EPA Data Governance Council

Meeting Summary – December 11, 2023

General Chief Data Officer Updates

- The Governance Subcommittee successfully completed the process to establish the Data Officer role and onboard representatives into this position for each office and region.
    - The Data Officers were introduced to recent and active data projects.
    - Next, the Data Officers will help establish data project priorities for 2024.
- The Information Technology Portfolio Reviews, led by Chief Information Officer, Vaughn Noga, have previously been in the spring and summer, but the schedule is changing to align with budget scheduling. The 2024 ITPR discussions will be conducted between January and March.
- Richard Allen proposed four options in a survey to Data Officers, Information Management Officers and Information Resource Management Branch Chiefs to mitigate the potential difficulties caused by the ITPR schedule change.
    - Option 1: Cancel the ITPR Data Discussions for FY24 and focus on analysis of the information collected during FY 23 Data Discussions.
    - Option 2: Delay the next Data Discussions until between May and August of 2024.
    - Option 3: Change the format of the ITPR Data Discussions to incorporate programs and their lead regions into joint conversations and move the discussions to the January through March 2024 timeline.
    - Option 4: Maintain the current format of individual discussions with each program office and region according to the new January through March 2024 timeline.
    - Additional options or considerations for the next ITPR Data Discussions include:
        - Lead regions transition every two years and that transition just occurred. It may be difficult to have a joint conversation in early 2024 because the current lead region has not had the time to learn the background of active data priorities.
        - It is possible that options three and four would work best if moved to 2025.
        - Follow-up discussions throughout the year would improve internal data communications. The timing and participant options for additional meetings should be discussed further.

Artificial Intelligence Updates

- Chair of the AI Subcommittee, Andrew Chase gave a presentation on the Office of Mission Support leadership's current plan to align EPA with the latest Office of Management and Budget Executive Order addressing AI.
- The definition of AI per U.S.C 9401(3) is "a machine-based system that can, for a given set of human-defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations or decisions influencing real or virtual environments."
- EPA currently reports three AI systems in the required public inventory but has many AI systems that do not qualify for the inventory based on federally defined exclusions.

- There are three portions of the new EO that OMS leadership will focus on addressing or implementing within EPA:
  - EPA needs to continue to ensure that the use of AI is encouraged but used transparently, responsibly, safely and ethically.
  - EPA needs to ensure that the proper safeguards are in place for any AI systems that are safety-impacting or rights-impacting.
  - EPA needs to complete additional OMB deliverables such as a compliance plan, strategy and AI governance committee.
- The new EPA AI goals will increase the workforce demand for AI tools and training.
  - OMS is addressing the increased demand by developing new training resources, piloting new processes and tools, sponsoring an AI Challenge funding program and preparing for different potential AI Use Cases.
- Three topics that need to be communicated to EPA staff are how the agency will evaluate AI risks, how AI will be governed and what AI guidance will be provided by EPA leadership.
- Another meeting will be held to discuss how AI is defined, approved and monitored within EPA based on the related EOs and other federal guidance.

Standardized Contracting Language for Data Collection
- Kathryn (Katie) Krueger proposed the creation of a new DGC Subcommittee to standardize contracting language for data collection.
- The goal of the new subcommittee is to ensure that all data generated and/or paid for by the EPA is being managed appropriately.
- The initial steps of the new subcommittee will be to:
  - Inventory existing language and policies related to data collection contracts.
  - Identify gaps in language and policies related to data collection contracts.
  - Collaborate with data communities to encourage consistency across EPA's data collection contracts.
- A meeting will be held December 14, at 12:00 p.m. EST to gauge participant interest and define the scope of the new subcommittee.

Updates from Subcommittees
- The Communication Subcommittee completed the revisions to the public epa.gov/data site.
- Next, the Communications Subcommittee will create an internal EPA data site. The Communications Subcommittee is soliciting information to determine what data and tools should be integrated into the new internal site.
  - **Action Item**: DGC members are asked to complete the internal data web content requirements form if they have suggestions or requests for information that should be included in the new site. The form also allows individuals to request a meeting directly with the Communications Subcommittee about the internal data site.