication/interpersonal skills
- A working knowledge of Internet technologies
- A strong business acumen to collaborate effectively with the business owners of the application

We have crafted a Web-based eGovernment Guidebook for USDA agencies and offices to help them with long-term eGovernment strategic planning as well as elements of agency tactical planning over the shorter term.



Business Process Development

Business processes are a set of activities that transform a set of inputs into a set of outputs (such as content, services, and products) for another person or process. The execution of business processes is usually supported by a technology capability. Before building eGovernment applications, it is imperative to review and potentially re-engineer the business processes related to that application. Therefore, people skilled in business process re-engineering must be included as part of any project team.

Business process developers should likely have the following skill sets:

- Expertise in business process methodologies
- Expertise in business process mapping and mapping tools

- Organization development skills
- Working knowledge of Internet technologies
- Activity based costing
- Stakeholder analysis
- Writing skills

Technology Development

Once business requirements for applications have been defined, technologists must become involved to design, build and maintain the application. Therefore, a technology team must possess skills to support the development, implementation, and operations of the eGovernment applications and systems.

Specific responsibilities may include application design, technical architecture design, database design and administration, user-interface design, application development, application testing, system testing, and stress testing. To accomplish these tasks when building an eGovernment application, our people must possess the following skills:

- Database Administration
- Internet Development Technologies
- System Administration
- Cybersecurity
- Technical Architecture Design
- Network Architecture and Administration
- User Interface
- Graphic Design
- Usability Expertise
- Telecommunications
- Understanding of business processes and organization impacts due to business process change
- A strong business acumen to collaborate effectively with the business owners of the application

- Writings skills for development of documentation, issue papers, etc.

Change Management

When introducing new applications to our employees, inevitably many people will be asked to perform their jobs differently. Business processes, as well as the traditional organizational structures created to execute them, will require change in order to effectively utilize eGovernment. Commitment is needed from those individuals whose jobs are affected and who will see the largest change in their day-to-day lives by the eGovernment initiatives.

Change management experts are necessary to ease these transitions. Their major activities usually include organization and/or team restructuring, training, and communications and marketing to not only build an awareness of new capabilities, but obtain an understanding of the nature and intent of the change, an acceptance that these new capabilities will help facilitate positive change, and ultimately, a commitment and personal ownership of the change initiative.

To perform these activities effectively, a mix of the following skill sets is required:

- Understanding of business processes and organizational impacts due to business process change
- Strong communication/interpersonal skills
- A working knowledge of Internet technologies
- A strong business acumen to collaborate effectively with the business owners of the application
- Writing skills

4.4.2 Successful Use of eGovernment Applications

While understanding the skills required to implement the eGovernment initiatives is important, it is also imperative to understand the skills necessary for employees, citizens, and private industry to accept and effectively utilize these new applications. In fact, it is crucial to the success of this Plan that employees have the knowledge, skills, and support available to not only effectively use newly deployed applications, but also perceive the change as an accepted norm by articulating personal ownership, encouraging others to commit to using the new capabilities and ultimately have a real involvement and participation in the overall implementation of this Plan.

To become an effective user and advocate of new eGovernment initiatives, there are specific skills that every employee, citizen, and private industry employee should work to develop. These include proficiency in using a Web browser and e-mail package and awareness of eGovernment capabilities, especially an understanding of how eGovernment can improve how employees do their jobs.

4.5 Required Technology Capabilities

As with legacy applications currently in operation at the USDA, the deployment of eGovernment opportunities requires a suite of technical capabilities, supporting business processes, and organizational structure. This section will discuss the technical capabilities that must be present to build and maintain the applications defined in the 24 eGovernment initiatives outlined in this Plan.

The chart below shows all technology capabilities that are necessary to realize the long-term eGovernment strategic vision. Although only technical capabilities will be discussed in this section, the processes and organizational structure that undergird these technical capabilities are critical components of a successful, robust eGovernment portfolio.

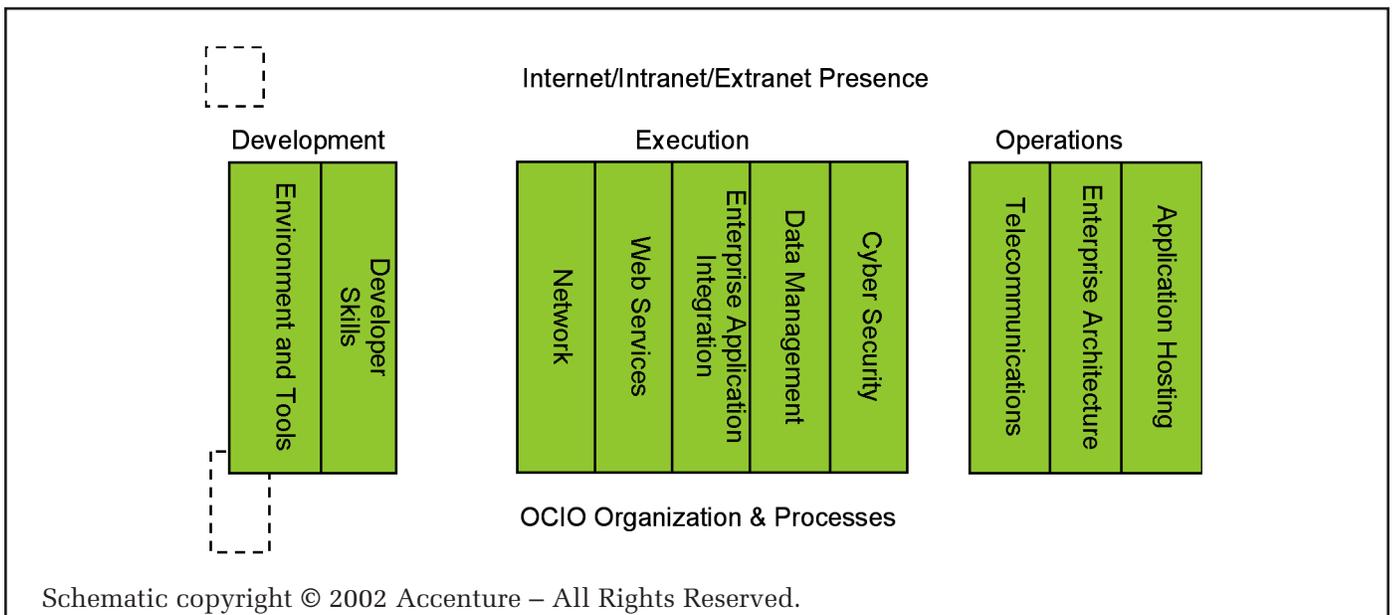
A few of these technology capabilities are prerequisites (Web Presence, Data Management) to the development of many of the short-term strategic eGovernment opportunities. As a result, these technology capabilities are represented as an eGovernment enabling opportunity in the eGovernment Strategic Plan.

