

Integrated Baseline Review (IBR)

Summary Description:

The Integrated Baseline Review (IBR) is a conversation between the respective government and contractor teams intended to confirm that the project is properly planned and ready for execution. IBRs are intended to provide a mutual understanding of risks inherent in contractors' performance plans and underlying management control systems. The IBR is conducted to obtain government and contractor agreement that the scope, schedule, and cost that have been proposed for the project are adequately documented and are in accord one with one another, and that the project management strategy is appropriate for moving the project forward.

Thus, the IBR is intended to confirm that:

- All activities and deliverables required by the contract statement of work (SOW) are in the work breakdown structure (WBS) and all activities in the WBS are in the SOW
- There is a logical sequence of effort, consistent with the contract schedule, and that all activities and deliverables in the WBS are on the integrated master schedule (IMS) and all scheduled activities and deliverables are in the WBS
- The allocated control accounts and budgets are valid, and that all activities and deliverables in the WBS are budgeted and all budgeted items are in the WBS
- The WBS, IMS, and budget not only agree with, but support, each other, and the technical content of the work packages and planning packages is consistent with the contract's SOW, the contract WBS (CWBS), and the CWBS dictionary
- Work packages are developed at the appropriate level of the WBS
- The earned value technique proposed for each work package to measure progress is appropriate to the work package, and that objective and meaningful performance data can be provided by the contractor
- The control account managers (CAM) understand their assigned work packages and understand that they are responsible for effectively managing their work packages to successful completion
- Potential project risks over the entire project lifecycle are identified and mitigation strategies developed for near-term (and possibly intermediate-term) risks

Through the IBR, the government project team gains a sense of ownership and understanding of the contractor's management process, and confidence that earned value is being effectively used as a project management tool. One of the results is a baseline plan about which the government and contractor agree that the scope, schedule, and cost that have been established for the project can be accomplished within the bounds of all identified risk. Stated another way, a net result of the IBR is validation of the performance management baseline.

Technical solutions may be discussed, as well as any project-related issues, although they are not the primary focus of the IBR. At the end of the IBR, both the government and the contractor/developer will have a more-complete sense of what the project entails, and each party may have action items which arose during the IBR.

Status:

Mandatory – Department of Health & Human Services policy requires that certain information technology (IT) investments have earned value management (EVM) applied to their projects. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requires that projects with EVM conduct one or more IBRs. The actual conduct of the IBR will be somewhat dependent on the specific circumstances of the IT project.

Optional – Where an IBR is not mandated by current policies and regulations, the project manager should consider conducting one, especially if the details of the work have changed since originally proposed. Just as EVM is one of the useful tools in the project manager’s toolbox, the IBR can serve a powerful role in confirming clarity of what will be done, by whom, when, and how, to result in another successful project.

Timeframe:

The IBR must be conducted within 90 days of contract award (per HHS guidance), normally during the planning phase, when the contractor/developer has initially developed the Entrance Criteria artifacts. However, a complex, multi-phase, multi-year project may require up to 180 days to prepare for,

Responsible Reviewing Component:

The CMS component that has the project owner and project manager assigned to it will have responsibility for ensuring that the IBR takes place as required. If the two are from different components, the project manager’s component will have the responsibility. Assistance can be provided by OIS/ISDDG/DPM, OIS/EASG/DITIM, and OOM/PPMAG to ensure that the IBR is appropriately conducted.

Primary Information Exchange Partners:

The following are the primary stakeholders who participate or have an interest in the IBR.

- System owner/manager
- Project owner/manager
- Project sponsor
- CMS project team, including government task leader (GTL)
- System contractor/developer project manager
- System contractor/developer project team
- CMS Chief Technology Officer (CTO)
- OIS/ISDDG/DPM or OOM/PPMAG (for project management)
- OIS/EASG/DITIM (for EVM)
- OIS/EDG (for databases)
- OIS/BAMG (for systems OIS will support)
- Independent verification & validation (IV&V) contractor (when contracted for)
- Contracting Officer (CO), contract specialist, and contract Project Officer (PO)

Government Responsibilities:

The CMS project manager sends a letter to the system contractor/developer inviting the latter to the IBR. The letter should state the location (usually the contractor’s location), start date and time, anticipated duration, anticipated agenda, expected government participants, expected contractor participants, the list of artifacts that the government expects to receive from the contractor prior to the IBR, and the list of artifacts to be available for review and discussion by both parties at the IBR. The last two items comprise the list of entrance requirements; that list may be short or extensive, depending on the project.

NOTE: If a system is being developed in-house, without outside contractor resources, then the government developers are responsible for the contractor/developer responsibilities described in this document.

Representatives from the key stakeholder groups within the Office of Information Services (OIS) are responsible for reviewing the input documents prior to the IBR and being prepared to present any concerns during the IBR. The OIS stakeholders, based on their individual areas of subject matter expertise, are responsible for ensuring that all assumptions, constraints, priorities, issues, and risks, as appropriate, are identified and addressed during the IBR.

Between key portions of the IBR (or at the end of each day's agenda items) the CMS representatives will caucus to review issues resolved, new issues identified, action items resolved, new action items, and new risks identified. Following the caucus, the CMS project manager will make an informal presentation to the system contractor/developer representatives, including listing any changes to those artifacts which should be provided at the next day/session, and any changes to the IBR schedule. Upon completion of the IBR session(s), the CMS project manager will conduct a final caucus. After the final caucus, the project manager will either present a summary of the CMS "findings" to the contractor staff or will give a more-formal presentation. If the presentation can't be prepared within the constraints of the IBR schedule, a summary should be presented at the end of the IBR, and the "presentation" given at the next status meeting as a priority.