4.5.1 Development Architecture

Based on a set of business requirements, the Department and its agencies must be able to design, build and enhance the applications that constitute its eGovernment portfolio. There are two primary capabilities required in this regard:

4.5.1.1 Environment and Tools

Environment and tools include the availability of Integrated Development Environments (IDEs), coding standards, project



management tools, and version control tools for use by project teams.

Currently, individual agencies have purchased these capabilities, but few Departmental standards or enterprise licensing agreements for these capabilities exist.

Further, many standards do not exist or have been defined but are not enforced. To develop future Interdepartmental, Departmental, or cross-mission area applications, we must:

- Create development standards for all eGovernment application development to ensure all applications are developed consistently and efficiently.
- Define a standard testing strategy to ensure all applications are being released to their stakeholders with the highest possible quality. This includes system testing, stress testing, and security testing.
- Enable application development teams with managed development, testing, and production environments during the development lifecycle.
- Deploy standard project management tools, including financial tools, workplanning, risk analysis, and status reporting templates to project managers.
- Deploy a standard version control capability to application developers to help facilitate application development and ensure against productivity loss.

4.5.1.2 Developer Skills

Many agencies have initiatives to bring their IT staff up to speed on current development technologies. To fully achieve our goals, we should look to further these efforts Department-wide and ensure agencies and corporate alike have the following skill sets:

- Database Administration
- Internet Development Technologies
- System Administration
- System Training
- Security Expertise
- Technical Architecting
- Network Architecting and Administration
- User Interface, Graphic Design, and Usability Expertise

4.5.2 Execution Architecture

The execution capabilities form the infrastructure to run both legacy and eGovernment applications. Once applications are implemented, we will depend on these execution capabilities to help deliver services to the intended audience.

4.5.2.1 Network

In the context of this Plan, we define network as the level of access available to headquarters, field offices, and employee homes. Currently, some form of network access is available across the enterprise; to a lesser extent, employees have access from their homes and through mobile devices.

As eGovernment applications become more mission-critical and more bandwidth is required to run many of the applications, we must take several steps to ensure we are providing the level of access required to operate effectively. Specifically we must:

- Provide dedicated broadband access that is available in both headquarters and every field office location
- Provide secure remote 56k dial-up access or VPN capabilities for remote users

- Enhance our network configuration requirements to allow a USDA employee to "configure once, run anywhere"
- Intelligently manage our network through the use of network monitoring tools and bandwidth throttling
- Plan for future use of wireless applications in our headquarters, field offices, and off-site locations and implement solutions for relevant business uses
- Build partnerships to provide broadband home office capabilities. This is especially important, as 80% of our employees state they would like to telecommute.

4.5.2.2 Web Services

For the USDA, there are two types of Web services: Department-wide services that are used by IT developers or business developers as enablers to deliver strategic eGovernment solutions, and back-office services that are used to enhance the delivery of another eGovernment application.

Several Web services were deemed significant enough to be included as one of our 24 eGovernment opportunity areas. For example, User Authentication is a capability we feel is important to offer to our application developer community as an enterprise-wide solution to help facilitate secure transactions. The development of enterprise-wide services is especially important to ensure capabilities are developed once, without the redundancy of multiple agencies working on similar efforts.

4.5.2.3 Enterprise Application Integration

Our ability to deploy Enterprise Application Architecture (EAI) capabilities will determine how reliably current data and processes can be utilized to develop new eGovernment applications and enhance existing efforts.

The National Information Technology Center (NITC) currently offers system integration services, and there have been nascent legacy system integration efforts by the National Finance Center (NFC) to deliver their ePayroll system to the Department.

However, in order to capitalize on our existing systems and data, we should create a robust application integration capability. The following are specific capabilities we should work to develop:

- A standard messaging protocol and capability (ORB) for applications to share data
- Enterprise-wide syntactic translation of one data set into another e.g., translation of date formats)
- Enterprise-wide semantic translation of data based on underlying data definitions or meaning (e.g., conversion from the English system to the metric system)
- Centralized visibility and control of multi-step technical business processes traversing multiple applications
- Pre-built adapters to technology and application solutions such as EDI solutions, messaging software, specialized technologies (i.e. COM, CORBA, EJB, etc), and database environments
- Connection managed to and from source application, including security (authentication, authorization, and encryption)

4.5.2.4 Data Management

Data management is a critical enabler of multiple strategic opportunities. Please refer to Section 3.2 under "eGovernment Enabling Opportunity – Data Management" to read about the short term and long-term capabilities we need to develop in this area.

4.5.2.5 Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is a key issue in every eGovernment application that is in production today and every application that will be introduced in the future. USDA currently has an aggressive security policy and has recently been appropriated significant funds to further that strategy. Besides these short-term goals however, there are enterprise-wide capabilities that we can implement that integrate cybersecurity concerns into the fabric of the Department:

- Managed virus server and virus software implementation on all desktops
- Comprehensive security communications plan
- Annual business process evaluation to detect potential security issues
- Policy and breach alert mechanisms
- Host-based intrusion detection services
- Managed web filtering to check for inappropriate use of resources
- Certificate revocation and management services
- Non-repudiation support
- Managed distribution of classified materials
- Managed VPN services; steady state monitoring and review of configuration change requests

- Security help desk
- Wireless network monitoring and intrusion detection
- Integration of biometrics into security infrastructure

Because of the importance of cybersecurity, we have identified electronic signatures and user authentication as a high priority opportunity area.

4.5.3 Operations Architecture

The Operations Architecture defines how eGovernment applications are managed on a day-to-day basis. More specifically, the operations architecture defines standards for the technology that is supported in the enterprise, how changes are managed for those operation-level standards, how systems are monitored, and what maintenance is necessary.

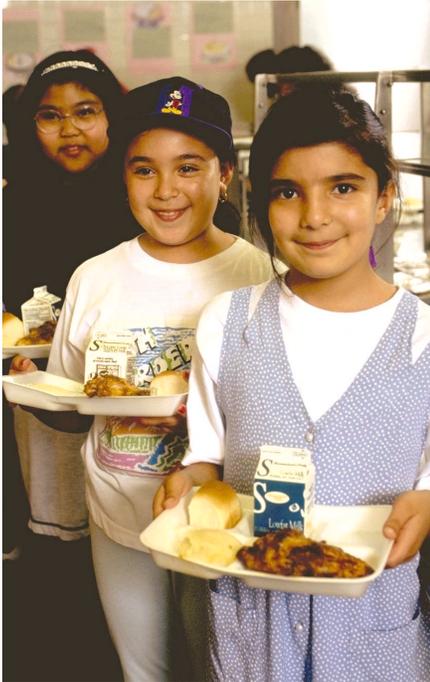
4.5.3.1 Enterprise Architecture

The USDA Enterprise Architecture should define standards for technologies that are supported in the enterprise. However, our Enterprise Architecture is also a living plan that will continue to grow and mature as projects introduce new technologies and new technologies are developed by Industry.

Our Enterprise Architecture should start by developing technology principles that support our business drivers and goals and quickly evolve in to making specific recommendations on technology platforms that should be utilized by the Department. These recommendations can serve as a guideline for what software solution to utilize for a given business purpose.

USDA currently has an Enterprise Architecture effort focused on cataloging all USDA





applications in production. In addition to this tracking capability, the Enterprise Architecture should work towards the following:

- Definition of standards throughout the Department on the desktop level according to business usage for:
 - Hardware configurations
 - Operating system
 - Office productivity software
 - Web browser, e-mail package
- Definition of standard enterprise-wide file formats
- Standard server configurations and limited choice of server environments for desired functions
- Networked file and print serving (Internet printing protocol) capabilities
- Standard desktop and server images used for all new machines in the Department
- Vendor analysis group to define standards and perform evaluations of software and hardware for major business uses
- Dedicated support staff to troubleshoot hardware/software issues on supported platforms
- Enterprise Architecture management system to track all enterprise systems and report on those systems
- Automatic software updates on login to network
- Roaming user capability
- Remote profile storage to enable access to settings and applications from any location at USDA

4.5.3.2 Application Hosting

Application hosting is a capability necessary for the operations of all eGovernment applications. Therefore given its large impact, it has been elevated to become a defined eGovernment opportunity

area. Please refer to the Application Hosting area in Section 3.2 to read about the short term and long term capabilities we need to develop in application hosting.

4.5.3.3 Telecommunications

All eGovernment applications require a robust and reliable telecommunications infrastructure to operate effectively. This infrastructure includes voice and data networks that are generally wired, land-based systems, but also include wireless capabilities where applicable.

USDA's existing telecommunications infrastructure must be redesigned and upgraded to meet growing eGovernment demands. Currently the Department is managing a telecommunications project, the Universal Telecommunications Network (UTN), which will address eGovernment requirements and other Departmental/agency telecommunications demands.

The vision of the UTN is a *robust telecommunications network that provides, scalable, reliable, secure, cost effective services, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to enable USDA agencies to meet Departmental missions and goals for serving their customers.*

The UTN will be designed, operated and maintained under the direction of the USDA's Chief Information Officer, who will enter into a partnership with world-class partners and Agencies/Staff Offices to implement, operate and manage network services. The network's functional characteristics (breadth of services, capacity, security, and reliability) will be based upon departmental and agency business

processes required to meet mandated missions and achieve strategic goals. The architectural design will ensure network stability and employ proven, state of the market technologies, improving security and enhancing telecommunications interoperability for the agencies. Network service features will be scalable, providing the flexibility and agility to accommodate changing requirements and opportunities to continuously improve service to the public.

UTN Project Objectives include:

- Providing continuous network monitoring, stability, and sufficient capacity to ensure quality service and attainment of Departmental and agency mission goals.
 - Ensuring business requirements drive telecommunications service requirements. Preparing today for the service and support requirements of tomorrow.
 - Providing best value telecommunications service to USDA offices and agencies to ensure best business practices for the Department.
 - Implementing a secure enterprise network infrastructure that protects USDA information, safeguards the physical network, and ensures continuity of operations.
 - Providing continuous monitoring and proactive network services, support and casualty response.
 - Introducing telecommunications network planning and management tools for USDA leaders to use for decision-making and providing strategic direction to the world-class telecommunications service partner.
- Achieving consensus on metrics to define success for the following attributes: robust, reliable, and secure.
 - Establishing a telecommunications Service Level Agreement framework for service performance parameters and billing for services used.

Appendix A: USDA's Current eGovernment Capabilities

Goal 1: Citizens <i>Improve citizens' knowledge of and access to USDA to enhance service delivery.</i>	
Customer Service	<p>USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline</p> <p>Last year, over 76 million cases of food poisoning occurred in the U.S., (according to the Centers for Disease Control), most because of improperly handled and prepared food. Food safety specialists helped 90,000 callers in 2000, ranging from consumers and media to health professionals and educators answering questions concerning safe food handling and the prevention of foodborne illness. This year, even more emphasis has been placed on food safety as a result of bio-terrorist threats. Available in both English and Spanish 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, via telephone, TTY, via email, and integrated with the Web, the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline has been a trusted and convenient resource for more than 10 years. www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/programs/missnhl.htm</p>
New Delivery Channels	<p>Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)</p> <p>EBT is an electronic system allowing recipients to authorize transfers of their government benefits from a Federal account to a retailer account to pay for products. Currently used to issue over 80% of food stamp benefits, EBT is faster and cheaper than previous paper-based processes. Its accompanying customer card, which functions like a credit card, also provides dignity to beneficiaries and faster payment for the Food and Nutrition Services's (FNS's) network of over 200,000 retailers. Further, EBT creates an electronic record of each food stamp transaction, making it easier to identify and document instances where food stamps are "trafficked," or exchanged for cash, drugs, or other illegal goods, ultimately helping cut back on food stamp waste, fraud, and abuse. This delivery channel has saved USDA, taxpayers, and retailers an estimated \$420 million since its inception. FNS is now looking to apply EBT and smart card technologies to another major program, Women Infants and Children (WIC).</p>
Bridging the Digital Divide	<p>CyberSeniors CyberTeens</p> <p>CyberSeniors CyberTeens is a unique and innovative program that aims to help senior citizens become familiar with and use the Internet while giving young Americans valuable skills and experience at teaching. Currently operating in a number of locations across the U.S., both urban and rural, the program pairs young people—some of the most avid and experienced users of the Internet—with older Americans, many of whom have no experience with computers. Teens tutor seniors on computer- and Internet-related topics such as Very, Very Basic Computers and Introduction to the Internet and E-Mail; additional</p>

²⁰⁰From Paper to Electronics: Creating a Benefit Delivery System That Works Better & Costs Less." Federal EBT Task Force, 1994.