The project owner/manager is responsible for tracking and resolution of all actions resulting from the IBR. This is an appropriate agenda item for periodic status meetings, until all action items from the IBR have been addressed to the joint satisfaction of the parties involved.

The results of the IBR are an appropriate agenda item at the next project review meeting with Key Stakeholders.

Contractor/Developer Responsibilities: Entrance Criteria/Inputs:

The following are responsibilities that the system contractor/developer has with regard to the IBR. The person responsible for project management activities shall typically:

1. Provide the following artifacts for review prior to the IBR. They should arrive early enough for the CMS project team to do a thorough review of them prior to the IBR, typically two to three weeks before the IBR start date.
 - Contract work breakdown structure (CWBS)
 - CWBS dictionary
 - First/Next phase/stage/increment/segment schedule
 - First/Next phase/stage/increment/segment budget, allocated to control accounts and work packages
 - Estimating methodology
 - Basis of estimate for activities in the CWBS and project schedule
 - Responsibility assignment matrix (by control account/by work package)
 - Documentation of compliance with ANSI/EIA Standard 748 of the contractor's EVM system (EVMS), if required
2. Provide the following artifacts at the beginning of the IBR.
 - Project management plan and all supporting documents

- Risks and mitigation strategies; identification of project, technical, security, and/or business risks with proposed strategies for mitigating the risks
 - The risk definition document for each identified risk
 - Earned value standards, procedures, and reports for control accounts and work packages, including method proposed to be used to earn value for each work package
3. Provide other relevant artifacts which may be required during conduct of the IBR. These may include:
- Control account plans
 - Work package authorization documentation, work plans, and work packages
 - Acceptance criteria for the control account or work package
 - Project control book
 - List(s) of configuration items
 - Other performance measurement baseline (PMB) documentation that the contractor/developer desires to present
 - Standards and procedures relating to the work to be done
 - The contractor's process improvement plan
 - Business process model format and proposed tool
 - Logical data model and data dictionary formats and proposed tool
 - Interface control document format
 - Database design document format and proposed tool
 - Proposed test plan; test case forms and examples
 - System security plan format
 - Other documents peculiar to the project, or to the particular phase of the project

Note that CMS will expect CAMs—not the project manager—to present scope, schedule, and budget information pertaining to their assigned control accounts. They should be prepared to answer questions pertaining to plans, standards, and procedures, as they apply to their work packages.

Exit Criteria/Outputs:

The following are results/outputs that are expected from an IBR.

- Updated assumptions
- Updated constraints
- Updated documents
- Updated risk mitigation strategies
- Validated PMB
- Issues identified during the IBR
- Action Items
- Next Steps

Guidance:

Multi-phase development projects generally require an IBR at the start of each phase. Earlier “planning packages” should now have been developed into “work packages,” for example.

A significant change in the scope, schedule, or budget generally requires that an IBR be conducted to insure that all artifacts reviewed in the previous IBR were changed appropriately and still support each other and the project as a whole.

An IBR is not a stage-gate review. A stage-gate review determines if work to that point was done well enough to allow the project to continue (or poorly enough for the project to be terminated). An IBR determines if a project that is continuing is planned well enough that it is ready to continue...and that both CMS and the contractor agree that the scope, schedule, and budget are reasonable for this work and support each other.

An IBR is not a technical design review. It is to identify resource/planning risk issues. There is no pass/fail for an IBR. It is not, for example, appropriate to tie performance in an IBR to an award fee amount.

The general process for conducting an IBR is:

- Plan. What do we want to accomplish during this particular IBR? Why are we doing that? Why are we proposing to do it that way? What are the risks in doing it that way?
- Make Assignments. Who on our team is going to be the counterpart for each function on the contractor's team? Who has experience with the things we're looking at? Who do we need from outside the team just for the IBR?
- Train. Insure a basic level of understanding of the EVM concept, and get everyone up to speed on their IBR areas.
- Prepare & Conduct. Draft agendas, list potential questions, list possible risks, review advance artifacts, schedule.
- Follow up & Close out. Discuss action items at status meetings. Issue closeout letter/e-mail message.

Review Process:

The project owner/manager and GTL insure that the SOW for the contract includes the requirement to conduct an IBR/IBRs. This document should be listed in the "deliverables" section of the SOW.

The project owner/manager invites the contractor/developer to the IBR in writing; specifying the artifacts CMS will require prior to, at the beginning of, and during the IBR; specifying the location (usually the contractor's site for availability of experts and documents); specifying the expected attendees from CMS and the contractor/developer; and specifying the expected agenda and time frames. All key stakeholders should be notified of the IBR, although the CMS and contractor/developer project teams are the active participants. CMS and contractor/developer staff prepare/collect/review artifacts for the IBR to be ready when it starts. A link to an example letter of invitation is on the EVM page.

The actual IBR is conducted by the CMS project manager, usually the responsible division director. Depending on the situation, the PO and/or the GTL may lead the IBR. The IBR opens with introductions of the participants and their roles, and distribution of the appropriate entrance artifacts. The agenda is reviewed and any adjustments made. The CMS project manager or his designee keeps lists of issues and any resolutions at the IBR, potential contract modifications, and action items. The CMS team will caucus and update these at the end of each day of a multi-day IBR. After the end of each day's caucus, the remainder of the agenda may be adjusted. At the end of the IBR, or at the first following project status meeting, the project manager will brief these results to the contractor. Action items and issues from the IBR will remain on the agenda for status meetings until all are resolved.

NOTE: The IBR is not "completed" until the PMB is validated.

If an executive steering committee (ESC) exists for the IT project, then the project owner/manager should provide a summary of the results of the IBR informationally to the ESC.

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