<p>Electronic Delivery of Products</p> <p>Supply Chain Management</p> <p>eWorkspaces</p>	<p>interrelated programs while focusing on results, improving resource allocation benchmarks, and de-emphasizing bureaucracy. UES, which receives over 11,000 submissions annually, improves customer service by combining applications to reduce paperwork burdens. Additionally, UES has reduced reimbursement time from 3 weeks to 3 days and significantly decreased redundant information requests. Overall, industry burdens have been reduced by 30 staff years.</p> <p>Import Authorization System (IAS)</p> <p>IAS, a Government Technology Leadership award winner for its innovation, allows the Animal Plants and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to manage permits for both fruit & vegetable and live animal imports electronically. 25% of all APHIS's permit applications use this Lotus Notes-based Web system allowing users to submit and revise permit applications and check their status. Applicants can choose to have their permits sent via multiple channels, including postal mail, fax, or e-mail. IAS has generated significant cost savings for APHIS through reduction of paperwork, data entry, reduced errors, and improved processing/delivery time. https://web01.aphis.usda.gov/IAS.nsf/Mainform?OpenForm</p> <p>Electronic Bid Entry System</p> <p>EBES automates, via the Internet, the bid entry portion of USDA's procurement of commodities exported under various foreign donation programs. FSA has built upon this success by building a similar system to handle procurements for Domestic distribution of food assistance (Domestic Electronic Bid Entry System) and is in the process of building the Freight Entry Bid Entry/Evaluation System to handle the acquisition of freight bids for the foreign donation programs. To close the end-to-end nature of FSA procurement process, the agency is building a web-based application system that will streamline program operations and improve customer service by linking the originating agencies (USDA/FAS, USAID, and the UN) requests for procurement with the procurement and freight systems.</p> <p>ERS Extranet</p> <p>The Economic Research Service Extranet is a private and secure virtual meeting space where ERS's research partners access timely, relevant information and data to help them conduct business, work collaboratively with peers, create knowledge, and participate in established, professional networks. Five extranets are currently available to ERS's partners, and extranets for additional partner groups are planned.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Employees and the Enterprise <i>Improve USDA's internal efficiency by promoting Enterprise-wide solutions.</i></p>	
<p>Knowledge Management</p>	<p>National Agriculture Library Digital Desktop Library</p> <p>The National Agricultural Library (NAL) has built its Digital Desktop Library to provide 24-hour access to key databases, journals, news services, statistics, and other significant electronic information resources. Important agricultural books, journals, reference materials, and databases are increasingly available in digital form. The NAL provides access to</p>

<p>Web-based Human Resources</p>	<p>these digital resources by obtaining USDA-wide licenses at lower rates and offering participating USDA agencies a single interface to the Digital Desktop Library. Access to the first two fee-based products licensed through this initiative has been extended to all USDA staff worldwide. http://www.nal.usda.gov/usda/digitop.htm</p> <p>Employee Personal Page</p> <p>The Employee Personal Page provides self-service functionality to federal employees of agencies serviced by the National Finance Center. It allows employees to view their statements of earnings and leave (i.e., pay stubs), W2 statements, personal benefits statements, travel vouchers, and other information. In 2002 the Personal Page will provide update capability where employees can change personal address information, federal & state tax info (e.g., W4), DD/EFT, and other information. Since its inception in 1998, over 214,000 federal employees have signed up, with a current active user base of over 168,000. In 1999, the Employee Personal Page received the USDA Secretary's Group Honor Award for Excellence.</p>
<p>Electronic Authentication</p>	<p>Web-based Centralized Authentication and Authorization Facility (WebCAAF)</p> <p>WebCAAF is a combination of applications and business processes that provide an electronic means for Web-based applications to know that their users – USDA customers and partners – are who they say they are. The WebCAAF combines commercial, off-the-shelf software, a customized registration application, and interactions with Web-based applications. USDA employees help customers start the registration process, including collecting current information and verifying customer identification, then turn over management of the customer's account to the customer. Although the technical architecture behind the WebCAAF is fairly complex, the WebCAAF is practically invisible to both USDA employees and USDA partners and customers, and, once registration is complete, only requires a few moments of their time to log in. This low impact on time and effort has increased employee acceptance and improved customer satisfaction.</p>
<p>Data Tools for the Field</p>	<p>Laboratory Electronic Application for Results Notification (LEARN)</p> <p>LEARN is a web-based application used by the Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS's) 9,000-strong field inspection force. Allowing inspectors and managers to obtain laboratory test results from multiple plants, this extensive reporting tool enables FSIS staff to quickly isolate potential and presumptive positive microbiological test results, which are often the trigger for a product recall. Increased reporting and analysis means faster decisions, which in turn mean improved public safety and potentially lives saved. Used by inspectors in 7,000+ meat and poultry plants, FSIS district office and headquarters management, LEARN also provides results to any establishment that provides the agency with an e-mail address.</p>
<p>Electronic Human Resources</p>	<p>Combined Administrative Management System (CAMS)</p> <p>Currently servicing more than 60,000 employees nationwide, CAMS provides employees Web-based access to their Human Resources information. Some self-service capabilities include Spot and Time Off nominations, self profiles with education level, emergency contacts, personal data, personnel actions, position descriptions, training history, performance plan/appraisals, and course catalogs and requests for training. http://cams.usda.gov/</p>

Appendix B: USDA Mission, Vision, Goals and Objectives

USDA's Mission				
<p>To enhance the quality of life for the American people by supporting production agriculture; ensuring a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply; caring for public lands and helping people care for private lands; supporting sound sustainable development of rural communities; providing economic opportunities for farm and rural residents; expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products and services; and working to reduce hunger in America and throughout the world.</p>				
USDA's Vision				
<p>A healthy and productive Nation in harmony with the land.</p>				
Strategic Goal 1	Strategic Goal 2	Strategic Goal 3	Strategic Goal 4	Strategic Goal 5
Expand economic and trade opportunities for U.S. agricultural producers.	Promote health by providing access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food.	Maintain and enhance the Nation's natural resources and environment.	Enhance the capacity of all rural residents, communities, and businesses to prosper.	Enhance the capacity of all rural residents, communities, and businesses to prosper.
Strategic Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Objectives	Strategic Objectives
1.1 Provide an effective safety net and promote a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy.	2.1 Reduce hunger and improve nutrition among children and low-income people in the United States.	3.1 Maintain the productive capacity of the natural resource base for future generations	4.1 Expand job opportunities and improve the standard of living in rural communities.	5.1 Ensure that USDA provides fair and equitable service to all customers and upholds the civil rights of its employees.
1.2 Expand market opportunities for U.S. agriculture.	2.2 Reduce hunger and malnutrition around the world.	3.2 Protect the quality of the environment.	4.2 Ensure the neediest rural residents and communities have equal access to the USDA programs that will help them succeed.	5.2 Improve organizational productivity, accountability, and performance.
	2.3 Protect the public health by significantly reducing the prevalence of foodborne hazards.	3.3 Provide multiple benefits to people from the Nation's natural resources.		
	2.4 Improve public health through nutrition education, promotion, and research.			

Appendix C: Methodology and Project Approach

To develop the Department-wide eGovernment Strategic Plan, the Deputy Secretary directed the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to facilitate a structured process that would ensure the involvement of a broad cross-section of business and technology, management and non-management, field and headquarters personnel. In less than three and a half months, over 200 persons representing every Department agency and staff office contributed to the development of this Plan. Additionally, 4,800 USDA employees participated in the eGovernment employee survey.

The eGovernment Working Group, Executive Council and eGovernment team — OCIO staff and full-time representatives from each of the mission areas — developed this strategic plan using the following key steps:

- 1. Captured high-level USDA vision and priorities** – The eGovernment Program conducted primary and secondary research to evaluate the key business and technology priorities for the Department.
 - Research and reviews of the USDA's strategic and business planning documents, including the USDA Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plan, Business and Operating Plan, and Agency Strategic Plans were conducted.
 - Interviews were conducted

with each mission area Under Secretary, 11 Agency Administrators, senior executives from each agency, leadership from nearly every Staff Office, and nine agency CIOs.

- Three focus groups were conducted with farmers, international trade organizations and service center employees to gain additional input directly from stakeholders.

- 2. Conducted an eGovernment Readiness Assessment** – The Readiness Assessment provides a comprehensive analysis of the USDA's current eGovernment capabilities in comparison with industry best practices. The Readiness Assessment:

- Identifies current capabilities of high-impact business processes
- Examines stakeholder readiness for eGovernment and, in particular, issues of access
- Evaluates the level of eGovernment sophistication for Departmental support functions against industry best practices
- Highlights the gaps in technology infrastructure and deployment that are required capabilities for eGovernment
- Provides an initial comprehensive listing of all exist

ing eGovernment initiatives and programs ranging from, AMS Market News, CAMS, LINC, and Inventory of Automated Systems

3. Established USDA's

eGovernment Strategic

Direction – The mission, vision, strategic goals and objectives were developed through weekly meetings with the eGovernment Working Group and Executive Council. Interview notes, key issues and business priorities were all used as factors to decide USDA's eGovernment strategic direction.

4. Identified eGovernment Opportunity Areas and Smart Choice Candidates

- Internal and external eGovernment best practices were identified
- eGovernment opportunities were developed by synthesizing information from over 9 visioning sessions, submissions of ideas to the eGovernment Mailbox, and as part of the eGovernment Employee Survey
 - 7 mission area visioning sessions
 - 1 collectively for the Staff Offices and Departmental Administration
 - 1 Department-wide visioning session with eGovernment Working Group members.
- eGovernment opportunities were then prioritized and categorized by goals, level of initiative, and whether strategic or enabling.
- Short-term and long-term initiatives for each of these

opportunities were then identified

- The Executive Council then made final decisions about which eGovernment opportunity areas would be Smart Choice Candidates
- The Deputy Secretary and Undersecretaries then committed to advancing these high priority initiatives in particular and the broader strategic plan in general

5. Concurrent to the development of this strategic plan, the eGovernment Program also began education and awareness-building to support the eGovernment Strategic Planning Process:

- **Communications**
 - eGovernment Web site – www.egov.usda.gov
 - eGovernment mailbox – EGov@usda.gov
 - eGovernment Employee Survey
- **Marketing Materials:**
 - eGovernment pamphlet
 - 3 eGovernment billboards

Appendix D: Relevant Legislation and Guidance

Executive Directives & Oversight:

1. The **President's Management Agenda** provides a foundation and strategy for streamlining the management and performance of the Federal Government. It articulates five "government-wide initiatives" in order to achieve its goals. One of these government-wide initiatives is Expanded Electronic Government; its basic premise is for the Government to deliver "greater services at lower cost through electronic government... and meet high public demand for eGovernment services." The President's Management Agenda establishes a foundation and framework for eGovernment initiatives across the Federal Government, stressing strategic planning, linkages with budgeting, government-wide solutions, and citizen-centered design.
 - A. The President Management Agenda's Goals for eGovernment:
 - Create easy-to-find single points of access to government services for individuals;
 - Reduce the reporting burden on businesses—businesses should not have to file the same information over and over because government fails to reuse the data appropriately or

- fails to take advantage of commercial electronic transaction protocols;
 - Share information more quickly and conveniently between the federal and state, local, and tribal governments; and
 - Automate internal processes to reduce costs internally, within the Federal Government, by disseminating best practices across agencies.
- B. eGovernment initiatives should:
 - Provide high quality customer service regardless of whether the citizen contacts the agency by phone, in person, or on the Web;
 - Reduce the expense and difficulty of doing business with the government;
 - Cut government operating costs;
 - Provide citizens with readier access to government services;
 - Increase access for persons with disabilities to agency Web sites and E-government applications; and
 - Make government more transparent and accountable.

The President's Management Agenda establishes an eGovernment Task Force to identify major, government-wide eGovernment applications and initiatives and is administered under the oversight of the

President's Management Council.

2. **Quicksilver Initiatives** - Based on the President's Management Agenda, the eGovernment Task Force has developed 24 eGovernment initiatives, often referred to as 'Quicksilver Initiatives'; these cross-agency initiatives aim to bring eGovernment to a wide range of areas and processes including loan administration, grants management, employee training, and rulemaking. These initiatives will be implemented across the federal government, with all appropriate agencies participating in the design and administration of new processes and systems. By coordinating the initiatives across agencies, the task force and the President's Management Council intend to ensure efficiency while creating integrated solutions that satisfy citizen needs without regard to organizational structure. (A full listing of Quicksilver initiatives can be found in Appendix E.)
3. The Office of Management and Budget has consolidated planning and oversight for information technology investment and eGovernment into one office under the oversight of the **Associate Director for Information Technology and Electronic Government**. This division will be responsible for reviewing information technology investments to ensure efficient use of resources and to maximize coordination of initiatives across the Federal Government.
4. The Office of Management and Budget has issued guidelines for the development of GPEA implementation plans and will

provide continued oversight; several departments and agencies will provide guidance on specific areas of expertise:

- The Department of Commerce will follow public Federal Information Processing Standards, as appropriate, to further the specific goals of GPEA. The Department will also develop guidance in the area of authentication technologies.
- The Department of Justice will develop practical guidance on legal considerations related to agency use of electronic filing and record keeping.
- The Department of The Treasury will develop policies for the use of electronic transactions and authentication techniques for use in Federal payments and collections, and ensure that these policies fulfill the goals of GPEA.
- The National Archives and Records Administration will develop policies and guidance on the management, preservation, and disposal of Federal records associated with electronic Government transactions, and must give particular consideration to records issues associated with the use of electronic signature technologies.
- The General Services Administration will support agencies' implementation of digital signature technology and related electronic service delivery.

Legislation and Guidance

1. The **Freedom to E-File Act** of 2000 (E-File) requires the Department of Agriculture's

Risk Management Agency to allow electronic access to and submission of program applications and other forms by December 2001; it also requires the Department's Service Center Agencies (Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development) to make forms available for electronic download by December 2000.

2. The **Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act** of 2000 (ESIGN) gives electronic signatures the same legal standing as written signatures, enabling electronic signing of contracts, entirely electronic collection and storage of documents, and electronic transmission and receipt of notices and disclosures.
3. The **Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act** of 1999 requires Federal agencies and departments to improve the effectiveness and performance of Federal Financial assistance programs; simplify program application and reporting requirements; improve the delivery of services to the public; and facilitate greater coordination among those responsible for delivering such services.
4. The **Government Paperwork Elimination Act** of 1998 (GPEA) requires that most Federal agencies, by October 2003, to give the public the option to submit information, forms, program applications, and other transactions electronically; to maintain or disclose information to the public using electronic means; and to use electronic authentication methods to verify the identity of the sender and the integrity of electronic content. The law directs

agencies to engage in the "acquisition and use of information technology, including alternative information technologies that provide for electronic submission, maintenance, or disclosure of information as a substitute for paper, and for the use and acceptance of electronic signatures."

5. The **Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendment** of 1998 creates a specific procedure through which all Americans can exercise their right to request and obtain access to particular federal agency records and data. Commonly called "eFOIA," the Act has increased demand for publications and reports from agencies, leading many agencies to allow their publications and reports to be electronically downloaded from their Web sites.
6. The **Clinger-Cohen Act** of 1996 facilitates, encourages, and provides for the efficient and effective use of modern information technology by executive agencies. The Act seeks to increase the responsibility and accountability of departments and agencies in achieving substantial improvements in the delivery of services to the public and in other program activities through the use of modern information technology. Formerly known as the Information Technology Management Reform Act, this law specifically mandates that agencies and departments:
 - Establish Chief Information Officers (CIOs) with defined duties and responsibilities;
 - Design and implement capital planning and investment controls; and
 - Use information technology as a strategic enabler of agency and departmental missions and business objectives, implementing information technology-related actions to enhance performance and results-based management.
6. The **Debt Collection Act** of 1996 requires increased use of electronic commerce to improve cash and debt collection management.
7. The **Paperwork Reduction Act** of 1995 significantly changed many aspects of information resources management in the Federal Government. The Act requires agencies to seek approval from the Office of Management and Budget for all collections of information from the public. In planning for the development of new collections of information and the extension of ongoing collections, the PRA directs agencies to ensure that the minimum burden is placed on the public. The PRA also governs agency dissemination of and public access to information; statistical activities; records management activities; privacy; confidentiality; security; disclosure; and sharing of information; and the acquisition and use of information technology and telecommunications.
8. The **Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act** of 1994 established the Federal Acquisition Computer Network and increased agencies' flexibility in terms of procurement processes. OMB's Office of Federal Procurement Policy governs acquisitions. This Act, and subsequent amendments and directives found in the Federal Acquisitions Regulations (FAR), provides the legislative impetus for electronic procurement. OMB will continue to advance the evolution of agencies' acquisition processes from paper to electronic media to save taxpayer dollars, expedite processes, and ease the burden on businesses.
9. The **Government Performance and Results Act** of 1993 (GPRA) requires government agencies to link performance to results and fosters short-term business planning and long-term strategic planning. The law also requires that agencies develop performance plans that articulate their target performance goals and progress towards meeting these goals. Electronic government is a means by which agencies can fulfill these performance goals. The Act also encourages bureaus and offices within agencies, such as CIO and IT organizations, to improve service delivery and focus on results and customer satisfaction.
10. The **Computer Security Act** of 1987 provides for the security of Federal information systems. The Act requires each agency with a Federal computer system to establish a security plan to protect the security and privacy of sensitive information. In addition, the Act establishes a Computer System Security and Privacy Advisory Board within the Department of Commerce and directs the National Bureau of Standards to establish a computer standards program for Federal computer systems. Moreover, the Act requires that agencies provide periodic training for their employees on the management, use, and operation of computer systems.

11. The **Privacy Act** of 1974 provides specific guidance to Federal agencies on the control and release of appropriate records, as well as on the collection and storage of citizens' personal information.

12. As amended, **Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act** of 1973 requires Federal agencies to ensure that their electronic and information technologies provide people with disabilities access to information and data comparable to that of people without disabilities. This requirement applies to Federal employees as well as members of the general public that conduct business with the agency. Additional guidance regarding this Act and its implications for electronic government has been issued by the interagency CIO Council and the Department of Justice. Moreover, many federal Web sites are now compliant, using various certification standards and tools (e.g., "Bobby-approved" by the nonprofit Center for Applied Special Technology).

13. Finally, there are numerous other security and records management regulations and directives that impact Federal agencies:

- The Federal Information Processing Standard Publications (FIPS Pubs) are the official series of publications relating to standards and guidelines adopted and promulgated under the provisions of Section 111(d) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended by the Computer Security Act of 1987, Public Law 100-235. These publications provide

the standards to be used by Federal organizations in specifying the use of cryptographic-based security systems to provide protection for sensitive or valuable data. These standards provide four increasing, qualitative levels of security intended to cover a wide range of potential applications and environments. The security requirements cover areas related to the secure design and implementation of a cryptographic module. These areas include basic design and documentation, module interfaces, authorized roles and services, physical security, software security, operating system security, key management, cryptographic algorithms, electromagnetic interference/electromagnetic compatibility (EMI/EMC), and self-testing.

- The Minimum Interoperability Specifications for PKI Components (MISPC), produced in cooperation with ten industry partners through Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs), provides a basis for interoperable PKI components from different vendors. The goal of these specifications is to foster interoperability among heterogeneous public key certificate management systems, and thereby provide security services to users in large communities. The MISPC specifies a minimal set of features, transactions, and data formats for the various certificate management components that make up a PKI.

Moreover, the MISPC addresses certificate generation, renewal, and revocation; certificate validation; signature generation and verification; and other related issues.

- The Circular on Management of Information Resources (OMB Circular A-130) establishes the policies for the management of Federal information resources, and includes, as appendices, procedural and analytic guidelines for implementing specific aspects of these policies.
- The Federal Records Act (36 CFR 1220) defines Federal records and requires the establishment of agency programs to ensure adequate and proper documentation of organization, function, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions.
- The Critical Infrastructure Protection Plan (PDD 63) specifies how vulnerabilities that may diminish HUD's ability to achieve its critical mission are to be minimized. The plan identifies the minimum essential functions that HUD must be able to carry out in an emergency and outlines how these functions are to be maintained. In addition, the plan provides for the continuous monitoring of and responsiveness to changes in threats, technology innovations, and improved risk reduction measures.

Appendix E: Quicksilver Initiatives

Summaries of these initiatives are taken from the eGovernment Strategy published by the Office of Management and Budget. A full version of this document is available on the Web at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/egovstrategy.pdf>.

Government-to-Citizen

Recreation One-Stop Proposed Agency Managing Partner: DOI

This initiative will build upon "Recreation.gov" and will provide a one-stop, searchable database of recreation areas nationwide, featuring online mapping and integrated transactions, including online campground reservations and the purchase of recreational passes, maps and other products. The project will include links to recreational opportunities provided by all levels of government.

Eligibility Assistance Online Proposed Agency Managing Partner: Labor

Through a common Internet portal, citizens (with a focus on high-need demographic groups) will have an online tool for identifying government benefit programs from which they may be eligible to receive assistance.

Online Access for Loans Proposed Agency Managing Partner: Education

The Online Access for Loans initiative allows citizens and busi-

nesses to find the loan programs that meet their needs.

USA Services Proposed Agency Managing Partner: GSA

The USA Service initiative will use best practices in customer relationship management to enable citizens to quickly obtain service online, while improving responsiveness and consistency across government agencies. This initiative would enable citizens to personalize the combination of services they obtain across multiple programs and agencies in a privacy-protected environment.

EZ Tax Filing Proposed Agency Managing Partner: Treasury/IRS

The initiative would make it easier for citizens to file taxes in a Web-enabled environment.

Government-to-Business

Online Rulemaking Management Proposed Agency Managing Partner: DOT

This initiative would provide access to the rulemaking process for citizens anytime, anywhere. An existing "e-Docket" system would be expanded and enhanced to serve as a government-wide system for agency dockets. Other agency systems would use the system by creating "storefronts" consistent with statutory requirements for each agency under the Administrative Procedures Act. Comments would be organized

using knowledge management tools to improve the quality of rules.

Expanding Electronic Tax Products for Businesses
Proposed Agency Managing Partner: Treasury /IRS

This initiative's goals include decreasing the number of tax-related forms that an employer must file, providing timely and accurate tax information to employers, increasing the availability of electronic tax filing and modeling simplified federal and state tax employment laws.

Federal Asset Sales
Proposed Agency Managing Partner: GSA

Prospective customers will be able to find assets that they are interested in, regardless of the agency that holds those assets. Customers will be able to bid and/or make purchases electronically for financial, real and disposable assets.

International Trade Process Streamlining
Proposed Agency Managing Partner: DOC

The initiative would create a single customer-focused site where new or existing exporters could be assisted electronically through the entire export process. The 20 current Web sites would be organized and accessed through a single entry point.

One-Stop Business Compliance Information
Proposed Agency Managing Partner: SBA

This initiative would provide information on laws and regulations that can help users understand compliance information. It would also offer wizards and tuto-

rials to help users determine if rules apply to them and how to proceed. To the maximum extent possible, permits would be completed, submitted and approved online.

Consolidated Health Informatics (business case)
Proposed Agency Managing Partner: HHS

The initiative would provide the basis for a simplified and unified system for sharing and reusing medical record information among government agencies and their private healthcare providers and insurers. It would enable a single mechanism for making those records accessible.

Government-to-Government

Geospatial Information One-Stop
Proposed Agency Managing Partner: DOI

The Geospatial Information One-Stop will provide access to the federal government's spatial data assets in a single location and help make state and local spatial data assets more accessible. federal agencies will also make their planned and future spatial data activities available to state and local governments to promote collaboration and reduce duplicative efforts. Data standards developed through an intergovernmental process will result in data that can be used multiple times for multiple purposes, saving taxpayer money. It will also help empower the private sector by communicating the characteristics of a desired standardized data product.

eGrants
Proposed Agency Managing Partner: HHS

This initiative will create an electronic grants portal for grant

recipients and the grant-making agencies that will streamline, simplify and provide an electronic option for grants management across the government. This effort will include the work of the 26 federal grant-making agencies to implement P.L.106-107.

Disaster Assistance and Crisis Response
Proposed Agency Managing Partner: FEMA

This initiative involves a public, one-stop portal containing information from applicable public and private organizations involved in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. This portal will also serve as a single point of application for all disaster assistance programs.

Wireless Public SAFETy Interoperable COMMUNICATIONS (Project SAFECOM)
Proposed Agency Managing Partner: Treasury

For public safety officials to be effective in their daily responsibilities, as well as before, during and after an emergency event, public safety agencies throughout all levels of government, i.e. federal, state and local, must be able to communicate with each other. This initiative would address the Nation's critical shortcomings in efforts by public safety agencies to achieve interoperability and eliminate redundant wireless communications infrastructures. At the same time, it would assist state and local interoperability and interoperability between federal public safety networks.

eVital
Proposed Agency Managing Partner: SSA

This initiative would expand the existing vital records online data

exchange efforts between federal agencies and state governments. Value to Citizen: Elimination of burden imposed on citizens to obtain and deliver vital record information from local government to the federal government. Enables more efficient and effective benefit qualification. Value to the Government: Save millions of dollars annually through fraud detection from computer matching programs as well as from reductions in erroneous payments.

Internal Efficiency and Effectiveness

eTraining

Proposed Agency Managing Partner: OPM

The vision is to provide a repository of government-owned courseware to be made available to all governments (federal, state and local), to provide high interest and government-required training to government employees at economies of scale pricing. In addition, this would foster development of communities of practice. This initiative supports achievement of the President's Human Capital initiative.

Recruitment One-Stop

Proposed Agency Managing Partner: OPM

This initiative would improve the federal hiring process by improving the functionality of the federal automated employment information system. It would provide job seekers with streamlined resume submission, online feedback about their status in the employment process and integration with automated assessment tools. The initiative will provide federal employers with a searchable resume database.

Enterprise HR Integrations Integrated Human Resources and e-Clearance

Proposed Agency Managing Partner: OPM

This initiative will eliminate the need for paper employee records, enable strategic decisions regarding the use of human capital and financial resources to improve agency performance and address emerging needs. It will also allow for the electronic transfer of HR data throughout the federal sector, better protect the rights and benefits of the federal workforce and streamline and improve government-wide reporting and data analyses. It will reduce the time required to seek and access employee and contractor security clearance information.

ePayroll/HR (Payroll Processing Consolidation)

Proposed Agency Managing Partner: OPM

The vision is to simplify and unify elements of the Payroll/HR process in order to consolidate and integrate HR and payroll systems across government. This effort will provide several hundred million dollars of savings to organizations and significantly reduce future information technology (IT) investments and could foster direct privatization. This initiative supports achievement of the five dimensions of the President's Management Agenda.

eTravel

Proposed Agency Managing Partner: GSA

Agencies will use a common travel management system throughout the federal government. Existing travel management resources will be consolidated and processes will be simplified for cheaper, more efficient operation.

Integrated Acquisition Environment

Proposed Agency Managing Partner: GSA

Agencies will begin sharing common data elements to enable other agencies to make more informed procurement, logistical, payment and performance assessment decisions. It will also allow agencies to make maximum use of eMarket approaches.

Electronic Records Management

Proposed Agency Managing Partner: NARA

This initiative will provide the tools that agencies will need to manage their records in electronic form, addressing specific areas of electronic records management where agencies are having major difficulties. This project will provide guidance on electronic records management applicable government-wide and will provide tools for agencies to transfer electronic records to NARA in a variety of data types and formats so that they may be preserved in for future use by the government and citizens. Value to Citizen: Easier process for creating information, with more reliable storage, that is also in compliance with the Federal Records Act Value to the Government: More efficient operations that meet the statutory requirements of the Federal Records Act.

Initiatives That Address Barriers to E-Government Success

eAuthentication

Proposed Agency Managing Partner: GSA (Infrastructure)

eAuthentication will build and enable the mutual trust needed to support wide spread use of elec-

tronic interactions between the public and government and across governments. This will establish a method for satisfactorily establishing 'identity,' without which the promise of E-Government will never reach its full potential. The project will establish common interoperable authentication solutions for all of the E- Government initiatives. Value to Citizen: Secure, consistent method of proving identity to the federal government. Value to the Government: Eliminate redundancy in electronic signature technology and policy operations, thereby reducing costs and employee time required.

Federal Architecture
Proposed Agency Managing
Partner: OMB

This activity, which supports all of the initiatives, will map government processes by line of business. It will develop information, data and application interface standards to eliminate redundancies and yield improved operating efficiency and effectiveness. Value to Citizen: Citizens are best served by an efficient and effective government. Value to the Government: A well architected federal information system will provide a more efficient and effective government by eliminating redundancies.

Appendix F: Glossary of Relevant Terms

General Terms

Agency-Specific	Applications and initiatives that deal exclusively with one USDA agency.
API	Application Programming Interface is a method or set of procedures used by an operating system (such as Windows) or other software to allow communication or integration with other software.
CRM	Customer Relationship Management is a set of methodologies, software, and Internet capabilities that help an enterprise manage customer relationships in an organized way.
Cross-Mission Area	An eGovernment initiative that relates to more than one USDA mission area.
Cybersecurity	The security of electronic data, computers, and information systems.
EA	Enterprise Architecture is a plan to streamline and standardize computer systems within an agency with common hardware and software specifications
EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer, a debit card-like system that replaces paper-based benefits with an electronic solution.
EITIRB	Enterprise Information Technology Investment Review Board , this Departmental council makes decisions on IT capital investments.
EC	USDA eGovernment Executive Council
eCommerce	eGovernment is the exchange of value, including services, programs and information, through an electronic medium
E-FILE	The Freedom to E-File Act of 2000 (see Appendix D).
EGWG	USDA eGovernment Working Group
Enterprise-wide	An eGovernment initiative that applies throughout the USDA organization.
GIS	Geographic Information Systems store maps and other geospatial data electronically, enabling better graphical and geographic analysis of data.
GPEA	The Government Paper Elimination Act of 1998 (see Appendix D).
Interdepartmental	An eGovernment initiative that applies across Federal departments and/or independent agencies.
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PRA	Paperwork Reduction Act (see Appendix D).
Quicksilver	A set of 24 interdepartmental eGovernment initiatives coordinated by the Office of Management and Budget (see Appendix D).
RF-ID	Identification tags that use radio frequencies for authentication.

SAN	Storage Area Networks are high-speed special-purpose networks that interconnect different kinds of data storage devices with associated data servers on behalf of a larger network of users.
SLAs	Service-Level Agreements are contracts between a service provider and a customer that specify, in measurable terms, what services the service provider will furnish, including measures of quality of service.
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development
VPN	Virtual Private Networks are secure, private networks that use the infrastructure of a public network (such as the Internet) to communicate. Using special security and encryption systems, private data is securely transmitted over the public network.
WIC Program	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, it provides supplementary food aid to pregnant and nursing mothers and young children.

USDA Agencies and Staff Offices:

AMS	Agricultural Marketing Service
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
ARS	Agricultural Research Service
CNPP	Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
CSREES	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
DA	Departmental Administration
ERS	Economic Research Service
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Service
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service
FS	USDA Forest Service
FSA	Farm Service Agency
FSIS	Food Safety and Inspection Service
GIPSA	Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration
NAD	National Appeals Division
NASS	National Agricultural Statistics Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
OC	Office of Communications
OCE	Office of the Chief Economist
OCFO	Office of the Chief Financial Officer
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OCR	Office of Congressional Relations
OES	Office of the Executive Secretariat
OGC	Office of the General Counsel
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OPBA	Office of Budget and Program Analysis
RBS	Rural Business-Cooperative Service
RHS	Rural Housing Service
RMA	Risk Management Agency
RUS	Rural Utilities Service

